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A State of War: Florida from 1939 to 1945

Anthony Atwood

Florida International University, Anthony.Atwood@fiu.edu

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FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Miami, Florida

A STATE OF WAR:

FLORIDA FROM 1939 TO 1945

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

HISTORY

by

ANTHONY D. ATWOOD

2012

To: Dean Kenneth Furton
College of Arts and Sciences

This dissertation, written by Anthony D. Atwood, and entitled A State of War: Florida from 1939 to 1945, having been approved in respect to style and intellectual content, is referred to you for judgment.

We have read this dissertation and recommend that it be approved.

Ralph E. Clem

Sherry Johnson

Gwyn Davies

Darden A. Pyron, Major Professor

Date of Defense: October 25, 2012

The dissertation of Anthony D. Atwood is approved.

Dean Kenneth Furton
College of Arts and Sciences

Dean Lakshmi N. Reddi
University Graduate School

Florida International University, 2012

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to those who have served, and to the fallen.

Lest we forget



Major William S. Pagh, of Ormond Beach, Florida [right] and the crew of his A-20 light bomber "*The Florida Gator*." Soon after the photo was taken, they were shot down over Hollandia, New Guinea, on August 11, 1944. They remain missing in action.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

A STATE OF WAR: FLORIDA FROM 1939 TO 1945

by

Anthony D. Atwood

Florida International University, 2012

Miami, Florida

Professor Darden A. Pyron, Major Professor

World War II profoundly impacted Florida. The military geography of the State is essential to an understanding the war. The geostrategic concerns of place and space determined that Florida would become a statewide military base. Florida's attributes of place such as climate and topography determined its use as a military academy hosting over two million soldiers, nearly 15 percent of the GI Army, the largest force the US ever raised. One-in-eight Floridians went into uniform. Equally, Florida's space on the planet made it central for both defensive and offensive strategies. The Second World War was a war of movement, and Florida was a major jump off point for US force projection world-wide, especially of air power. Florida's demography facilitated its use as a base camp for the assembly and engagement of this military power.

In 1940, less than two percent of the US population lived in Florida, a quiet, barely populated backwater of the United States.¹ But owing to its critical place and space, over the next few years it became a 65,000 square mile training ground, supply dump, and embarkation site vital to the US war effort. Because of its place astride some

¹ US Census of Florida 1940. Table 4 – Race, By Nativity and Sex, For the State. 14.

of the most important sea lanes in the Atlantic World, Florida was the scene of one of the few Western Hemisphere battles of the war.

The militarization of Florida began long before Pearl Harbor. The pre-war buildup conformed to the US strategy of the war. The strategy of the US was then (and remains today) one of forward defense: harden the frontier, then take the battle to the enemy, rather than fight them in North America. The policy of “Europe First,” focused the main US war effort on the defeat of Hitler’s Germany, evaluated to be the most dangerous enemy. In Florida were established the military forces requiring the longest time to develop, and most needed to defeat the Axis. Those were a naval aviation force for sea-borne hostilities, a heavy bombing force for reducing enemy industrial states, and an aerial logistics train for overseas supply of expeditionary campaigns.

The unique Florida coastline made possible the seaborne invasion training demanded for US victory. The civilian population was employed assembling mass-produced first-generation container ships, while Florida hosted casualties, Prisoners-of-War, and transient personnel moving between the Atlantic and Pacific. By the end of hostilities and the lifting of Unlimited Emergency, officially on December 31, 1946, Florida had become a transportation nexus. Florida accommodated a return of demobilized soldiers, a migration of displaced persons, and evolved into a modern veterans’ *colonia*. It was instrumental in fashioning the modern US military, while remaining a center of the active National Defense establishment. Those are the themes of this work.

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CHAPTER I.

PRE-WAR FLORIDA: GEOGRAPHY AND DEMOGRAPHY

Florida offers a case study of the interplay of history and geography during World War II at the provincial level, a subject sometimes overlooked in the study of that conflict. Before Pearl Harbor, even before the rise of Hitler, military observers saw there was unique strategic potential of Florida. The peninsula offered a unique combination of *place* and *space* that determined it would host mighty armies and over 250 military installations.² Florida's place, its internal characteristics of gentle seashore, flatlands, abundant forests and favorable climate were ideal for military training in an environment that had the aspect of one big campground. Likewise, Florida's space, its relationship to the rest of the world, made it the guardian of the most important sea lanes of the US. Perhaps more importantly, the space Florida occupied on the planet made it the launch site for projecting aerial military power around the world. The demography of Florida likewise foreshadowed and shaped its wartime role. This chapter explores first the military geography of the peninsula, place and space, in the context of both defensive and offensive war; second it surveys the demographic potential of the state as revealed in the pre-war 1940 census.

Florida is and always has been a maritime State.³ The peninsula projects into strategic waters that demand military attention. Its then-uninhabited coastline of sheltered pleasant beaches would be particularly useful in the coming war. Jacksonville,

² See Appendix A - Military Installations in Florida in WWII.

³ The use of the term "state" for the purpose of identifying Florida will be capitalized as "State" throughout the dissertation to avoid confusion. Usually the term "state" applies to an entire country, but in the US (and a few other countries) the individual provinces and commonwealths are referred to as "states."

Fort Lauderdale, Miami, Key West, Tampa, and Pensacola offered significant harbors. Such attributes and facilities ensured Florida would offer naval training of all kinds. Maps reveal Florida's importance to maritime planning. Alfred Thayer Mahan, the naval strategist and historian identified the issues as early as 1902: "The first and most obvious light in which the sea presents itself from the political and social point of view is that of a great highway."⁴ Within this context of the seas as a medium for transportation and commerce, some of the most important intersections of the great nautical highway are dominated by Florida.

Figure 1.

Mahan's Chart of the Realm⁵



⁴ Alfred Thayer Mahan. "Elements of Sea Power." Mahan on Naval Warfare. Little, Brown and Co. New York. 1999. 16.

⁵ Reprinted from Mahan's "Strategic Features of Gulf and Caribbean." William E. Livezey. Mahan on Sea Power. University of Oklahoma Press. 1981. 130.

Geo-strategic terminology describes a region that is informed and constrained by specific geographic factors as a realm. Florida is a part of the sea realm between the continents of North and South America, an expanse of ocean dotted with a clutter of island stepping-stones. The waters of the Caribbean Sea come from the Atlantic Ocean flowing between the Antilles through the Windward, Mona, and Grenada Passages, and several smaller channels, traversing east to west. From the Caribbean basin these waters wash through the Yucatan Passage, join with the Gulf of Mexico and generate the Gulfstream current. The Gulfstream then flows back out to the open ocean via the Florida Straits, traveling west to east. Mahan, in his day, noted the increasing importance of the region.⁶ Writing at the turn of the twentieth century, even before the US had begun work on the Panama Canal, the one-time president of the American Historical Association predicted the canal's completion and foretold it would confer on Florida critical new national security concerns for the US:

Along this path a great commerce will travel, bringing the interests of the other great nations, the European nations, close along our shores, as they have never been before. With this it will not be so easy as heretofore to stand aloof from international complications. The position of the United States with reference to this route will resemble England to the Channel.⁷

Mahan's vision acknowledged the commanding geographic space of the Florida peninsula. The Admiral saw intuitively that its waters were key positions to the defense of the US. He was specific regarding the military importance of this geography:

At present, the United States has one frontier which is strictly continuous, by land as by water, from the coast of Maine to the Rio Grande. There are in it, by natural division, three principal parts: the Atlantic, the Gulf, and

⁶ Mahan. 27-30.

⁷ Ibid. 29.

the Straits of Florida.... It may fairly be claimed that these three are clear, are primary, and are principal. They are very unequal in length, and, from a military standpoint, in importance; for while the peninsula of Florida does not rank very high in the industrial interests of the nation, a superior hostile fleet securely based in the Straits of Florida could effectively control intercourse by water between the two flanks.⁸

Mahan's analysis articulates what military thinkers call a "Center of Gravity," in this instance, a locale of critical importance to a war effort. Mahan believed that a fight for control of the Straits and neighboring Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs) would be driven by the stakes on the table: merchant ships. It would take the form of a *guerre de course*, a war against commerce. The enemy would seek to destroy shipping, rather than develop a battle of fleet against fleet. Three factors combined for such a scenario: first, a great many ships would be traveling through these confined waters, these targets had to pass through predictable narrows, and therein they would be most vulnerable.

Through the SLOCs around Florida passed ships bearing goods essential for the US to fight WWII. Petroleum was one such material.⁹ Tankers full of Texas oil had to pass through the Straits of Florida to reach the industrial eastern seaboard. Empty tankers had to return along the same route in reverse to fill up again. Without the petroleum (and without the tankers themselves) the US could not wage war. Bauxite, the raw material for refining aluminum also passed through the narrows.¹⁰ Aluminum had many uses for the land and naval forces of the US. Above all, the strong and lightweight metal was

⁸ Mahan. 65.

⁹ Although Mahan wrote when machinery were still fueled by coal, the replacement of coal by petroleum did not reduce the importance of the waters around Florida. The oil of Texas, Louisiana, Venezuela, and the Dutch West Indies refineries at Aruba and Curacao made the waters of the region all the more strategic.

¹⁰ Samuel Eliot Morison. The Two-Ocean War: A Short History of the United States Navy in WWII. Little, Brown. Boston, MA. 1963. 117.

essential for manufacturing the warplanes of the US air forces. Without aluminum, the US air fleets would not fly. In the Western Hemisphere most of this strategic ore came from Brazil, Guyana and Suriname (then-British and Dutch Guiana, respectively). Convoys of bauxite had to pass through the sea lanes dominated by Florida to reach the industrial centers of North America.

All of the maritime traffic of the US heartland that flowed in or out of the Mississippi River also travelled the same route. The Mississippi reaches almost to Canada and the Great Lakes. Into it pour the riparian arteries of the central US: the Missouri, the Illinois, the Ohio, Tennessee, Arkansas, and Red River. These tributaries carry the traffic from the interior hinterlands of the continent as far reaching as Montana, Colorado, Pennsylvania and Oklahoma. To reach the heartland goods had to enter the Mississippi. To depart the interior they had to exit the passes of the Mississippi. All maritime traffic coming or going had to pass through the Gulf of Mexico, before or after transiting the Florida Straits to reach the East Coast, or go through the adjacent Yucatan Passage to reach the Panama Canal and the West Coast.¹¹ Florida commanded these chokepoints.

Mahan was not alone in seeing the predictability that war would come to these watery spaces of Florida, and that it would focus upon the merchant ships that perforce sailed through them. Contemporary British naval historian, Julian Stafford Corbett, seconded the observation in his 1911 maritime observations: “The most fertile areas always attracted the strongest attack...the terminals of departure and destination where trade

¹¹ Mahan. 31.

tends to be crowded, and where, owing to the conformation of the land, trade tends to converge.”¹² Corbett summarized the predictability of naval warfare by borrowing from Scripture: “For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles gather together.”¹³

Florida’s proximity to the Panama Canal engaged still other strategic concerns. All the West Coast and Pacific shipping that funneled through and emerged from the Canal – whichever way it was bound—steamed within range of Florida-based aircraft, and often within eyesight of the peninsula. The US naval historian of WWII, Samuel Eliot Morison, titled his work “The Two Ocean War.” It was an apt description: the US fought its war from the Atlantic Ocean and the Pacific Ocean. The US could not have done so without the Panama Canal.¹⁴ It was the interior SLOC for supply and communication of every kind. It connected the US war effort around the world. Writing forty years before the war, Mahan nonetheless predicted: “One thing is sure: in the Caribbean Sea is the strategic key to the two great oceans, the Atlantic and Pacific, our own chief maritime frontiers.”¹⁵ The closest, largest and strongest bastion of American power protecting this essential waterway was Florida.

The dictum of the US naval service is “To keep the sea lanes open.” That is the primary mission of the Navy, and it defines the defensive role of Florida in WWII. As WWII spread across Europe and Asia, the US necessarily turned first to its own defenses. Measures undertaken in Florida were part of a larger pre-war program by the US to

¹² Julian S. Corbett. Some Principles of Maritime Strategy. Longman, Greens & Co. London. 1911. 361.

¹³ Matthew 24:28 King James Version.

¹⁴ Morison. 115.

¹⁵ Mahan. 112.

strengthen the defenses of the North American continent. In the Pacific, the forward defenses of the Continental United States (CONUS) included building the Al-Can Highway to Alaska from the “Lower-48,” along with new and improved bases in Alaska and the Aleutian Islands. The defense line then arced to the Hawaiian Islands, where the US Fleet was moved in 1940 from San Diego to take up station in mid-ocean at Pearl Harbor. The US Philippine Islands Territory, in its exposed forward position, was reinforced with US troops and the local population was organized into a defense force. The US Panama Canal Zone likewise received strengthened garrisons and hardened defenses.¹⁶

From Panama eastward ran a similar Atlantic defense line, and in it Florida figured prominently, along with its regional appendages of Guantanamo, Cuba; Puerto Rico; and the US Virgin Islands.¹⁷ A line of offshore defenses was to run from Brazil to Greenland. Establishing such forward defenses motivated the Administration’s 1940 agreement with Britain trading arms for basing rights. In exchange for surplus warships, the US received leases to establish military bases at the British territories of Newfoundland, Bermuda, and its Caribbean territories of the Bahamas, St. Lucia, Jamaica, Trinidad, Antigua, and British Guiana.¹⁸ The redoubts the US established in these Caribbean places were closest to the US at Florida, and the soldiers and supplies fed into these forward naval and aviation outposts passed through Florida first.

¹⁶ Among the soldiers sent to strengthen the Philippines was Army 2Lt. Alexander R. “Sandy” Nininger, of Fort Lauderdale. Nininger was posted to the Philippine Scouts.

¹⁷ See Chapter Two, the Hepburn Commission.

¹⁸ Morison. 31-32.

As it did with defenses, Florida likewise figured in offensive considerations. Mahan knew the importance of engaging the enemy, and observed that geographic conditions were part and parcel of offensive operations. “The geographic position of a country may not only favor the concentration of its forces, but give the further strategic advantage of a central position and a good base for hostile operations against its probable enemies.”¹⁹ Florida’s military value was more than the guardianship of vital sea routes. The peninsula was positioned to project offensive power.

Yet the military power that Florida was poised to project was not naval, but the new weapon that would become a determining factor in WWII: air forces. US military aviation had an understandable pre-war interest in Florida for two reasons. The first, and obvious reason is that of place: the climate, and topography favored aviation development. The year-round blue skies were ideal for training up the new weapon of air forces. The peninsula was never more than 150 miles from the sea, allowing for unlimited gunnery practice. The large empty National Forests and State Forests were available for bombing ranges. The flatness of the terrain invited landing fields, and any uninhabited meadow would do. Commercial aviation saw this before the war. In 1939 Florida offered six flying schools. By 1945 it had forty.²⁰ From nine pre-war working airfields, Florida emerged from the war with 146 airfields, every one run by the government and operated with military precision.

Developing the air arm of the US military to its full potential had long been the goal of aviation strategist and advocate General William “Billy” Mitchell. The

¹⁹ Mahan. 23.

²⁰ Mormino. “WWII.” 323.

outspoken Mitchell, who gained fame as a US Army Air Service field commander in the Great War –later renamed World War I, strongly urged the establishment of an independent air force. Such a force he envisioned would be equal to the Army and Navy.²¹ Only when freed from the tactical concerns of those two services, General Mitchell theorized, could air forces be utilized for their true value as a strategic weapon and a determining military factor in modern warfare: “The influence of air power on the ability of one nation to impress its will on another in an armed conflict will be decisive.”²²

Mitchell witnessed in the Great War how armies locked in the carnage of trench warfare were unable to budge, while aircraft simply flew over them. Presuming that future warfare would repeat that model, he advocated a vast air force, commanded specifically by airmen, which would fly over the opposition and visit aerial war on the enemy’s homeland with bombs. By attacking the enemy’s industrial means of waging war, conflict might be ended quickly, compared to the bloodshed of ground warfare. “It is a quick way of deciding a war and really much more humane,” he argued, “than the present methods of blowing people to bits by cannon projectiles or butchering them with bayonets.”²³ Bombing, he believed, was the means by which to achieve victory:

Air Forces will attack centers of production of all kinds, means of production, agricultural areas, ports and shipping; not so much the people themselves. They will destroy the means of making war.... Today to make war we must have great metal and chemical factories that have to

²¹ Mitchell. Our Air Force: The Keystone of National Defense. E.P. Dutton. New York. 1921. 12.

²² William “Billy” Mitchell. “Winged Defense.” The Paths of Heaven: the Evolution of Airpower Theory. Air University Press. Edit. Col. Phillip S. Mielinger, USAF. Maxwell Air Force Base, AL. 1997. 214.

²³ Mitchell. “Skyways.” The Paths of Heaven: the Evolution of Airpower Theory. 63.

stay in one place, take months to build, and if destroyed, cannot be replaced in the usual length of a modern war.²⁴

The surprising idea that bombing more humane than ground warfare was one shared by other aviation thinkers in the years before World War II. The Italian aviator, Giulio Douhet, argued that bombing directed specifically against civilian cities was in the long run merciful, as civilian morale would quickly break and force warring nations to the peace table. In the light of such aerial massacres as Dresden, Tokyo and Hiroshima, the notion is one of ghastly impropriety. But it must be remembered that those horrors had not yet occurred, and Mitchell and his colleagues had no idea they would happen.²⁵

Bombing “would deprive armies, air forces and navies of their means of maintenance.”²⁶ The proposed model of waging war with airplanes instead of armies and navies included the attractive prospect of being relatively cost-free by comparison. Despite the appeal of his arguments, Mitchell’s confrontational style led to his 1925 court-martial for insubordination. Even after his forced retirement, the junior officers of the Air Corps continued to believe in the offensive capability of bombing, and in the separation of the Air Corps from the Army as an independent branch of service, as was the Royal Air Force (RAF). The accidental death of the Air Corps commander in September 1938 brought one of these acolytes, Lieutenant General Harold Harley “Hap” Arnold, into command of the Air Corps. Arnold oversaw the introduction into the inventory of the four-engine B-17 heavy bomber, together with Congressional approval

²⁴ Mitchell. “Aeronautical Era.” The Paths of Heaven: the Evolution of Airpower Theory. 99-100.

²⁵ David R. Mets. The Air Campaign: John Warden and the Classical Airpower Theorists. Air University Press. Maxwell Air Force Base. AL. 1999. 12.

²⁶ Mitchell. “Aeronautical Era.” 98.

for Air Corps expansion in Florida.²⁷ The concurrent advent of the Dakota transport plane would make Florida a central proving ground for the assembly of a strategic bombing force, and of an airlift capacity, vital components and core competencies of an independent air force. The second reason for airpower attraction to Florida, less obvious but equally important, was the spatial relationship of Florida to the rest of the world. From the perspective of global travel, the technical limitations of airplanes during the war made Florida a logical starting point from which to send forth air power. First, the skies over the North Atlantic from the US to Europe were dangerous much of the year. Second, contemporary aircraft lacked the range to over-fly the mid-Atlantic Ocean.²⁸ Finally, the mid-Atlantic Azores Islands of neutral Portugal were closed at the time to any but humanitarian landing and refueling.²⁹ Aerial refueling did not then exist. Florida offered a classic peripheral air route to reach the theaters of operation, Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Pacific. Thus, airmen could fly in stages from Florida via the Caribbean islands to South America, from there to West Africa and from thence to the fighting fronts. Such hop flights from Florida air bases developed critical strategic importance in the war. Aerial force projection from Florida rivaled training as the main wartime mission of the State. In the pre-war years the groundwork would be laid for an airlift extending more than halfway around the world from its point of origin in Florida.

²⁷ See Chapter Three, the Southeast Airbase Plan.

²⁸ W.F. Craven and J.L. Cate. The Army Air Forces in WWII. Office of Air Force History. Washington, DC. 1948. Vol. I. 312.

²⁹ Ibid. 325.

Another proposal of Mitchell that would manifest signs in Florida was his plan to create a “Department of National Defense,” to replace the US War Department.³⁰ The War Department had authority over wartime matters, but it was unwieldy. In peacetime its halls were a neglected place with caretaker staff officers dressed in civilian mufti. In wartime it lurched into activity, with the Navy Department and State Department alongside. The War Department waged war zealously but inefficiently. When peace returned the War Department squandered its strength with rapid demobilizations. Its ill-defined authority often conflicted with State Department prerogatives. Hostilities not of the nature of a declared war were handled vaguely. Mitchell not only proposed three branches of service, -- land, sea, and air; but a new government organization each branch would each report to at all times: a Department of National Defense.³¹

Explicit in such a reorganization of the US government was the independence of its aviation forces, modeled after the example of the RAF. Mitchell was well acquainted with the Air Marshal of the RAF, Hugh Trenchard. Trenchard similarly believed in the efficacy of strategic bombing, and strongly championed air power as an independent branch of service.³² When Roosevelt assumed the presidency, Mitchell sought him out as a private citizen and shared his concepts and concerns for the future of air power. A drive resonating within the US war effort from the start would be a technical,

³⁰ Mitchell. Our Air Force: The Keystone of National Defense. 200.

³¹ Mitchell. “Winged Defense.” The Paths of Heaven: the Evolution of Airpower Theory. 99.

³² Mets. 22.

administrative and managerial evolution towards an independent air force. Much of it would come to life in Florida.

An understanding of Florida's military persona, defined thus far as derived from land, sea, and air factors of place and of space, must include the demography of the State at the time: knowledge of the people and their works. The US Census of 1940 provides an essential picture of who the Floridians were, and what they were doing before the US entered the war. The Census records the number of Floridians in spring 1940 at 1,897,414. The State was home to less than one-and-one half percent (1.415 percent) of the US population of 134 million. Florida by gender had 943,123 males, and 954,291 females, a ratio conforming to biological norms. The population was spread out over a land mass of nearly 66,000 square miles, which meant that the land was relatively empty, with a density of only 29 people per square mile. There was plenty of room for incoming soldiers and plenty of land for military activities.³³

Racially, the Census suggests that Florida was an almost classic Old South province on the eve of war. Its small population was far more mixed than most of the US, whose black American population then comprised eleven percent of the total. Florida's black population was more than twice that national average: one in four Floridians was black. Florida counted 1,381,986 (72.8%) as white, and 514,198 (27.2%) as black.³⁴ These numbers reinforce Florida's demographic alignment with the Deep South states of South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana. Beyond race, this Southern alignment perhaps explains other aspects of the State's involvement in

³³ US Census of Florida 1940. Table 4 – Race, By Nativity and Sex, For the State. 14.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

the war. Southerners' affection for the military may help account for the very high rate of service enlistment among Floridians: almost one-quarter of a million of them donned the uniform during the war.³⁵

Foreign-born Floridians had identity patterns of their own. Those whites claiming foreign-birth were 69,861 men and women, or five percent of the total.³⁶ The 514,198 black population contained 7,779 foreign-born, primarily of Bahamian, Jamaican, and Trinidadian origin.³⁷ Regarding the white foreign-born population, the largest group hailed from the British Isles (12,700 altogether). Another large group originated in Canada (9,482 persons). Other western European countries provided 7,764, while Russia and the Baltic States were the origin for 7,372.³⁸ Thus, 37,318 Floridians claimed origin from places that at the time were either at war against the Axis powers or soon would be.

Conversely, those originating from Germany and Austria constituted 8,914 persons. To these may be added those from Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary, another 4,147. All these points of origin in 1940 were incorporated parts of *Gross Deutschland*. Italy was the place of origin of another 5,138 persons. In 1940, therefore, 18,199 Floridians identified themselves as originating from soon-to-be enemy

³⁵ Michael Gannon. Michael Gannon's History of Florida in Forty Minutes. University of Florida Press. Gainesville. 2007. 48.

³⁶ US Census of Florida 1940. Table 14 - Foreign-Born White. By Country of Birth, By Sex, For the State. 32.

³⁷ US Census of Florida 1940. Table 4. 14.

³⁸ US Census of Florida 1940. Table 14. 32. [Only 3,247 persons were of Spanish origin in 1940. The great migration of Hispanics to Florida is a modern phenomenon, and one perhaps facilitated by the travel and transportation infrastructure left behind in Florida in the aftermath of World War II.]

countries.³⁹ These European-born citizens of Axis origin were regularly rumored to be lending assistance to the enemy in the form of clandestine U-boat refueling sites, secret radio communications, divulging war news, and providing aid and comfort to enemy landing parties. That these stories may have contained some truth is suggested by the insertion in Florida of saboteurs in *Operation Pastorius* in 1943.⁴⁰ Florida would also become the incarceration place for thousands of enemy Prisoners of War.⁴¹ The existence of these enemy soldiers in their midst, often engaged in work connected to the US war effort, together with Florida's own sub-group who identified themselves as originating from the same place, may have fueled the persistent belief during the war that the enemy was operating among them.⁴²

Only 154 persons of Japanese origin lived in Florida on the eve of war.⁴³ One small group was the vestigial remnant a small agricultural community created by the State in Palm Beach County known as the Yamato Colony.⁴⁴ Their fate may be illustrative of the wartime militarization of Florida. Yamato began as an experimental

³⁹ US Census of Florida 1940. Table 14. 32.

⁴⁰ Jim Wiggins, Florida and World War II: A Personal Recollection. Heritage Books. Westminster, MD. 2008. 96.

⁴¹ Robert Billinger, Jr. Hitler's Soldiers in the Sunshine State: German POWs in Florida. University Press of Florida. Gainesville. 2000. xiv.

⁴² Gary Mormino. "World War II." The New History of Florida. Edit. Michael Gannon. University of Florida Press. Gainesville. 1996. 326.

⁴³ US Census of Florida 1940. Table 25 – Indians, Chinese, and Japanese, By Sex, For Counties, and for Cities, 10,000 To 100,000. 75.

⁴⁴ US Census of Florida 1940. Table 28 - Race and Age, By Sex, With Rural Farm Population, For Minor Civil Divisions, By Counties. 106.

farm to cultivate pineapple for a cash crop using farmers brought in from Japan.⁴⁵ Blight doomed the experiment and only a handful of farmers remained, so that in 1940 only 16 persons of Japanese birth or ancestry were counted in Palm Beach County.⁴⁶ After Pearl Harbor, the Federal government seized the land and awarded it to the War Department. The acreage became part of wartime Boca Raton Army Airfield.⁴⁷ The local community pitched in to build the base, readily taking up the employment provided by this wartime construction project, as they were doing at many other military sites across Florida.

The census revealed critical aspects of employment that would directly affect Florida's role in the war. The Great Depression had hit the State hard. In 1932 the number of families on relief constituted 36 percent of the black population, and 22 percent of the white population.⁴⁸ The 1940 Census confirms continuing malaise. The labor force comprised 402,634 white Floridians, 156,417 black Floridians, and 465 persons of "other races," 14 years-of-age and older, making a total of 559,516 "gainful workers."⁴⁹ Of those in the white labor force 84.4 percent were categorized "at work." Those in the category of "On Public Emergency Work (WPA, etc.*)" constituted 5.9 percent of the total, while those "seeking work" numbered 7.7 percent. Among black males in the labor force, 84.3 percent were "at work." Another 5.4 percent were

⁴⁵ Raymond A. Mohl and George E. Pozzeta. "From Migration to Multiculturalism: A History of Florida Immigration." The New History of Florida. Edit. Michael Gannon. 395.

⁴⁶ US Census of Florida 1940. Table 25. 75.

⁴⁷ Sally J. Ling. Small Town, Big Secrets: Inside the Boca Raton Army Air Field During World War II. History Press. Charleston. 2005. 25.

⁴⁸ William W. Rogers. "The Great Depression." The New History of Florida. 306.

⁴⁹ US Census of Florida 1940. Table 20 – Persons 14 Years Old and Over in the Labor Force. 43.

categorized “On Public Emergency Work (WPA, etc.),” while black Floridians “seeking work” accounted for another 8.9 percent of the black population.⁵⁰ That this “public emergency work” might not have been considered genuine employment is suggested by its existence as an exception to the usual category of employment. In fact, the overview of the Census section reporting characteristics of the population states:

In the interpretation of the data for persons on public emergency work, allowance must be made for the misclassification in the census returns of considerable numbers of public emergency workers..... The total number of unemployed, as usually defined, includes (1) persons seeking work and without any form of public or private employment, and (2) those on public emergency work programs established to provide jobs for the unemployed. Because of the mis-classification of public emergency workers, the census total of these two groups understates the amount of unemployment.⁵¹

The 1940 Census has no category for unemployed, but counts 7.4 percent of Floridians as “Seeking Work.” Another 2.2 percent are categorized as “with a job,” but not working at the time of the census.⁵² The picture that therefore emerges is that among the male Floridians in 1940 unemployment and underemployment was in double digits. Bringing full employment to the State, as it would, it is not surprising that the call to national defense resonated well with, and was welcomed by, the citizenry.

Another potentially martial aspect to the Florida employment picture was the female employment in 1940. The census counted 735,840 females 14 years-of-age and

⁵⁰ US Census of Florida 1940. Table 17. 36.

⁵¹ US Census of Florida 1940. Characteristics of the Population. Introduction. 6.

⁵² US Census of Florida 1940. Table 17. 36.

older.⁵³ On the brink of the US entrance into the largest war in history, only 227,238 female Floridians (31%) were in the labor force, 508,552 (69%) were not.⁵⁴ In the event of a national emergency, a large number of women were available for at least limited activity outside of the home. Florida on the eve of war had a labor pool of over a million persons to perform war work. Since close to half of the males of laboring age would be mustered into the military itself, the large number of unemployed female Floridians would be drawn directly into the war effort.

Armies march on their stomachs, and especially in an age of limited refrigeration and food preservation, plentiful staples were a prerequisite for total war. Florida in 1940 was blessed with the means to produce enough foodstuffs for its own, and for guests. According to the census, agriculture provided the chief source of work in the State. Farming and fishing employed 129,293. The allied job fields of food manufacturing, and food and dairy product retailing employed another 38,852. The total amounted to 168,145 persons employed in farming and food related pursuits.⁵⁵ The primary products were citrus, cattle, dairy, and sugar.⁵⁶ The cattle ranches, fruit groves, cane fields and truck farms of Florida were an essential pre-condition for the militarization to come.

The next largest industry of Florida, the category of “Personal Services,” offered surprising military applications. The Personal Services industry included domestic

⁵³ US Census of Florida 1940. Table 16 – Persons 14 Years and Over, By Employment Status, Class of Worker, Race, and Sex, For the State. 34.

⁵⁴ US Census of Florida 1940. Table 17. 36.

⁵⁵ US Census of Florida 1940. Table 18 – Employed Workers 14 Years Old and Over, By Major Occupation, Industry Group. 37.

⁵⁶ Charlton W. Tebeau. A History of Florida. University of Miami. Coral Gables, Florida. 1971. 418.

service (73,494); hotels and lodging places (20,834), laundering and cleaning services (10,639), amusement, recreation and related services (9,936), and miscellaneous personal services (11,644). Altogether 126,547 persons worked in occupations providing services to others.⁵⁷ Florida's hospitality staff would make a useful military adjutancy. In addition to trained service personnel, the industry offered physical plant in the form of thousands of extant rooms in hotels, motels, and apartment houses. In the present age of limited conflicts prosecuted with only the object of maintenance of the status quo, war can be approached leisurely. But in those rare cases of total war wherein the existence of the nation-state itself is at stake, time is of the essence. The existence in Florida of thousands of hotel rooms, providentially empty owing to economic conditions, and available at the turn of a key, would be a real military asset.

Two more industries of Florida with martial attributes in 1940 were lumber and construction. Forestry, logging, sawmills, and miscellaneous wooden goods employed 30,959 persons.⁵⁸ A great deal of Florida was covered by forests of cypress, mahogany and pine, owned and operated by the Federal Government, the State, and private companies. Apalachicola National Forest and Ocala National Forest were the largest and second-largest national forests in the US, respectively. Florida was an abundant source of lumber. Hardwood is useful for building shallow-draft vessels such as Submarine Chasers, minesweepers and PT Boats. Soft pine is the basic building material for any quick construction project, military or civilian. There were 43,761 persons employed in the construction industry itself. In 1940, both the raw materials and the workers for an

⁵⁷ US Census of Florida 1940. Table 18. 37.

⁵⁸ US Census of Florida 1940. Table 18. 37.

accelerated program of construction were available in Florida.⁵⁹ The heavily forested terrain of Florida was itself a wilderness readily adaptable to military bivouacs and target practice with ordnance of every kind.

One more industry of military usefulness was extant in Florida: transport, communications and other utilities employed significant numbers. Railroading (including repair shops), trucking, busing, lighters, and communications provided work for 45,411 persons.⁶⁰ The railroads of Florida were designed to bring people from the populous northeast of the US to Jacksonville, Miami, Tampa, and Pensacola. This rail system connected directly with Charleston, the Chesapeake, New York City and Boston, the main seaports and designated wartime embarkation points of the eastern seaboard. Large numbers of personnel could be brought in to Florida by train, and sent from Florida to these US maritime terminals for shipment overseas. Washington, DC, the nation's capital and military headquarters for the war effort was a the midway point on this rail line, easily and quickly accessible to Florida.

While the census demonstrates Florida's rural poverty and absence of an industrial base, it also suggests the potential for wartime service as a mobilization site and force projection platform. Florida could provide adequate food, and numerous hands to assist and provide for visitors. The State's tourism infrastructure could offer living quarters to numerous visitors. Florida lumber and carpenters were available to build additional quick wooden accommodations, as well as smaller war vessels. The countryside was empty and available for practicing the art of war.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ US Census of Florida 1940. Table 18. 37.

Although the census of 1940 does not mention the embryonic field of aviation, Florida was ready to take off in this industry, as well. For purposes of international travel by air, Florida was closer to the rest of the world than was most of the US. The peninsula was already a recognized entrepot for air travel. Florida hosted Air Fairs to celebrate its aviation links, complete with flying races and aerobatic demonstrations for the public.⁶¹ These popular and high-profile events were promoted by the State, such as the 1941 Miami Air Fair, whose organizers and guests of honor included Florida Governor Spessard B. Holland and Army Air Corps generals.⁶² Flight pioneers Glenn Curtiss, Amelia Earhart, Charles Lindberg, and the Florida-born aviatrix Jacqueline Cochran all had ties to the State. The civilian air carriers of the day, Pan American, Eastern, Delta, and National Airlines all flew from Florida. The Goodyear blimp migrated to Florida during the winter.⁶³ Pan American Airways in particular pursued aggressive expansion of its flights to South America, Africa, and the Orient from its headquarters in Miami. These commercial enterprises were a promising military adjunct in the event of war.

While the majority of Florida's population was rural and its economy agricultural, the census confirmed three urban centers. Miami boasted a population 172,172.⁶⁴ To that may be added the populations of Miami Beach, 28,012, and Fort Lauderdale, with 17,996 more.⁶⁵ Together with the rest of Dade County, the Greater Miami population

⁶¹ William C. Lazarus. Wings in the Sun: The Annals of Aviation in Florida. 118, 143, 152, 171, 173.

⁶² McDill AFB Library Base History Archive. Miami Daily News. Jan 13, 1941.

⁶³ Lazarus. 143.

⁶⁴ US Census of Florida 1940. Table B-35 – Age By Race and Sex, For the City of Miami: 1940. 141.

⁶⁵ US Census of Florida 1940. Table 31 – Composition of the Population for Cities of 10,000 to 100,000: 1940. 124.

stood at 285,735 persons.⁶⁶ Tampa's population was 108,391 persons.⁶⁷ With adjacent St. Petersburg and Clearwater, it composed an urban area of 179,339 persons.⁶⁸ The city of Jacksonville had a 173,065-person population.⁶⁹ Surrounding Duval County added 37,078 more.⁷⁰ Miami, Tampa and Jacksonville, were situated around the important anchorages of Biscayne Bay, Tampa Bay, and the St. Johns River, respectively. The three coastal metropolises of Jacksonville, Greater Miami, and Tampa Bay counted a total of 675,217 Floridians. They would become enormous centers of military training. Their working harbors would facilitate shipbuilding on a tremendous scale. In Miami, Miami Beach, Palm Beach, St. Petersburg, Clearwater, and Daytona Beach whole enclaves of the urban environment would be commandeered to serve as military barracks.

A dozen smaller municipalities existed in Florida prior to the war. Eight of them were situated along the coast: Pensacola, Panama City, Sarasota, Ft. Myers, Key West, West Palm Beach, Daytona Beach, and St. Augustine. The four inland towns of Tallahassee, Gainesville, Orlando, and Sanford were the only ones of note in the interior of the State. The smaller metropolitan areas in 1940 claimed a combined population of 229,048 persons. Together with the populations of the three urban centers, they amounted to 900,000 persons, less than half the population of Florida in 1940, so that

⁶⁶ US Census of Florida 1940. Table 28 – Race and Age, By Sex, With Rural-Farm Population, For Minor Civil Divisions, By Counties. 91.

⁶⁷ US Census of Florida 1940. Table C-35 – Age, By Race and Sex For the City of Tampa: 1940. 150.

⁶⁸ Mormino. 326.

⁶⁹ US Census of Florida 1940. Table A-35 – Age, By Race and Sex For the City of Jacksonville. 132.

⁷⁰ US Census of Florida 1940. Table 28. 94.

over half of all Floridians were officially rural dwellers before the war.⁷¹ The number of Floridians actually living out in “the country” was far greater. Many counted as urbanites lived nowhere near the urban cores. A person counted as a “city dweller” might reside at a distance of hour or two by automobile from the metropolitan downtown.⁷²

Figure 2.

Smaller Municipalities of Florida⁷³

<i>Municipality</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Municipality</i>	<i>Population</i>
Panama City	11,610	Pensacola	37,449
Daytona Beach	22,584	St. Augustine	12,090
Fort Myers	10,604	Sanford	10,217
Gainesville	13,757	Sarasota	11,141
Key West	12,927	Tallahassee	16,240
Orlando	36,736	West Palm Beach	33,693.

In sum, Florida in 1940 was a large peninsula with a small population. Its few urban areas were all harbors on the coast. Its interior was mostly undeveloped. Its natural resources were land, foodstuffs, and wood. It had unlimited access to the sea, and a working network of railroads reaching to the national core. Its underemployed work force had some specialization in tourism, and there was a budding aviation industry. The peninsula had a salient position astride some of the most important sea lanes of the day

⁷¹ US Census of Florida 1940. Table 28. 91.

⁷² US Census of Florida 1940. Characteristics of the Population. Introduction. 3

⁷³ US Census of Florida 1940. Table 31. 124

and it was well placed to host international air routes. Florida enjoyed year around clement weather and mostly sunny days for almost every training purpose.

The lay of the land, an appreciation of the waters and skies surrounding it, and giving a face to the inhabitants of Florida, are three of the four baselines to understanding the setting of Florida at war. The final consideration is the Armed Forces themselves. The number of soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines fielded by the United States during WWII was enormous. Serving between December 1, 1941 and August 31, 1945 were 14,903,213 men and women.⁷⁴ It was the largest *levee en masse* in American history, and one of the largest mobilizations in world history. Of those who served, 10,420,000 served in the Army (including 2,400,000 in the Army Air Corps). The Navy and Marines absorbed the rest at 3,883,520 and 599,693, respectively. Fourteen percent of the whole, one seventh of the entire US force engaged in WWII, came to Florida, but one of 48 states. The militarization of Florida can be said to have begun in 1938, and its momentum had started long before Pearl Harbor.

Once in the war Florida became an armed camp of military personnel. A total of 2,122,100 military personnel served in Florida.⁷⁵ Most striking, soldiers outnumbered civilians in Florida during the war. To be sure, most came temporarily, and at any given time the number of military personnel were fewer than civilians. But the number of Florida civilians also shrank dramatically during the war. Almost 250,000 Floridians joined the US military, more than one-eighth of the population, including 51,467 black

⁷⁴ Congressional Research Service. "American War and Military Operations Casualties: Lists and Statistics." Government Printing Office. Washington., D.C. 2010. Table I. 4.

⁷⁵ Mormino. "WWII." 336.

service men.⁷⁶ During the war there were only 1,647,414 civilians in the State. The military presence gave the State a new identity, especially as all military members groomed alike, dressed the same, and were all sworn to government service. Still more compelling, almost all were males in the prime of life years between the ages of 18 to 45. The impact was great. To their numbers may be added the uniformed civilians of the various pan-military organizations that supported the war effort. Groups such as the Civil Air Patrol, Coast Guard Auxiliary, Women's Air Service Pilots, Civil Defense Wardens, and the Red Cross all wore martial garb, drew funding, rations, and sometimes even weapons from the military.⁷⁷ Such persons were frequently sworn to allegiance as US civil service war workers and War Department employees. They engaged in military training and activities and frequented military installations.⁷⁸ They came under military supervision and could be construed as belonging to the military community, more so than to the civil population of Florida. It was an overwhelming influx, more than doubling Florida's population over five years. The centrality of the State to the war was determined by the aspects of place and space to be examined.

Politically, Florida in 1940 was a "solid south" stronghold of the Democratic Party and the New Deal Administration.⁷⁹ The same 1940 election that returned the administration to Washington, DC, also brought fellow Democrat, Holland, into office as

⁷⁶ Mormino. "WWII." 335. From Florida's black minority fully 20 percent, one in five, all in the prime of life between 18 and 45 years of age, joined the US military during the war.

⁷⁷ Morison. 131.

⁷⁸ Mormino. "WWII." 338.

⁷⁹ David R. Colburn. "Florida Politics in the Twentieth Century." The New History of Florida. 356.

Governor of Florida. Holland had fought in the Great War as an aerial gunner in the Army Air Service, and he was keen on military aviation. He would work closely with the administration and the War Department to bring military funds and programs to the State. The election of 1940 likewise returned to office the senior US Florida Senator, Charles O. Andrews, another Democrat. Andrews had been a Captain in the Florida National Guard. Florida's junior US Senator, Claude D. Pepper, had served in the Army Student Training Corps during college.⁸⁰ Pepper especially held forth as a friend and supporter of the White House.⁸¹ The political leaders of Florida were aligned with the administration, and in exchange brought home federal projects to their constituents. Florida would willingly adapt to wartime mobilization.⁸²

⁸⁰ Rogers. 311.

⁸¹ Robert E. Sherwood. Roosevelt and Hopkins: An Intimate History. Harpers Publishers. New York. 1949. 93.

⁸² Colburn. 357.

CHAPTER II.

NAVAL AIR STATION FLORIDA

This chapter examines the rise of the military establishment in Florida beginning in the late 1930s. Long before the attack on Pearl Harbor of December 1941, the arming of Florida began. It came from deliberate decisions of the Roosevelt Administration, Army and Navy planners, and the civic leaders of Florida as they took steps to prepare the US for war. The rise of Nazi Germany and Imperial Japanese aggression in Europe and Asia ultimately threatened the US and was paralleled by Florida's mobilization. As the world situation deteriorated into global war, Florida increasingly became a center for US military assembly. This chapter focuses on expanding naval activity in Florida, particularly naval aviation, in the context of the increasing international threat.

In the mid-1930s Florida saw little military activity. Pensacola, the only naval station in Florida, was an ante-bellum Navy Yard with live oaks and Spanish moss whose mission was to serve as the flight school for all Navy and Marine Corps pilots. It trained about one hundred aviators annually. In South Florida a Naval Reserve Training Base in the Miami suburb of Opa-Locka handled some aircraft activity, including occasional Navy zeppelin landings. A 17-man Navy radio station crew oversaw the boarded-over Key West base, and some Coast Guard station keepers manned harbor pilothouses, lighthouses, and a few Houses of Refuge. The Army Air Corps maintained an airstrip in North Florida at Eglin Army Air Field, bordered by the Choctawhatchee National Forest.⁸³ The Florida National Guard fielded to main unites: the 124th infantry regiment, and the 265th Coastal Artillery Regiment. These soldiers of Florida drilled at armories

⁸³ Mormino. 324.

around the state, and held annual summer encampments at Camp Foster on the St. Johns River outside Jacksonville.

When President Franklin D. Roosevelt assumed office in 1933, the US Army numbered 137,000 officers and men, and was ranked seventeenth in size among the nations of the world.⁸⁴ As war approached, the President worked to rearm and militarize the US, and during his term of office the US witnessed a nearly 100-fold increase in men under arms, along with the comparable growth of infrastructure and supply. As war clouds gathered, he spoke of the US as the “Arsenal of Democracy” and during his presidency he fashioned it into that arsenal, fielding armies and navies of a size America has not seen since.⁸⁵ He took his position as Commander in Chief of the military services more seriously than any president since Lincoln.⁸⁶ Florida would figure prominently in his war plans.

Roosevelt carried Florida in every one of his four presidential elections. In the presidential election of 1940, Roosevelt won Florida by 65 percent of the vote, and he would carry Florida again in the 1944 election.⁸⁷ He was popular with Floridians, and he was personally well acquainted with the State from repeated trips there over the years, including visiting between 1936 and 1941 seven times.⁸⁸ Each one of those visits

⁸⁴ American Military History. Maurice Matloff, Edit. Office of the Chief of Military History. United States Army. Government Printing Office. Washington, DC. 1968. 410.

⁸⁵ Sherwood. 226.

⁸⁶ Morison. 583.

⁸⁷ William W. Rogers. “The Great Depression.” The New History of Florida. 308.

⁸⁸ Robert F. Cross. Sailor in the White House: the Seafaring Life of FDR. Naval Institute Press. Annapolis, MD. 2003. 30. During the 1920s Roosevelt made two extended houseboat stays in the Florida Keys in the effort to find relief after being stricken with polio.

involved cruises at sea aboard US Navy warships either embarking from, or debarking at Florida. Roosevelt was himself a competent yachtsman, and a strong proponent of naval power.⁸⁹ The White House characterized his patrols aboard Navy cruisers and destroyers as “fishing holidays,” and while engaged in that pastime he covered every bit of the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico, including two inspections of the Panama Canal and its military installations. His cruises exposed him to the important geographic facts of the seas of the realm around Florida. Likewise he knew both the demographics and the geography of the State. He saw with his own eyes the promising military attributes of pre-war Florida: the large flat empty peninsula with a temperate climate and a supportive, if small, population. He would soon put these military assets of Florida into play.

On December 12, 1937, the threat of war leapt suddenly into national prominence when Japanese aviators attacked and sank the *USS Panay* on the Yangtze River in China. Two American sailors and an Italian journalist onboard were killed in the incident and forty crewmen were wounded, ten seriously. By happenstance, two civilian news journalists aboard the US gunboat filmed the attack.⁹⁰ The raw footage of the attack was shown to President Roosevelt before being released to the public, and to avoid inflaming public opinion, he had thirty feet of it cut out. That particular footage showed Japanese warplanes attacking at deck level, and revealed that the *USS Panay* was marked clearly with large American flags.⁹¹ The film left little doubt that future hostilities were a very real possibility.⁹²

⁸⁹ Morison. 583.

⁹⁰ Hamilton Darby Perry. The Panay Incident: Prelude to Pearl Harbor. Toronto. MacMillan. 1969.

⁹¹ Iris Chang. The Rape of Nanking: the Forgotten Holocaust of WWII. Putnam. New York. 1997. 148.

The following month, on January 28, 1938 President Roosevelt addressed the American people on the subject of rearmament. He reaffirmed the US commitment to the Monroe Doctrine and spoke of national defense and the Western Hemisphere. He stressed the need to “keep any potential enemy many hundreds of miles away from our continental limits.” The Administration thus began its preparations for war. The 75th session of Congress responded to FDR’s call to arms. At the end of the session in May, both houses passed major pieces of legislation expanding the nation’s military forces. The Navy’s air arm was authorized to increase to 3,000 aircraft, and new warships including an aircraft carrier, battleships, cruisers, destroyers, and submarines were ordered. In addition, smaller vessels such as oilers, tugs, mine sweepers, and experimental Patrol Torpedo (PT) Boats, and blimps were authorized.⁹³ The Act also provided for the expansion of military facilities, including those in Florida.

To guide US naval expansion the Congress created the Hepburn Board, whose recommendations profoundly impacted Florida. Chaired by one of the most senior officers in the Navy, Admiral Arthur J. Hepburn, the board was charged with recommending improvements to national defense. The Hepburn Board recommended moving the Pacific Fleet from San Diego to the forward base in mid-ocean at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. It also called for building eighteen new bases in the Pacific and the Caribbean and expanding naval aviation. The board advised structuring the US Atlantic

⁹² Morison. 23.

⁹³ PT Boat prototypes No.1 and No.2 were built by Miami Shipbuilding Company. These cheap wooden vessels were powered by three Packard engines, carried 3,000 gallons of fuel, and were capable of racing at 41 knots for six hours. Hundreds were produced by American shipbuilders, among them Miami Shipbuilding and Huckins Yacht Company of Jacksonville.

defense responsibilities from Canada to Panama to establish sectors of responsibility, creating a new 10th Naval District to operate from Puerto Rico, and a vastly increased Navy presence for the 7th Naval District of the US: the peninsula of Florida. Hepburn and Mahan read the same charts.

Figure 3.

Florida at the Center of the Atlantic Coastal Defense⁹⁴



⁹⁴ Craven and Cate. Vol. I. Map Pages. 26.

Hepburn also proposed Florida as the site for one of three new large aviation training centers proposed for the Continental United States (CONUS).⁹⁵ Although naval tactics centered on the firepower of the battleship, it did not overlook the importance of naval aviation. Senior officers such as Admirals Ernest J. King and William F. “Bull” Halsey, Jr., for example, were qualified pilots. Navy airpower was primarily designed around smaller aircraft built to attack enemy ships: dive bombers, torpedo bombers, fighter planes and scouts. These operated over blue water and demanded mastery of the fine aerobatics of launch and recovery on the pitching deck of aircraft carriers at sea. The appeal of Florida above other states for such training was obvious. The Hepburn Board wanted a Navy “second to none,” and this included aviation training that would generate a force of aircraft, pilots, air crews, aircraft carriers, maintenance and repair personnel, and bases that would win a world war. Florida fit these criteria better than any other locale.

As it prepared its study, the Hepburn Board toured the entire peninsula, including surveys of Miami, Fort Lauderdale, Key West, Fernandina, Banana River and Jacksonville.⁹⁶ Jacksonville particularly interested the Hepburn Board. Its members visited the Municipal Airport, Eastport, Green Cove Springs, Fleming Island, and the National Guard’s Camp Foster on the St. Johns River. The Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce welcomed them, and organized a committee to facilitate their inspections. The Hepburn Board liked Jacksonville’s reasonable proximity to Pensacola, and the

⁹⁵ Ronald M. Williamson. Naval Air Station Jacksonville, 1940-2000. Turner Publishing Company. Nashville, TN. 2001. 23.

⁹⁶ Williamson. 24.

nearby deepwater cove of Mayport at the mouth of the St Johns River.⁹⁷ A base at Mayport commanded the river, with submarine nets making it impenetrable. The Mayport location also permitted aircraft carriers to go directly to sea, without having to run any of the risky passages of Florida's sea realm. The Board especially noted the National Guard camp on the river, just far enough inland to be safe from enemy naval gunnery. After the departure of the Board, three navy seaplane bombers arrived in Jacksonville. Their crews set up on the St. Johns and for five days practiced taking off and landing at Camp Foster. Hepburn returned for a second visit to examine the land issues pertaining to Camp Foster, and the possibility of basing aircraft carriers at nearby Mayport. Unlike the publicity granted to the first visit, the Admiral kept this trip secret. December 1, 1938 Hepburn gave his recommendation that Camp Foster be approved as the site for a Naval Air Station, and Mayport for a two-aircraft carrier Naval Base, to be expanded in stages to accommodate four of the flat tops. A seaplane base was also recommended for the Banana River lagoon at Cape Canaveral to cover the Atlantic approach to the Florida Straits.⁹⁸

Expansion of the existing Naval Air Station at Pensacola was as logical as it was predictable. Pensacola naval flight school had existed since 1913, only two years after the Navy bought its first airplane.⁹⁹ The physical plant of the long-functioning base could be readily expanded, and from a geostrategic point-of-view its proximity to the

⁹⁷ Naval Station Mayport Base Guide. US Naval Station Mayport. Florida. 2008. 31-32.

⁹⁸ Williamson. 24.

⁹⁹ McGovern, James R. "Pensacola, Florida: A Military City in the New South." Florida Historical Quarterly. Vol. 59.

mouth of the Mississippi River made it a vital defense post. Hepburn's recommendation to add students, aircraft, facilities and outlying airfields to NAS Pensacola accorded completely with Mahan's observations:

In case of a contest for supremacy in the Caribbean, it seems evident from the depth of the south pass of the Mississippi, the nearness of New Orleans, and the advantages of the Mississippi Valley for water transit that the main effort of the country must pour down that valley, and its permanent base of operations be found there.¹⁰⁰

From a pre-war production of 100 pilots a year, Pensacola would graduate 1,000 a month at its wartime peak.¹⁰¹

President Roosevelt visited Florida from February 14-28, 1939. The trip was announced by the White House as a road trip to tour the new Overseas Highway to Key West, a New Deal work project recently completed. The trip coincided with the annual Navy war games being staged that year in the Caribbean. Roosevelt announced that after visiting Key West he would observe this naval exercise. Roosevelt's participation was unprecedented. No president had ever joined the Navy for its most prominent annual exercise.¹⁰² Roosevelt came by train to Miami, where a temporary White House was set up in the Biltmore Hotel.¹⁰³ He then motored over the new Overseas Highway to Key West. His Chief of Staff, Admiral William D. Leahy, accompanied him. From the back seat of his convertible, Roosevelt gave an address to his radio audience. In Key West, he and Leahy inspected the former naval station. They found yachts of the rich moored in

¹⁰⁰ Mahan. 29.

¹⁰¹ Roosevelt inspected NAS Pensacola August 8-9, 1938 after debarking from a tour of the Panama Canal Zone aboard *USS Houston (CA 30)*. He took the salute of the Pensacola aviation cadets at pass-in-review.

¹⁰² Cross. 122.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.* 123.

the submarine basin and destroyer berths; squatters were living in the abandoned barracks.¹⁰⁴ Leahy took notes. Within a few months the civilian boats were ordered to leave. The barracks were cleared. Navy seaplanes began landing at Key West again, and before the year was out the Navy would be back in force.

After inspecting Key West, Roosevelt embarked on the cruiser *USS Houston* to join the fleet and observe the Navy war games at sea off Cuba. The exercise involved some 150 ships, 600 aircraft, and 60,000 sailors. Roosevelt participated actively. He decided gambits, maneuvers, and otherwise exercised his prerogative as Commander in Chief. During the training he gave a statement to the press, announcing that the exercise was to test the defenses of the *entire* Western Hemisphere against outside invasion.¹⁰⁵ It was a surprising announcement that with a word effectively expanded the US sphere of military operations to include South America, Central America, and Canada. At the conclusion of the exercises President Roosevelt held admiral's call aboard *USS Houston*, and with the top officers of the fleet assembled in his stateroom, he only half-jested with them to watch out for Germans and Japanese.¹⁰⁶

Six weeks later President Roosevelt signed into law the Hepburn recommendation creating the new Jacksonville Naval Air Training Operating Base (NAOTB).¹⁰⁷ The base

¹⁰⁴ Cross. 123.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. 123.

¹⁰⁶ E.B. Potter. Bull Halsey. 143.

¹⁰⁷ H.R. 2880, 76th Congress. First Session.

was to provide primary and advanced training in all types of naval aircraft.¹⁰⁸ The same legislation authorized the Mayport aircraft carrier base and the Banana River Naval Air Station. Mayport was projected to grow into a Navy Operating Base (NOB), the equal to Norfolk and Brooklyn, the centers of US naval power on the East Coast at that time. The Jacksonville NAOTB expansion began almost immediately. Auxiliary air stations at Jacksonville Municipal Airport, Cecil Field and Green Cove Springs soon followed. Satellite naval air stations held groundbreakings at Lake City, Daytona Beach, Deland, Sanford, Melbourne, Banana River, and Vero Beach.¹⁰⁹ Rather than oriented to operate over the peninsula or the interior Gulf of Mexico, all of these new Florida Naval Air Stations (NAS) were sited to face the Atlantic, which for the Navy in times of war constituted “the front.”

South Florida also drew the Navy’s attention. Its proximity to the strategic Florida Straits and Caribbean demanded a strong military presence here. In the event of war with Germany, the Florida Straits could expect to be attacked, as could the waterfront city of Miami itself, the most exposed urban area of the peninsula. South Florida was, moreover, already a civilian aviation hub. In addition to the Miami Municipal Airport, the city boasted seaplane stations at Dinner Key and Watson Island on Biscayne Bay. Commercial air carriers flew from their own airport at 36th Street in the city.¹¹⁰ In July, 1939 the Navy announced it would open Naval Air Station Miami at the existing Navy

¹⁰⁸ Florida Medal of Honor recipient David McCampbell was among the instructors to pass through the base. Cmdr. McCampbell fought in the Pacific, and received the recognition on June 19, 1944 for 34 aircraft victories, a Navy record.

¹⁰⁹ See Figure 4. Naval Training Stations in Florida During the War. 38.

¹¹⁰ Geoffrey Arend. Great Airports: Miami. Air Cargo News, Inc. New York. 1986. 88.

Reserve Aviation Training Base. Its location on the edge of the Everglades adjacent to the Miami Municipal Airport offered room to expand. In nearby Broward County the Navy took over the simple Merle Fogg airstrip. Renaming it NAS Fort Lauderdale, it established still another training base, with hangars, a terminal and all the facilities for training more military pilots. Those trainees numbered among others the future President George Herbert Walker Bush. The Navy opened an aircraft Ball Gunner School in Hollywood, and a Naval Facility at Port Everglades. A Naval Air Navigation School, first opened in Coconut Grove using Pan American instructors, would expand to occupy and fill the exclusive Hollywood Beach Hotel.¹¹¹

The US Maritime Service was likewise drawn to Florida, opening a training base at St. Petersburg September 1, 1939. The Merchant Marine Act of 1936 created the US Maritime Commission, a New Deal federal agency for priming the US shipbuilding industry to build ships. In 1938 President Roosevelt created the US Maritime Service (USMS) to recruit and train crews for this new merchant marine fleet.¹¹² Bayboro Harbor was the location of the St Petersburg Maritime Service Training Station. The Maritime Service was armed, uniformed, and subject to military discipline. It accepted youths as young as sixteen. Enlistments were for one year of sea duty after training, and graduates of the Civilian Conservation Corps had preference.¹¹³ Recruits at Bayboro lived in

¹¹¹ See Appendix A.--Military Installations in Florida in WWII.

¹¹² Michelle L. Hoffman. St. Petersburg Maritime Service Training Station. Arcadia. S. Carolina 2006. 6.

¹¹³ Members of the US Maritime Service were awarded Veterans Status in 1988.

barracks under military authority, the only racially-integrated service at the time. Later the government added an Officer Candidate School to the Florida base.¹¹⁴

The Coast Guard ran the maritime training at St. Petersburg. The first five weeks consisted of marching, swimming, first aid and hygiene, fire-fighting, small boat handling, knots and gunnery. Seven additional weeks involved deck training, steering, compass and navigation, cargo handling, mooring, signaling, and more gunnery.¹¹⁵ Target practice included anti-aircraft guns and the use of the Top Secret 'Polaroid Trainer,' a motion picture device invented to simulate attacks by enemy aircraft under various angles and conditions. Specialty training followed for ship engines and turbines, electricians and hull technicians, radio operators, pilots and coxswains, cooks and bakers, signalmen and corpsman. The five training ships at the St. Petersburg boot camp, included the centerpiece of the base, the tall ship *Joseph Conrad*, the last surviving three-mast frigate in the world, with masts just under 100 feet high.¹¹⁶ Graduates won licenses in their specialties and assignment to US merchant ships. During the war over 25,000 Merchant Mariners were trained in Florida, ten percent of the Maritime Service.¹¹⁷

The US Maritime Commission also initiated at this time what would become the premier civilian industry of the State: shipbuilding.¹¹⁸ In 1940 the Tampa Shipbuilding and Engineering Company was struggling to build a few cargo ships with Maritime

¹¹⁴ John J. Koneazny. Behind Friendly Lines. General Store Publishing House. Ontario. 2001. 45.

¹¹⁵ Wyndall Deese. St. Petersburg, Florida: a Visual History. The History Press. Charleston, SC. 2006. 84.

¹¹⁶ Deese. 84.

¹¹⁷ Emory S. Land. The United States Merchant Marine at War; Report of the War Shipping Administrator to the President. Washington. 1946. 24.

¹¹⁸ See Chapter Eight.

Commission financing. In late 1940 the business failed, the ships only half-built. The Commission and the Reconstruction Finance Corporation approached the Tampa Chamber of Commerce for new management.¹¹⁹ The company was reorganized as TASCOS (Tampa Shipbuilding Company), and a leader was found in banker and civic booster George Howell. Howell, a veteran of the Great War, set about reenergizing the operation. He proved a most competent shipbuilder. By November, 1941, TASCOS had completed three ships. After Pearl Harbor, the War Shipping Administration (WSA) would be created, headed by retired Admiral Emory S. Land, Chairman of the Maritime Commission and a personal friend of President Roosevelt.¹²⁰ As the merchant marine went into emergency wartime production, shipbuilding in Florida expanded exponentially.

A sobering reminder to Florida of the drift towards war came in the summer of 1939 when the German passenger ship *SS St. Louis* steamed off its coast. The ship departed Hamburg May 13, 1939, with 900 Jewish refugees seeking asylum in Cuba. When the ship reached Havana the government refused the passengers entry. For several days negotiations went back and forth, but the Jewish passengers were not allowed to land. In June the vessel loitered at sea off Miami.¹²¹ She was trailed by US Coast Guard cutters at the behest of Treasury Secretary Morgenthau, who hoped the US policy of non-admittance might change. The US policy did not change, nor did the policy of Cuba. On

¹¹⁹ Lewis N. Wynne, "Still they sail: Shipbuilding in Tampa during World War II." Florida at War. St. Leo College Press. Florida. 1993. 91.

¹²⁰ Morison. 132.

¹²¹ Sarah A. Ogilvie and Scott Miller. Refuge Denied: the SS St. Louis Passengers and the Holocaust. University of Wisconsin. Madison. 2006. 24.

June 17, *SS St. Louis* returned to Antwerp and disembarked its passengers. Few survived the Holocaust.¹²² The incident became known as the “Voyage of the Damned,” and it underscored how dangerously unstable the world was becoming, and that Florida would not escape its affects.

Less than three months later, on September 1st, Germany invaded Poland. Britain and France declared war on Germany. Simultaneous to the outbreak of war, President Roosevelt promoted General George C. Marshall over several senior officers to be Army Chief of Staff.¹²³ On September 5, President Roosevelt announced the creation of the “Neutrality Patrol.” He declared a 200-mile buffer zone along the eastern littoral of the Western Hemisphere wherein the US would exercise command and control, keeping the seas free of belligerents and hostilities. In theory merely an extension of the Monroe Doctrine, in practice it further mobilized the US towards war. A proclamation of Limited National Emergency followed. And Florida’s military tempo ratcheted up another notch.¹²⁴ Air Corps bombers began patrolling the Florida coast as part of their flight plans.¹²⁵ Destroyers took up station in the Florida Straits. In October, Navy seaplanes arrived for Neutrality Patrol duty at Key West, along with several submarines. The townspeople, known as “Conchs,” welcomed the return of the Navy with a military

¹²² Ogilvie and Miller. 114.

¹²³ While serving as the Army liaison to the CCC in the 1930s, Marshall became familiar with Florida while establishing CCC camps around the state, and his support for the program brought him to the positive attention of the White House.

¹²⁴ Scarborough, William E. “The Neutrality Patrol: To Keep Us Out of WWII?” Navy Aviation News. April 1990. 18-23.

¹²⁵ Ibid. 4.

parade down Duval Street and on November 1, Key West Naval Station was officially reopened.¹²⁶

The following month an episode brought the war closer to home for curious Floridians. On December 14, two German merchant ships in the Gulf of Mexico, *Arauca* and *Columbus* made a break through the Florida Straits to reach the open seas and avoid being seized by the British Navy. United States destroyers of the new Neutrality Patrol trailed them, reporting their positions in plain-language radio messages easily read by British warships in the area.¹²⁷ The *HMS Orion* cornered the *Arauca* off Fort Lauderdale. With the US destroyer *USS Philip* nearby and B-18s from Miami overhead, the British warship fired across the bow of the German freighter. *Arauca* fled into Port Everglades to escape capture.¹²⁸ There the German ship was quarantined by the Coast Guard. Floridians sympathetic to Britain went out to *HMS Orion* with magazines, candies, and charts of the local waters. Shots fired in US waters, the Nazi *Arauca* in Fort Lauderdale, and *HMS Orion* standing outside Port Everglades amounted to a diplomatic incident for the neutral United States. The *Arauca* and its 52-man crew was left undisturbed at the harbor docks. The ship's captain and officers were allowed to move about town.¹²⁹ The US State Department expressed disapproval at the appearance of public bias shown

¹²⁶ Clayton D., Roth, Jr. "150 Years of Defense Activity at Key West." Tequesta. Vol. 30. 1970. 48.

¹²⁷ Robert J. Cressman. The Official Chronology of the US Navy in WWII. Naval Institute Press. Annapolis. 1999. 13-14.

¹²⁸ Cressman. 14.

¹²⁹ Susan Gillis. Fort Lauderdale, the Venice of America. Arcadia Press. Florida. 2004. 52.

towards Britain. The people of Fort Lauderdale good naturedly delivered several cases of beer to the crew of the *Arauca*, by way of welcoming the Germans to Florida.¹³⁰

On May 10, 1940 the Nazi blitzkrieg swept into France.¹³¹ Holland was overrun, Belgium collapsed, the British evacuated Dunkirk, and France surrendered. In this crisis, the new British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, requested fifty surplus US Navy WWI destroyers then in mothballs. In exchange, Roosevelt asked for 99-year leases to Britain's Atlantic territories, most of them in the Caribbean. Basing rights at these would strengthen the US east coast defenses from Canada to South America.¹³² On July 16, the aerial attack by Germany on Britain known as the Battle of Britain began. It marked the nadir of Allied fortunes. On September 2 the destroyers were transferred to Britain. The US got nine new bases, seven of them close to Florida.

Another step in the US mobilization for war came two weeks later when President Roosevelt signed the Conscription Bill, commencing further mobilization long before the US entered the fighting. With the support of the President, the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940 was introduced in Congress. The administration's ally, Florida Senator Claude Pepper, was a principal advocate of the policy.¹³³ On September 14, 1940, President Roosevelt signed the Draft into law. Initially conscription required men

¹³⁰ Gene M. Burnett. Florida's Past. Vol. 2. Pineapple Press. Fort Myers. 1997. 188.

¹³¹ Cross. 45. February 15-29, 1940 Roosevelt visited Pensacola again. He embarked in *USS Tuscaloosa* for a re-inspection of the US Panama Canal Zone. Returning to Pensacola, Roosevelt addressed the crew. He warned them war in Europe could spread to the Americas, and the US military must prepare for war.

¹³² Morison. 30-31.

¹³³ Claude Denson Pepper with Hays Gorey. Pepper, Eyewitness to a Century. Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich. Orlando. 1987. 111.

between the ages of 21 and 35 to register for service of one year.¹³⁴ After Pearl Harbor, the age range was expanded to all men from 18 to 45, the time of service to last for the duration of the war and six months beyond. In the few months remaining in 1940, 18,633 men were drafted. In 1941, before the attack on Pearl Harbor, 900,000 more were called for service. During the war years, 9,838,725 men would be drafted into the US military.¹³⁵

One seldom-noted aspect of the program provides another metric into Florida's pervasive militarization: the requirement to register for service. Conscription was limited to males between the ages of 18 and 45 years of age. But all males from 45 to 65 years of age were required to be card-carrying registrants of Selective Service, providing regular reports to their local draft board of their whereabouts. Law required them to acknowledge in writing their obligation to serve if the age requirements were raised to include them. Insofar as this impacted Floridians it meant those between the ages of 18 and 65, 596,161 men, over a third of the entire civilian inhabitants of Florida, formally identified themselves for military service.¹³⁶

In December 1940 Roosevelt again traveled to Florida. From Miami on December 3 he embarked on *USS Tuscaloosa* to inspect the new Caribbean military bases the US had acquired from Britain. While underway he steamed close to the Vichy-French island of Martinique and dropped anchor outside of the three-mile limit. While

¹³⁴ "History of Conscription and the Selective Service System." Selective Service System. Government Printing Office. Washington, DC. 2003. 8

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ US Census of Florida 1940. Table 8 – Age, By Sex, For the State. 21.

his officers studied the island with binoculars, Roosevelt summoned the US Consul General to his cabin. The consul briefed him on the situation on the Nazi-collaborating island. The Vichy-controlled Martinique posed a real threat. Soft power in the form of gold bullion evacuated from the French Treasury resided at Martinique. Hard power in the form of a squadron of the French Navy had retreated to the island with the gold when France was overrun. The French warships included the aircraft carrier *Bearn*, armed with 100 US-made warplanes, light cruisers *Jeanne D'Arc* and *Emile Bertin* and several destroyers obedient to the orders of Vichy. They threatened the Panama Canal, the Mississippi passes, and Florida itself. While still at sea, the President received via Navy seaplane a 4,000 word letter from Churchill that asserted Britain was running out of money, weapons and time. It prompted Roosevelt to finalize plans for Lend-Lease.¹³⁷

In Washington January 6, 1941 he gave the nation a radio fireside chat to explain his new idea to help Great Britain and still remain neutral. He used the famous “garden hose” simile to appeal to the American people.¹³⁸ He compared the world situation to that of a family (America) with a neighbor (Britain) whose home had caught fire. To put out the fire and save his home, the neighbor needed to borrow a garden hose:

Suppose my neighbor's house catches fire and I have a length of garden hose four or five hundred feet away. If he can take my garden hose and connect it to his hydrant, I may help him to put out the fire. Now what do I do? I don't say to him before that operation, “Neighbor, my garden hose cost me fifteen dollars; you have to pay me fifteen dollars for it.” No! What is the transaction that goes on? I don't want fifteen dollars --I want my garden hose back after the fire is over.¹³⁹

¹³⁷ Cross. 135.

¹³⁸ Sherwood. 228.

¹³⁹ Winston Churchill. *Their Finest Hour*. Houghton Mifflin. Boston. 1949. 568.

Thus the President justified Lend-Lease. As congressional legislation, the bill's chief sponsor was Florida's Senator Pepper.

President Roosevelt visited Florida again on March 22, 1941. At Fort Lauderdale he was met by *USS Potomac* and *USS Benson* for another 'fishing trip.'¹⁴⁰ Boarding *USS Potomac* at the pier in Port Everglades he saw the interned German freighter *Arauca*, flying the Nazi swastika flag.¹⁴¹ Roosevelt put to sea for a week of fishing. While at sea a classified radio message notified him the Lend-Lease Bill had passed. Returning to Port Everglades March 29, *USS Potomac* again tied up near the *Arauca*, still flying its swastika. President Roosevelt ordered the Nazi flag struck and the vessel seized. Authorities arrested the officers and crew, and jailed them at the federal courthouse in Miami.¹⁴² The President's Executive Order applied to all German ships in US ports. No less than 51 German ships and their crews of several thousand German citizens were seized.¹⁴³ The same day Roosevelt gave his Jackson Day radio address from his ship's stateroom at Port Everglades. The speech starkly criticized Hitler and the Nazi regime. Roosevelt's speech and orders on March 29 offered serious provocation to the Germans. Florida was again at the intersection of war.

In the months afterward Florida hosted a continuing series of visits by the top brass of the Navy, including Secretary of the Navy, Frank Knox, and Admiral King.

¹⁴⁰ En route FDR stopped his train at NAS Jacksonville for an inspection and briefing by the new base commander. To newspaper reporters present he declaring himself "amazed" at the progress of the base.

¹⁴¹ Cross. 137-138.

¹⁴² Sherwood. 278.

¹⁴³ Cressman. Those 51 seized German ships were transferred to the US Navy.

They made critical inspections of the region and the new outposts being established. They examined such diverse concerns as the rail capacity of Brazil, and the suitability of the Galapagos Islands for a seaplane base. To provide a contingency safe haven if the Royal Navy was forced to evacuate Britain, Naval Station Roosevelt Roads on the Atlantic coast of Puerto Rico was acquired. The outlying isle of Vieques was purchased to help defend the anchorage and serve as a gunnery range. As naval gunnery of the time required precise calibration of gun sights and range finding gear, the placid waters of the Caribbean were ideal for the purpose.¹⁴⁴

Guarding the passes of the Florida sea-realm: the Straits, Yucatan Channel, and the other chokepoints, was a naval priority. Navy airships were brought into this mission. With the ability to hover over the sea lanes on extended patrol, their surveillance capacity was significant. The first lighter-than-air platforms, “Type A (Rigid)” airships had metal superstructures and were called zeppelins, after the German airship inventor, Otto von Zeppelin. Their metal framework housed compartments of helium or hydrogen for buoyancy. The weight of the metal, however, necessitated huge helium compartments. The size of the Type-A zeppelins worked against them. Costly to build and difficult to manage in flight, the Navy had more important uses for its steel.¹⁴⁵ The new “Type B (Limp)” airship, a balloon contorted by cabling into an aerodynamic shape was the alternative. The craft went limp when deflated, hence its name “B (Limp)” or simply: “*blimp*.” A control car with radar, radio and lookouts was suspended beneath. Easy to

¹⁴⁴ Vieques would serve as the main gunnery range for the Navy for the next sixty years.

¹⁴⁵ J. Gordon Vaeth. Blimps & U-boats: US Navy Airships in the Battle of the Atlantic. Naval Institute Press. Annapolis. MD. 1992. 6-8.

build and inexpensive, blimps would be a useful guardian over the SLOCs of Florida. The Navy and the Goodyear Company settled on the K-ship, equipped with 2 Pratt-Whitney engines, 4 bombs and a crew of ten. On December 4, 1939 the *Homestead Ledger* newspaper reported the Navy would seek funding for 36 of these airships. The *Ledger* noted the Navy considered building a blimp station in South Florida.¹⁴⁶

In April 1941 Secretary Knox requested authorization for an airship base in Florida. The President answered:

I approve your memorandum of April 18 in regard to additional patrol blimps and authorization for temporary stations. ...I am heartily in favor of what I have been heartily in favor of all this time! (signed) F.D.R.¹⁴⁷

If Lakehurst, New Jersey was the “home” of Navy airship aviation, Florida would develop into the “home away from home” for military blimps during the war.

The government established the largest US airship base in the world, outside of Lakehurst, in Florida near the strategic tip of the peninsula. Authority and support for wartime airship operations from Texas to Brazil would center at the critically-placed Florida airship installation overlooking the Straits and the Caribbean at NAS Richmond Field just north of Homestead.

Congressional legislation and funding, the recommendations of the Navy, the attention of the Commander-in-Chief, and the welcome of the Floridians themselves were all instrumental in a dramatic expansion of naval activity, particularly of naval aviation in Florida on the eve of war. Key West was reopened and Mayport was under construction. The triad of Navy flight schools

¹⁴⁶ “Miami Studied as Blimp Site.” Homestead Leader. International News Service. Dec.4, 1939. 1.

¹⁴⁷ Richard G. Van Treuren. *Airships vs. Submarines*. Atlantis Press. Florida. 2009. 206.

at Pensacola, Jacksonville, and Miami was complimented by twenty more naval air stations, auxiliary stations, outlying fields and facilities.¹⁴⁸ The size of this system when it reached maturity can be measured by the muster reports from 1944 of naval aviation training personnel in Florida, when there was a training

Figure 4.

Naval Air Stations in Florida During the War¹⁴⁹

<i>Base</i>	<i>Opened</i>	<i>Garrison strength in 1944</i>
NAS Banana River	1940	391 officers, 2492 enlisted, 587 civilians
NAAS Barin Field – Pensacola	1942	5795 students. No other data.
NAAS Bronson Field-Pensacola	1942	147 officers, 1889 enlisted, 892 s
NAAS Cecil Field-NAS Jax	1941	530 officers, 2025 enlisted. No civilian data
NAAS Corey Field-Pensacola	1940	210 officers, 1610 enlisted, 423s
NAS Daytona Beach	1942	293 officers, 1222 enlisted, 314 civilians
NAS Deland	1942	331 officers, 1143 enlisted, 373 civilians
NAF Diner Key-Miami	1942	134 officers, 607 enlisted. No civilian data.
NAAS Ellyson Field – Pensacola	1941	177 officers, 1345 enlisted, 600 students
NAS Fort Lauderdale	1942	393 officers, 1905 enlisted, 373 civilians
NAAS Green Cove Springs	1941	518 officers, 1471 enlisted. No civilian data
NAS Jacksonville	1940	1551 officers, 11387 enlisted, 6236 civilian
NAAS Jacksonville Municipal #1	1941	No data available.
NAS Key West	1940	346 officers, 1916 enlisted, 352 civilians
NAS Lake City	1942	294 officers, 1128 enlisted, 266 civilians
NAAS Mayport	1941	44 officers, 232 enlisted
NAS Melbourne	1942	361 officers, 1184 enlisted, 266 civilians
NAS Miami	1940	675 officers, 7139 enlisted, 3136 civilians
NAS Pensacola	1915	2628 officers, 7559 enlisted, 8300 civilians
NAS Richmond-Miami	1942	99 officers, 607 enlisted, 202 civilians
NAS Standford	1942	358 officers, 1385 enlisted, 289 civilians
NAAS Saufley Field-Pensacola	1940	210 officers, 1145 enlisted, 458 students
NAS Vero Beach	1942	294 officers, 1128 enlisted, 266 civilians
NAAS Whiting Field-Pensacola	1943	584 officers, 2719 enlisted, 1431 students

¹⁴⁸ M.L. Shettle, Jr. United States Naval Air Stations of World War II. Vol. I – Eastern States. Schaertel Publishing. Bowersville, GA. 1995. 233-4.

¹⁴⁹ Compiled from Shettle. 23, 27, 37, 47, 57, 65, 67, 75, 79, 91, 103, 107, 113, 117, 129, 131, 139, 69, 177, 191, 197, 201, 217, and 223.

cadre of 10,568 officers, 53,238 enlisted men, and 20,960 civilian employees in Florida, exclusive of student-trainees. The training force numbered 85,000 personnel. To make a comparison with another educational enterprise drawn at random to demonstrate the size and impact of this wartime activity, there were more people in Florida engaged in naval aviation training in WWII, than are employed today by the Florida State University System, now serving a population ten times as large. By 1944 the primary occupation of Florida was war.

CHAPTER III.

ARMY AIR FIELD FLORIDA

This chapter examines Florida as a critical training base for the Army Air Corps as the war approached. The Army of the time was organized into three components: Army Ground Forces, Army Air Forces, and Army Service Forces.¹⁵⁰ The Army Air Forces came to Florida first. The first, obvious reason for which the State was chosen to host the Air Corps, was its fine flying conditions. The early welcome and appreciation that Florida showed for aviation also contributed, as personnel in the Air Corps had heard of, and sometimes participated in, the air shows of the State. From Jacksonville and Pensacola to Key West, Floridians from the Governor to common citizens were keen on bringing the military presence to the State. Military planners and strategists remained no less mindful of the State's potential.

The Air Corps' interest in Florida was equally driven by the fact that the peninsula was geographically on the front line of continental US defense. Watching the Axis powers expand from one nation to the next, the US military could not help but consider the defense of America. Florida was one of the first places any potential enemy invasion originating from Europe would reach, a geographic factor enough of itself to merit military interest. But there was an ever greater military consideration that geography conferred on the State: thanks to its place in the world, Florida was equally well situated to be a platform from which to project US air power to the wider world. Military planners had not merely to prepare for defense, but to plan for offensive

¹⁵⁰ Matloff. 430.

operations, without which war cannot be won. The considerations of military geography, quite as much as the mostly sunny days, destined Florida to become a military base. In preparing to defend the US, and simultaneously laying the groundwork for projecting US power offensively, the two military services of the day, the Army and the Navy, came to a formal agreement over Florida. They divided the peninsula into areas of authority: the Navy operated generally along the Atlantic coast of Florida, while the Army Air Corps took the Gulf side of the State.¹⁵¹

A shortage of pilots was an immediate concern of the Army. Florida would answer this lack. In the late 1930s the Administration created the Civilian Pilot Training (CPT) Program. This New Deal program aimed to boost the US airline industry by training 20,000 civilian pilots a year drawn from the nation's colleges and universities. At the prompting of First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, and her friend, Florida educator Mary McLeod Bethune, the program included Black colleges, and women's colleges.¹⁵² Not only was the program of flight training that was offered an egalitarian economic stimulus, but, like the Maritime Service, it assumed an underlying military dimension. Thus, the CPT contracts enrolled each male trainee into the Army Reserve. The CPT increased the pool of potential military pilots, *ipso facto*.

The new commander of the Air Corps, General Arnold, looked for ways to expedite the program, as well as to militarize it further. He proposed that the civilian flight schools become government contractors and execute the CPT under Army

¹⁵¹ Lazarus. 235. Joint Army-Navy Boards met regularly to draw and re-draw the map of Florida and the sectors of airspace over which each branch of service exercised cognizance for training activity.

¹⁵² Sandler. Segregated Skies: All Black Combat Squadrons of WWII. Smithsonian Institution Press. Washington, DC. 1992. 9.

oversight. The Army would provide the airplanes and curriculum. The civilian schools would provide the instructors, the training, room and board, and other facilities. The schools would receive a government hourly rate for flying hours and operating costs. Known as the “Arnold Scheme,” it brought several significant flight schools and military personnel to Florida. With a CPT contract in hand, the aviation entrepreneur, Albert I. Lodwick, relocated from Nebraska to Florida, opening the Lodwick School of Aeronautics at the Lakeland municipal airport and nearby Avon Park. Lodwick graduated 6,000 pilots during the war.¹⁵³ Greenville Flying Academy moved from Mississippi to Ocala. Embry-Riddle, the partnership company of aviator John Paul Riddle and his financial backer, Talton Higbee Embry, collaborated first with the University of Miami to open a school there, then moved to expand their business elsewhere in Florida.¹⁵⁴

The expansion of Embry-Riddle is an example of the close wartime collaboration of capitalism and the military in Florida. When the Arcadia Chamber of Commerce urged the Air Corps to reopen defunct Carlstrom Field, a training airstrip from the Great War, the military approved the location and contracted Embry-Riddle to open a primary flight school there.¹⁵⁵ Carlstrom was rebuilt as a state-of-the-art million-dollar facility publicized as the new “West Point of the Air,” giving hundreds of jobs to the surrounding

¹⁵³ Waneta Sage-Gagne. Pilots in the Sun: Primary Pilot Training Schools in Lakeland and Avon Park, Florida, 1940-1945. Friends of the Library. Lakeland, Florida. 1990. 1-4.

¹⁵⁴ Stephen G. Craft. Embry-Riddle at War: Aviation Training during World War II. University Press of Florida. Gainesville, FL. 2009.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid. 56-57.

community.¹⁵⁶ Ten miles away, Dorr Field was developed with the same energized activity. Carlstrom Riddle Aeronautical Institute welcomed its first Army cadet on March 16, 1941. Carlstrom and Dorr grew to include six more auxiliary airstrips. These eight working airfields, all within a 30-mile radius in the center of the peninsula, were a powerhouse of Florida aviation training. Many who failed to qualify as pilots nevertheless trained successfully as bombardiers, navigators, and aviation maintenance officers.¹⁵⁷

In Miami the Embry-Riddle Seaplane Flying School on Biscayne Bay operated at full capacity. Another Embry-Riddle flight school opened at Miami Municipal Airport. When the Navy annexed that entire airport in the summer of 1942, the company was required to vacate the site.¹⁵⁸ Riddle persuaded the Army to allow the flight school to reopen at Chapman Field south of Miami.¹⁵⁹ Chapman Field was another training airstrip left over from the Great War, its name honoring Victor E. Chapman, the first US pilot killed over France in the Great War. Chapman Field, closed to all but occasional use by Eastern Airlines and Pan American Airways as a reserve airstrip, was reopened as an Embry-Riddle CPT primary flight school. When the CPT was restructured with wartime, Chapman Field adapted to strictly-military trainees of the later War Training Service

¹⁵⁶ Craft. 58.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid. 60.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid. 139.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid. 140.

(WTS), training Army, Navy, RAF, and federalized airline pilots. Notably, Chapman Field engaged fifteen female flight instructors.¹⁶⁰

Embry-Riddle also opened a major ground school at the Pan American and Miami Army Airfield complex. Mechanics, pre-flight, air crew, and celestial navigation were taught in partnership with the University of Miami. The campus was the former-Fritz Hotel, known as the Aviation Building, on the edge of the flight line.¹⁶¹ The school was open to civilians, male and female, to learn hangar work. The grounds were strewn with fighters, bombers, and cargo planes in various stages of assembly and overhaul. Army and Navy trainees were housed on the upper floors, and when those spaces filled, in a bowling alley, in private homes, and in thrown-together wooden bungalows nicknamed “shacks,” on the grounds of the University itself. They roomed with RAF Cadets taking pre-flight instruction and navigation courses. Riddle flight schools graduated 2,241 of the British pilots, among them, Desmond Leslie, nephew of Winston Churchill.¹⁶²

Florida’s Embry-Riddle flight schools expanded to Clewiston, Daytona Beach, Tennessee, and ultimately gained international status. The institution was contracted by Brazil to train Brazilian, Bolivian, and Cuban fliers. In Sao Paulo they would eventually operate the *Escola Tecnica de Aviacao*, Technical Aviation School, providing training to hundreds of Allied airmen from South America.¹⁶³ These ventures further expanded Florida’s premier role in military aviation and its growing international status.

¹⁶⁰ Craft. 143.

¹⁶¹ Ibid. 123.

¹⁶² Ibid. 209.

¹⁶³ Ibid. 132.

However energetic and useful such civilian enterprises, they were eclipsed by the Army Air Corps itself. The same 1939 Congress that approved naval expansion authorized the Four Base Plan which established four new major Army aviation bases. Each of the four quadrants of continental United States (CONUS) had one. They were intended to specialize in heavy bomber aviation. The “Southeast Air Base” was an economic plum that would have military jurisdiction over all the southern States from Virginia south and from the Mississippi River east. Under the Four Base Plan, the CONUS aviation forces would be restructured into four numbered air forces, one per base.¹⁶⁴

Besides the other Southern States, several Florida municipalities competed for the Southeast Air Base. Tampa made the most promising bid. The community’s welcome had pleased the Air Corps authorities in hosting the aviation war games between March 14-29, 1938. For the exercise, the Tampa Chamber of Commerce Aviation Committee had secured facilities for thirty-three Air Corps planes, as well as lodgings for 300 Air Corps personnel for training that included dogfights, bombing runs, and a mock aerial attack on Jacksonville. The exercise underlined the potential Tampa and the rest of Florida held for Air Corps activity.

When Congress passed the Four Base Plan, the Hillsborough County Commission offered the War Department a perpetual gift of 3,500 acres at the southern end of Tampa Bay’s Intercity Peninsula. The Air Corps accepted. Soon after, President Roosevelt approved a plan of the Florida WPA Administrator to use WPA funding for the

¹⁶⁴ Maurer. Air Force Combat Units in WWII. Department of the Air Force. Office of Air Force History. Washington, DC. 1983. 199. 9.

construction.¹⁶⁵ General Arnold personally flew the plans to town on December 5, 1939.¹⁶⁶ Although infested with rattlesnakes and palmetto scrub, the site possessed strategic potential. Located on important Tampa Bay, it commanded the Gulf of Mexico, and fell within range of the sea-passages of the Caribbean. The Florida peninsula also shielded it from enemy aircraft carrier-borne air attack.¹⁶⁷ No less than the weather, such considerations inspired the Air Corps. Flyboys soon swarmed to Florida.

The concentration of air power in Florida came as the Air Corps sought independence as a branch of service separate from the Army and co-equal with the Army and Navy. This idea propounded by General Mitchell resonated throughout the Air Corps. With the coming of war, the Air Corps would re-designate itself the Army Air Forces (AAF), and the war would provide it the opportunity to demonstrate its independence. When the US entered the war, President Roosevelt moved to bind his military commanders into an efficient team, christening his top military leaders the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS). The head of the Navy at the time of the Pearl Harbor disaster was reassigned to diplomatic duty and replaced by Admiral King, as Chief of Naval Operations (CNO). Together with the Army Chief of Staff, General Marshall, and Admiral Leahy, a close friend of the President serving as its chairman, they made up the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The President appointed Arnold, technically only a Corps Commander, to membership in this original JCS, despite his secondary rank of

¹⁶⁵ McDill Base History Archive, MacDill Air Force Base Library. Tampa Tribune October 24, 1939.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid. Tampa Tribune December 12, 1939.

¹⁶⁷ Craven and Cate. Vol. V. 128.

Lieutenant General. Elevated as such, Arnold wielded much the same power as the head of an independent service.¹⁶⁸

Arnold believed in strategic bombardment, and found in Florida a place to test this activity.¹⁶⁹ The Air Corps had settled on the Boeing B-17, a four-engine long range bomber, as its main weapon for bombing. The B-17 aircraft would soon assume mythic proportions in the lexicon of air power. The plane was strong, dependable, and had the range to project air power great distances. Armed with as many as 13 machine guns it won the nickname of “Flying Fortress.” By 1940 the Army Air Corps had 150 of these heavy bombers. Tampa would be home for many of them. The Third Air Force was activated at Tampa in December 1940. Its mission was the air defense of the Southeastern District of the US: Louisiana, Arkansas, Tennessee, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and Florida. The Gulf of Mexico fell also in its area of responsibility. The Third Air Force remained in Tampa throughout the war.¹⁷⁰ The base was formally dedicated on April 16, 1941, as MacDill Field in memory of Col. Leslie MacDill, an Army pilot killed in a flying accident a few years previously. The popular base commander of Osage Native American heritage, Brigadier General Clarence L. Tinker, flew in the first B-17 Bomber. Senator Pepper gave the keynote address.¹⁷¹ On May 16, 1941, the 29th Bomb Group began arriving. It

¹⁶⁸ Matloff. 428.

¹⁶⁹ Maurer. 8.

¹⁷⁰ Maurer. 81-82, 439, 459.

¹⁷¹ Steven A. Williamson. MacDill Air Force Base. Arcadia. South Carolina. 2011. 44.

typified the Air Corps units coming to Florida, consisting of about fifty aircraft organized in four squadrons.

MacDill Field was primarily for training bombing units, with Third Bomber Command its principal tenant. Across town, Third Fighter Command established itself at Tampa's city airport, Drew Field Municipal Airport. Located at the northern end of the Intercity Peninsula, the Army annexed the airport and shortened its name to Drew Field.¹⁷² The Army built a six-mile military highway, Dale Mabry Boulevard, for the express purpose of connecting the two bases. From MacDill and Drew, and Hillsborough Army Airfield a few miles north, the Third Air Force spread across the State. St. Petersburg, Bradenton, Venice, Sarasota, Fort Myers, Naples, Punta Gorda, Imokolee, Sebring, Bartow, Lakeland, Brooksville, Bushnell, Cross City, Dunnellon, Kissimmee, Leesburg, Gainesville, Montebrook, Zephyrhills, and Panama City all hosted Army Air Fields for bomber and fighter plane training.¹⁷³

The government also established Air Corps fighter plane training facilities at the State capital. On May 8, 1941 the Air Corps took over Tallahassee's Dale Mabry Airport. With the blessings of Governor Holland, P-39 Aircobras, P-40 Warhawks, and P-51 Mustangs appeared in the sky over Tallahassee for the next five years. Fly-overs over the State capitol building were routine. Nearby Eglin Army Airfield grew exponentially when Congress transferred Choctawatchee National Forest's 341,000 acres to the base. Renamed Eglin Military Reservation and comprising over 640 square miles,

¹⁷² Maurer. 440.

¹⁷³ Craven and Cate. Vol. I. 309.

it encompassed an area more than half the size of Rhode Island.¹⁷⁴ It was the largest base in the Army Air Corps, and remains one of the largest air bases in the world.¹⁷⁵

Similarly, the Air Corps commandeered Orlando Municipal Airport in central Florida. Reopened as the Orlando Air Base in December, 1940, it became the center for fighter plane activities.¹⁷⁶ The AAF School of Applied Tactics for fighter plane training operated there, in conjunction with nearby Pinecastle Army Airfield.¹⁷⁷ In South Florida, the government established Morrison Army Airfield in West Palm Beach and Miami Army Airfield.¹⁷⁸ By December, 1941 the Air Corps had no less than forty Army Airfields up and running, or in various stages of construction.¹⁷⁹

The tremendous burst of aviation training was not the only aspect of Air Corps activity in Florida. The War Department and the Administration were concurrently pondering how to defend the Western Hemisphere if it was attacked. The geographic feature of the Atlantic Narrows between western Africa and Brazil was one focus of their concern. The French possessions in Morocco, Algeria, and French West Africa all faced the Atlantic. Because of the collaboration between Germany and Vichy-France, US planners feared that France would introduce the *Wehrmacht* into those African territories.

¹⁷⁴ M.L. Shettle, Jr. Florida's Army Airfields of World War II. Schaertel. Roswell, GA. 2009. 10.

¹⁷⁵ Gannon. Florida: A Short History. 104.

¹⁷⁶ Florida posthumous Medal of Honor recipient Thomas B. McGuire, Jr. was among the pilots who trained there, and later taught there. Maj. McGuire was the second highest scoring US ace of the war, achieved 38 victories in the Pacific, before being killed in action over the Philippines on January 7, 1945.

¹⁷⁷ Maurer. 440.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid. 108-109

¹⁷⁹ See Appendix A – WWII bases in Florida.

From there the Axis armies could cross the Atlantic and work their way up the coast of South America to attack the US Panama Canal and CONUS itself. If the Panama Canal was the strategic lynchpin, then, geographically, it was also the Achilles Heel of the US defenses. Destroying the canal did not require an invader to overcome its thousands of defenders. A single dive bomber, a salvo of accurate naval gunfire, or even a satchel charge damaging one lock mechanism could close the canal. Especially after its feat of steaming unnoticed 4,000 miles from the Sea of Japan to attack Pearl Harbor, the Imperial Japanese Navy was capable of conducting such an amphibious attack. If a Japanese raid such as this were executed in cooperation with the contemplated advance of its German ally up the coast of South America, strategic planners foresaw disastrous consequences. Were the Vichy-French naval task force at Martinique to join in, the picture was bleaker, still. Mexico remained a question mark.¹⁸⁰

An attack on the US was not a far-fetched scenario at the time. Britain was struggling to survive. If Britain fell, the US could expect to be attacked next by Germany. Strategically, the Atlantic narrows offered an enemy the obvious line of approach. Argentina was openly pro-Axis. Most of South America and Central America would have watched from the sidelines, their support based pragmatically on whichever side appeared stronger. The later US alliance with Brazil did not exist at that time. In the event of an attack from this direction, planners recognized Florida as being central to the national defense. For such a defense, Washington inaugurated a series of Army commands to compliment the naval districts. The military strategy involved other

¹⁸⁰ Hitler's decision to go east and invade his erstwhile ally the Soviet Union, rather than going west, may rank among the most fortuitous in US History.

countries, and creating the outlying defenses made for touchy diplomacy, as the US introduced armed guards and erected defenses at airstrips on foreign soil where permission to even land was a revocable permission of the host nation. The British and Dutch territories welcomed the insertion of US Army garrisons. The matter was more delicate elsewhere. Spanish American states requested weapons as a quid pro quo, a difficult request since the US itself was moving to full mobilization, and Washington had earmarked any spare weapons for Britain and Russia. Particularly difficult were the Antillean islands of Martinique and Guadalupe, and French Guiana on the mainland. Obedient to Vichy France, they remained stiffly neutral towards the US.¹⁸¹

If Florida figured centrally in defensive operations, it played an equally important strategic role in offensive planning. The Florida-Brazil coastal corridor offered a logical path of advance for striking at the Axis powers.¹⁸² As the US sought to supply Britain and the Soviet Union, the path from Florida was all the more critically important. The shortest route to Europe had significant disadvantages. Pioneered by Lindberg in his famous flight of 1927, this “North Atlantic Route,” extended from the US to the British Isles, with refueling stops in Montreal and Newfoundland.¹⁸³ It was a relatively short 2,700 miles, and specially-fitted four-engine planes could fly it non-stop. But weather conditions made the route dangerous half of the year, and often impossible.¹⁸⁴ Aviators contended with rain, hail, sleet, snow, and gale-force winds. If storms forced down an

¹⁸¹ Craven and Cate. Vol. I. 315.

¹⁸² Craven and Cate. Vol. I. 316.

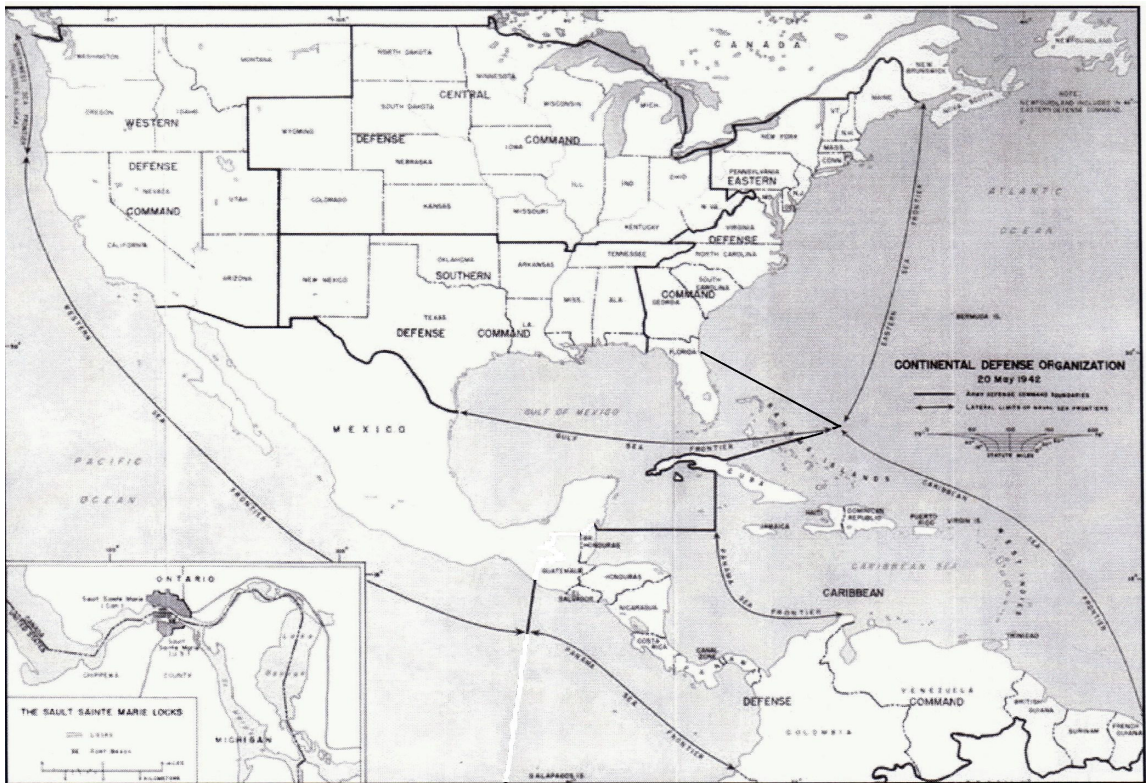
¹⁸³ Craven and Cate. Vol. I. 318.

¹⁸⁴ In the run-up to war, the occupation of Greenland by the US Army in April, 1941, and of Iceland by US Marines in July, 1941 were in part to secure airstrips to support the northern air route.

aircraft into the rough seas below, hypothermia and drowning was the likely result, along with the complete loss of the aircraft itself. Florida presented an alternative.

Figure 5.

Florida at the Heart of Army Continental Defense¹⁸⁵



Military geography suggested a safer route to both Europe and Asia by flying south by southeast from Florida. Theoretically, Florida-based aircraft could fly safely all year long across the Caribbean to Brazil, then across the Atlantic Narrows to Africa. From Africa, airplanes could fly north to the Mediterranean and Europe, or fly easterly across Africa to the British base at Egypt. From there planes could deliver war materials to Russia via Iran. Just so, they could continue to British-held India, and from there to

¹⁸⁵ Stetson Conn, Rose Engelman, Byron Fairchild. Guarding the United States and its Outposts. Army Center for the Study of Military History. Washington, DC. 1962. 39.

the Far East and the Pacific.¹⁸⁶ While the Florida-based departure solved critical issues, it posed other problems, however. First was distance. The route from Florida to Asia was nearly 12,000 miles, and for most of the way it lacked anything but the most primitive air transportation infrastructure. Second, it required seasoned pilots. Florida offered a ready made solution to the latter issue.¹⁸⁷

Florida's legendary Pan American Airways flyers had piloted its powerful "Clipper Ship" seaplanes around the world. Almost no other US pilots possessed the practical experience of transcontinental flying. Washington took advantage of the circumstance. In 1940, the New Deal's Airport Development Program (ADP), under the US Civil Aeronautics Administration, commissioned Pan American to pioneer a route to Asia.¹⁸⁸ With ADP funding, the Miami-based airline created what would become a critical air route of the war. It started in Florida and took advantage of the new leases at the British colonies in the Western Hemisphere to create airstrips reaching to South America.¹⁸⁹ In addition to the major stops at Puerto Rico and Trinidad, auxiliary landing fields were laid in Cuba, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, British Guiana and Venezuela. While these auxiliary locations were not directly part of the new route, the airfields were built to satisfy the safety concern of providing places for emergency landings in the event of aircraft malfunction. In reality, the military potential of these additional airstrips complemented the new worldwide force-projection system being extended from Florida.

¹⁸⁶ Craven and Cate. Vol. I. 318.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid. 319.

¹⁸⁸ See Figure 6. The South Atlantic Route. 75.

¹⁸⁹ Craven and Cate. Vol. I. 320.

Known as the South Atlantic Route, and sometimes as the Southeastern Route, the Pan Am subsidiary, *Panair do Brasil*, initiated or improved airfields along the coast of South America as far as Recife and the offshore Brazilian islands of Fernando Noronha.¹⁹⁰ On the African side of the Atlantic narrows, Pan Am worked with British authorities to carve out a string of simple landing fields from the British colonies of Gambia and Sierra Leone to Egypt and the Middle East. Ostensibly an enterprise to improve the US civilian airline industry, the Pam Am project involved working in concert with the U.S. military authorities. Whatever the benefit to the civilian air carriers, the results significantly enhanced the American ability to project hard military air power overseas. The Pam-Am project also strengthened the emerging friendship between Brazil and the US, while undercutting Nazi influence in the region. On August 31, 1941, a pair of Army pilots left Florida to test fly the route in a B-24 bomber.¹⁹¹ Two weeks later the flight reached Basra, Iraq. The bomber then retraced the route back to Miami. Their flight underlined the significance of the flight going two ways. Thus, Florida served as both the point of origin and the destination of this first international air route of the war.

Mobilization for war brought international aviators to Florida. Lend-Lease was initially interested in flying warplanes and shipping supplies to Britain, using the merchant marine and the newly created Army Air Ferrying Command to facilitate. The Act, however, also provided for training foreigners to use American equipment, allowing the President to employ the US military “to instruct others in matters of defense vital to

¹⁹⁰ Craven and Cate. Vol. I. 320.

¹⁹¹ Ibid. 326. The two aviators were Col. Caleb Haynes and Major Curtis LeMay.

the security of the United States.”¹⁹² “Others” included the Royal Air Force. Britain needed pilots desperately. After a meeting with an RAF delegation, General Arnold proposed enrolling the British flight cadets in the civilian American flight schools.¹⁹³ The US Army would lend the British 260 primary training planes, and 285 advanced training planes. Calling itself the British Flying Training Schools (BFTS), the program enrolled British cadets at CPT schools for a twenty-week course in primary, basic, and advanced flight training.¹⁹⁴ As with the already existing civilian-contract flight schooling program, the BFTS operated under Army Air Corps oversight. Arnold offered the facilities in Lakeland, Arcadia, and Miami for this purpose.

In the summer of 1941, British airmen arrived in Florida. Royal Air Force pilot-candidates first crossed the Atlantic by ship to Canada. They then traveled in civilian clothes by train across the neutral US to Florida, a four-day journey. Upon reaching their flight school they were enrolled as civilians. Despite being low-key, there was nothing unmilitary about the BFTS. Once in Florida, the RAF cadets changed back into uniform and joined the American cadets already in khaki. The schools were run as military training schools. RAF officers supervised their own contingents.¹⁹⁵ The first ninety RAF cadets enrolled in the Lakeland flight school on June ninth. The town gave them a warm welcome, feting them with simple banquets and unlimited orange juice. Soon they were on the flight line, and in the skies overhead. At the graduation ceremony of the first class

¹⁹² Craft. 69.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid. 71.

¹⁹⁵ Steve Glassman. “Keep’em Flying: Riddle’s Wild Blue Yonder.” South Florida Historical Magazine. Summer 1989.

on August 16, Governor Holland appeared personally to present the RAF cadets their pilot certificates.¹⁹⁶ “We think of you as eagles going out to fight for the right,” he lauded them.¹⁹⁷

The RAF aviation training, especially of the pilot-cadets, fell under the auspices of the Army Air Corps. Some of the RAF students received Navy instruction in navigation courses, but for the most part the BTFS operated within the portfolio of the Air Corps. The RAF’s existence as an independent branch of service lent validation-by-association to their counterparts of the Army Air Corps in its campaign for autonomy. The RAF contracted directly with aviation entrepreneur Riddle for the Clewiston air school. The land for the airfield was purchased in July by Riddle and Lend-Lease funds paid for the construction. The Clewiston Flight School rose from cow pastures and sugar cane fields in record time. Within a few months the Riddle-McKay Aero College at Clewiston was in operation as a British Flight Training School.¹⁹⁸

In September 1940, another major step in the US mobilization came with the call-up of the National Guard. The Florida National Guard was activated and ordered to report for a year of active service at the new National Guard base of Camp Blanding. Earlier, in approving the Navy takeover of Camp Foster, the Secretary of War simultaneously approved a municipal bond sale to provide the Florida Guard \$400,000 for a new training camp. In facilitating the transfer of Camp Foster and the bond sale, the Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce stipulated that the new National Guard Camp be

¹⁹⁶ Sage-Gagne. Pilots in the Sun. 30.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid. 29.

¹⁹⁸ Craft. 71.

located within an hour's drive of the city. The Guard chose a forest near Starke, initially acquiring 30,000 acres. WPA labor, reservists, contract workers, and convicts from nearby Raiford State Prison, threw Camp Blanding together. Water and sewer systems were established and Florida Power and Light Company strung electricity.¹⁹⁹ The camp was named for Lt. General Albert H. Blanding, the senior officer of the Florida Guard, who was then completing his final tour of duty as President Roosevelt's appointed Chief of the National Guard.²⁰⁰ After Pearl Harbor the Regular Army assumed authority and the camp grew to over 150,000 acres. Based on population alone, it would become the fourth largest "city" in the State.²⁰¹

Among the National Guard units activated in the pre-war mobilization was the 31st National Guard Division, known as the "Dixie Rifles." The Division consisted of Guardsmen from Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana. The 124th Infantry Regiment of Florida, one of its units, was ordered to muster at Camp Blanding in November.²⁰² Camp Blanding was soon swarming with thousands of young riflemen, and the woods rang with the drawl of the Deep South. The Dixie Rifles set up pup-tent camps and went on twenty mile-hikes; they hunted each other in mock-battle situations, and took potshots at the wildlife. Florida's 124th Infantry Regiment was only the first to

¹⁹⁹ Joseph and Anne Freitus. Florida: the War Years, 1938-1945. Wind Canyon. Niceville, FL. 1998.

²⁰⁰ General Blanding retired in 1940, but at the outbreak of war he was recalled by Governor Holland. Blanding served on active duty as the Governor's aide-de-camp for the duration of the war.

²⁰¹ Mormino. 325.

²⁰² The Army Almanac: A Book of Facts Concerning the United States Army. Department of the Army. The Military Service Publishing Company. Harrisburg, PA. 1959. 662.

train at Camp Blanding. By the end of WWII, this base in an obscure corner of the State would become the largest Army Basic Training Camp in the US.²⁰³

Once the Florida National Guard was federalized, Governor Holland and the State Legislature were without a military force of their own. In April 1941 they created the Florida Defense Force. This “home guard” consisted of several thousand volunteers armed and equipped by the State. The Florida Defense Forces served as guards and escorts assisting the war effort. They were armed, uniformed and paid by the State.

On May 27, 1941 President Roosevelt went on the radio to proclaim a State of Unlimited National Emergency confronting the US. He stated to the listening nation in no uncertain terms that the US was increasingly threatened by the Axis Powers. In proclaiming his unprecedented executive decree, Roosevelt emphasized the geographic factors influencing his concern. Referring to the map, he noted how Axis forces were fully capable of crossing the Atlantic narrows and how their air and sea forces directly menaced the United States.

They [the Axis] also have the armed power at any moment to occupy Spain and Portugal; and that threat extends not only to French North Africa and the western end of the Mediterranean but it extends also to the Atlantic fortress of Dakar, and to the island outposts of the New World -- the Azores and Cape Verde Islands. The Cape Verde Islands are only seven hours' distance from Brazil by bomber or troop-carrying planes. They dominate shipping routes to and from the South Atlantic. The war is approaching the brink of the Western Hemisphere itself. It is coming very close to home.²⁰⁴

His sober observation was that if Britain fell, the US could expect to be attacked next. “Control or occupation by Nazi forces of any of the islands of the Atlantic would

²⁰³ Gannon. 50.

²⁰⁴ Franklin D. Roosevelt. Proclamation of Unlimited National Emergency. May 27, 1941.

jeopardize the immediate safety of portions of North and South America, and of the island possessions of the United States, and, therefore, the ultimate safety of the continental United States itself.”²⁰⁵ Roosevelt stressed the conclusion he had reached, emphasizing that the circumstances “directly endanger the freedom of the Atlantic and our own American physical safety. Anyone with an atlas, anyone with a reasonable knowledge of the sudden striking force of modern war, knows that it is stupid to wait until a probable enemy has gained a foothold from which to attack.”²⁰⁶ Implicit in his reasoning was the fact that the Florida peninsula was the first US landfall an enemy invasion from the east would encounter. The President exhorted the US military, naval, air, and civilian defenses to prepare themselves for such a possibility.

By autumn 1941, Florida had reached a conventional state of readiness. The Florida National Guard was federalized. The 124th Florida Infantry Regiment was in the field, training in the forests of Camp Blanding with the rest of the Dixie Rifles. The 265th Florida Coastal Artillery Regiment was at target practice in Texas. At induction stations in Tampa, Miami, Tallahassee and Jacksonville, conscripts were raising their right hands to be sworn in and report for training. The newly-created Florida Defense Force mustered at armories and county courthouses around the State. Twenty Naval Air Stations were under construction in Florida. Thirty-seven new Army Air Fields were being built.²⁰⁷ Formations of bombers and fighter planes were regular features in the Florida skies. The civilian flying schools of Florida were sending up their own flights of

²⁰⁵ Franklin D. Roosevelt. Proclamation of Unlimited National Emergency. May 27, 1941.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ See Appendix A --WWII Bases in Florida.

Army Reservists, Navy cadets, Royal Air Force trainees, and WASPS. Workers were building barracks and classrooms at construction sites across the State. Three top-secret military schools teaching the new cutting-edge Navy technology of Sonar, Army radio signaling, and the aviation technology of Radar were being established at Key West, Hobe Sound, and Boca Raton, respectively. Navy destroyers and cruisers of the neutrality patrol steamed offshore. Military mobilization in Florida was apparent to all. Nation-wide the efforts of the Administration and the War Department had raised the Army to a strength of one-and-a-half-million, from a force numbering 189,839 men at the end of 1939.²⁰⁸

Then unexpectedly, the war arrived, not from Europe, but from the Pacific. At 7 a.m. on Sunday morning, December 7, 1941 the Japanese suddenly and devastatingly attacked Pearl Harbor. Eighteen American ships, including eight battleships, were sunk or severely damaged at their moorings, with scarcely a shot fired in their defense. One hundred and eighty-eight aircraft were destroyed, and 2,403 Americans were killed. The war had come, and with a vengeance.²⁰⁹ The way the war began was the first of two great surprises to the United States in WWII. At about 2:30 p.m. Florida radio stations began interrupting their usual broadcasts with the first news of the catastrophe. The initial reports were soon followed by public service announcements ordering servicemen to return to their stations and report for duty. Florida would be one of the first places to trade blows with the enemy.

²⁰⁸ Jean Edward Smith. FDR. Random House. New York. 2007.

²⁰⁹ Morison. 67-68.

CHAPTER IV.

OFF WE GO: THE FIRST AIR STRIKES FROM FLORIDA

The war began disastrously for the US. The same day Hawaii was attacked, the Japanese Empire struck across the Pacific.²¹⁰ The Army Air Forces in the Philippines were also destroyed on the ground. The 3,000-man US garrisons at Peking and Shanghai awoke to find themselves prisoners. The US island of Guam was overrun and Wake Island attacked. British Malaya and the Dutch East Indies were invaded. Adolf Hitler of Germany declared war on the US four days after Pearl Harbor. Japanese forces invaded the Philippines and 13,000 US soldiers and 65,000 Philippine Allies were cornered in the Bataan peninsula. By March, British Singapore had fallen, the US-British-Dutch-Australian fleet was annihilated, and the US forces on Bataan and Corregidor Island were under siege.²¹¹ The US fought back immediately, and much of its response began with aviation strikes from Florida bases. In Florida much of the Air Corps infrastructure of airfields, airplanes, pilots and crews was already concentrated.

The first and best known US air operation at this early period, the Doolittle Raid, was trained in Florida. After Pearl Harbor, President Roosevelt insisted that the home islands of Japan be bombed as soon as possible.²¹² Yet the distance to Japan was too far for even the longest range American bombers to reach. In theory the US aircraft carriers could bring airplanes close enough, but aircraft carriers carried only smaller aircraft with

²¹⁰ Matloff. 424-425.

²¹¹ Florida posthumous Medal of Honor recipient Alexander "Sandy" Nininger was killed in the fighting at Bataan on January 12, 1942. On February 5, 1942 the White House announced the award of the Medal of Honor to 2 Lt. Nininger, the first Medal of Honor received in WWII.

²¹² H.W. Brand. Traitor to His Class: the Privileged Life and Radical Presidency of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Doubleday. New York. 2008. 666.

limited range and firepower. None of the large bomber aircraft had ever taken off from a carrier. Worse, in getting close enough to strike, the US fleet would face the Imperial Japanese Navy at the height of its military strength. The risk to the remaining US Navy was great. The chance of success was small. Still, Roosevelt persisted.²¹³

By January the War Department had a solution, and Florida was the centerpiece. The plan was simple. Longer-range US Air Corps bombers would be loaded aboard an aircraft carrier. The carrier would steam to within range of Japan and launch the bombers. The planes would fly over Japan, drop bombs, and fly on to China and land safely at Chinese airfields. The plan was audacious in the extreme. No bomber pilots had ever flown off an aircraft carrier.²¹⁴ The government selected Eglin Army Air Field for the training base.²¹⁵ The Panhandle facility provided an optimum location. Its vast, uninhabited spaces included gunnery and bombing ranges, airstrips to practice the short takeoffs all day and night, and no civilians to watch.²¹⁶ The Gulf of Mexico substituted for the Pacific. On February 27, B-25s and volunteer crews began arriving there.

For the next month the airmen trained in Florida with the mission commander, Lt. Col. Jimmy Doolittle. They began launching at 7 a.m., and trained at short takeoffs until 10 p.m.²¹⁷ As the Doolittle Raiders grew proficient, the length of the runway was shortened. The Raiders practiced flying long distances at wave-top level over the Gulf of

²¹³ General James H. “Jimmy” Doolittle with Carroll V. Glines. I Could Never be so Lucky Again. Bantam. New York. 1991. 231.

²¹⁴ Ibid. 243.

²¹⁵ Ted W. Lawson. Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo. Blue Ribbon Books. Garden City, NY. 1944. 27.

²¹⁶ Jack A. Sims. First Over Japan: Autobiography of a Doolittle Raider. Southpointe Press. 2002. 16.

²¹⁷ Lawson. 25.

Mexico to avoid visual and radar detection. They rose to execute their bombing runs and a climbing escape, then descended again and flew hours more at low altitude, returning to Eglin at the end of the day. In the third week of March the entire group flew the length of the Florida Gulf Coast. After the shortest takeoff yet, the bombers flew at wave-top height from Eglin to Fort Myers. Then they turned west and crossed the Gulf of Mexico, still at wave height. Over Texas they simulated their bombing run. Then they descended and flew back to Florida at an altitude of 50 feet. It was their final exam, and all passed.²¹⁸ On March 24 they departed Florida.

On April 18, the Doolittle Raiders launched their mission from the aircraft carrier *USS Hornet* off the coast of Japan. All sixteen bombers took off successfully. They bombed Tokyo, Yokohama, Kobe and Nagoya. The raid came suddenly and seemingly from out of nowhere. Although they experienced great difficulty in reaching China, most of the raiders returned safely. Only two of the crews were captured. Though their payload of bombs was too small to cause significant damage, the raid demonstrated the vulnerability of the Japanese homeland to US arms, and it embarrassed the Japanese military.²¹⁹ It marked a profound morale-boosting psychological victory.²²⁰ When Roosevelt announced the raid to the world, he teased that the raiders had come from the new secret base at “Shangri-la.”²²¹ Above all, the raid encouraged the Allies to fight on.

²¹⁸ Lawson. 29.

²¹⁹ 2194 Days of War. Gallery. New York. 1977. 234.

²²⁰ Morison. 139.

²²¹ Brand. 668. “Shangri-La” was a mythical land in a popular fiction novel of the times, Lost Horizons.

While the Doolittle Raiders were training at Eglin, other flight crews assembled in Florida to project US airpower into the war. These raids departed by way of the South Atlantic Route to the Far East. The expeditions were known as “Aquila Force,” “Project X,” and “HALPRO.” Aquila Force went first, flying a scratch force of available bombers in Florida. The government charged the Aquila Force to fly to China by way of the South Atlantic Route, and from China make a bombing attack on Japan from the west, in coordination with the Doolittle Raid coming from the East.²²² Aquila Force consisted of a dozen B-17 bombers, one B-24 Liberator, and a few C-47 cargo planes. The haste of the operation was indicated by the cargo planes eliminating seats with strapped 50 gallon drums of aviation gasoline in their place.²²³ The initial wartime confusion led the State Department to require Aquila Force apply for visas for all the countries they would fly over – Brazil, Liberia, Nigeria, Egypt, Arabia, India and China.²²⁴ The aircraft launched into the war from Palm Beach’s Morrison Field.

Just as the Doolittle Raid required great daring to fly off the pitching deck of an aircraft carrier, the raiders traveling the South Atlantic Route faced challenges of their own. The logistics were daunting. At the time, only the B-17, B-24, and powerful C-47 cargo plane had the range to make the journey. The fuel tanks of the average B-17 had a capacity of 1,700 gallons, giving it a range of 1,850 nautical miles, without a bombload. The range of the empty B-24 was slightly better at 2,000 nautical miles.²²⁵ The first leg

²²² Col. Robert L. Scott. God Is My Co-Pilot. Charles Scribner’s Sons. New York. 1943. 50.

²²³ Ibid. 54.

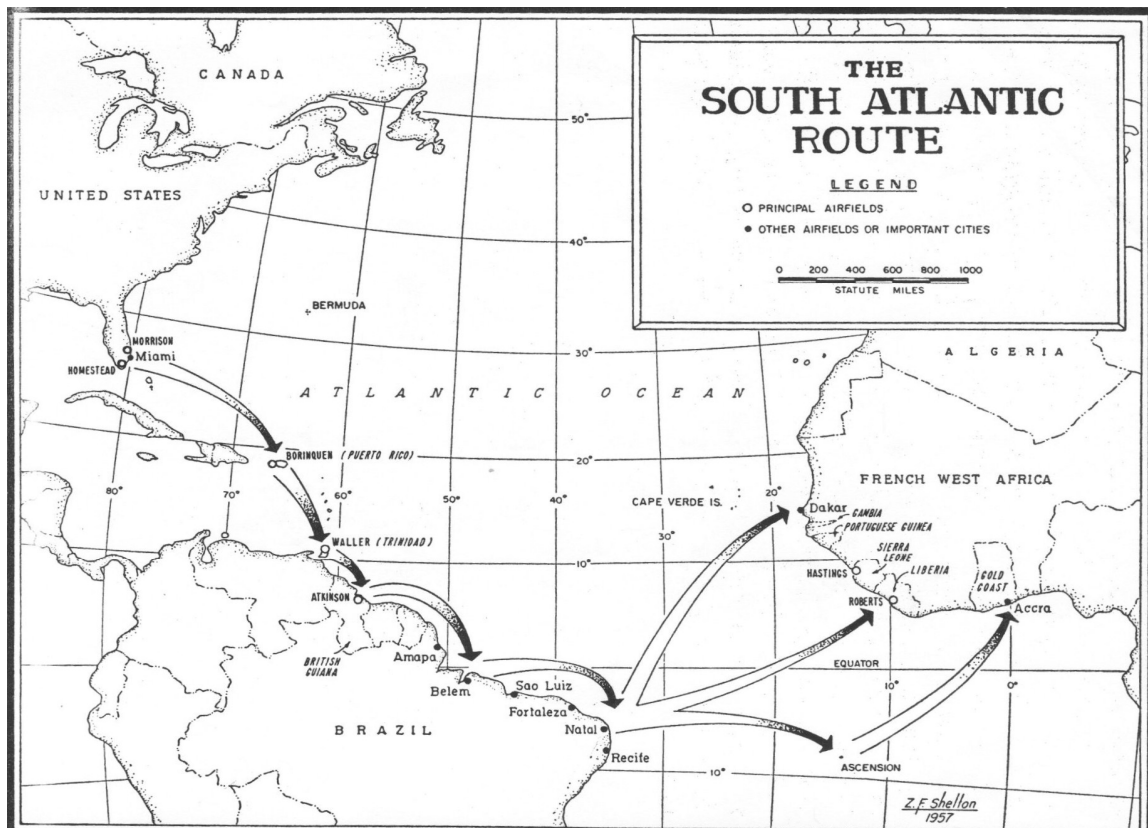
²²⁴ Ibid. 51.

²²⁵ Craven and Cate. Vol. VII. 404-5.

of the South Atlantic Route from Florida to Puerto Rico was approximately 1,000 miles. Washington had prepared brand new Borinquen Army Airfield on the west coast of the island to facilitate just such traffic. The next hop from Puerto Rico to British-controlled Trinidad was an easy 632 miles. From Trinidad to Atkinson Airfield, British Guiana, the distance was 350 miles, and from Atkinson Field to Belem, Brazil was 862 miles. Flights from Trinidad could overfly Atkinson, making a non-stop flight to Belem of 1,200 miles. The next hop from Belem to Natal was 960 miles. There the aviators faced the narrows of the Atlantic Ocean.

Figure 6.

The South Atlantic Route From Core to Periphery²²⁶



²²⁶ Craven and Cate. Vol. VII. Map Pages. 1.

From Brazil to the Dakar Bulge of the west coast of Africa was a distance of 1,800 miles across blue water. Allied airfields were waiting across the narrows at the British colonies of Sierra Leone and Gambia. But the B-17 and the B-24 were the only military aircraft that could cover the distance. For single-engine and twin-engine planes (unless specially equipped with extra fuel tanks) it was impossible to reach Africa. It proved an endurance test even for the B-17s and B-24s. Deviation of a few degrees south or north from the course, a common effect of headwinds and tailwinds, could result in missing Africa altogether and flying straight into the sea when the fuel was exhausted. If one missed the landfall, there was precious little fuel remaining to retrace the flight. For inexperienced pilots and navigators with the bare minimum of training, the 12-hour flight was an experience sometimes finished with a landing on fumes alone.²²⁷

In Africa the route was far from refined. Miami Pan Am's subsidiary, Atlantic Airways Ltd., had built outright or improved on the colonial airfields at Bathhurst in Gambia, Freetown in Sierra Leone, and Accra in Gold Coast. The pro-US nation of Liberia granted landing rights at Hastings Field.²²⁸ Pan Am pioneered bare airstrips across the waist of Africa at Kano and Maiduguri in Nigeria, Fort Lamy in French Equatorial Africa (a place nominally Free-French), and El Geneina, El Fasher, El Obeid and Khartoum in Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. From Khartoum pilots followed the Nile north to Cairo, then east to India and the Orient.²²⁹

²²⁷ Scott. 65-67.

²²⁸ The Liberia Airport would remain under exclusive Pan American control for years after the war.

²²⁹ Craven and Cate. Vol. I. 323-324.

Aquila Force left Florida with Col. Caleb Haynes leading the way at the controls of the B-24. Beside him was a briefcase with a million dollars provided by the War Department.²³⁰ The planes departed singly and in pairs so as not to overburden the infrastructure along the way. At one stop, the Americans used cash to bribe the local sheik to guard the aircraft from his own tribesmen while the aircrews slept. In Karachi, British constables tried to impound the airplanes for their own army; they were deterred only when the American aircrews displayed loaded Tommy guns.²³¹ Several planes were left behind at Caribbean, African or Asian airstrips for lack of fuel or parts. Still, most of the aircraft of Aquila Force reached India in early April.

The work of the air power projected from Florida began in northeast India at Assam. At the time US Lieutenant General Joseph “Vinegar Joe” Stilwell and his Chinese troops were being overrun in the attempt to stop the Japanese invasion of Burma. Haynes personally flew to the assistance of the American general. Landing in a clearing, the Aquila Force commander found Stilwell in the midst of the retreat.²³² “Vinegar Joe” refused to be flown to India, preferring famously to walk to safety leading his staff.²³³ When Haynes returned to Assam, he received orders to fly aviation gas from India to China.²³⁴ With China now cut off from all directions except the air, this flight initiated

²³⁰ Scott. 54.

²³¹ Ibid. 84.

²³² Stilwell. 94.

²³³ Scott. 105.

²³⁴ Craven and Cate. Vol. VII. 118. Unknown to Haynes, the fuel he transported over the Hump was for the Doolittle Raiders, expected to land in China after their mission of bombing Japan.

the airlift over the Himalaya Mountains. The feat would become known as “Flying the Hump,” and the airlift would become a primary war mission for Florida.

The second of the Florida-based air strikes aimed to relieve the Philippines. “Project X” was a much larger mission than Aquila. It included seventy heavy bombers to reinforce the US forces fighting on Bataan. Much better organized, it reflected the maturing plans of using Florida in the air offensive. The strategic approach exploited the peninsula for the express purpose of systematically launching American air forces into the war. The process accomplished several military goals. By launching from Florida, more military hardware and personnel were introduced into the State, making it that much more defensible against invasion. The missions increased US presence at the outposts along the way, as well, further forestalling the possibility of the enemy gaining a beachhead in the Western Hemisphere. Above all, it provided the most practical way to get at the enemy. Although the South Atlantic Route was hardly in good shape for serious air traffic, the exigencies of the situation in the Pacific demanded urgent action.

On December 19, the first six B-24 Liberator bombers of Project X arrived at MacDill Field.²³⁵ Over the next six weeks, sixty more B-17 Bombers joined them.²³⁶ Neither planes nor crews were prepared to fly halfway around the world using the most primitive air route of the day. Extraneous weight consumed precious fuel and made the planes harder to fly. As with the aviators of Aquila Force, the pilots and crews of Project X had only vague notions of the geography they had to cover. None were trained in flying without radio contacts, homing beacons or landmarks. None were experienced in

²³⁵ Craven and Cate. Vol. I. 332

²³⁶ Ibid.

unassisted takeoffs and landings at muddy airstrips, navigation by the stars, or night landings.²³⁷

But unlike the ‘fly-by-the-seat-of-the-pants’ urgency of Aquila Force, Project X paused for rigorous training. Pan-Am pilots experienced in trans-Atlantic flights were brought to MacDill to provide instruction. While arriving bombers were methodically stripped of excess weight, the crews attended classroom instruction on what to expect along the route. They studied primitive briefing books, sometimes no more than tourism brochures. Their training included information about stopping points, refueling arrangements, weather, local inhabitants, health conditions, food, shelter, and safety conditions in route. Pilots, navigators, and radiomen were given training in how to find their way across the Amazon, the Atlantic, and the Sahara they were to cross. In the wake of Aquila Force the first planes of Project X took off: destination Karachi.²³⁸

The effort came too late. By the time the aircraft of Project X reached India, Bataan had been lost and Corregidor besieged. A handful of Project X bombers managed to make their way to Australia. In Australia the planes of Project X formed the nucleus of the newly created 5th Air Force.²³⁹ Although few in number, the arrival of the bombers coincided with the arrival in Australia of US General MacArthur following his flight from the Philippines. The B-17s lent credence to his brave words exhorting continued resistance, boosting the morale of the Americans and the threatened allied population of

²³⁷ Craven and Cate. Vol. I. 333.

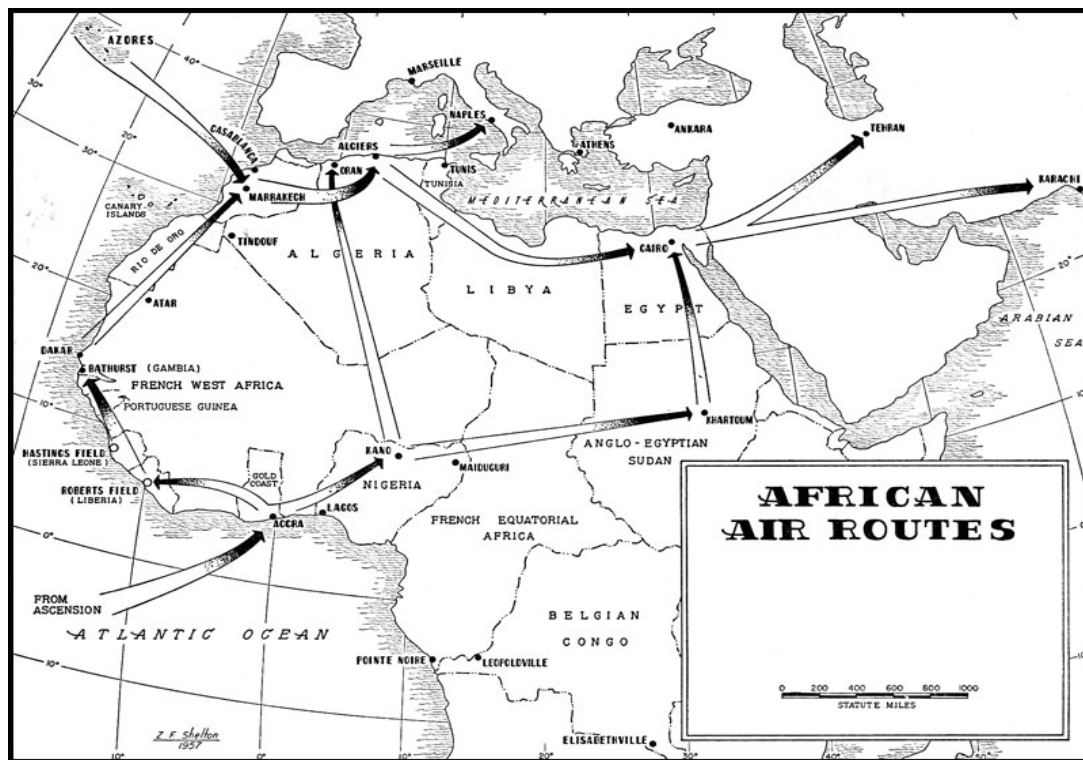
²³⁸ At MacDill Field on February 10th, 1942 training paused for a ceremony presenting the posthumous Medal of Honor of Sandy Nininger to his father, who had come to the base for the occasion.

²³⁹ Craven and Cate. Vol. I. 331.

Australia, cheered to see Flying Fortresses arriving after a journey of 18,000 miles beginning in Florida.²⁴⁰ Others of the Project X aircraft remained in India. Combined with Aquila Force, they made up the core of the new 10th Air Force. Four of the Project X bombers crashed into the ocean during the Atlantic passage, one went down over the Amazon, and two were parked permanently in Africa and cannibalized for spare parts by succeeding flights.²⁴¹ Yet, for all those failures, the bombers had flown two-thirds of the way around the world and taken the war from Florida to the enemy.

Figure 7.

The Route to the War Across Africa²⁴²



²⁴⁰ Craven and Cate. Vol. VII. 47.

²⁴¹ Ibid. 336.

²⁴² Ibid. Map Pages. 2.

The third early air strike from Florida was also launched with the intention of bombing Japan from Chinese bases. Codenamed HALRO, the secret operation began at Fort Myers.²⁴³ The codename referred its commander, Col. Harry E. Halverson. For the mission the Army appropriated civilian Page Field and renamed it Fort Myers Army Airfield.²⁴⁴ Twenty-three B-24D Liberator bombers and hand-picked crews secretly assembled there. The bombers launched from Morrison beginning on May 20, 1942 in three synchronized groups with a two-day time interval between each group. The Florida commanders of the South Atlantic Route were learning to feed aircraft through a pipeline while avoiding overcrowding the facilities in route. All the bombers of HALPRO reached the British-mandate territory of Palestine in June, 1942.²⁴⁵

The deteriorating situation in China prevented HALPRO from continuing on with its original mission. The enemy, perhaps taking notice of the airpower beginning to come their way out of Florida, seized the bases in China that HALPRO was to operate from. But their arrival in the Middle East came to serve other purposes. As the *Afrika Korps* advanced to threaten the Suez Canal, Washington re-directed HALPRO to fly bombing missions against Germans, led by General Erwin Rommel, from the British airstrips in Palestine. Stragglers of Aquila Force and Project X joined them in an improvised composition called the U.S. Middle East Air Force. They helped blunt the Axis

²⁴³ Craven and Cate. Vol. I. 341.

²⁴⁴ Bomber Command simultaneously built another base across town: Buckingham Army Airfield.

²⁴⁵ Craven and Cate. Vol. I. 342.

offensive. In the ensuing battle of El Alamein they flew forty-seven sorties in that defining victory against Rommel.²⁴⁶

These aerial expeditions taught the Air Corps much about operating the air bridge from Florida. Florida might be the home base for all these flyers, but the State's role hardly ended with crew training and the like. All of the departing aircraft, pilots, and aircrews were kept track of and accounted for on situation boards in Florida. Morrison Army Air Base in West Palm Beach was designated the Aerial Port of Embarkation for the South Atlantic Route. Its first job was to establish properly the overseas airfields with bulldozer-graded runways, or using the new interlocking perforated steel landing mats. Control towers, radio shacks, hangar facilities, barracks and chow halls were built. Orders were issued assigning engineers, controllers, technicians, mechanics and guards for every stop along the way. Logistic systems for fuel, lubricants, parts, communications, security and health were set up. Miami Army Airfield was assigned to handle air cargo over the route, and liaison with the contract carriers of Pan American, Eastern and National Airlines.²⁴⁷ Aquila Force, Project X and HALPRO pioneered the vital aerial transportation system from Florida that would supply US military operations throughout the war, especially in the emerging Theater of Operations that would come to be known as China-Burma-India (CBI).

One major activity from Florida begun at this time to supplement the CBI airlift was the Stilwell Road project. General Stilwell, the theater commander, was skeptical of the ability of aviation to supply China from India. He called for the construction of a

²⁴⁶ Maurer. 464-5.

²⁴⁷ Craven and Cate. Vol. I. 337.

road to be built from Allied India to China.²⁴⁸ The road was meant to traverse the jungle highlands of Burma and connect with the old Burma Road the Japanese had cut. When complete, the road would enable truck convoys to supply China easier, and in larger volume. The problem was that the road had to pass through some of the worst terrain on earth. Known as the Stilwell Road, for its main advocate, or as the Ledo Road, for its point of origin in Assam, or simply the Burma Road; the road was one of the unsung feats of the war. Florida troops were instrumental in building it.

One of the first units assigned to build the road was the 45th Engineering General Services Regiment, composed entirely of black soldiers, many of them Floridians. The unit was one of the first activated at Camp Blanding. After training at Camp Blanding the unit was deployed to CBI in June 1942. The 1,200 soldiers of the 45th Engineering Regiment spent the next three years in-country. Their leadership and labor directed the many local laborers hewing the road through the mountainous jungle with switchback after switchback. The black GIs from Florida contended with steep mountains, dense jungles and sweltering heat. Besides the monsoon, malaria, and cobras, the soldiers faced Japanese ambushes and raiding parties. Late in the war the road finally reached China. The first truckload of supplies arrived there in spring of 1945, to compliment the air bridge.²⁴⁹

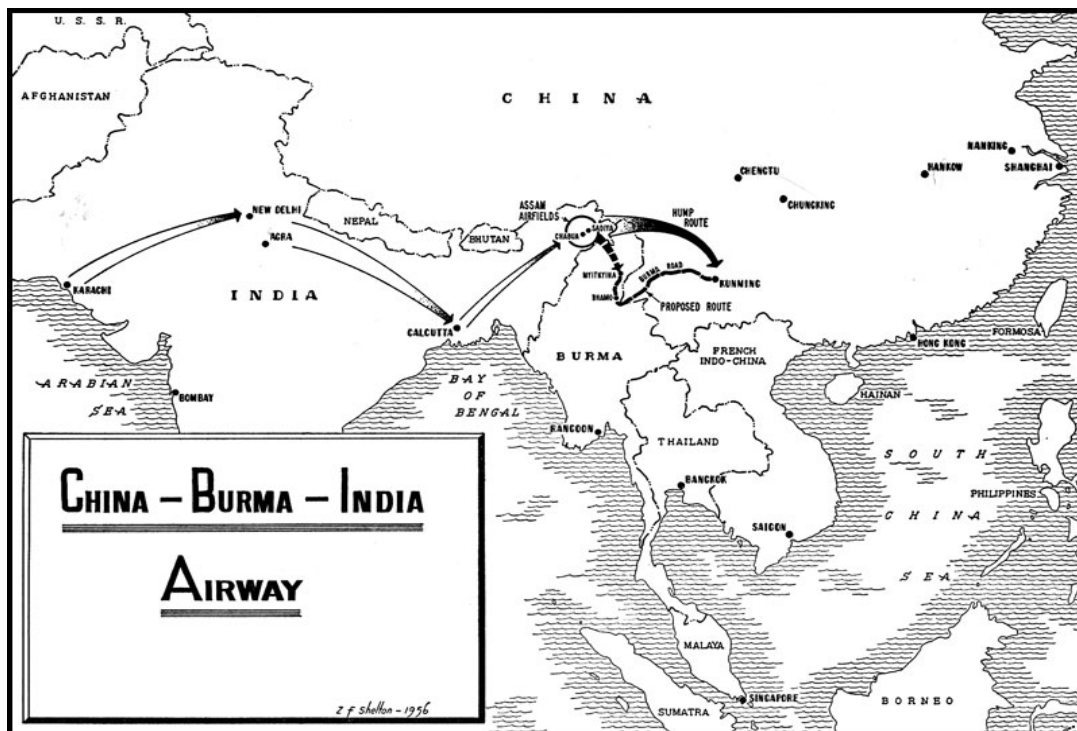
²⁴⁸ Matloff. 523.

²⁴⁹ W. Stanford Smith. Camp Blanding: Florida Star in Peace and War. Research Triangle Publishing. North Carolina. 1998. 75-77.

By June of 1942, over four hundred military aircraft had been launched into the war via the air route from Florida.²⁵⁰ Airplanes arriving in Florida to start on combat expeditions were joined by Lend-Lease aircraft destined for US Allies abroad. Many of these aircraft were flown from the factories to the Florida embarkation points by female pilots. Because of the demand and shortage of male pilots, women began flying airplanes in large numbers. Organized into the wartime Women's Air Service Pilots (WASP) program, over 1,000 female pilots participated.²⁵¹ Helping wherever needed, they

Figure 8.

The Route to CBI over the Hump²⁵²



brought warplanes to their trainees at Florida bases, and flew charters for the nationalized

²⁵⁰ Craven and Cate. Vol. I. 60.

²⁵¹ Florida WWII Heritage Trail. Florida Heritage Publication. Tallahassee, FL. 1995. 10.

²⁵² Craven and Cate. Vol. VII. Map Pages. 3.

civilian air carriers. WASPs served as flight instructors, and contract pilots towing sleeves for aerial target practice. Throughout the war, female pilots made up a visible part of Florida's aerial landscape.²⁵³

The importance of the air power projected from Florida led to continuous improvement and care for the route by the US military. The Army Air Ferrying Command was renamed Air Transport Command (ATC), with designated headquarters at Morrison Field in West Palm Beach. Three subordinate commands were parsed out along the way: Caribbean Wing in Florida, South Atlantic Wing in Brazil, and Africa-Middle East Wing at Sierra Leone. A general officer directed airlift operations in each sector.²⁵⁴ Many of the major war councils of the Allies, including the overseas conferences at Casablanca, Cairo, and Tehran, as well as meetings in the US, were facilitated by the Florida route. The oldest of the air routes, and throughout 1942 the most important, stretched from Florida across the South Atlantic to Africa and the Middle East, all the way to China.²⁵⁵

In July, 1942, a small but critical construction project made the South Atlantic Route fully operational as an Allied air bridge: completion of the airstrip on the British territory of Ascension Island in the middle of the Atlantic narrows. The airstrip was named Wide-awake Airfield for the flocks of terns that congregated on its runway. The terns were a peculiar aviation danger. Aircraft landing at, and lifting off from Ascension

²⁵³ Jacqueline Cochran directed the WASP program, a consolidation of the Women's Flying Training Detachment (WFTD) and the Women's Auxiliary Flying Squadron (WAFS), which fielded women pilots flying in support of the Armed Forces. In 1977 its members were awarded veteran status by Congress.

²⁵⁴ Craven and Cate. Vol VII. 49.

²⁵⁵ Ibid. 46

were forced to plow through a multitude of birds as they came and went. But the danger was surpassed by the military significance of the island. Ascension Island is 1437 miles from Brazil, and 1357 miles to Accra, Ghana. With Ascension as a stepping stone, those distances were possible for twin-engine medium B-25s and B-26s bombers, and even single-engine fighter planes. The homing beacon on Ascension further assisted navigating the narrows and opened the South Atlantic Route to most aircraft in the AAF inventory.²⁵⁶ The Pan Am engineers and Air Corps advisors who initially planned the South Atlantic Route from Florida had no idea it would bear a vast airlift of daily cargo flights, across two-thirds of the Great Circle of the Earth and over the tallest mountains in the world. But that was the result.

As a major staging area, Florida threw together a great variety Army aviators, some of whom played compelling roles later in the war. Among them were several serving in the new 97th Bomb Group, assigned to training at Sarasota Army Air Field.²⁵⁷ Its B-17 pilots included the young Captain, Paul Tibbets. Tibbets had grown up in Miami and learned to fly there before joining the service. In Sarasota he made friends with Capt. Thomas Ferebee, a navigator, and 1Lt. Theodore “Dutch” Van Kirk, a bombardier. These three officers would serve together and become the nucleus of the crew of the B-29 bomber “Enola Gay,” that would deliver the atomic bomb.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁶ Craven and Cate. Vol. I. 319.

²⁵⁷ Tibbets. 120.

²⁵⁸ Maurer. 167.

CHAPTER V.

ANCHORS AWEIGH: THE SEA BATTLE OFF FLORIDA

As Admiral Mahan had foreseen, the war came to Florida, quickly and viciously. Germany declared war on the US four days after the Pearl Harbor attack, and within a week the first U-boats sailed to attack the shipping off the eastern seaboard of the US.²⁵⁹ Three weeks later the submarines reached their areas of operation. Florida was among the destinations and became one of the few places in the continental United States to see active combat. The sea battle occurred within sight of the beaches of Florida and in the surrounding waters of the Florida Straits, the Gulf of Mexico, and the Caribbean Sea.²⁶⁰ Only supplies could prevent the fall of England and the Soviet Union, so the US supply ships had to cross the Atlantic. The German Navy fought to prevent the ships from reaching the open sea in the first place. For that purpose they came to close the sea lanes of the Gulf Sea Frontier. This chapter chronicles the ensuing battle.

On February 19, German submarines arrived off Florida and began their campaign against Allied shipping. That day, a German U-boat torpedoed the tanker *SS Pan Massachusetts*. The tanker had just exited the Florida Straits bound for New York with 90,000 barrels of oil.²⁶¹ Twenty miles off Cape Canaveral two torpedoes turned the ship into an inferno. Twenty crewmembers died as she sank in 300 feet of water. The ship sank within sight of NAS Banana River, the new seaplane base being built near Cape

²⁵⁹ Michael Gannon. Operation Drumbeat. Harper & Row. New York. 1990. 80-82.

²⁶⁰ Morison. 110.

²⁶¹ Ibid. 115.

Canaveral to prevent just such attacks.²⁶² The spectacle horrified crowds watching from the beach. The sinking of the *SS Cities Service Empire* four days later repeated the circumstances of the *Pan Massachusetts*. The U-boat simply stayed on station and waited for the next target to appear. Another fourteen sailors died. As more submarines arrived the German Navy launched successive waves of attacks down the coast of Florida, sinking six more ships between March 13 and April 30; two of them were tankers. The first week in May the battle grew in intensity and ships were attacked every day. Twelve were sunk; two of them tankers. Another two tankers and a freighter were damaged by torpedoes and only managed to limp into harbor. On May 6, five ships were sunk in a single day.²⁶³

The waters around Florida were a natural center of gravity where a sea battle would develop, much as Admiral Mahan had observed:

A cross-roads is essentially a central position, facilitating action in as many directions as there are roads. Those familiar with works on the art of land war will recognize the analogies. The value becomes yet more marked if, by the lay of the land, the road to be followed becomes very narrow; as at the Straits of Gibraltar, the English Channel, and in a less degree the Florida Strait.²⁶⁴

Knowing the terrain, or rather, the seascape is central to understanding the sea battle off Florida. The Yucatan Passage and the Florida Straits both saw considerable combat. The deepwater Yucatan Passage, 750 fathoms at its shallowest, is shaped like the waist of an hourglass. Although the passage itself is short, the shoal water shallows of the Campeche Banks extending due north from the Yucatan peninsula serves to

²⁶² Karl Doenitz. Memoirs: Ten Years and Twenty Days. 1959.

²⁶³ See Annex B: Ship Attacks in the Gulf Sea Frontier, 1942-1943. 211-212.

²⁶⁴ Mahan. 69.

accentuate the narrows. Ships have little room to maneuver before entering the slot. The 135 mile wide strait was a battlefield where thirty ships were attacked and sunk in the approaches that funnel ships through the passage itself.

The Florida Straits represents a much lengthier stretch of confined waters, one not always apparent on ordinary maps. The Bahamas Islands at the eastern end of the Straits act almost as a stopper to the channel. Although the islands themselves are only small land masses rising slightly above sea level, they mark a much larger mass of submerged limestone shoals known collectively as the Bahamas Banks.²⁶⁵ The name of the Bahamas itself derives from the Spanish word for shallows: bajamar. These flats are nowhere more than a few fathoms deep. Thus, the Bahamas Banks confine shipping to the coastline of Florida, along which flows the Gulfstream. In wartime, shipping would normally fan out before entering or after exiting narrows such as the Florida Straits, but the Bahamas Banks restrict access to the open sea and force shipping to hug the Florida coast.²⁶⁶ Not until the banks recede opposite Fort Pierce can vessels strike for the open seas. The net effect of the Bahamas Banks, in combination with the Straits, is to double the length of the confined passage shipping is forced to take. The waters of the passage itself are deep: 400 fathoms off Port St. Lucie, 500 fathoms off Cape Florida, and over 900 fathoms between Key West and Havana. Such attributes made this sea lane a veritable shooting gallery for submarines and 38 ships were to be sunk in the Florida Straits.

²⁶⁵ Specifically, they are the Great Bahamas Bank, the Little Bahamas Bank, and the Cay Sal Bank.

²⁶⁶ The banks extend almost to Cuba, confining shipping along its north coast to the Old Bahamas Channel.

Another geographic feature makes the space even more advantageous for the attacker. Only two passages cut through the Bahamas Banks from the Atlantic Ocean to the coastal waters of Florida. The Northwest Providence Channel lies between the island groups of Grand Bahama and Andros; and the Old Bahama Channel between the Banks and the north coast of Cuba. Both channels are winding and narrow, but hundreds of fathoms deep. These channels lead away from the destination of any surface vessel heading either north to the US eastern core, or south to the Canal. In wartime there would be no reason for shipping to use them except to make for the safety of the open sea. But any surface vessel plying either would be in extreme peril, exposed and far from any assistance. On the other hand, U-boats in the Atlantic wishing to enter the hunting grounds of the Gulf Sea Frontier could simply dive deep, negotiate the preferred channel unseen and slip unnoticed into the area. It should be understood that no submarine deployed at random into the war zone without orders to take up station within a specific grid sector of the battle space. Each was assigned to an area perceived by U-boat Command to offer the best chance to cause maximum damage, death, and destruction. In this regard, the Germans simply repeated naval history. The treasure galleons of the Spanish Main were at the mercy of hurricanes and pirates in these confined waters. During WWII the U-boats hunted these same spaces assiduously.

As Mahan predicted, the mouth of the Mississippi River also focused the battle.²⁶⁷ For the obvious reason that so many targets came and went via the great river, U-boats concentrated there. Twenty-five ships were sunk within sight of Louisiana, and one U-boat even laid mines at the entrance to the delta. As elsewhere, the attacks followed a

²⁶⁷ Mahan. 29-30.

pattern. The U-boat never revealed its presence in advance, and did not scruple to confine hostilities to identified belligerents alone. They attacked anything coming within their cross-hairs.²⁶⁸ The successful torpedo hit its target within a minute or two. Seldom did the U-boat linger over the kill. The *U-bootfahren* were brave, not suicidal. Their mission after sinking one ship was to sink another, and then another. To do so they had to save themselves by leaving the area.

The undersea topography of the west coast of Florida served to limit combat there to only seven ships sunk.²⁶⁹ The long land mass of Florida acts as a rampart against the Atlantic. Sheltered by the lee of the peninsula in the relatively calm waters of the Gulf Coast the sand and silt has accumulated for ages, giving west Florida a wide band of smooth flat shallows. The usual U-boat in theater, the workhorse VIIC, displaced 769 tons when surfaced, and 871 tons submerged, and was 67 meters (about 220 feet) long, 6.2 meters (20.34 feet) wide, with a 4.74 meter (about 15 ½ feet) draft.²⁷⁰ It was not a small object to hide, and not difficult to detect under the right conditions. From the sky, foreign objects in calm shallow water stand out, especially on a sunny day against a level sandy background.

Such geography facilitated the weapons of anti-submarine warfare. Sonar operates best in shallow waters; the deeper the water, the weaker the signal, and the less

²⁶⁸ Gannon. Operation Drumbeat. 347. Mexico was forced to declare war on Germany after several of its own ships were sunk.

²⁶⁹ With similar features and the farthest distance from the attackers, the western coast of the Gulf of Mexico and the Bay of Campeche also saw fewer sinkings; six altogether. In the midst of the Gulf of Mexico there were also only six lost, reflecting the difficulty of finding individual vessels on the open seas, specks on a sheet of deep water. Four outlying merchant ships were lost east of the Bahamas, sunk by U-boats coming and going from the battlefield by the Bahama channels.

²⁷⁰ Edwin P. Hoyt. U-boats Offshore: When Hitler Struck America. Scarborough. MI. 1978. 18, 37, 132.

certain would be its return impulse. Similarly, against a smooth and uniform seabed, detection is easier. Radar operates by radiating sound waves over the surface of the ocean. If the rays hit a foreign object on the water, a return bounces back, signaling it. The calmer the sea-state, the better the capability to detect foreign objects afloat on its surface. Shallow water is generally calmer. Such technology was not, however, initially employed in any systemic response to the U-boat attack. The US Navy was surprised, overwhelmed, and nearly defeated by the implacable war the U-boats waged. Altogether 112 ships were attacked in the Gulf Sea Frontier in a few months, and nearly all of them were sunk. It was a naval disaster.²⁷¹

Before Pearl Harbor the Navy planned for battles of big ships on the open sea and strategists adapted reluctantly to the war they faced. They embraced the reality of anti-submarine warfare (ASW) reluctantly. It lacked glamour, involving the tedious work of small vessels engaged in tracking down solitary, invisible U-boats. Further, the Navy had not developed escort warships; they had not adopted convoy travel; and they had otherwise ignored anti-submarine training.²⁷² Similarly, the Frontier headquarters, initially at Key West was isolated from command and control of the region. Still further, individual civilian shipping did nothing to adapt to wartime. Ignoring the advice of the Royal Navy, merchant ships travelled as they pleased, un-darkened at night, radioing in the clear at will, and tossing tell-tale garbage overboard.

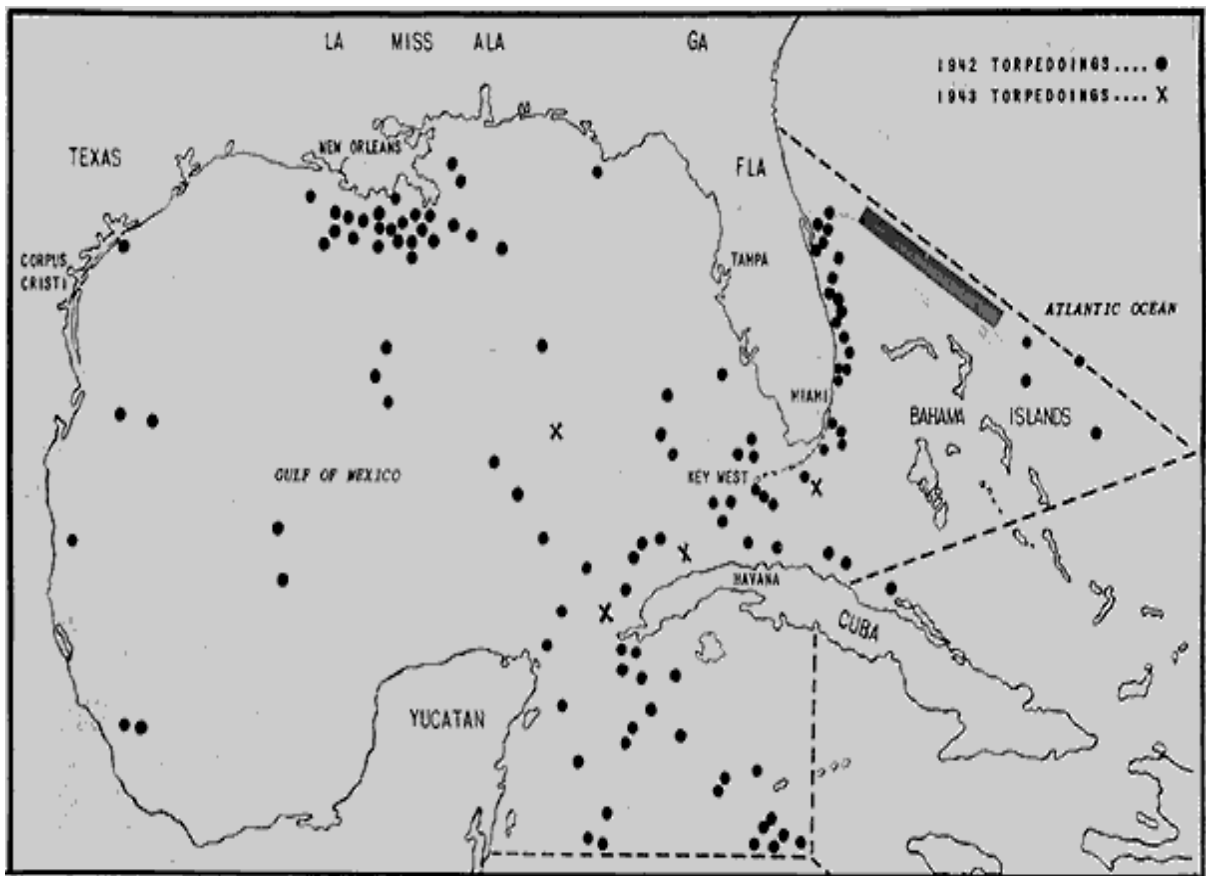
²⁷¹ Scott. 54. One aspect of the battle seldom considered was the ecological damage caused by the sinking of thirty-five oil tankers, with battle damage to several more. Aviators on patrol, as well as the civilians of the realm routinely observed the coastline fouled with goopy tar-like oil slicks washed ashore.

²⁷² Morison. 115-117.

The civilian community of Florida was likewise unprepared for submarine attacks. Many, especially in the tourism industry, refused to face the storm. Hoteliers dismissed the danger, worried that acknowledging the war would hurt what tourism there was. In the first few months of the war at night along the Atlantic coast on Highway A1A and the seaside towns, lights from beachfront hotels and motels nicely silhouetted passing freighters.²⁷³ Twenty-nine ships were sunk in May, and five more damaged.

Figure 9.²⁷⁴

Combat in the Gulf Sea Frontier



²⁷³ Morison. 109.

²⁷⁴ Gulf Sea Frontier. War Diary. Map pages. 3.

In June, 1942, the Gulf Sea Frontier lost more ships than had been sunk world-wide in any month of 1940-41.²⁷⁵ Chief of Staff Marshall virtually demanded attention from the Navy. In June, he wrote Adm. King: “The losses off our Atlantic seaboard and in the Caribbean now threaten our entire war effort.... Of the 74 ships allocated to the Army for July by the War Shipping Administration, 17 percent have already been sunk. Twenty-two percent of the bauxite fleet has already been destroyed.... Tanker sinkings have been 3.5 percent per month of tonnage in use.”²⁷⁶

Censorship, both official and self-imposed, prevailed across Florida. The case of the Mexican tanker *Potrero del Llano* serves as an example. The *Potrero del Llano* was transiting the Straits for New York with 6,000 tons of petroleum. As she cleared Key Largo, travelling north off Key Biscayne on the morning of May 14, she came into the sights of U-boat Five-Six-Four. The sub’s torpedoes set the ship on fire and thirteen crewmen died outright, the others abandoned ship. Blazing, the crewless ship then drifted north with the gulfstream past the most populated region of Florida: Miami, Miami Beach and Fort Lauderdale. Clouds of black smoke boiled skyward. Crude oil and dead sailors washed ashore. Thousands witnessed the sinking tanker and many photographed it. Survivors were brought to Miami. *Potrero del Llano* went down at dusk. It was vivid proof that America was under attack, and a news story of international scope. Yet not a word reached print.²⁷⁷

²⁷⁵ Morison. 116.

²⁷⁶ Ibid. 136.

²⁷⁷ The Miami Herald. May, 1942.

Besides sinking ships, the U-boats fostered espionage, in one notable incident. On the night of June 16, 1942, the *U-584* surfaced and four Nazi saboteurs came ashore at Ponte Verde Beach in North Florida, bearing explosives, civilian clothes, and US cash. The four were Edward John Kerling, Hermann Otto Neubauer, Werner Theil, and Herbert Haupt. Their mission was to infiltrate and destroy. All spoke English, had lived in the US before the war, and were familiar with America and its customs.²⁷⁸ After landing, they buried their rubber raft, hiked to Jacksonville Beach, and in the morning caught a bus to Jacksonville. There they split up, boarding trains for the US interior. Armed with paper lists of the names and addresses of secret agents and safe houses, written in invisible ink, they planned to rendezvous in Cincinnati on the 4th of July and begin destroying such targets as the locks on the Ohio River, the water system for New York City, and the Newark train station. It was an ambitious plan, to be accomplished in concert with another group of four saboteurs landed a few nights earlier on Long Island, New York.²⁷⁹

Fortunately for the US, the enemy team on Long Island was discovered soon after landing.²⁸⁰ The ringleader, George John Dasch, and fellow-spy, Ernst P. Burger, sought out the FBI and confessed. All eight saboteurs were apprehended. They were taken in custody to Washington. President Roosevelt regarded the matter with great seriousness and invoked the Articles of War to order trial by a military tribunal, the first such tribunal since the assassination of President Lincoln. Seven general officers assembled in the

²⁷⁸ Wiggins. 99-100.

²⁷⁹ Tebeau. 420.

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

Justice Building in Washington to try the case.²⁸¹ The federal government preferred four charges against the eight spies: violating the law of war; violating Article 81 of the Articles of War, defining the offense of corresponding with or giving intelligence to the enemy; violating Article 82 of the Articles of War, defining the offense of spying; and, conspiracy to commit the offenses alleged in the first three charges.

The tribunal convened July 2, and all eight were soon convicted and sentenced to death. The Supreme Court, on July 31, in *Ex Parte Quirin* sustained the conviction. On August 8, 1942 the White House issued the following news release:

The President approved the judgment of the Military Commission that all of the prisoners were guilty and that they be given the death sentence by electrocution. However, there was a unanimous recommendation by the Commission, concurred in by the Attorney General and the Judge Advocate General of the Army, that the sentence of two of the prisoners be commuted to life imprisonment because of their assistance to the Government of the United States in the apprehension and conviction of the others. The commutation directed by the President in the case of Burger was to confinement at hard labor for life. In the case of Dasch, the sentence was commuted by the President to confinement at hard labor for thirty years. The electrocutions began at noon today. Six of the prisoners were electrocuted. The other two were confined to prison. The records in all eight cases will be sealed until the end of the war.²⁸²

The six dead spies, including all four who landed in Florida, were buried in numbered graves in Anacostia potter's field across the river from Washington.

If slow to react to the attacks immediately, by summer the military, government officials and ordinary Floridians mobilized in a series of specific strategies against the German submarine warfare. To harden the defenses of the peninsula, the Coast Guard

²⁸¹ Wiggins. 99.

²⁸² Statement by the White House concerning the sentences of eight Nazi saboteurs, issued August 8, 1942.

created a unique unit for Florida's 1,197 mile coast: the Mounted Patrol. To cover this enormous stretch of coastline, including almost seven hundred miles of beach, the Coast Guard put its Guardsmen on horseback.²⁸³ The Army Remount Service provided the horses for this new Coast Guard cavalry. The Guard enlisted volunteers among cowboys, jockeys, rodeo riders and polo players.²⁸⁴ These mounted sentries rode the coast day and night. *Ad hoc* cavalry sailors, with rifles and new walkie-talkies slung across their backs became a permanent sight along the once serene shoreline of the Sunshine State. Soon dogs of the Military Canine Corps joined the patrols.²⁸⁵ The tiny islands of the realm, such as Fort Jefferson, Swan Island and Corn Island also got Coast Guard sentries, seaplanes and wireless radio sets.

The State Civil Defense Agency erected coastal watch towers up and down the beaches of Florida. Built of donated telephone poles and plywood, these towers averaged fifty feet in height. The Florida Defense Force organized a volunteer force of lifeguards, housewives, students, and the elderly to man them. Among the hundreds of volunteers was the author Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings.²⁸⁶ With sun helmets and binoculars, Coast Watchers scanned the sea for enemy U-boats. The attacks had galvanized the public,

²⁸³ James Noble. "The Beach Patrol and Corsair Fleet." The U.S. Coast Guard in World War II. Coast Guard Historian's Office. Washington. 1993. 4.

²⁸⁴ Ibid. 16.

²⁸⁵ Ibid. 14.

²⁸⁶ E. Lynne Wright. It Happened in Florida. Morris Book Publishing. Connecticut. 2010. 56.

civic leaders, and military authorities. They reached for whatever means available to defend Florida.²⁸⁷

The threat also brought response from the surging military aviation training program of the State. Army and Navy pilot and aircrew trainees learned to fly on ASW air patrols criss-crossing the Gulf Sea Frontier. Civilian aviation joined them. With all private flights in Florida outlawed for the duration of the war, the Air Corps organized the Civil Air Patrol (CAP), a volunteer association of private airplane pilots assisting the military.²⁸⁸ While the first two squadrons were established to defend New York and the New Jersey Shore, CAP Squadron Three defended Florida.²⁸⁹ Fuel, facilities, and uniforms with CAP insignia were provided by the military. Pilots and mechanics drew daily pay of \$7 and \$5, respectively. A pilot who was a popular newspaper comic strip cartoonist drew up a squadron emblem of a Piper Cub airplane gamely carrying a bomb larger than itself. The CAP flew their own planes from Army Airfields across the peninsula, patrolling the coast at low level. They scanned the seas for signs of the enemy, allied ships in distress, dead bodies, oil slicks, and debris; the flotsam and jetsam of sea war.²⁹⁰

Blimps were also deployed against the submarines.²⁹¹ Armed with radar (and later towed sonar), depth bombs and a crew of ten, they were well-suited for aerial

²⁸⁷ The last of these towers stands at Ormond-By-The-Sea, saved and restored by local historic preservationists and a supportive developer at 2160 Ocean Shore Blvd, Ormond Beach, FL.

²⁸⁸ Lazarus. 240.

²⁸⁹ Ibid. 246-7.

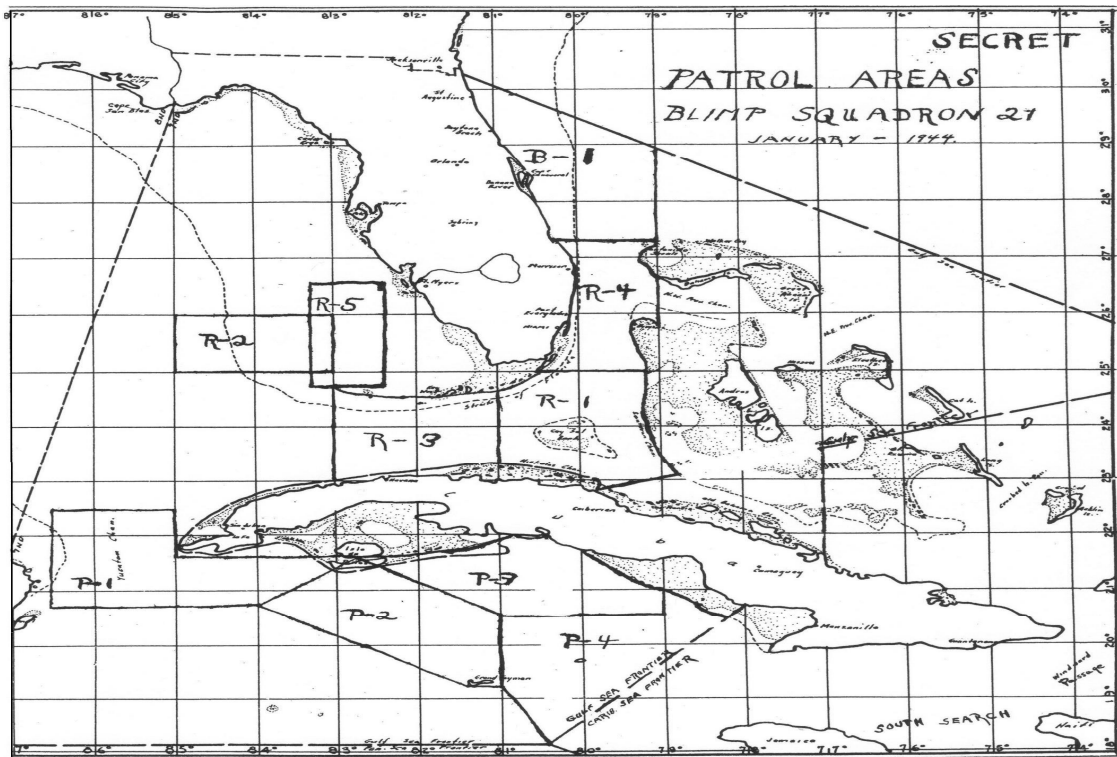
²⁹⁰ Morison. 118.

²⁹¹ Ibid. 129.

surveillance. Rather than waste time and steel on expensive rigid airships, the Navy and Goodyear commenced a crash production run of 150 blimps for service up and down the US coasts. At NAS Richmond, south of Miami, government contractors scraped and graded an immense landing mat on the edge of the Everglades. While an army of civilian workers built three huge wooden hangars, airships arrived from the Akron plant to activate Zeppelin Patrol (ZP) Squadron 21, with charge over the Florida Straits and Yucatan Passages. It was the largest such squadron in the Navy, with 20 blimps and outposts at the north end of the Straits at NAS Banana River, and at the south end of the Straits at NAS Key West.

Figure 10.²⁹²

Blimp Patrol Sectors over the Florida Straits



²⁹² Gulf Sea Frontier. War Diary. Monthly Situation Report. Jan. 1944.

With the concurrence of the Cuban government, forward stations were set up at San Julian and the Isle of Pines to patrol the Yucatan approaches. At Houma, Louisiana, a hangar was built, and ZP-22 activated to patrol the Gulf of Mexico. Another such unit, ZP-23, was activated on Jamaica to cover the Panama Canal.²⁹³ All these units operated under the command of Airship Wing Two, headquartered at NAS Richmond. Military blimps, their rubberized canvas envelope spray painted with shiny silver nitrate dope to reflect heat and maintain buoyancy, became a common sight floating over Florida and the Caribbean for the duration of the war.²⁹⁴

Most critical of all, small craft came into play against the German subs. Admiral Mahan had warned: “there should be a local flotilla of small torpedo-vessels, which by their activity should make life a burden for an outside enemy.”²⁹⁵ He accurately characterized this decisive element of the sea battle:

Such a flotilla, owing to the smallness of the components, and to the simplicity of their organization and functions, is to be found the best sphere for naval volunteers; the duties could be learned with comparative ease, and the whole system is susceptible of rapid development.²⁹⁶

Florida’s civilian small boaters were the first to mobilize, enrolled by the Coast Guard as the so-called “Corsair Fleet.” Officially named the Coastal Picket Patrol, they were nicknamed the “Hooligan Navy,” because the Coast Guard accepted practically any

²⁹³ As the defense of the Gulf Sea Frontier became stronger, the U-boats shifted their attacks south into the Caribbean and South America. Airship units patrolled the South Atlantic as far as Santa Cruz, Brazil. NAS Richmond, Florida was their stateside terminal for supply, maintenance, and personnel concerns.

²⁹⁴ One squadron deployed to the Mediterranean and served first at Anti-Submarine Patrol over at the Straits of Gibraltar, then in support of the US invasions of Italy and France.

²⁹⁵ Mahan. 131.

²⁹⁶ Ibid. 131.

boat “capable of going to sea in good weather for a period of at least 48 hours at cruising speeds.”²⁹⁷ Yachts, shrimp boats, and small craft were signed on; their owners were given the honorary rank of Chief Bosun’s Mate. Pickup crews were assembled from whomever claimed nautical experience; college men, beachcombers, and even ex-bootleggers.²⁹⁸ The Coast Guard organized the force as the Coast Guard Auxiliary. Vessels were assigned picket stations. Uniforms, binoculars and gray deck paint were found. The vessels were put to work as picket boats guarding the harbors and patrolling the waterways of the peninsula.

They were joined in Florida waters by the new warships of the Navy’s crash program to build small wooden combatants now beginning to bear fruit. Known as the ‘Splinter Fleet’ because of their hardwood construction, a 110-foot Submarine Chaser could be built in 60 days. Hundreds of them were built, many in Florida. The “Subchaser” rode so low in the water they were often invisible to the U-boat periscope, and they were simple to operate. Armed to the teeth with deck guns, machine guns and depth charges, the three officers and 24-man crews needed only quick military training before putting to sea.²⁹⁹

The Navy also responded by transferring the Gulf Sea Frontier headquarters from isolated Key West to the mainland city of Miami. It commandeered an entire downtown office building for headquarters. The floor between the second and third floors was

²⁹⁷ Morison. 131.

²⁹⁸ Ibid. 132.

²⁹⁹ Theodore R. Treadwell. Splinter Fleet: Wooden Subchasers of WWII. Naval Institute Press. Annapolis. 2000. 19.

removed to provide a thirty-foot-tall situation room, complete with radio room, telex and gigantic charts of the Caribbean on which yeomen and WAVES plotted the courses of friendly vessels and noted the location of enemy contacts night and day. Experienced at ASW from his earlier duty as the initial Officer in Charge of Iceland, Rear Admiral James L. Kaufman assumed command.³⁰⁰

The Navy established a major ASW school to train seamen for the battle. It took over Biscayne Bay for training exercises and pre-empted downtown hotels to serve as barracks for the student-draftees. The Port of Miami was annexed to become the Navy's Submarine Chaser Training Center (SCTC), opening March 16, 1942 using dockside warehouses for classrooms.³⁰¹ The sailors of ASW were called the "Donald Duck Navy" in recognition of the unit logo provided by Walt Disney Studio artists of a swashbuckling Donald Duck armed with a cutlass, depth charges on his back, and a stethoscope about his neck.³⁰² Yet nothing comical characterized the exhibit the school's commanding officer installed to welcome new seamen: a blood-stained lifeboat riddled with bullet holes.³⁰³ The lifeboat had been found adrift and brought to the school. Trainees were marched to the site for a fiery lecture about how the survivors in the boat had been

³⁰⁰ Theodore Treadwell. 116. Two serious complications during the battle were posed by Vichy-French Martinique. Martinique collaborated with German U-boats, providing them fuel and safe haven. Still graver was the military threat posed by the French Navy aircraft carrier and its escorts. Knowing the US would ultimately invade France, and unwilling to antagonize the French military, the US maintained a careful neutrality towards Martinique until July 1943. At that time a US airborne invasion to neutralize the island was cancelled at the last minute when the Vichy authorities on the island signaled their willingness to surrender.

³⁰¹ John F. Kennedy was an instructor of PT Boat training there for six weeks while on temporary assignment awaiting back surgery for wounds received in the Solomon Islands.

³⁰² Noble. 3

³⁰³ Eric Purdon. Black Company: the Story of Subchaser 1264. Naval Institute Press. Annapolis, MD. 2000. 34.

slaughtered.³⁰⁴ The sailors graduated to man the thousand new Navy Subchasers, Patrol Craft, and Destroyer Escorts putting to sea up and down the East Coast to fight the U-boats. By 1944 the Navy deployed 25,000 officers and 57,000 sailors to the Splinter Fleet from the Florida Subchaser School.³⁰⁵

All of these efforts finally influenced the battle in the waters around Florida. The large numbers of suitable warships now being launched into the theater armed with the anti-submarine weapons of depth charges, sonar and radar, together with the air patrols now overhead, both fixed wing and aerostatic, military and civilian, dramatically restricted the U-boats previous freedom of operation. Even the darkened lighthouses of the Florida coast contained radio rooms applying the newly-learned math of triangulation: ascertaining the position of a U-boat from the strength of the radio messages it transmitted. Concurrently, the targets of the U-boats now operated in convoys under the command of the Gulf Sea Frontier Headquarters. Every civilian skipper who had refused to sail in convoy was now either dead or convinced of the need to sail in groups under naval jurisdiction, steaming on evasive zig-zag courses, darkened at night, maintaining radio silence, and subordinating themselves to Navy discipline. Just so, Navy Armed Guards rode every merchant ship, and each equipped with deck guns. Minefields were sown at the approaches to Key West, providing a safe anchorage for convoys to assemble before transiting the Straits under escort³⁰⁶

³⁰⁴ Edward Peary Stafford. Subchaser. Naval Institute Press. Annapolis. 1988. 8.

³⁰⁵ Charles W. Rice. "The Submarine Chaser Training Center: Downtown Miami's International Graduate School of Anti-Submarine Warfare During WWII." Tequesta. Miami, FL. Vol. LXX. 2010. 43.

³⁰⁶ Maureen Ogle. Key West: History of an Island of Dreams. University Press. Gainesville. 2003. 199.

June 11, 1942 marked the shifting tide. That day the U-boat *U-157* torpedoed the tanker *SS Hagan* off the north coast of Cuba. The next day an Army B-18 sighted the U-boat. It dropped four depth bombs, and forced the submarine to dive. The contact brought more aircraft to the scene, together with naval vessels from Key West and Miami. Ships and planes combed the Straits between Havana and Key West. On June 13, the Coast Guard Cutter *Thetis* spotted a periscope rising above the water and dropped a pattern of depth charges. They hit the mark. Only scraps of clothing and a pipe fragment stamped “Made in Germany” were recovered.³⁰⁷ Finally an enemy U-boat had been sunk.

By the end of 1943 the Gulf Sea Frontier had achieved a *mare clausum*. Enemy efforts to renew the offensive failed. On May 13, the *U-176* attacked a convoy off Cuba. She sank two vessels, but quickly paid the price. Subchasers, destroyers, aircraft, blimps, and small craft converged on the site. Members of the allied Cuban Navy aboard the new Subchaser *C-13* attacked with depth charges. The *U-176* went down with all hands lost. The Navy Subchaser School in Miami honored the *C-13* Cuban crew: the crew was piped aboard the station, and the flags of the two allies were exchanged in a ceremony on Biscayne Bay. A few months later another U-boat was sunk, this time in the Gulf of Mexico.³⁰⁸

The offensive petered out. The night of July 18, 1943 the Navy K-74 blimp from NAS Richmond went up on a routine patrol of the Florida Straits. Its radar revealed a U-boat surfaced and angling to attack a pair of merchant ships who were transiting the

³⁰⁷ Kenneth Wynn. U-boat Operations of the Second World War. Naval Institute Press. 1997. 121

³⁰⁸ Losses compiled from Wynn, 339-350; and Florida World War II Heritage Trail. 61-65.

passage.³⁰⁹ The blimp strafed and bombed the enemy, the U-boat One-Three-Four. The U-boat's anti-aircraft guns shot down the airship, but not before its bombs had mortally damaged the enemy U-boat.³¹⁰ Vainly endeavoring to escape, the U-boat was hunted as far as Cape Ferrol. There she was sunk by the RAF with all hands lost.

The sea battle off Florida was a victory for the US, but the battle had been long and costly. Enemy submarines attacked over a hundred merchant ships in the Gulf Sea Frontier. Almost all were sunk, with the loss of the ships, their cargoes, and 1,500 lives. Most of the US did not experience the U-boat attacks. The East Coast was hit by the full force of the U-boats, but for the other states their fight was only along their one front that faced the sea. The Florida peninsula experienced the battle on three sides east, west, and south; a front 1200 miles long. Florida's population was directly exposed to the war and militarized far more than most of the US. The State was on a war footing from end to end.

³⁰⁹ Morison. *History of US Naval Operations in WWII*. Vol. II. Little, Brown. Boston, MA. 1954. 194.

³¹⁰ Anthony D. Atwood. *An Incident at Sea: the Historic Combat between U.S. Navy Blimp K-74 and U-Boat 134*. Thesis. Florida International University. 2003. 57.

CHAPTER VI.

BASIC TRAINING FOR INVASION

With the onset of war, the US Army Ground Forces reported to Florida in great numbers to take advantage of the training opportunities the peninsula offered. A triad of bases at Camp Blanding, Camp Gordon Johnston, and Fort Pierce trained over a million ground soldiers, graduating many with a specialty in amphibious warfare, which the war demanded, and for which training Florida was the ideal place. Camp Blanding was absorbed by the Regular Army and gave Basic Training to hundreds of thousands of volunteers and draftees, teaching them how to camp, march and shoot; transforming them into riflemen, machine-gunners and artillerists.³¹¹ Camp Gordon Johnston Amphibious Training Center on the Gulf of Mexico taught them how to invade, and also trained the officers and crews of Army Transport Service how to service invasions from the sea. At Naval Amphibious Training Base (NATB) Fort Pierce, sailors and soldiers learned how to pilot landing craft executing ship to shore operations. Fort Pierce also generated the commandos, Scouts and Raiders, Rangers and Frogmen who enabled the invasions with secrecy and sabotage.³¹² There is an intimate connection between command of the sea and control of the shore. All the elements of the military ensemble needed to teach the art and science of seaborne invasions required to conquer the enemy were orchestrated in Florida. This chapter covers Florida as one of the most important Army training grounds in the entire war.

³¹¹ W. Stanford Smith. 56.

³¹² Robert A. Taylor. World War II in Fort Pierce. Arcadia Press. Charleston. 1999. 37.

The US could only win the war by bringing troops to bear on the battlefield. The principal Allies, Britain, the Soviet Union, and China were all hard pressed by Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan. The US had to go to the “World Island” made up of Africa, Europe and Asia, and it had to go in force. Aviation forces could wound the enemy, and naval forces could engage the enemy offshore, but only land forces could conquer them, and the land forces were needed in great numbers.

Twelve full Infantry Divisions trained in Florida.³¹³ Each was organized in three regiments. The regiment was broken down into battalions, and the battalions into rifle companies.³¹⁴ The weapon of the individual soldier was the new M1 Garand Rifle, a semi-automatic (self-loading) weapon that fired a clip of eight rounds.³¹⁵ It was the first semi-automatic rifle issued in mass to the soldiers of any nation. It gave the US rifleman an advantage in fire power. Most enemy soldiers were armed with bolt-action rifles requiring manual operation of the bolt for each shot. By contrast, the M1 rifle fired more rapidly, and was comparably accurate and dependable on the battlefield. The weapon weighed ten pounds and issued with it was either a 16-inch or a 10-inch bayonet. Every soldier had a utilitarian pot-shaped steel helmet with a net or fabric cover allowing for shrubbery to camouflage it. Officers, NCOs, military police, runners and drivers carried the government-issue .45 Caliber pistol, a sidearm with notable close-range stopping power. The Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR), Thompson submachine gun, M1 Carbine,

³¹³ US Army Ground Forces fielded 90 Divisions during the war.

³¹⁴ Matloff. 461.

³¹⁵ Ibid. 416.

bazookas, and hand grenades were all widely issued and available.³¹⁶ The field uniform was brown or olive drab; the soldiers wore brogan shoes with canvas leggings. The private soldier's pay was \$30.00 per month. They called themselves "GIs," an acronym for "Government Issue," and they poured into Florida.

Their other weapons included machine guns, mortars, and, as the technology progressed, flame-throwers. Each regiment included a field artillery battalion and the standard field-piece was the 105mm howitzer with a range of 11,200 meters. Guns were towed by a truck or a jeep, might be mounted on a tractor, or manhandled into position by soldiers. Each division also had an independent artillery battalion armed with the larger 155mm howitzer, capable of dropping explosives on targets 14,600 meters away.³¹⁷ Men armed such weapons arrived in Florida by the hundreds of thousands. An Engineer battalion with specialized construction and destruction talent, and a Medical Battalion accompanied each division. The division headquarters contained a signals company equipped with radios, a quartermaster company with trucks, Military Police, and a musical band. At full strength a US Army Division and its attached elements numbered close to 20,000 soldiers. Camp Blanding held maneuvers on a grand scale, with aggressor forces and defenders contending against each other. At night the camp was lit by the eerie glow of flares and tracer bullets.

³¹⁶ Matloff. 426.

³¹⁷ Ibid. 461.

Many of the units were raised elsewhere and came to Camp Blanding for war games, practicing for battle while they waited to go overseas.³¹⁸ Other units were activated on the spot at Camp Blanding. Volunteers and draftees from across Florida and the rest of the Southeast US reported to Camp Blanding straight from civilian life. They were stripped of their civilian belongings and herded through physical examinations and inoculations. Their heads were shaved and their military kit dumped in their arms. They were assembled into recruit companies under the supervision of Drill Sergeants. For the next thirteen weeks they learned the basics of soldiering: rigorously long marches to build up stamina, field bivouacs to toughen them, and target practice to learn riflery. They were taught a healthy obedience for the authority of wartime discipline. The object of the training was not to break their spirit, but rather to break their individuality and forge the pieces into a group that would act together to win in the face of war. The recruits lived roughly, slept sparingly, and exerted themselves greatly amid the enforced privations of the field. The rights of the buck private were few.

In addition to the numbered infantry divisions, many specialized ground combat units trained at Camp Blanding. The 508th Parachute Regiment was activated there. Known as the “Red Devils,” these paratroopers fought at D-Day, in Operation Market Garden, and the Battle of the Bulge. The 156th Regiment of Military Police served in North Africa and then provided security for the “Red Ball Express” supply truck convoy system across Europe. They also processed thousands of German prisoners of war. The

³¹⁸ Like the Roman two-legion camps of antiquity, Camp Blanding’s 170,000-acre size was large enough to accommodate two divisions at one time, allowing the soldiers to stage gigantic mock-battles against each other. One such contest pitted the Dixie Division of the Deep South against the 43rd National Guard Division of New England.

6th Cavalry (mechanized) Regiment was activated at Camp Blanding served under George Patton Jr., serving through 281 continuous days of combat.³¹⁹

Camp Blanding was Army Headquarters in Florida, and a major Replacement Training Center. Army Ground Forces policy was to keep its original units intact, but as the war wore on these were depleted by casualties. Reinforcements were required to keep the line of battle up to strength. Rather than activate more units, fresh soldiers were trained at Camp Blanding and then forwarded to units already overseas to join them as replacements. In the parlance of the GI, Camp Blanding was a REPL-DEPO (Replacement Depot) of major proportions. The base also served as the Army Reception Center for soldiers returning from overseas for reassignment either to another war theater or to duty State-side. Because of the nature of WWII, soldiers were enlisted for the duration. It was the processing center for soldiers being discharged, primarily for wounds. The camp hosted so many soldiers in 1943 and 1944 that based on its population it was statistically the fourth largest city in Florida.³²⁰ All combat arms; infantry, armor, and artillery, and more than 825,000 soldiers received all or part of their training at Camp Blanding alone, 10 percent of the 8,020,000 soldiers of the Army Ground Forces in WWII.³²¹

A select group of soldiers trained at Camp Carrabelle Army Amphibious Training Center, the second major Army base in Florida. The base opened on the Florida Gulf

³¹⁹ Army Almanac. 687.

³²⁰ Mormino. 324.

³²¹ American War and Military Operations Casualties: Lists and Statistics. Congressional Research Services. Library of Congress. Government Printing Office. Washington, DC. 2007. 3-4.

Coast in the autumn of 1942, thanks to its military geography. The Command began life at Cape Cod, Massachusetts, but the site proved incompatible with wintertime training. The New England seas were too rough and too cold, the coastline too forbidding for practice invasions. The dense populations on the East Coast also compromised security. Florida filled the breach. Its calm waters, long placid beaches, and absence of civilian population made it a perfect schoolyard for the seaborne invasions critical to the war.³²² Planners studied various locations in the State, choosing Carrabelle for its twenty miles of contiguous beachfront, sheltered by the offshore barrier of Georges and Dog Islands. It offered privacy, warm waters and easy beaches long enough to land an entire division at once. The Gulf Coast location was close enough to the eastern seaboard to suit the US strategy of “Germany First.” Another quality recommended the site: the terrain approximated the arduous jungles of the Pacific. It was a snake, wild boar, scorpion and mosquito infested swamp.³²³

The camp was soon renamed Camp Gordon Johnston to honor of Army Medal of Honor recipient, Col. Gordon Johnston (1874-1934).³²⁴ Landing craft for mock invasions assembled on the beaches and in adjacent Apalachicola Bay.³²⁵ Hitting the beaches was the specialty practiced there. Ten thousand acres at Carrabelle were purchased outright by the War Department, and another 150,000 acres were leased from the St. Joe Paper

³²² Maj. Marshall O. Becker. *The Amphibious Training Center: Study Number 22.* Army Ground Forces. Washington, DC. US Army. 1946. 1.

³²³ David J. Coles. “Hell-By-The-Sea: Camp Gordon Johnston in World War II.” Florida Historical Quarterly. Vol 73. 1994-1. 7.

³²⁴ Becker. 12.

³²⁵ *Ibid.* 15.

Company.³²⁶ Unlike Camp Blanding, Camp Gordon Johnston was not built as the result of the planned and premeditated build-up of the US military. It was set up in haste once the fighting began. Field latrines and canvas pup tents were all the camp had to offer.³²⁷ The soldiers gave it a name of their own: “Hell-By-The-Sea.”³²⁸

The first instructors transferred from Cape Cod arrived under the command of Brig. General Keating in September 1942: the 2nd Engineer Amphibian Brigade, 400 officers and 7,000 enlisted men.³²⁹ Their mission was to train to the infantry who would come next. The Engineers hacked the camp out of the wilderness. Towers were erected and hung with netting overlooking the shores to simulate ship debarking. Rifle ranges and obstacle courses were laid out. In early November the 38th Infantry Division arrived for training.³³⁰ Landing craft at Carrabelle were in short supply. Some were sent from Cape Cod lashed down on flatbed cars and sent by train.³³¹ Other landing craft reached the camp by a more circuitous route: a journey that demonstrated the can-do attitude of the soldiers and showed the spirit of the times.

Army engineers from Camp Gordon Johnston were sent to Norfolk, Virginia to bring back LCM (Landing Craft, Mechanized).³³² These were motorized open barges,

³²⁶ Coles. 7.

³²⁷ Ibid. 2.

³²⁸ Ibid. 55.

³²⁹ Becker. 23

³³⁰ Ibid. 56.

³³¹ Ibid. 12.

³³² Oliver Smith. *Amphibian: Camp Gordon Johnston Association newsletter*. Winter 2008. 4.

with a ramp and a small armored wheelhouse mounted aft. They were built to be driven as close to shore as possible. When the vessel grounded, the ramp was lowered to allow the sixty troops inside to storm ashore. The Camp Gordon Johnston engineers took charge of twenty LCMs, three soldiers to each.³³³ In a flotilla they headed south along the Atlantic seaboard, destination Carrabelle.³³⁴ They followed the East Coast to Florida's Indian River. At Port Saint Lucie they entered the Saint Lucie River. Halfway across the interior of the State they came to Lake Okeechobee. Striking across Lake Okeechobee in their convoy of landing craft, the soldiers picked up the Caloosahatchee River on the western shore of the Lake. They piloted their LCMs the length of the Caloosahatchee River, emerging into the Gulf of Mexico at Fort Myers. From there they steered north up the Gulf coast of Florida, eventually reaching the Carrabelle beaches. It was a nautical feat, a journey of 1,500 miles in open boats.³³⁵

Camp Gordon Johnston itself developed a reputation all its own. General Omar Bradley remembered the camp in his memoirs:

Camp Gordon Johnston was the most miserable Army installation I had seen since my days in Yuma, Arizona, ages past. It had been hacked out of palmetto scrub along a bleak stretch of beach.... Every training exercise was a numbing experience. The man who selected that site would have been court-martialed for stupidity.”³³⁶

The camp mission statement epitomized how warlike Florida had become:

³³³ Oliver Smith. 4.

³³⁴ Ibid. 5.

³³⁵ Ibid.

³³⁶ Omar M. Bradley and Clay Blair. A General's Life. New York. Simon & Shuster. 1983. 112.

...the instruction was to emphasize loading and unloading landing craft quickly and quietly by day and night; boat discipline and control of landing craft; organization and control of troops during loading and unloading operations; tactical operation, and supply of combat teams, including the seizure of the beachhead and the advance inland to the objective. Crossing beach obstacles and defensive works; clearing the beach of obstacles, demolitions, etc., and the subsequent beach organization to support operations; resupply; night operations; development of an effective intelligence to amphibious operations, including the employment of intelligence agencies and scouts of all units; development of signal communications peculiar to amphibious operations; using smoke screens; the use of chemicals for contamination purposes; decontamination; air-ground support; antiaircraft defense; swimming; camouflage; knife and bayonet fighting; judo; infiltration; battle firing; firing automatic weapons from landing craft; and combat in cities.”³³⁷

The war the GI Army fought was one of invasions landing on foreign shores, often in the face of the enemy. Armadas had to assemble suddenly offshore at a specific place and time, arriving stealthily and in secret. The nature of the shoreline and the whereabouts of the enemy were unknown factors. While warships and aircraft pulverized the shore with gunnery, bombing and strafing, the soldiers of the transport ships clambered down into small craft alongside. The stubby open boats then sloshed to the shore loaded with soldiers, under whatever sea-state prevailed. As close to the water’s edge as possible the boats dropped their ramps and the soldiers disgorged. Sometimes they landed dry-shod on empty beaches. But sometimes they stepped into the face of hell: water over their heads, overpowering undertow, barbed wire entanglements, razor-sharp shoals, and murderous enemy fire. As they struggled ashore, friendly fire from the ships had to cease at exactly the right moment, or the ships would be killing their own men. Meanwhile, the landing craft returned to the ships to take on another load of troops

³³⁷ Bradley and Blair. 57.

and repeat the process. It was organized chaos, dangerous and complicated under the best of circumstances.

Camp Gordon Johnston provided realistic amphibious training. Soldiers trained for the daunting invasions of Sicily, Italy and France in the European Theater of Operations (ETO), and the equally tough invasions of New Guinea, the Philippines, and other islands of the Pacific Theater.³³⁸ Assault troops and beach masters learned the craft of conquering overseas enemies on Florida's sunny shores.³³⁹ In typical training, a wave of landing craft loaded with troops closed in from the sea on a specific beach, of which there were five at Camp Gordon Johnston. Barrage balloons were deployed overhead while landing craft hit the beach. Each beach covered 500 yards strewn with realistic obstacles, and was capable of handling 125 men (a standard rifle company) every forty minutes. The landing craft ground themselves on the sands of the beach. The soldiers rushed ashore. They were hurried every step of the way by umpires. The waterline was considered the most dangerous place in a landing. The soldiers were pushed to get off the beach and press inland. Minutes behind them came the next wave of assault troops.

Scrambling in from the beach the soldiers encountered the infiltration course. Each course was 150 yards wide and 100 yards long, designed to expose the soldier to the noise, confusion, and danger of the battlefield.³⁴⁰ Soldiers crawled the length of the course under or through barbed wire, obstacles, logs, stumps, and shell holes. The course

³³⁸ Florida Medal of Honor recipient James Henry Mills fought in Italy. Pvt. Mills, US Army, received the medal for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at Cisterna di Littoria, Italy, on May 24, 1944.

³³⁹ Becker. 58.

³⁴⁰ Ibid. 58.

was “traversed by the interlocking fire of six machine guns the trajectory of which cleared the ground by thirty inches.” Everything about the training was meant to be as real as possible, and even the machine guns fired live ammunition.³⁴¹

Figure 11. ³⁴²

Infantry Divisions Trained at Camp Blanding

<i>Unit</i>	<i>Nickname</i>	<i>Campaigns</i>	<i>Casualties</i>
31 st Infantry Division (National Guard)	Dixie Rifles	New Guinea, Philippines, Western Pacific	KIA 340 WIA 1,391 DOW 74
43rd Infantry Division (National Guard)	Winged Victory	Northern Solomon Is. New Guinea, Philippines	KIA 1,128 WIA 4,887 DOW 278
1 st Infantry Division	Big Red One	Algeria, Tunisia, Sicily, D-Day, Northern France, Rhineland, Ardennes, Central Europe	KIA 3,616 WIA 15,208 DOW 664
29 th Infantry Division (National Guard)	Blue and Gray Division	D-Day, Northern France, Rhineland, Central Europe	KIA 3,887 WIA 15,541 DOW 899
30 th Infantry Division (National Guard)	Old Hickory	Normandy, Northern France, Rhineland, Ardennes, Central Europe	KIA 3,003 WIA 13,376 DOW 513
36 th Infantry Division (National Guard)	Texas Division	Naples, Rome, Anzio, Southern France, Rhineland, Ardennes, Central Europe	KIA 3,131 WIA 13,191 DOW 506
63 rd Infantry Division	Blood and Fire	Rhineland, Central Europe	KIA 861 WIA 3,326 DOW 113
66 th Infantry Division	Black Panthers	Northern France	KIA 795 WIA 636 DOW 5
79 th Infantry Division	The Cross of Lorraine	Normandy, Northern France, Rhineland, Ardennes, Central Europe	KIA 2,476 WIA 10,971 DOW 467

³⁴¹ Becker. 59.

³⁴² Compiled from The Army Almanac. Department of the Army. 651-684. “KIA” indicates killed in action. “WIA” indicates wounded in action. “DOW” indicates died of wounds.

Figure 12. ³⁴³

Infantry Divisions Trained at Camp Gordon Johnston

<i>Unit</i>	<i>Nickname</i>	<i>Campaigns</i>	<i>Casualties</i>
38 th Infantry Division	Cyclone Division	New Guinea, Luzon, Leyte	KIA 645 WIA 2,814 DOW 139
28 th Infantry Division	Keystone Division	Normandy, Northern France, Rhineland, Ardennes, Central Europe	KIA 2,316 WIA 9,609 DOW 367
4 th Infantry Division	Ivy Division	D-Day, Normandy, Northern France, Rhineland, Ardennes, Central Europe	KIA 4,097 WIA 17,371 DOW 757

Once past the infiltration course, the soldiers discovered a simulated Nazi town named “Shickelgruber Haven.”³⁴⁴ The military had turned the abandoned logging village of Harbeson City into a European town for the practice of urban combat. The soldiers were exposed to the street fighting they would face in the shattered towns of Europe. They learned such useful combat skills as scaling walls with and without ropes, fighting from rooftops, using grenades at close quarters, and recognizing and de-arming bobby traps. House-to-house searches and urban fighting in the bombed out village used live ammunition. Additional training included target practice from moving jeeps to simulate firing from landing crafts.³⁴⁵ The training also included swimming classes at three sites: the Carrabelle River, Wakulla Springs, and the Gulf of Mexico itself.³⁴⁶ Three entire

³⁴³ Compiled from The Army Almanac. Department of the Army. 651-684. “KIA” indicates killed in action. “WIA” indicates wounded in action. “DOW” indicates died of wounds.

³⁴⁴Becker. 60.

³⁴⁵ Ibid. 8.

³⁴⁶ Ibid. 59.

Divisions went through the course, practicing day and night.³⁴⁷ Among them was the 4th Infantry Division, being brought to a high state of readiness to serve as an invasion spearhead.³⁴⁸ The experience of Private Harper Coleman was typical of the rough and ready regimen:

Almost upon arrival, I saw a notice on the bulletin board regarding the need for volunteers (a dirty word) for a project involving swimmers. As I had been a Red Cross swimming instructor, I stuck my neck out and volunteered. Much to my surprise, the next day I was ordered to report to battalion headquarters at "X"-Hour, with a towel and a packed lunch. For the next six weeks, this was my daily routine. I, along with the other volunteers, assembled at a nearby lake to give lessons in swimming to novices and/or non-swimmers. The lake, inhabited with alligators, had a sandy beach at one end with two piers extending out into the water. The first day there, we just stood on the beach while the engineers built a tower for armed guards to stand and shoot at the alligators. We then began to give swimming lessons to truckloads of GIs and officers scheduled to arrive with light field packs, fatigues, and shoes. The troops were marched out one pier, ordered into the water, and then to remove their shoes and tie laces, then hang the shoes around their neck and swim to the other pier. We had numerous near drownings, but did not lose a single person.

I recall one day a group of officers of many ranks arrived. The ranking officer was a non-swimmer and had brought his staff along to assist him in covering the distance from pier to pier. We instructors, on and off duty, had to form a line in the water between the piers and in front of the alligators. In mid-November our swimming detail ended and we returned to our units to prepare for amphibious training. My last thought was, *No more peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for lunch.*³⁴⁹

The 4th Division culminated its training with the entire division staging a landing on Thanksgiving Day, 1943. Then they departed for the war. On D-Day, June 6, 1944,

³⁴⁷ Becker. 60.

³⁴⁸ Army Almanac. 653.

³⁴⁹ Harper Coleman – Company H, 2nd Bn., 8th Infantry Regiment. War Stories: Utah Beach to Pleiku, the 4th Infantry Division. 4th Infantry Division Association. St Johns Press. Baton Rouge. 2001. 29.

the 4th Division's soldiers were the first American infantrymen to hit the beach -- apart from the Army Rangers who had been trained at Fort Pierce.³⁵⁰

At Camp Gordon Johnston the Army also began assembling naval equipment in anticipating amphibious landings. The Army acquired a large number of seagoing vessels. These included 35 troopships, 16 cargo ships, 55 inter-island freighters, 2 cable-laying ships, a communications ship, 36 floating, self-propelled warehouses, and 23 hospital ships. Smaller vessels included 510 barges, 104 small tankers, and 746 tugs. This fleet came under the command of the Army Transport Service (ATS) and much of it collected at the Apalachicola Bay estuary of Camp Gordon Johnston.³⁵¹ By mid-1943 the camp was a major staging port for the ATS fleet.

The Army drew heavily on the graduates of nearby St. Petersburg Merchant Marine Training Center to man these vessels. Many of the officers for the Army's vessels came from the St. Petersburg Maritime Service Marine Officer Candidate School. The ten week OCS there graduated 614 deck officers and 512 engine officers in 1943. The graduates, commissioned as Junior Marine Officers in the Army Transport Service went to Jackson Square in New Orleans for advanced instruction at the US Maritime Service Upgrade School on Lake Ponchartrain.³⁵² The Graduates were designated third mates in the Army Transport Service, ostensibly to be assigned to Merchant Marine ships.³⁵³ The needs of the Army, however, came first. In February 1944 the entire

³⁵⁰ Army Almanac. 653.

³⁵¹ Matloff. 541.

³⁵² Koneazny. 42.

³⁵³ Ibid. 56.

graduating class of the Maritime Service Upgrade School, 400 Junior Maritime Officers who had just completed six months of training there and at St. Petersburg, assembled in a drill hall.³⁵⁴ They were asked to volunteer for the US Army. Volunteers would be given direct appointments as 2nd Lieutenants in the Army with a branch transfer to the Army Transport Service. Those who refused would have their Maritime Service commissions revoked, and be drafted into the Army as privates and assigned to the same duty, at one-third the pay and no rank. All volunteered for the first option.³⁵⁵

The former Maritime Officers were sent to Camp Gordon Johnston to learn their new duties. Organized into platoons of 40-men each and given a six-week Army Officer Training course, they were assigned to specialized Army Harbor Craft Companies. These units, unlike any other in the Army, contained tugboats, barges, cranes and small craft. Harbor Craft Companies comprised 50 officers and 250 enlisted men each.³⁵⁶ These units facilitated seaborne invasions, utilizing and repairing war-devastated ports and harbors. Once proficient, they shipped out around the world to manage invasions. Many of the tugboats, barges, skiffs, scows and lighters that would join them were built in Florida during the great shipbuilding activity that seized the peninsula.

A third major Florida base dedicated to invasion training was Fort Pierce Naval Amphibious Training Base. Fort Pierce trained commandos and landing craft skippers,

³⁵⁴ Koneazny. 60.

³⁵⁵ Ibid. 60.

³⁵⁶ Ibid. 63-66.

without whom the seaborne landings could not take place.³⁵⁷ In early 1942, the initial joint Army-Navy Amphibious Command for training Scouts and Raiders began at Chesapeake Bay in Maryland, but the winter seas prevented year-around training there. The military scouted for a suitable location and found it at Fort Pierce.³⁵⁸ The long barrier islands of North Hutchinson and South Hutchinson Island sheltered the Indian River beaches, and Sebastian Inlet between the islands gave controlled access to the Atlantic. There were miles of empty beaches, and Indian River provided a calm maritime staging area. The government claimed the 19,000 acre site and annexed miles of the Florida coast. The Naval Amphibious Training Base opened formally on January 26, 1943.³⁵⁹

Like Camp Blanding and Camp Gordon Johnston, Fort Pierce also lacked amenities. The NATB made do with pine shacks the classroom and training facilities. Tent cities housed the troops. The newly-created JANET (Joint Army/Navy Experimental Testing) Board set up shop at the base, taking over North Hutchinson Island for a research and testing facility.³⁶⁰ Commando training of combined teams of Army and Navy volunteers known as “Scouts and Raiders,” began immediately. The Scouts and Raiders trained to infiltrate by water wherever there was coastline that could be penetrated. The twelve-week course covered swimming and small boat handling, photographic interpretation, hand-to-hand combat, camouflage and survival techniques,

³⁵⁷ Taylor. WWII II in Fort Pierce. 8.

³⁵⁸ Ibid.

³⁵⁹ Gordon L. Rottman. US Special Warfare Units in the Pacific: 1942-1945: Scouts, Raiders, Rangers, and Recon Units. Osprey Publishing. 2005. New York. 38.

³⁶⁰ Taylor. WWII in Fort Pierce. 37.

signaling and radio operations. A lightweight and collapsible rubber raft was created by Goodyear for their use.³⁶¹

One unit created at Fort Pierce was Special Service Unit #1, established in July 1943 and later renamed the 7th Amphibious Scouts.³⁶² Their mission was to go ashore ahead of the assault forces marking channels for the incoming landing craft, taking soundings, blowing up beach obstacles and communicating between the coming ashore, and the warships engaged at shore bombardment. The 7th Amphibious Scouts served in more than forty such landings throughout the Pacific during the war.³⁶³ Other Scouts and Raiders from Fort Pierce deployed to the CBI Theater to prepare the inevitable invasion of Japan.³⁶⁴ Disguised as Chinese coolies operating from sampans, they infiltrated the Japanese-held coast of China. They surveyed the coast, studied the enemy, and set up covert bases to facilitate the invasion when it was launched.³⁶⁵

United States Army Rangers also came to Fort Pierce for training.³⁶⁶ A wartime experiment of General Marshall, the Rangers sought to be self-sufficient light infantry shock troops operating independently, harking back to the colonial rangers of the Revolutionary era. In September 1943, the 2nd Battalion of Army Rangers came to Fort Pierce. The unit, commanded by Col. James E. Rudder, went through the Scouts and

³⁶¹ Taylor. WWII in Fort Pierce. 46.

³⁶² Fred J. Pushies. Weapons of the Navy SEALs. MBI Publishing. St. Paul, MN. 2004. 12.

³⁶³ Ibid.

³⁶⁴ Ibid.

³⁶⁵ Ibid.

³⁶⁶ Rottman. 38.

Raiders School at Fort Pierce. After training in Florida they shipped out to Scotland, where they practiced mountain climbing. This unit had the assignment to storm the heights of Pointe du Hoc, one of the most dangerous missions of the D-Day invasion of Normandy.³⁶⁷

Navy commandos trained in Florida for D-Day included Naval Beach Battalions and Navy Combat Demolition Units (NCDU).³⁶⁸ In June 1943, the NCDU program began at Fort Pierce.³⁶⁹ Six-man teams trained to neutralize obstacles on the beaches. The enemy had embedded barriers of steel girders and cement, often bobby-trapped, offshore. The NCDUs were to dynamite the obstacles before the landing forces reached them. Replicated obstacles were strewn along the Fort Pierce beaches and the NCDU practiced the dangerous art of blowing them up at close range while under live fire.³⁷⁰

Thirty-one NCDU teams from Fort Pierce participated in the D-Day invasion. The morning of June 6, 1944 the teams hit the beaches at 0630 hours. Their rubber boats full of explosive offered tempting targets. Some team members had to stand on each others shoulders under fire in waist-deep water to place their charges. Casualties of 91 killed and wounded at Omaha Beach ranked over 50 percent of the men engaged. The 2nd Ranger Battalion, the 6th and 7th Naval Beach Battalions, and the NCDUs teams were

³⁶⁷ Taylor. WII in Fort Pierce. 46.

³⁶⁸ LT(jg) H. L. Blackwell, Jr., USNR. "Report on Navy Combat Demolition Units in Operation Neptune." Department of the Navy. July 5, 1944. 1.

³⁶⁹ Ibid. 3.

³⁷⁰ Ibid. 4.

only the advance elements of the largest of the seaborne invasions.³⁷¹ All three of the infantry divisions, over 60,000 soldiers making up the American contingent of Allied landing force on D-Day (the 1st Infantry Division, 29th Infantry Division, and 4th Infantry Division) had previously trained in Florida.³⁷² The D-Day invasion spearhead contained a high percentage of troops who had received training in Florida.

Fort Pierce also developed the Underwater Demolition Teams (UDT) for covert warfare.³⁷³ Lieutenant Commander Draper L. Kaufmann led them. Kaufmann was an Annapolis graduate denied a commission in the Navy because of his poor eyesight. When the war broke out, he volunteered as an ambulance driver in France, and later joined the Royal Navy as a bomb disposal expert. After Pearl Harbor Kaufmann rejoined the US Navy and was readily promoted for his skill with explosives. He was ordered to create the UDT and chose Fort Pierce for the purpose.³⁷⁴ The UDT pioneered such swimming devices as flexible fins, face masks, oxygen bottles, and mini-sub. These champion swimmers were known as the “Naked Warriors,” and nicknamed “Frogmen.” Their method of rapid seaborne extraction by PT Boat involved grasping an arm ring extended by the craft as it sped past. About 3,500 Frogmen trained at Fort Pierce.³⁷⁵ The rigorous training was capped by “Hell Week,” involving extreme challenges such as

³⁷¹ The popular war movie *Saving Private Ryan*, depicts a small group of soldiers engaged in the D-Day invasion. The captain in charge (played by Tom Hanks) and his team are accurately depicted by their uniform patches as members of the 2nd Rangers. Their soldier-interpreter wears the 29 Division insignia.

³⁷² Army Almanac. 652, 653, 661.

³⁷³ Robert A. Taylor. “The Frogmen of Florida: US Navy Combat Demolition Training in Fort Pierce, 1943-1946.” *Florida Historical Quarterly*. Vol. 75. Winter. 91.

³⁷⁴ Ibid. 289-90.

³⁷⁵ Ibid. 294.

carrying telephone poles over their heads to learn group dynamics, discipline and endurance.³⁷⁶

The Fort Pierce Attack Boat School was a major component at the Fort Pierce base teaching sailors how to operate landing craft. Over 30,000 sailors received instruction at operate landing craft (attack boats) on the Indian River.³⁷⁷ They learned how to stow their landing craft aboard transports, and to deploy them offshore when the time came. They practiced maneuvering their small craft alongside troop transports and holding them steady while troops climbed down into them. They trained at bringing their landing craft inshore, reading the buoys and the signals of the beach masters, and coming as close as possible to the shore. The difference between landing troops in three feet of water, or six feet of water, was life and death. The school taught how to operate the rocket launchers, cannon and machine guns some of the landing craft were armed with for pummeling the shoreline with firepower immediately in advance of a landing.

The Fort Pierce base gave instruction at operating all the various landing craft; the large LCS(L) Landing Craft Support, Large; LCT (Landing Craft Tank); and the smaller LCVP (Landing Craft Vehicle, Personnel), known as the Higgins Boat. Second generation landing craft at the base included the DUKW, and the LVT (Landing Vehicle, Tracked) of Florida-inventor Donald Roebling.³⁷⁸ Roebling designed the LVT at Dunedin, and perfected it in the Everglades.³⁷⁹ Known as the Alligator, or the Amtrac,

³⁷⁶ These warfare units evolved into the Navy SEAL (Sea, Air, Land) Teams of today.

³⁷⁷ Taylor. World War II in Fort Pierce. 64.

³⁷⁸ Lewis N. Wynne and Richard Moorhead. Florida in WWII. History Pres. Charleston. 2010. 213

³⁷⁹ A few of these storied vehicles are in use today around the world as amphibious tour buses.

this landing craft could cover sixty miles of open sea, and was equipped with tank-like caterpillar treads that engaged on reaching the shore.³⁸⁰ The “Alligator” could crawl over offshore reefs, and was unstoppable by beach obstacles. Protected by chassis armor, the Alligator was prized by the US Marines who stormed the atolls of the Pacific.³⁸¹ Altogether, 110,000 soldiers and sailors trained at Fort Pierce, making it during the war a major Florida city.³⁸²

The topography of Florida was essential for invasion training. Not only was the peninsula ideal for field bivouacs, but its shelving sandy beachfront was the best suited place on the North American Continent for the amphibious training needed. The beaches of the West Coast of the US are narrow, rocky, and obstructed by mountain ranges extending to the shoreline. The seas themselves are cold, falling off quickly into deep waters with strong and difficult currents. Basic training for invasions there was impractical. On the East Coast of the US, the North Atlantic Ocean renders much of its shoreline similarly unsuitable. Where there were spacious, hospitable beaches there were also large civilian populations, undesirable witnesses to military activity. That left temperate, unpopulated Florida.

The serious of the mission demanded precisely executed invasions. The British geo-strategist and colleague of Admiral Mahon, Col. C.E. Caldwell, devoted considerable study to the tactical difficulties of amphibious warfare. His appreciation of the dangers

³⁸⁰ Wynne and Moorhead. 214.

³⁸¹ Taylor. WWII in Fort Pierce. 82-3.

³⁸² Ibid. 127.

faced was realistic: “If the attacking army is prepared to accept heavy loss, it may succeed. But the operation is not one to be ventured on with a light heart, or one to be undertaken without counting the cost and without accepting risk of disaster.”³⁸³

Of the 12 Infantry Divisions who trained in Florida, nine of them, 3 out of 4, were sent to the Africa-Mediterranean-Middle Eastern and ETO, fulfilling the US strategy of “Europe First.” Florida’s rail links to the East Coast Embarkation Centers facilitated their departure aboard ATS troop transport ships and merchant marine convoys. Florida’s elementary school for war taught the Army the basics of soldiering, how to storm the enemy shores, and how to dig in and hold them. It trained the maritime officers and crews who supported the invasions and exploited them. It taught the landing craft coxswains and boat crews who brought the troops and cargo onto the beaches. The frogmen and commandos who led the way honed their skills in Florida as they sharpened their blades. Their mission of invasion and conquest was learnt in Florida. It was realistic training delivered with urgency. The war was at its peak.

³⁸³ C.E. Caldwell. Military Operations and Maritime Preponderance: Their Relations and Interdependence. Blackwell and Sons. London. 1905. 360.

CHAPTER VII.

BOMBS AWAY AND OVER THE HUMP

This chapter examines the development of Florida as a locus for aerial force projection world wide. Two activities pertaining to aviation combined to fine tune the State's wartime mission. Florida hosted the deadly art of massed aerial bombardment taught to great numbers of students, who upon graduation departed for the front. Equally important, with battle theaters literally around the world, a new weapon of war, the airlift, emerged as a central mission of Florida. This was especially true of the critical, often overlooked China-Burma-India (CBI) Theater. Florida's new guests came to learn their craft and carry the war overseas.

On March 1, 1943, General Arnold insisted to the Secretary of War: "The No. 1 job of an air force is bombardment."³⁸⁴ Florida was the center for developing this capability with B-17 and B-24 bombers, and with even greater numbers of the newer B-26 Martin Marauder twin-engine medium bomber. The B-26 was first flown in November 1940, and after Pearl Harbor it went into crash production. As quickly as the B-26s came off the Martin assembly lines in Maryland and Oklahoma they went straight to the Air Corps in Florida. MacDill Field was the primary training base for the new bomber. Most of the B-26 Bomber Groups the US fielded in World War II were activated and fully trained in Florida.³⁸⁵ Pilots, navigators, radiomen, gunners,

³⁸⁴ H. H. Arnold. "Report of the Commanding General of the Army Air Forces to the Secretary of War." The War Reports of General George C. Marshall, General H.H. Arnold, Fleet Admiral Ernest J. King. Lippincott. New York. 1947. 303.

³⁸⁵Maurer. 439.

bombardiers and mechanics all trained at MacDill Field and its many auxiliary locations across the central peninsula.³⁸⁶

The start of the new B-26 training program in 1942 seemed like training for disaster. The B-26 had characteristics making it difficult for the inexperienced pilots to fly. Most dangerously, the plane had a tendency to stall. The plane had to be flown at exact airspeeds, and if the final approach before landing was not kept at the relatively high speed of 150 mph, the engines tended to fail.³⁸⁷ Engine failure right after takeoff was also common. MacDill Field was surrounded on three sides by water, and the bombers regularly splashed there. “One a day in Tampa Bay,” became an unwelcome motto at MacDill.³⁸⁸ During one 30-day period, 15 bombers crashed into Tampa Bay, generating other B-26 nicknames, such as the “widow maker,” and the “flying prostitute,” a sobriquet referring to the plane’s short wingspan that gave it no “visible means of support.”³⁸⁹

These difficulties prompted the Air Corps to assign the now-famous Jimmy Doolittle to solve the problem. Back from his spectacular bombing raid on Japan and promoted to Brigadier General, he came to MacDill Field to investigate that summer.³⁹⁰ The problem, he determined, lay less in the aircraft itself, than in inadequate pilot

³⁸⁶ Maurer. 70.

³⁸⁷ Nick Wynne and Richard Moorehead. World War II in Florida. History Press. Charleston. 2010. 82.

³⁸⁸ McDill Thunderbolt. Vol 28. No. 3. October 3, 2003. 1.

³⁸⁹ Ibid.

³⁹⁰ Doolittle and Glinnes. 254.

training.³⁹¹ He modified training to correspond to the plane's requirements. Pilots under instruction were coached in the idiosyncrasies of the B-26, while the plane itself was modified with a longer wingspan and larger fin and rudder.³⁹²

Nine of the twelve operational B-26 Bomb Groups that fought in WWII were activated and trained in Florida. All served in the European Theater, and many flew as part of the Eighth Bomber Command (later renamed the 8th Air Force). Together with the Florida-trained B-17 Flying Fortresses, and B-24 Liberators, the B-26 bomb groups made up over twenty percent of the "Mighty Eighth."³⁹³ That command, at top strength, fielded 2,000 bombers and 1,000 fighter planes, and over 200,000 American personnel. It was half the size of the entire Air Force of today. The Eighth suffered 26,000 killed and 21,000 wounded: half of the Air Corps casualties in the war. It also boasted 261 fighter pilot aces and 305 gunner aces in the Eighth Air Force. Thirty-one of the fighter aces had 15 or more aircraft confirmed victories.³⁹⁴

Every time a squadron was activated the entire unit assembled in ranks on the tarmac, pilots, bombardiers, machine gunners, radiomen, ground crews, and maintenance personnel. During the war years these impressive ceremonies were a regular part of Florida's landscape. The commanders and local civilian officials gave speeches. The ceremonies included flags, military bands, bugles, and salutes. The civilian community poured onto the base to witness the event. Under their eyes, the airmen paraded the flight

³⁹¹ Doolittle and Glinnes. 255.

³⁹² Maurer. 200.

³⁹³ Graham Smith. The Mighty Eighth in the Second World War. Countryside Books. Newbury, Berkshire. 2001. 288-91.

³⁹⁴ Army Command and General Staff College (ACGSC), MLHIC Series.

line in formation, pilots in leather flight caps and gunners carrying their machine guns at shoulder arms, shouting out the new Air Corps anthem: *Off We Go into the Wild Blue Yonder!* Each time a unit departed for the war such ceremonies were repeated, with perhaps more emotion, especially after casualty figures became known.

Figure 13.

B-26 Marauder Bomb Groups Activated and Trained in Florida³⁹⁵

<i>Command</i>	<i>Squadrons</i>	<i>Activated-MacDill</i>	<i>Bases/Theaters/Awards</i>
21 st Bomb Group	313 th , 314 th , 315 th , 398 th	June 17, 1942	Third Air Force Trainer Cadre
320 th Bomb Group	441 st , 442 nd , 443 rd , 444 th	June 23, 1942	North Africa, Sicily, Italy, France Distinguished Unit Commendation (DUC) Battle of Siegfried Line
322 Bomb Group	449 th , 450 th , 451 st , 452 nd	July 17, 1942	England, France, Germany DUC – Battle of D-Day
323 rd Bomb Group	453 rd , 454 th , 455 th , 456 th	August 21, 1942	England, France, Germany DUC – Battle of Bastogne
344 th Bomb Group	494 th , 495 th , 496 th , 497 th	September. 8, 1942	England, France, Belgium, Germany DUC – France
386 th Bomb Group	552 nd , 553 rd , 554 th , 555 th	December 1, 1942	England, France, Belgium DUC – ETO
387 th Bomb Group	556 th , 557 th , 558 th , 559 th	December 1, 1942	England, France, Holland DUC – Battle of the Bulge
391 st Bomb Group	572 nd , 573 rd , 574 th , 575 th	January. 21, 1943	England, France, Belgium DUC – Battle of the Bulge
394 th Bomb Group	584 th , 585 th , 586 th , 587 th	March 5, 1943	England, France, Holland DUC – Battle of D-Day
397 th Bomb Group	596 th , 597 th , 598 th , 599 th	April 20, 1943	England, France, Holland DUC – Battle of the Bulge

The bombing program grew enormously. In March 1942, MacDill expanded with a huge bombing area at Avon Park General Bombing and Gunnery Range in the center of

³⁹⁵ Compiled from Maurer. 70, 199-200, 202-3, 203-4, 222, 273, 274, 278, 281-2, 283, 81-82, 154, 156-8, 162-3, 166-7, 168-9, 338, 354-5, 101-2, 160-1, 168-9.

the State.³⁹⁶ Acquiring first 107,059 acres of swamp and scrub, the military added another 111,165 acres the following year in neighboring Okeechobee County. The range consisted of approximately 352 square miles of territory, and got its own Army Airfield in October 1942. By 1943 it was a fully integrated base, providing training in all manner of aircraft bombardment. Avon Park expanded to become the largest bombing range in the South Atlantic United States. It included a mock 555-acre town on the shore of Lake Arbuckle. The range also offered a large floating target ship on Lake Kissimmee, and an eight-mile railroad target. A special town was erected there for the practice of incendiary bombing, and it was burned repeatedly by the airmen in learning how to execute fire-bombings. Between 1942 and 1945 more bombs were dropped on Avon Park than on any enemy target.³⁹⁷

Figure 14.³⁹⁸

B-24 Liberator Bomb Groups Trained in Florida

<i>Command</i>	<i>Squadrons</i>	<i>Trained in Florida</i>	<i>Bases/Theaters/Awards</i>
44 th Bomb Group	66 th , 67 th , 68 th , 404 th	Jan 1941-Feb 1942	England DUC – Kiel DUC – Battle of Ploesti
93 rd Bomb Group	328 th , 329 th , 330 th , 409 th	15May-2Aug 1942	England DUC – North Africa DUC – Battle of Ploesti
98 th Bomb Group	343 rd , 344 th , 345 th , 415 th	Feb-July 1942	Palestine, Egypt, Italy DUC – North Africa DUC – Battle of Ploesti

³⁹⁶ Wiggins. 42.

³⁹⁷ Ibid.

³⁹⁸ Compiled from Maurer. 70, 199-200, 202-3, 203-4, 222, 273, 274, 278, 281-2, 283, 81-82, 154, 156-8, 162-3, 166-7, 168-9, 338, 354-5, 101-2, 160-1, 168-9.

Figure 15.³⁹⁹

B-17 Flying Fortress Bomb Groups Trained in Florida

<i>Command</i>	<i>Squadrons</i>	<i>Trained in Florida</i>	<i>Bases/Theaters/Awards</i>
29 th Bomb Group	6 th , 43 rd , 52 nd , 411 th	May 1940 – June 1942	CONUS, Guam DUC – Japan
88 th Bomb Group	316 th , 317 th , 318 th , 419 th	Nov1943-May1944	Third AF Trainer Group
91 st Bomb Group	322 nd , 324 th , 401 st	May-June1942	England DUC – Germany DUC – Germany
92 nd Bomb Group	325 th , 326 th , 327 th , 407 th	Mar-July1942	England, France DUC – Germany
94 th Bomb Group	328 th , 329 th , 330 th , 409 th	June-July1942	England DUC – North Africa DUC – Battle of Ploesti
97 th Bomb Group	340 th , 341 st , 342 nd , 414 th	Feb-May1942	England, Tunisia, Italy DUC – Austria DUC – Battle of Ploesti
99 th Bomb Group	346 th , 347 th , 348 th , 416 th	June-July1942	Tunisia, Anzio, Normandy DUC – Invasion of Sicily DUC – Austria
100 th Bomb Group	32 nd , 352 nd , 353 rd , 419 th	June 1942	England DUC – Germany DUC – Battle of Berlin
463 rd Bomb Group	772 nd , 773 rd , 774 th , 775 th	Nov 1943- Feb 1944	Italy DUC – Battle of Ploesti DUC – Germany
483 rd Bomb Group	815 th , 816 th , 817 th , 840 th	Nov 1943- March 1944	Italy DUC – Germany DUC – Germany

Frequently the bombing raids were joined by fighter planes flying escort. Fighter command's Orlando AAF School of Applied Tactics used 8,000-square-miles of north central Florida air space, from Tampa to Titusville and from Starke to Apalachicola (an area larger than New York State) for dogfights, and war games concluding with the fighter planes rendezvousing with bombers over Avon Park. Outside of Ocala,

³⁹⁹ Compiled from Maurer. 70, 199-200, 202-3, 203-4, 222, 273, 274, 278, 281-2, 283, 81-82, 154, 156-8, 162-3, 166-7, 168-9, 338, 354-5, 101-2, 160-1, 168-9.

specialized aviation training was conducted at Dunnellon Army Airfield in the form of Troop Carrier squadrons training at dropping paratroopers, and towing glider planes loaded with troops and cargo. Plywood glider planes were hammered together at a factory in Deland.⁴⁰⁰ Cargo planes towed gliders full of soldiers across the central Florida sky. When they neared the landing field the glider cable was unhooked from the aircraft. With no engines of their own, the gliders seemed to float effortlessly to earth. But the landings themselves were no more than controlled crashes. Bombs by the ton, paratroopers and gliders all descended on the Florida peninsula.⁴⁰¹

Florida also played an essential and largely unexamined role in the process of developing the Army Air Corps into an independent branch of service. Florida's empty hotel rooms contributed significantly with their selection to be the home of the new Officer Candidate School (OCS) of the Army Air Corps. The Air Corps was striving to be autonomous, and in 1941 had won a measure of that autonomy with the new name, the "Army Air Forces" (AAF). The creation of an autonomous officer corps further institutionalized the differentiation from the Army. All officers in the AAF were previously graduates of the Army academy at West Point, or Army OCS. That was part of the problem. According to General Mitchell, appreciation of the air as a fighting environment "required an entirely different class of men from those which had heretofore constituted the officers in an army or a navy. In fact," he argued, "the physical

⁴⁰⁰ Lazarus. 231.

⁴⁰¹ President Roosevelt himself took the South Atlantic Route in January 1943 to tour the North Africa invasion front and attend the Casablanca Conference in Morocco. He went secretly by train as far as Miami, where he and his staff boarded two Pan Am seaplanes at Diner Key, manifested under the alias of "Mr. Jones and his Private Party." His two-week journey over the South Atlantic Route to Africa and back was the first flight of Air Force One.

requirements in the American Air Service are such that twenty-five percent of the officers accepted into the Regular Army between the ages of twenty and thirty cannot pass the physical examination.”⁴⁰²

This was not simply a matter of the physical characteristics of greater visual acuity, hand-to-eye coordination, altitude tolerance and response time that were required of aviators. Mitchell and his following believed that non-aviators simply could not exercise command of aviation forces effectively. “No one can know the air except one who works and travels in it, and a thorough air education can only be acquired by long study in this science and art.”⁴⁰³ Further, the General considered the greatest handicap to the development of aeronautics in the US was its leadership by non-aviators; they could not possibly know the problems of the field. Mitchell stated the cause of the problem succinctly: “This is because no corps of officers was especially trained, as a body, to specialize in aviation.”⁴⁰⁴

If nothing proved more fundamental to this aeronautic philosophy than specialized education, Florida witnessed, then, its birth in the war years. With mobilization bringing into the AAF huge new levees and air fleets requiring officer leadership, and citing the wartime need to save time and money in construction (while bypassing consensus-building and permissions), Arnold seized on Miami Beach as a ready-made campus for an immediate Air Corps academy of its own. The tourist town had 7,000 hotel rooms within a few mile radius on the narrow island beside Biscayne

⁴⁰² Mitchell. Our Air Force, the Keystone of National Defense. 112.

⁴⁰³ Ibid. 110.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid. 111.

Bay. Except for being empty of civilian guests, the hotels were fully operational. The hotels would serve, and with the concurrence of the city fathers and grateful hoteliers, the AAF commandeered the town overnight for its own Officer Candidate School and related training. Leases were taken out on 188 hotels, 109 apartment houses, and 18 homes for senior officers.⁴⁰⁵ Military Police (MPs) sealed off the causeways. Twenty-five percent of all AAF Officers received their schooling on Miami Beach, about 125,000 officers.⁴⁰⁶ An even larger number, 360,000 airmen, twenty percent of the enlisted Air Corps took basic training there.⁴⁰⁷

Noteworthy in addition to the ninety-day OCS, the AAF established in the same town its Officer Training School (OTS) for Direct Appointment officers. Direct Appointment officers were specialists in medicine and dentistry, chaplains, and former officers returning to the service. The Direct Appointees were commissioned the day they joined. Frequently older than the officer candidates, the training of these professionals was less rigorous, and their numbers fewer. Still, the accession of these often-prominent members of the elite further enhanced the standing of the AAF. Over 13,000 Directly Appointed Officers went through the OTS indoctrination. Its headquarters was the Roney Plaza Hotel.⁴⁰⁸

⁴⁰⁵ D. Colt Denfield. "Camp Miami: the Palm Playground Turns Serious During World War II." Journal of America's Military Past. Ft. Myer, VA. Fall 2007. 72.

⁴⁰⁶ Tebeau. 417.

⁴⁰⁷ The War Department appreciated the savings in time and money in the arrangement and duplicated such arrangements at St. Petersburg, Clearwater, Daytona Beach and Palm Beach, taking over entire blocks of hotels there to serve as troop accommodations.

⁴⁰⁸ Denfield. 78.

For enlisted recruits two large Basic Training Schools were set up: Number 4 and Number Nine. These provided basic training for large numbers of airmen.⁴⁰⁹ The enlisted men received indoctrination into the military, drill and ceremonies, and physical fitness. But there was a marked absence of the field training that was the hallmark of the Army Ground Forces. Instead, the course focused on classroom instruction in aviation matters, emphasizing Air Corps procedures and practices. A half-million personnel passed through these establishments.⁴¹⁰ When the initial training was completed, the future pilots and airmen went to job training in their specialty. There was yet another bonus to having Miami Beach for building up the AAF besides plentiful accommodations: it was close to advanced training at AAF bases all over Florida.

The AAF curriculum was weighted towards aviation subjects: avionics, aerodynamics, the basics of flight, aircraft maintenance, and the basics of waging war from the air. The golf courses of the resort town were converted into parade grounds, obstacle courses, and calisthenics arenas.⁴¹¹ Swimming was taught in the ocean or the Venetian Pool. The Air Corps officer candidates were divided into 50-man “Flights.” To address military health issues, the AAF took over the Biltmore Hotel in Coral Gables, giving it a new function as Army Air Forces Hospital Number One. The Nautilus Hotel on Miami Beach was also commandeered for the same purpose. The Biltmore’s deluxe

⁴⁰⁹ Florida posthumous Medal of Honor recipient Robert Edward Femoyer trained at Miami Beach. Femoyer served as a navigator with the Eighth Air Force. On November 2, 1944, on a bombing mission over Germany, 2Lt. Femoyer was mortally wounded when his B-17 sustained heavy battle damage. He remained at his battle station and was instrumental in navigating the successful return of the damaged aircraft, dying minutes after it landed.

⁴¹⁰ Tebeau. 417.

⁴¹¹ Denfield. 76.

golf course was used for Rest and Recuperation (R&R) by military patients. The Breakers Hotel in Palm Beach and the Don Cesar Hotel in St. Petersburg were similarly converted into military hospitals.⁴¹²

Besides the impact of the military on the city and the numbers of men training there, the exotic Florida location also proved especially attractive for patriotic publicity. The movie star Clark Gable's recruitment into the OCS enhanced this association all the more. The reason Gable gave for joining the service during World War II was the same reason held by the overwhelming number of Americans: he wanted to serve his country in time of war.⁴¹³ In December 1940, President Roosevelt had invited Gable and his wife, actress Carole Lombard to the White House. The administration enlisted their assistance as spokespersons for the "Arsenal of Democracy" effort to provide assistance to Britain. Gable and Lombard took the promotional work seriously. After Pearl Harbor the couple plunged into the war effort. Gable became chairman of the Screen Actors Division of the Hollywood Victory Committee organizing USO shows and entertainment to boost morale. Lombard sold war bonds. Sadly, on a war bonds tour, Lombard died in a plane crash. Gable grieved in quiet, and offered his services to the military.

General Arnold suggested the screen star could help the war effort by making a movie to promote the Air Corps. He offered the academy-award winner a seat at the new Officer Candidate School in Florida. On August 12, 1942, Gable was sworn in. When he reported to Miami Beach, the media was waiting. Like the modern paparazzi, they

⁴¹² Samuel D. LaRoue and Ellen Uguccioni. "World War II and Beyond: A Hotel Transformed." *South Florida History*. Vol. 30. No. 2. 2002. 14.

⁴¹³ Denfield. 77.

peppered him with questions and requests for photographs. He responded by offering them a deal. He would pose for them to photograph as he shaved off his trademark mustache, and in return, the reporters would then leave him alone to undergo his training.

A rich, famous, and overage candidate who had never graduated from high school, Gable was in the company of vigorous hand-picked young men with the highest motivation. The course went from morning until night six days a week, with physical fitness in between. The actor succeeded, graduating 700th in the first class of 2,600 officer candidates. General Arnold came to Miami to officiate at the first graduation of his new officers filling the Miami Beach Golf Course. Gable gave the graduation speech.⁴¹⁴

The AAF OCS in Miami Beach also witnessed wartime social change. For the first time in history, black Americans were enrolled for commissions in the Army Air Forces. Each initial class of 50 cadets at the Officer Candidate School on Miami Beach contained at least one black American officer candidate.⁴¹⁵ Placing a black American soldier in the same unit with white soldiers offered various innovations.⁴¹⁶ First, it included blacks –for the first time, in combat units, from which they had been excluded before. Previously, they had been isolated in Army Services Command, usually as stevedores and laborers. Second, access to the Army Air Forces meant access to what

⁴¹⁴ Denfield. 77.

⁴¹⁵ Sandler. 32-33.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid. 77-78.

was considered an elite branch of the military.⁴¹⁷ Finally, completing the course awarded the black American a rank generally held in esteem by civil society, that of “an officer and a gentleman.” Thus, if even in a small way, the military activity in Florida anticipated the push for establishing black civil rights of the 1950s.

The trainees of the Air Corps OCS, OTS and Basic Training Schools were all quartered within the civilian community, as were significant numbers of Navy trainees across Biscayne Bay in the mainland city of Miami, and at sites in Broward County. Almost 600,000 military personnel lived and trained in the Miami-Miami Beach-Fort Lauderdale urban area, a region with a pre-war population of less than half that number. As with the Jacksonville and Tampa Bay areas, these extraordinary numbers exemplified the nation’s iconic wartime narrative of uniformed servicemen literally filling the space. Around the nation as a whole, eleven percent of the population were in uniform. In Florida the military presence amounted to more than 50 percent. Law and order was maintained by Army MPs and the Navy Shore Patrol who made the peninsula their own.

Florida might have guaranteed its place in the history of WWII and of the future Air Force alone by being a most important and pioneering training ground for military airmen. However, it had an equal or even more critical role as a supply base and staging area for the world-wide war effort. Created on July 7, 1942 to handle this effort was the Miami In-transit Air Depot No. 6 (MIAD), a huge warehouse complex commanded by the AAF and run by thousands of civilians from the local community.⁴¹⁸ Most of the

⁴¹⁷ The US military was not integrated during the war. The Army fielded two segregated infantry divisions composed entirely of black soldiers, the 92nd Division in Italy, and 93rd Division in New Guinea. The rest of the black troops in the Army were assigned to Army Service Forces, or segregated Air Corps units.

⁴¹⁸ Craven and Cate. Vol. VII. 59.

freight arrived by train. Both the railroads of Florida, the FEC, and the Seaboard Air Line (SAL), now controlled by Army Transport Command, converged in Miami. There was a large freight yard in Hialeah, adjacent to the Hialeah Horse Racing Track. For most of the war, horseracing was banned, and the racetracks were commandeered by the military as supply dumps. The train line led from the freight yard and racetrack directly to the MIAD warehouses on the flight line of nearby Pan American Field and contiguous Miami Army Airfield.⁴¹⁹ The civilian airlines of Pan American, Eastern, National, United, and Delta Airlines were all concentrated there.⁴²⁰ The Federal Government nationalized these civilian air carriers during the war, but allowed them to operate on a charter basis for the military. Their cargo flights augmented the missions of Army Transport Command. Pan Am “Cannon Ball Express,” cargo flights from Miami to Karachi averaged 11,500 miles in three and a half days, while Eastern Airlines flew 33,480,000 miles and carried 47,500,000 pounds of cargo and 130,000 passengers for Army Transport Command during the war.⁴²¹

From the perspective of air-freight logistics, the tip of the Florida peninsula offered the logical embarkation point. Initially the Air Depot forwarded the materials needed to make the South Atlantic Route a dependable air bridge: the newly-invented interlocking steel landing mats, replacement aircraft engines and parts, aviation

⁴¹⁹ Craven and Cate. Vol. VII. 49. The two airfields were separated only by the railroad tracks and swale.

⁴²⁰ The Defense Reorganization Act of 1947-48 awarded veteran status and GI Bill Eligibility to all personnel of those civilian airlines who had worked with Army Transport Command during the war.

⁴²¹ Tebeau. 420-422.

equipment, fuel, oil, controllers and mechanics.⁴²² The greatest airline of all time: the US Air Transport Command (ATC), sustained the effort. As the landing, refueling, and servicing points along the route were stabilized, so were the two military air embarkation points of Florida: Morrison Army Airbase in West Palm Beach and Miami Army Airfield. Morrison was the ATC point of command where aircraft crews to received orders, inoculations, and briefings on overseas circumstances. Passengers, cargo, and mail departed from Miami.⁴²³

The Soviet Union was one sometimes overlooked destination of Florida's South Atlantic Route. The dangerous northern sea route known as the "Murmansk Run," into the Barents Sea and northern Russia is well known. But there was also a southern sealift route delivering supplies to the Persian Gulf at Basra, and from there by rail to Russia. It was supplemented by the airborne South Atlantic Route. Tehran was its terminal. One example illustrates the importance of this supply line. Between April and December, 1942 the Air Transport Command used the Morrison-Miami aerial port to send 102 Lend-Lease B-25 bombers to Russia. The bombers were flown to Tehran, mostly by Pan Am contract pilots. From there Soviet pilots flew them to Russia and the Eastern Front.⁴²⁴ These warplanes augmented Russian forces just as the Battle of Stalingrad developed, the turning point of the war on the Eastern Front. There was no other way for the aircraft to have reached the war than from Florida.

⁴²² Tebeau. 421.

⁴²³ Craven and Cate. VII. 47.

⁴²⁴ Ibid. 331.

Yet another great object and end of Florida's logistical war effort was support for China. American strategists recognized the necessity of keeping China in the war, thus tying down the large Japanese Kwantung Army. If China surrendered, those 800,000 Imperial Japanese soldiers would be released to reinforce their Pacific Theater against the GIs.⁴²⁵ It was essential that China be kept fighting. This meant, in turn, keeping the Chinese well-supplied. As the US forces fought their way across the Pacific, an additional strategic imperative emerged: Japan itself would ultimately have to be invaded and conquered. If the Japanese Army in China remained there long enough for the US Fleet to get between them and their home islands, and thereby prevent their return, the conquest of Japan itself would be much less daunting. It was a military necessity to keep China in the war.⁴²⁶ Doing so was not easy.

In the summer of 1942, the US diverted the HALPRO raiders and other weaponry previously earmarked for China in order to support the fight against Rommel when he threatened the Suez Canal. The Chinese Nationalist leader, Chiang Kai-Shek, was furious. Via General Stilwell, Chiang issued Washington the "Three Demands" ultimatum.⁴²⁷ He demanded 3 US Divisions, 500 aircraft, and 5,000 tons of supplies a month. Otherwise, he threatened, China would make a separate peace with Japan. He understood the first two demands were ploys of negotiation, to emphasize the third, the demand for massive monthly supplies. It acknowledged he could not resist without major

⁴²⁵ Mark D. Sherry. China Defense 1942-1945. US Army Center for Military History. Pub. 72-38. Government Printing Office. Washington, DC. 2003. 26.

⁴²⁶ Matloff. 464.

⁴²⁷ Ronald H. Spector. Eagle Against the Sun: the American War Against Japan. MacMillan, Inc. New York. 1985. 338.

assistance. Strategically, the US had to agree.⁴²⁸ Thus China became the primary client of Florida's airlift for the rest of the war.

Airlift over the Himalayas was the only means of accomplishing the mission. Flying the Hump was an acquired skill taught thirty miles south of Miami at Homestead Army Air Field. As part of their contract to create the South Atlantic Route, Pan-Am had hacked out an emergency landing strip on the edge of the Everglades at the extreme southern tip of the peninsula. When the contract ran out, the landing strip was annexed by Air Transport Command and given the name of the nearby farming community.⁴²⁹ In September 1942, Homestead Army Airfield formally opened.. It assumed the geographically appropriate mission of maintaining the transport planes that flew the South Atlantic Route.⁴³⁰ These included the C-47 Skytrain, known as the Dakota, or simply christened the Gooney Bird. Another was the even larger four-engine C-46 Commando, sometimes known simply as "Dumbo," in reference to the Walt Disney cartoon elephant.⁴³¹ Appropriately, the acronym of the Air Transport Command, ATC, was sometimes said to stand for "Aid to China."

The FEC Railroad ran south from Miami to Homestead and the AAF flight line, allowing the place to store surplus air freight in transit. Homestead AAF first provided the periodic engine overhauls for the cargo planes of the Army Transport Command. As permanent facilities for the Miami Air Depot emerged and the system of wartime airlift

⁴²⁸ Spector. 339.

⁴²⁹ Craven and Cate. Vol. VII. 42.

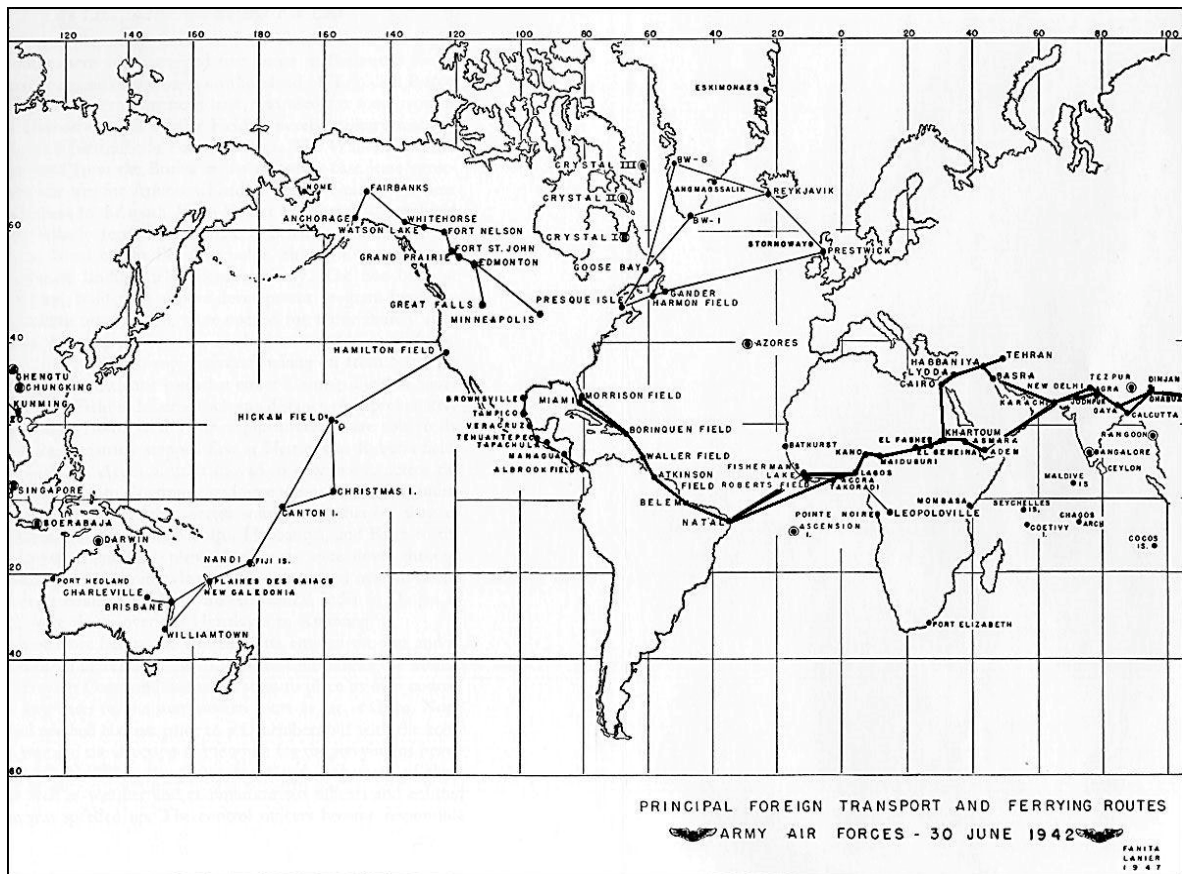
⁴³⁰ Florida Heritage Trail. 45.

⁴³¹ Craven and Cate. Vol. VII. 43.

throughput, the rate of movement of supplies in and out of the system became organized, Homestead AAF devoted itself to training cargo pilots, navigators, loadmasters and air crewmen. The specialty of the 2nd Operational Training Unit was teaching pilots and aircrew to “Fly the Hump.”⁴³²

Figure 16.⁴³³

The Warpath from Florida



Until the Stilwell Road over the mountains and jungles of Burma (the other huge CBI project also supported from Florida) was completed late in the war, there was no

⁴³² Craven and Cate. Vol. VII. 44.

⁴³³ Ibid. Vol I. Map Pages. 11.

other way to China except over the Himalayas. These mountains exceeded 23,600 feet in height, but flying over them was a military necessity. Every vehicle, every gallon of fuel, every gun and bullet to reach China in three years of war was flown in. The danger in flying over the desolate wind and snow-swept massif in the unarmed, unpressurized, heavily-loaded propeller-driven aircraft was often compounded by Japanese fighter planes waiting to pounce on the slow and laden Dumbos and Gooney Birds. During the war 400 planes crashed into the mountains and 1,600 pilots and aircrewmembers died. These numbers amounted to two plane crashes a week every week for three years. It was known as the “Aluminum Trail.” Someone was killed flying it every day, day in and day out, for the three years the airlift operated. The mission took aviation skill and good fortune.⁴³⁴ The vast majority of the personnel who flew the Hump, almost 17,000 pilots, and 1,500 navigators, radiomen, loadmasters, and flight engineers were trained at Homestead AAF in Florida.⁴³⁵

On March 3, 1943 the Commander of the Army Air Forces himself came to South Florida for an extended stay. General “Hap” Arnold was a hard-driving workaholic who was creating and wielding the largest air force ever known. He lived and breathed aircraft production, aviation training, and aerial warfare.⁴³⁶ His son was a cadet at West Point, and Arnold’s sole pastime was an occasional round of golf. On February 28, at his

⁴³⁴ Craven and Cate. Vol. VII. 115. Over 1,659 US pilots and crewmen were accounted for as killed or remain missing, lost while flying the Hump.

⁴³⁵ Florida Heritage Trail. 45. The Air Transport Command India-China Wing was the first non-combat unit ever awarded the Presidential Unit Citation, at the personal direction of President Roosevelt in 1944.

⁴³⁶ Craven and Cate. Vol. II. 266.

quarters in Ft. Myer near the Pentagon, Arnold suffered a heart attack.⁴³⁷ Three days later he was flown to Miami in a B-25 to recuperate.⁴³⁸ He spent the next three weeks at Army Air Forces Hospital No. 1, the former Biltmore Hotel, which had served as the temporary White House during the President's earlier visits.⁴³⁹ Arnold had earlier approved the hotel's conversion to a military hospital to support the medical needs of the thousands of airmen training in the area. Now he became its highest ranking patient. The Air Corps Chief was installed in the tower suite of the hotel and his illness was kept top secret.⁴⁴⁰ While recovering, Arnold puttered on the green, rode a PT Crash Boat around the bay, and exercised command of his Air Forces.

Arnold's command was one of the largest military institutions in history. Over 2.4 million Americans served in the Air Corps. It flew over 35,000 bombers alone. It was no accident he chose Army Air Forces Hospital No. 1 for his recovery. He knew Florida well. The Mighty Eighth Air Force, which bore the brunt of the air battle in the all-important ETO, came largely from Florida. The critical CBI airlift originated there. From the windows of the hospital tower, Arnold could watch a steady stream of aircraft lifting off regularly from Miami Army Airfield. Arnold had worked for years building up Florida as a pre-eminent base for his air forces. The following year another heart attack brought his return to again exercise command from the same Florida hospital room.⁴⁴¹

⁴³⁷ Thomas M. Coffey. Hap: The Story of the US Air Force and the Man Who Built It, General Henry H. "Hap" Arnold. Viking Press. New York. 1982. 304.

⁴³⁸ Coffey. 305.

⁴³⁹ Ibid. 306.

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid. 307.

⁴⁴¹ Ibid. 308.

Ailing or not, Arnold always pressed the offensive in war. Thus, he demanded the adoption of the B-29 – the “Superfortress” – with particular passion. The four-engine very heavy bomber, the largest aircraft of its day, could fly at 40,000 feet, beyond the range of anti-aircraft fire, had the first pressurized cabin, carried a payload of 5,000 pounds of ordnance, and possessed a combat radius of 1,600-miles. A Billy Mitchell dream, the B-29 was intended to demonstrate once and for all that AAF bombing alone could bring an enemy to its knees. Much of the testing on the B-29 occurred in Florida. Beginning in autumn 1943 at Eglin Proving Ground Command, testing of the experimental XB-29 prototype model was done by the B-29 Accelerated Services Testing Group, whose commander and lead test pilot was Col. Paul Tibbets.⁴⁴²

For his service in the North African and European air campaigns, Tibbets had been promoted and nominated by General Doolittle as his best bomber pilot. Tibbets flew the XB-29 across Florida against captured enemy planes, including the Zero, Mitsubishi, and Messerschmitt, to perfect its combat worthiness. Its guns were sighted in over the Gulf of Mexico. Test flights by “Tibbets’ Troubleshooters” ranged as far as the Florida Keys.⁴⁴³ In June, 1944, the B-29 was deemed ready for war. Tibbets was directed to assemble 15 of the Superfortresses and activate the 509th Composite Bomb Group for additional training for special missions.⁴⁴⁴

⁴⁴² George R. “Bob” Caron and Charlotte E. Meares. Fire of a Thousand Suns: The George R. “Bob” Caron Story, Tailgunner of the Enola Gay. Web Publishing Company. Westminster, CO. 1995. 99.

⁴⁴³ Ibid. 115.

⁴⁴⁴ Tibbets. 19.

With the release of the B-29 for combat, the new bomber received orders for Operation Matterhorn. Matterhorn was the deployment to CBI of five bomb groups composed entirely of the new B-29 for the express purpose of bombing Japan out of the war.⁴⁴⁵ Arnold took personal command of the B-29s of 20th Bomber Command, and its début coincided with the initiation of two Congressional bills to study a reorganization of the US military that would sanction autonomy for the AAF as separate branch of service.⁴⁴⁶ In early 1945, elements of Operation Matterhorn shifted from CBI to the recently captured island of Tinian in the Pacific to execute their bombing missions. They were joined by the 509th Composite Bomb Group.⁴⁴⁷ Its specific mission was to drop the new type of bomb secretly perfected by the Manhattan Project.

⁴⁴⁵ Craven and Cate. Vol. VI. 54-55.

⁴⁴⁶ Truman. 48-52.

⁴⁴⁷ Craven and Cate. Vol. V. 518.

CHAPTER VIII.

INDUSTRY, GENDER, RACE AND WOUNDS IN A STATE OF WAR

This chapter notes internal activity in Florida during the war among the civilian population, and the presence of other military groups: minority soldiers, female soldiers, enemy Prisoners of War (POWs), and wounded soldiers. Large numbers of Women's Army Corps (WACs), and black Army Service Forces trained in Florida.⁴⁴⁸

Demographic geography was a factor in all these tumultuous visitations. Most Floridians were engaged in the war effort: fifteen percent were in uniform and the rest of the males between 18 and 65 years of age were enrolled in draft registration. The labor force of the State was occupied with war work. Besides maintaining the ongoing military infrastructure of training and force projection, the primary industry was shipbuilding, and Florida's reserve of female workers joined this effort in large numbers.⁴⁴⁹ As Floridians moved to the cities for those patriotic and better-paying jobs, the farming sector was turned over to an unlikely group of new arrivals: German POWs. Yet another group of daily arrivals stamped *gravitas* on the entire Florida war effort: returning casualties. Because of its role as the embarkation point for one of the most important routes to the war, Florida was the point of return for thousands of wounded.

On the eve of the war there was no shipbuilding industry in Florida. There was the one earlier-noted contract with Kehler Shipbuilding of Tampa for a few vessels, but

⁴⁴⁸ Matloff. 430.

⁴⁴⁹ Wynne and Moorhead. 51.

that was in default.⁴⁵⁰ After Pearl Harbor, shipbuilding was underwritten by the US Maritime Commission, the Wartime Shipping Administration, the Navy, and the Army. The entrepreneurial flair and the labor pool of enthusiastic Floridians created a production boom. At Jacksonville, Panama City, Tampa Bay, and Miami, Floridians and out-of-state workers converged to build ships.⁴⁵¹ Shipbuilding in Florida had its genesis in the two 1940 PT Boat prototypes of the Miami Shipbuilding Company. From those came hundreds built across the nation, including many in Miami and others by Huckins Yacht Co. of Jacksonville.⁴⁵² In early 1942 Merrill-Stevens Company of Jacksonville won the contract to build “Liberty Ships.” These used the same blueprints at shipyards around the nation, were virtually identical, and built of prefabricated sections. Instead of time-consuming riveting, the ships were welded together.⁴⁵³

On September 27, 1941, President Roosevelt had christened the first, the *SS Patrick Henry*, repeating the famous quote “Give me liberty or give me death!”⁴⁵⁴ creating their common name. They could carry 9,000 tons at 11 knots, and with 2,751 constructed, were the largest number of any class of ships ever built. They anticipated the modern container ship industry.⁴⁵⁵

⁴⁵⁰ Lewis Wynne, “Still they sail: Shipbuilding in Tampa during World War II.” Florida at War. St. Leo College Press, 1993. 92.

⁴⁵¹ Wynne and Moorhead. 49.

⁴⁵² Ibid. 50.

⁴⁵³ Peggy Dorton Pelt. “The Liberty Ship: Unique Cargo Ship of World War II.” Selected Annual Proceedings of the Florida Conference of Historians. Vol. II. 1994. 120.

⁴⁵⁴ Morison. 133.

⁴⁵⁵ Pelt. 120.

The industry advanced another notch as the Merrill-Stevens Company set up the St Johns River Shipbuilding Company near NAS Jacksonville.⁴⁵⁶ With a subsidy of \$17 million from the Maritime Commission, the ambitious shipyard could produce six Liberty Ships at a time. August 15, 1942 the keel of the first Liberty Ship, the *SS Ponce de Leon*, was laid. It would build eighty-two more.⁴⁵⁷ The shipyard reached an efficiency of launching a boat into the water every forty days. In addition, the St. Johns Shipyard also built 11 Liberty Ship Tankers for transporting aviation fuel.⁴⁵⁸ The government had ordered these in early 1945 in preparation for the invasion of Japan. Assuming the conquest of Japan would take at least two years of combat, the tankers were destined to keep the US warplanes flying in Japanese airspace. True to the production schedule, the ships were completed just before the invasion of the Japan was scheduled to begin.

Other shipyards thrived in the area. Gibbs Gas Engine Company in downtown Jacksonville built 53 wooden Navy Minesweepers, 18 Navy Subchasers, and 25 Tugboats. For the Army, Gibbs produced 38 small boats and five barges; and cranked out 13 tugboats for the War Shipping Administration. Another Company, the Arlington Shipbuilding and Engineering Corporation of Jacksonville built tugboats for Lend-Lease to Britain. The Daytona Beach Boat Works built 20 Navy Subchasers.⁴⁵⁹

⁴⁵⁶ Wynne and Moorhead. 49.

⁴⁵⁷ L.A. Sawyer and W.H. Mitchell. The Liberty Ships: The History of the 'Emergency' Type Cargo Ship Constructed in the united States During Woeld War II. Redwood Press. London. 1970. 142-148.

⁴⁵⁸ Tim Colton. <http://www.ShipBuildingHistory.com>. Accessed Nov 10, 2012.

⁴⁵⁹ Wynne and Moorehead. 49-50.

Panama City experienced the same burst of shipbuilding.⁴⁶⁰ A \$13 million award from the Maritime Commission got the J.A. Jones Construction Company started there from scratch. Although there was no prior shipbuilding experience in the area, the emergency was real and the Federal subsidies were enormous. Governor Holland dedicated the shipyard. Jones Construction christened the enterprise the Wainwright Shipyard in remembrance of General Jonathan Wainwright, the US Commander in the Philippines who had been captured.⁴⁶¹ Workers flocked to the job. Almost overnight Bay County tripled to a 60,000 population.⁴⁶² The yard built dormitories, cafeterias, and clinics to accommodate the influx. Wainwright laid its first Liberty Ship keel on July 9, 1942; it was launched into the bay less than six months later, with Senator Pepper officiating. Panama City built 108 Liberty Ships.⁴⁶³ These included 66 standard Liberty Ships, 28 Boxed Aircraft Liberty Ships (for shipping disassembled aircraft), and eight Tank Transport Liberty Ships for shipping army tanks, the only eight such vessels ever built.⁴⁶⁴ In nearby Pensacola, the Warren Fish Boatyard built six Navy minesweepers and freighters.

The Florida industry took advantage of its assets: access to the sea and inland lakes, a willing and trainable population, and bountiful forests. Many of the vessels funded by the Emergency Shipbuilding Program were of simple wooden construction. In

⁴⁶⁰ Mormino. "World War II." 328.

⁴⁶¹ Peggy Dorton Pelt. Wainwright Shipyard: the Impact of a World War II War Industry on Panama City, Florida. A dissertation. Florida State University. 1994. 4-5.

⁴⁶² Eileen Cvitovich. Images of America: Bay County. Arcadia Press. Charleston. 2000. 103.

⁴⁶³ Mitchell and Sawyer. 83-86.

⁴⁶⁴ Peggy Dorton Pelt. "The Liberty Ship: Unique Cargo Ship of World War II." 122.

central Florida, Lake Beresford outside Orlando typified this industry.⁴⁶⁵ There the Beresford Shipyard used lumber from nearby Ocala and Lake George State Forests to build fifty ammunition barges and thirty tugboats for the US Army.⁴⁶⁶ The finished vessels were loaded aboard flatbed train cars and transported to the coast.

Similarly, cypress and mahogany hardwood from the Everglades and Key Largo were used by the Miami Shipbuilding Company to build more than 100 PT Boats of the Rescue Patrol Craft (RPC) Type on the Miami River.⁴⁶⁷ The speedy RPC, lacking only torpedo tube armament, was built for the Army Air Corps to use for rescuing training pilots and crews who crashed at sea. They were called aviation rescue boats, or simply “Crash Boats.” Many of the vessels were destined for Lend-Lease.⁴⁶⁸ They went to Russia, to the Royal Navy, the RAF, and the British Dominions. Dooley Boatyard on the New River in Fort Lauderdale converted yachts for service with the Hooligan Navy and provided repairs for small craft at the Port Everglades Naval Facility.⁴⁶⁹

In Tampa, the Tampa Shipbuilding Company (TASCO), and McCloskey Shipyards became major shipbuilders. When the US entered the war, TASCO had ten large (6,100 ton) half-built cargo ships. TASCO renamed them after volcanoes, finished them, and launched them into the war as Navy ammunition ships. Afterwards, TASCO devoted its construction to Navy warships. These included twelve ammunition ships,

⁴⁶⁵ Wynne and Moorehead. 51.

⁴⁶⁶ Colton. <http://www.ShipBuildingHistory.com>. Accessed Nov 10, 2012.

⁴⁶⁷ Wiggins. 116.

⁴⁶⁸ Wynne and Moorehead. 50

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid. 49.

twenty-four minesweepers, nine destroyer escorts, and three destroyer tenders. Many of its minesweepers went to Russia for the Lend-Lease program. Tampa had no larger employer, and as a prime Navy contractor, TASCOCO operated effectively as a War Department base, even policed by the Navy shore patrol. The Company also repaired battle-damaged warships and merchant marine ships.⁴⁷⁰

McCloskey Shipyards of Tampa built a unique type of Liberty Ship. The owner, Matthew H. McCloskey Jr., was a construction contractor. He secured a \$30,000,000 contract to build cement ships. No one else produced such vessels. Because of the wartime shortage of steel, these ships used poured cement over rebar frameworks for the hull, bulkheads, and superstructure. This construction took advantage of the nearby Florida Portland Cement Company, even as the mild weather helped the cement cure. McCloskey named the first *SS Vitruvius*, after the 1st Century A.D. Roman military engineer and expert in concrete. The company produced a total of twenty-four such Liberty Ships with hulls of poured cement. Two of these participated in the D-Day invasion. The *SS Vitruvius* and *SS David O Saylor* crossed the Atlantic to England prior to the invasion, sailing at 3 knots.⁴⁷¹ When the invasion hit Normandy, the two were scuttled off Omaha Beach as part of a “gooseberry” artificial breakwater. These protected the “mulberry” port of barges cobbled together to land men and materials for the invasion.⁴⁷²

⁴⁷⁰ Gary Mormino. Hillsborough County Goes to War. Tampa Bay Historical Center. Tampa. FL 2001. 52.

⁴⁷¹ Ibid. 53-54.

⁴⁷² Morison. 407.

Still another company, Tampa Marine and Bushnell Boatyards, built tugboats and barracks barges. The mostly wooden vessels were produced so quickly and uniformly that only the pennant and hull number distinguished them. The company laid keels for seventy-eight light tugboats destined for the Army. It also produced for the Navy nine unique three-story floating barracks for sailors' accommodations on foreign shores and at overseas outposts.⁴⁷³

The shipyards all demonstrated the institutionalized unity of private enterprise with the national government. In addition to the Federal grants and subsidies to private corporations, otherwise described, the government shaped other aspects of the industry. Thus, the workers strove to win Efficiency Awards from the Navy and the Department of the Treasury.⁴⁷⁴ Production involved military-like inspections and drives. The government and plant management promoted athletic tournaments and rivalries between the shipyards and local military teams. War Bond rallies were a fixture at the yards, producing a steady source of war dollars. The authorities singled out large war bond purchases for recognition and thanks. With young men in active military service, the labor force consisted primarily of older men and women. Women's work centered in factories that produced both weapons and war materials. Newly salaried, they too became a general economic force in their own right. Florida shipbuilding welcomed them. Practically every skill and job description was open to female workers. The government's Emergency Shipbuilding Program made a patriotic point of recruiting them. The emphasis on welding in the construction of the new ship types made that

⁴⁷³ Mormino. 54.

⁴⁷⁴ Wynne. "Still they sail: Shipbuilding in Tampa during World War II." 94.

previously male-only job skill a female-dominated activity. “Joan of Arc-Welding” had an iconic presence in Jacksonville, Tampa, Miami, and Panama City.⁴⁷⁵

When Wainwright Shipyards opened in September 1942, women constituted 3.4 percent of the work force, most in clerical positions. By March 20, 1943 ten percent of the work force was female, performing every job in the shipways. Six months later that figure soared to almost 20 percent. Wainwright’s 13,389-employee work force by December stood at 22 percent female.⁴⁷⁶ The shipyard initially gave training for female clerical workers. Within a few months it launched the first welding class for women. The very next class in welding had two of the first female graduates as its instructors. Classes in ship fitting, plan reading, and the electrical trades followed. These formerly-male dominated trades paid higher wages than the clerical positions, and in addition offered affiliation with the labor unions, providing yet another entrée into previously all-male organizations.⁴⁷⁷ Simultaneously, the Federal Office of Education funded no-cost engineering courses at the University of Florida for the female shipyard workers.

Whether under-employed housewives, under-worked farm hands, or members of Florida’s significant numbers of unemployed –as demonstrated in the 1940 Census, this war-inspired industrial frenzy found an extensive labor pool. Its extraordinary activity finds an easy measure in statistics of Florida production:

148 Standard Liberty Ships averaging 7,176 tons of steel apiece; 1,062,048 tons
12 Aviation Gas Liberty Ships averaging 7,230 tons of steel; 86,760 tons
28 Boxed Aircraft Liberty Ships averaging 7,176 tons of steel apiece; 200,928 tons

⁴⁷⁵ Mormino. “World War II.” 338.

⁴⁷⁶ Pelt. 133.

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid. 137.

6 Tanker Liberty Ships averaging 7,230 tons of steel apiece; 43,380 tons
8 Tank Transport Liberty Ships averaging 7,176 tons of steel apiece; 57,408 tons⁴⁷⁸
24 Cement Liberty Ships averaging 4,784 tons of steel; and 4,000 tons of cement
12 Navy ammunition ships
17 Coastal freighters
70 Army Barges and 9 Navy Barracks Barges
135 Army, Navy, and War Shipping Administration Tugboats – wood construction
81 Navy Minesweepers – wood construction
38 Navy Subchasers – wood construction
9 Navy Destroyer Escorts
100 PT Boats – wood construction⁴⁷⁹

This is a remarkable output for a State where there was minimal shipbuilding previously, and it reflects the wartime impact of Florida. Shipbuilding accounted for two-thirds of the industrial gains of wartime Florida.⁴⁸⁰ The production of 226 Liberty Ships was almost ten percent of the national output. Over 1,565,340 tons of steel was used in their construction. The enthusiasm of the work force can be measured by a single comparison: the first Florida Liberty Ship in 1942, *Ponce de Leon*, took eight months to complete. By 1945 the Liberty Ship *Thomas L. Haley* was built in two weeks.

As war work monopolized the citizenry of Florida, the agricultural base of the State suffered. Florida sought to remedy its farm worker shortage by using captured Prisoners of War.⁴⁸¹ Over 10,000 German POWs were interned in the State.⁴⁸² The headquarters for the program was the Camp Blanding Provost Marshal General (PMGO).

⁴⁷⁸ Compiled from Sawyer and Mitchell. 83-86, 142-148, 184-185.

⁴⁷⁹ Compiled from Sawyer and Michell, Wynne and Moorehead, Mormino, and Colton.

⁴⁸⁰ Mormino. "World War II." 329.

⁴⁸¹ Robert D. Billinger, Jr. "With the Wehrmacht in Florida: the German POW Facility at Camp Blanding, 1942-1946." 435,788 captured enemy soldiers, mostly German, were interned in CONUS during the war.

⁴⁸² Robert D. Billinger, Jr. Hitler's Soldiers in the Sunshine State: German PWs in Florida. University Press of Florida. Gainesville, FL. 2000. 8.

The first POWs to arrive were captured sailors from the U-boats. They were housed at Camp Blanding in tents and barracks behind double fences topped with barbed wire and guard towers. After the invasion of North Africa, German soldiers captured in Tunisia joined them.⁴⁸³ Eventually the State proved home to twenty-five POW Camps, including a second administrative center at Camp Gordon Johnson. In time, surrendering German conscripts from regions conquered by the Nazis joined the camps. For some, being a POW in Florida was the most enjoyable part of their military service. They joked that the “PW” stenciled on their clothing indicated they were “*Pensionierte Wehrmacht*,” (retired from the Army).⁴⁸⁴ Federal authorities put them to work farming tomatoes and green beans and harvesting sugarcane.⁴⁸⁵ They brought in citrus crops.⁴⁸⁶ They worked in the State Forests cutting trees and milling logs for shipbuilding.⁴⁸⁷ POWs incarcerated at bases worked in the mess hall kitchens, the laundries, and the Officers’ Clubs. Others worked at base garages. POWs at the Kendall POW Camp near Miami worked as orderlies at the US military hospitals on Miami Beach.⁴⁸⁸ POWs working at military bases made 10-cents daily in ration coupons good for cigarettes and toiletries. Those working on the farms and forests were paid 80-cents daily in the form of coupons, or

⁴⁸³ Billinger, Jr. Hitler’s Soldiers in the Sunshine State. 10.

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid. xv.

⁴⁸⁵ Tebeau. 418.

⁴⁸⁶ Mormino. “World War II.” 326.

⁴⁸⁷ Billinger. Hitler’s Soldiers in the Sunshine State. 32

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid. 33.

government savings accounts. They performed the jobs Floridians had left for the patriotic and better paying war work.⁴⁸⁹

Figure 17.⁴⁹⁰

Prisoner of War Camps in Florida

1.Camp Blanding (Army)	2.Homestead (AAF)	3.White Springs (Navy)
4. Banana River (Navy)	5.Kendall – Miami (AAF)	6.Winter Haven (AAF)
7.Belle Glade (AAF)	8.Leesburg (AAF)	9.Camp Gordon Johnston (Army)
10.Bell Haven–Miami (AAF)	11.MacDill Field (AAF)	12.Dale Mabry Field (AAF)
13.Clewiston (AAF)	14.Melbourne (Navy)	15.Eglin Field (AAF)
16.Dade City (AAF)	17.Orlando (AAF)	18.Telogia (Army)
19.Daytona Beach (Navy)	20.Page Field – Fort Myers (AAF)	21.Marianna (AAF)
22.Drew Field (AAF)	23.Venice (AAF)	24.Whiting Field (Navy)
25.Green Cove Spring (Navy)		

Friction existed between diehard Nazis, and those who were disenchanted with the Hitler regime.⁴⁹¹ It led to tension, fights, and strikes. US Military Police sometimes had to separate the factions.⁴⁹² There were occasional escape attempts, although only one POW in Florida was tragically successful in escaping from the camps. A young German soldier escaped from a working party in the cane fields of Clewiston. He became lost and

⁴⁸⁹ Wiggins. 103.

⁴⁹⁰ Compiled from Billinger.

⁴⁹¹ Billinger. Hitler’s Soldiers in the Sunshine State. 71.

⁴⁹² Ibid. 77-80.

spent several hungry nights in the open while search parties closed in. Hungry, dehydrated and disoriented, the man hanged himself with his belt.⁴⁹³ The POW camps were all located at military bases, in State forests, and farming areas. These unusual guest-workers went about Florida with a sometimes surprising freedom of movement.

War mobilization affected the State's demography and social order in other ways. As Army Ground Forces left Florida to deploy overseas, their classroom seats were filled by Army Service Forces (ASF) who followed.⁴⁹⁴ Camp Blanding became an ASF Command, and Camp Gordon Johnston was re-designated an ASF Training Center. Specializing in functions of Signals, Supply, Ordinance, Medicine, Chemicals and Transportation, the ASF absorbed most black volunteers and draftees in the still-segregated army of WWII, with most black volunteers and draftees being assigned to the ASF.⁴⁹⁵ Assignment to combat arms was denied black soldiers, except in two divisions comprised entirely of black troops. Some ASF work was highly technical; much of it was grim and arduous. In the wake of battle, the ASF buried the dead, cleared away the ruins, and kept the cargo moving.⁴⁹⁶ Nowhere was the dichotomy of US segregation more glaring than in the wartime armed forces. Black troops were expected to support whole-heartedly the war effort to destroy fascism, yet abide by a system relegating them

⁴⁹³ Billinger "The Other Side Now : What Blanding Prisoners of War Told the Wehrmacht." Florida Historical Quarterly. Vol. 74.

⁴⁹⁴ Billinger "The Other Side Now : What Blanding Prisoners of War Told the Wehrmacht." Florida Historical Quarterly. Vol. 74.

⁴⁹⁵ Matloff. 462.

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid. 464.

to an inferior position. With its large black minority population, and its numerous black soldiers in uniform, Florida witnessed early expressions of unrest against that system.

Black Americans proved an important source of military manpower in the war. Of 9,838,725 persons drafted during the war, 1,056,841 were black Americans.⁴⁹⁷ The Army contingent was largest: 885,945 black draftees were 10.9 percent of the 8,108,531 conscripted. Black naval conscripts numbered 153,224; 10 percent of the total. The black community offered 16,005 to the Marine Corps; 8.5 percent of its 188,709 conscripts. The Coast Guard's 1,667 black conscripts were 10.9 percent of its total.⁴⁹⁸ Constituting 11 percent of the total US population, the black participation in the wartime armed forces stands at parity. Florida's minority contribution to the service was much greater. Over fifty thousand of its black citizens joined the military: 20 percent of the Floridians in uniform were black.⁴⁹⁹

These black GIs, and their supportive families and communities, figured powerfully in Florida's demographics. With training bases across Florida they were seldom sent far for training. Once in the barracks they were joined by black soldiers from the north new to Southern racism.⁵⁰⁰ In such ways the war challenged Florida's mores of segregation. The wartime policy encouraging soldiers to visit their hometowns when possible between training courses facilitated interaction between the black GIs and their communities. Train rides of less than a day reaching most parts of Florida were

⁴⁹⁷ Selective Service and Victory: The 4th Report of the Director of Selective Service. Washington, DC. Government Printing Office. 1948. 187-188.

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid. 188.

⁴⁹⁹ Gannon. 335.

⁵⁰⁰ Mormino. "GI Joe Meets Jim Crow." 26.

plentiful, if governed by Jim Crow restrictions. Road trips by auto were rarer, but in many places soldiers on liberty could simply walk home. Twenty mile hikes were not considered hardships for the times. Florida's numerous black GIs, often the pride of their community, could not be insensible to the dichotomy of segregation in war, or their place in the vanguard of its refutation. Racial tension was a fact of the war in Florida.⁵⁰¹

Dale Mabry Army Airfield in Tallahassee was geographically only three miles from the State Capitol Building which promulgated, administered, and enforced the separate and unequal segregation of the State. Geography numbered among several factors making it a hotbed for tensions. The population of Tallahassee was 40 percent black, many living in the Frenchtown district.⁵⁰² Dale Mabry Airfield was visited often by the 332nd Fighter Group, the Tuskegee Airmen. This unit from Tuskegee Army Airfield in nearby Alabama was composed entirely of the first black Army pilots and their crews. Members of this decorated unit were often at the Tallahassee airfield on training flights and were both a source of inspiration to the black airmen there, and symbols of the struggle for equality, even as they challenged racial prejudices by their mere existence.⁵⁰³

Nearby Camp Gordon Johnston offered another source of frustration.⁵⁰⁴ The camp continued to fit its GI nickname "Hell by the Sea." Amenities were few,

⁵⁰¹ Mormino. "World War II." 336.

⁵⁰² Ibid. 336

⁵⁰³ Ibid. 335.

⁵⁰⁴ Becker. 58.

discomforts many.⁵⁰⁵ Tallahassee was the only place for the soldiers to go on weekend passes. Black soldiers gravitated to Frenchtown. There were incidents of racial unrest in September 1942, and in August and October, nineteen-forty-four.⁵⁰⁶ On Easter Sunday, 1945, resentment spilled over when white Tallahassee police, reinforced by white MPs, reacting to boisterousness, began arresting black soldiers. The scuffling, rock throwing and confrontation escalated into a series of ugly riots.⁵⁰⁷ It worsened that April. Hundreds of black GIs gathered in Frenchtown for a going-away party, having been issued orders to depart for the upcoming invasion of Japan.⁵⁰⁸ The soldiers unwound, fights broke out, stores were ransacked, and the Tallahassee police responded with tear gas. Dozens were arrested.⁵⁰⁹

MacDill Field in Tampa also figured in racial agitation. Blacks constituted 25 percent of Tampa's population, and the black community centered in a neighborhood known as The Scrub.⁵¹⁰ Again, black GIs on leave resorted to the local community. In July 1941, in June 1943, and in February 1944, the city police and black airmen from MacDill faced off. The 1944 disturbance escalated into a riot when Tampa police and white MPs attempted to arrest a black soldier in the Scrub. A crowd estimated at 4,000

⁵⁰⁵ Jon Evans. "The Origins of Tallahassee's Racial Disturbance Plan: Segregation, Racial Tensions, and Violence During WWII." *Florida Historical Quarterly*. Vol. 79. Winter 2001. 351.

⁵⁰⁶ Mormino. "GI Joe Meets Jim Crow." 26.

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid. 27.

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid. 29.

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid. 30.

⁵¹⁰ US Census of Florida 1940. Table C-35 – Age, By Race and Sex For the City of Tampa: 1940. 150.

gathered. Bottles were thrown from the crowd, and tear gas was released against them in return. Two dozen black soldiers and civilians were arrested for riot.

Another unsettling influence to both Florida and its armed forces was the arrival for training and service of large numbers of women military personnel. History had no precedent for the mass enlistment of female soldiers. The Coast Guard created the SPARS program (a nautical acronym of their motto *Semper Paratus* – Always Ready) composed of female Coast Guardsmen.⁵¹¹ Empty hotels in Palm Beach provided the barracks for the SPAR Boot Camp. From June, 1943 until 1945, seven thousand SPARs trained in Palm Beach.⁵¹² Much larger, the Army Women's Army Corps (WAC) enlisted 150,000 females during the war. The average WAC was between 25 and 27 years of age, a high school graduate, unmarried, and with no dependents. One in five of the historic WACs, 28,000 women, trained at Daytona Beach in Florida.⁵¹³

Three women led the campaign for women soldiers in Florida: US Representative Edith Nourse Rogers, First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, and Florida educator, Mary McLeod Bethune. As war approached, Eleanor Roosevelt suggested a "Women's Reserve" under the Office of Civilian Defense.⁵¹⁴ Congresswoman Rogers sponsored HR 4906 in May, 1941 to create a Woman's Army Auxiliary Corps. The bill proposed a para-military civil service organization of 25,000 women to assume clerical duties of male soldiers. The bill

⁵¹¹ John A. Tilley. *A History of Women in the Coast Guard*. Commandant's Bulletin. Office of the Coast Guard Historian. Washington, DC. 1996. 3.

⁵¹² Ibid.

⁵¹³ Col. Mattie E. Treadwell. *The Women's Army Corps*. Center of Military History. United States Army. Government Printing Office. Washington. Washington. 1954. 55.

⁵¹⁴ Mattie Treadwell. 16.

was sidetracked in the Bureau of the Budget, which failed to define a pay scale for women approximating the pay of soldiers doing the same duties. After Pearl Harbor, Rogers reintroduced the bill, increasing the proposal to recruit 150,000 females. Language was inserted granting the women genuine military status.⁵¹⁵ The bill passed both Houses and the President signed into law on May 16, 1942 ‘An Act to Establish a Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) for Service with the Army of the US.’ The program was on the leading edge of both gender and racial issues. The legislation included enrollment of black females in the program. Much of its activity would occur in Florida.

Bethune led the charge on two fronts. She strove for the inclusion of black Americans in the WAAC, just as she had earlier fought for their inclusion in the CPT. The National Negro Council proposed Bethune to supervise black recruitment into the WAAC.⁵¹⁶ She assisted the two black recruiting officers for the WAAC in Florida, Dovey M. Roundtree Johnson, and Ruth A. Lucas.⁵¹⁷ Almost 6,500 black females served in the WAC; 146 of them as officers.⁵¹⁸ Throughout the war Bethune and the black community worked for two victories of great seriousness: victory against the Nazis; and victory for equal rights.⁵¹⁹

⁵¹⁵ Bettie J. Morden. The Women's Army Corps 1945-1978. Center of Military History, United States Army. Government Printing Office. Washington. 1988.

⁵¹⁶ Audrey Thomas McCluskey and Elaine M. Smith, edit. Mary McLeod Bethune: Building a Better World, Essays and Selected Documents. Indiana University Press. Indianapolis, IN. 1999. 173.

⁵¹⁷ Putney. 32.

⁵¹⁸ Mattie Treadwell. vii.

⁵¹⁹ Brand. 516.

Bethune had only begun to fight. As a Special Assistant to the Secretary of War, Bethune strove to help her home State. As the popular WAAC program grew to need a second training base, Bethune urged the Army to select Daytona Beach. Taking advantage of the hotel infrastructure, the Army concurred. Daytona Beach became WAAC Training Center No.2. The Army leased the empty hotels, apartment houses, inns and villas of the town, activating the Training Center on October 1, 1942. New recruits went for Basic Training into a tent city capable of housing 6,000 recruits. After Basic Training they moved into hotels for skills training. Rogers meanwhile advanced legislation making the program officially a part of the Army. The “Auxiliary” nomenclature was dropped, re-designating it as the Women's Army Corps (WAC) on July 4, 1943. When the program began, females were eligible for just four military specialties. Within a year they were serving in 155 different Army jobs.⁵²⁰ The WAC in Daytona Beach drew considerable attention. Militarizing women aroused some opposition. A “whisper campaign” alleged impropriety and licentiousness.⁵²¹

Because of the large numbers of WACs billeted in the midst of Daytona Beach, both the allegations and the Army investigations focused on the civilian town:

It was said that WAAC trainees drank too much; that they picked up men in streets and bars; that they were registered with men in every hotel and auto court, or had sexual relations under trees and bushes in public parks; that the nearby military hospital filled to overflowing with maternity and venereal disease cases. Finally, it was seriously stated that WAACs were touring in groups seizing and raping sailors and Coast Guardsmen.⁵²²

⁵²⁰ Mattie Treadwell. 192.

⁵²¹ Ibid. 193.

⁵²² Ibid. 210.

Investigations by the Army Service Command Inspector General and WAC Headquarters rejected the complaints. Of the ten thousand women at the base in May 1943, only 18 were pregnant and 16 of those women were married. The Military Police report for a typical Saturday night in Daytona Beach had only 11 discrepancies, all generally trivial in nature. There were two infractions of kissing and embracing in public, one WAC with no hat on, one without her identification card, and one enlisted WAC walking with a male officer. A bit more seriously, two were injured in an auto accident, two were found intoxicated, one AWOL returned, and one WAC was "retrieved from Halifax River in an intoxicated condition."⁵²³ The information came to light that a few ex-WACs who had failed basic training and been discharged, had kept their uniforms and remained in town wearing them. Their behavior prompted the worst charges. In reality, venereal diseases in the WAC were practically zero, and pregnancy among unmarried WACs was one-fifth the rate of women in the civilian world. Twenty percent of the women of the WAC received their training in Florida. They joined the Coast Guard SPARS and smaller numbers of Navy WAVES, serving at bases across the State.

A final demographic group impact on the State was the wounded. Returning cargo planes from the front landed every day at Florida airfields. Worn out, and often shot up, all too often they ferried wounded soldiers to Florida hospitals. The number of US soldiers killed in the war is often listed at 291,557 killed (among them approximately 5,000 Floridians.)⁵²⁴ While this is the number of "Battle Deaths," the same tabulation counts 113,842 "Other Deaths." These died as a result of wounds, injuries, illness,

⁵²³ Mattie Treadwell. 209.

⁵²⁴ Congressional Research Service. "American War and Military Operations Casualties: Lists and Statistics." Government Printing Office. Washington. 2010. Table I. 2.

disease, training accidents, and while travelling to and from the battlefield. Every one had sworn to defend the Constitution and donned the uniform. The combined number is 405,399 dead.⁵²⁵ To that must be added the 6,100 US Maritime Service personnel killed while in uniform, under arms and subject to military law during the war.⁵²⁶ A total of 411,499 US military personnel gave their lives in the war. Those suffering “Wounds Not Mortal” were 670,846 personnel.⁵²⁷ The US military suffered at least 1,082,245 killed and wounded during the war.⁵²⁸ Over a million of the 14,903,213 who served were either killed or wounded, a metric clarifying the seriousness of the war.

Florida’s role as an aerial embarkation/debarkation port guaranteed that thousands of wounded would return to the US via Florida. Most came from the ETO and African-Mediterranean-Middle East Theaters.⁵²⁹ In 1943 casualties numbering 78,000 were evacuated to the US.⁵³⁰ In 1944 that number increased by 300 percent.⁵³¹ Most went by hospital ship, but 121,000 of the worst injured were airlifted, many over the South Atlantic Route to Florida. ATC and the civilian-carrier cargo planes of Florida brought them home. Landing fields overseas were co-located with the supply dumps and base hospitals behind the front. Once the planes from Florida landed and their outbound cargo

⁵²⁵ Congressional Research Service. “American War and Military Operations Casualties: Lists and Statistics.” Government Printing Office. Washington. 2010. Table I. 2.

⁵²⁶ In 1987 the Maritime Service was awarded Veterans Status by Act of Congress.

⁵²⁷ Congressional Research Service. Table 1. 4.

⁵²⁸ There is no tabulation of those injured outside of combat theaters, except where resulting in death.

⁵²⁹ Charles M. Wiltse. US Army in World War II. Vol. II The Medical Department. Office of the Chief of Military History. Department of the Army. Washington, DC. 1965. 141.

⁵³⁰ Army Service Forces Statistical Review: December 1941-August 1945. War Department. Washington, DC. Government Printing Office. 1946. 69.

⁵³¹ Ibid. 250.

of war materials was unloaded, whether blood plasma, dynamite, or fresh soldiers; the aircraft were turned around to go back for more. The return flights often carried the wounded being sent home, and they were usually the most seriously injured.

Neurosurgery, maxillofacial surgery, plastic surgery cases, and the blind had priority.⁵³²

Figure 18.⁵³³

Cargo Plane of Wounded Returning from Periphery to Core



C-47 CARGO PLANE CONVERTED TO AMBULANCE DUTY in North Africa. The attending nurse is 2d Lt. Alveda E. Lutz, one of eight U.S. nurses killed in action in the MTO.

⁵³² Wiltse. 50.

⁵³³ Ibid. 141.

The interior compartments of the cargo planes were reconfigured with brackets for handling stretchers.⁵³⁴ The wounded were brought aboard, signed over to the ATC, and joined by flight surgeons, nurses, and attendants. The return flights in the unpressurized Dakotas were long, tedious, and often terrible experiences in triage. When the flights reached Florida they landed either at Miami Army Airfield, Morrison Army Air Base, or MacDill Field. Each had a major hospital on standby. In Miami Army Air Forces Hospital No.1, the former Biltmore Hotel, converted into a 1,200 bed hospital treated the wounded. Morrison Air Base used the US Army's Ream General Hospital, formerly the Breakers Hotel of Palm Beach, with 1,900 beds. MacDill Field was linked to the Army Air Corps Station Hospital, formerly the Don Cesar Hotel of St. Petersburg.⁵³⁵ Florida hospitals also provided care for seriously injured members of the garrisons of the region requiring evacuation to the mainland.

From the Florida receiving hospitals the wounded were shipped by plane or train to medical care around the nation; called the "Zone of the Interior."⁵³⁶ In September, 1944 the Zone of the Interior had 164,000 available general hospital beds, of which 153,000 were effective. In addition, there were 53,000 effective Convalescent Hospital beds.⁵³⁷ The emphasis at the Convalescent Hospitals was on returning the soldier to battle. On Miami Beach the Floridian, Pancoast, Gulfstream, King Cole, Nautilus, and Tower Hotels served as convalescent hospitals. In Daytona Beach, Welch Army Convalescent

⁵³⁴ Wiltse. 139.

⁵³⁵ Samuel D. LaRue, Jr. and Ellen J. Uguccioni. The Biltmore Hotel: an Enduring Legacy. 88.

⁵³⁶ Clarence MacKittrick Smith. The Medical Department in WWII: Zone of the Interior. Office of the Chief of Military History. Department of the Army. Washington, DC. 1956. 341.

⁵³⁷ Military hospital beds containing a patient were termed "effective."

Center had 4,000 beds.⁵³⁸ Physical fitness conditioning was emphasized to insure the patients return to active service. As the war in Europe came to an end, the convalescent hospital program accelerated. It provided reunions at the Florida convalescent centers for husbands and wives long separated by the fighting. This was to strengthen morale among the troops in preparation for the hardest battle of the war that lay ahead. It was a battle the Army and Navy, and Florida itself was bracing for: the invasion of Japan.

⁵³⁸ Wiltse. 189.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SUDDEN END OF THE WAR – CENSUS AND REMEMBRANCE

FDR's death in April 1945 and Germany's surrender did not slow Florida's militarization, rather, it accelerated the military preparations for the huge undertaking of the conquest of Japan. Even the final atomic bomb raids which ended the war so suddenly had roots in Florida. These raids ended the war, but Florida had changed forever under the war's influence. The 1950 Census clearly indicates how the war changed the backwater agrarian society the previous census had measured. If militarization developed the State, the State also helped change the military. Innovations tried first in Florida gave a new twist to post-war soldiering. This final chapter explores these three phenomena: Florida's role in the reduction of Japan; the changes the war brought to Florida, and changes Florida made in the US military.

By 1945 war had become a way of life in Florida. The State was subordinated to the war effort. Florida hummed with wartime industry and near-total employment.⁵³⁹ The peninsula was full of military installations and activity, guards, restricted areas, and surveillance. Something as ordinary as a civilian car travelling on a road was enough to draw attention. The bombing at Avon Park, Ocala National Forest, and Eglin Military Reservation went on with systematic regularity. Blimps armed with machine guns and bombs leisurely patrolled the coastline, as did horsemen armed with rifles. Newspapers, radio, and travel were controlled; gasoline, tires, shoes and food were rationed, and the US Postal Service brought what news there was.

⁵³⁹ Mormino. "WWII in Florida." 328.

As Harry Truman stepped into the White House, the military shifted its focus to preparing for the second half of the war: the conquest of Japan. Codenamed Operation Downfall, the invasion was to begin in late 1945 and it was expected to take two years of fighting. The first landing, codenamed Olympic, was scheduled for November 1, 1945. Operation Coronet, the follow-up invasion of Tokyo Bay, was set for March 1, 1946. The scale of the invasion may be seen in the number of troops assembled for it. Troops numbering 395,000 went straight from Europe to the Pacific for the invasion. Another 408,200 soldiers were arriving in the Pacific after CONUS R&R in route. They were joined by 138,500 troops from the US, making up a landing force close to a million men. A force of 2.25 million soldiers was being positioned along the West Coast to serve as reinforcements and occupation force.⁵⁴⁰ From a demographic standpoint, five percent of the 65 million US males counted in 1940 were to participate in conquering Japan.

The 1945 battles of Iwo Jima and Okinawa offered ghastly preludes.⁵⁴¹ Of the 30,000 US troops who stormed the island of Iwo Jima, 6,821 were killed in action, 23 percent of the force. Of 21,000 Japanese fighting on Iwo Jima, only 134 surrendered. The rest – over 99 percent – fought to the death. At Okinawa, 65,631 US land and naval casualties were sustained.⁵⁴² Of these, 12,281, or 20 percent, were killed. Japanese losses were worse (of 100,000 Japanese defenders, only 7,000 lived to surrender).

⁵⁴⁰ Matloff. 526.

⁵⁴¹ Doughty and Gruber. 570.

⁵⁴² Florida final Medal of Honor (posthumous) recipient Robert M. McTureous, Jr. was among the fallen. Pvt. McTureous, USMC, received the award for gallantry in the fighting, June 7, 1945 on Okinawa.

Ninety-three percent died fighting. At least 80,000 civilians lost their lives in the fighting.⁵⁴³ Admiral Chester W. Nimitz warned:

We must be prepared to take heavy casualties whenever we invade Japan. Our previous successes against ill-fed and poorly supplied units, cut down by our overpowering naval and air action, should not be used as sole basis of estimating the type of resistance we will meet in the Japanese homeland where the enemy lines of communication will be short and enemy supplies more adequate.⁵⁴⁴

Florida was the intermediate staging point for much of the preparation. The AAF established the “White Project” to transfer almost 6,000 warplanes from Europe to join the forces already in the Pacific. Almost 40 percent of that air fleet, 2,282 aircraft (primarily bombers) took the South Atlantic Route stateside, landing 25 a day for three months in Florida before going east. During the same May-August time the military’s “Green Project” airlifted 80,000 troops over the same route to Florida. It was the largest troop movement of the war by air. The government erected hundreds of temporary Quonset huts at Miami Army Airfield to receive them. In a move anticipating the modern airline industry to come, ATC officers distributed preprinted survey cards to the soldiers, asking them to rate the service and efficiency of their flight.⁵⁴⁵

In addition to the Florida Convalescent Hospitals rehabilitating soldiers for fresh combat, the AAF set up “Personnel Redistribution Centers” in the former hotels of Miami Beach, St. Petersburg, and Palm Beach, converting them from the training barracks they had already become. Air Corps personnel returning from the war in Europe were sent to

⁵⁴³ Doughty and Gruber. 570.

⁵⁴⁴ Spector. 544.

⁵⁴⁵ Craven and Cate. Vol. VII. 215.

these pleasant surroundings.⁵⁴⁶ For between 7 and 30 days, they received physical exams, dental work, psychological testing, rest, and recreation. After that they were shipped west. Those getting this “R&R” treatment (rehabilitation, recuperation, and recovery) in Florida were personnel assigned to the invasion of Japan.⁵⁴⁷

Two one-plane US bombing missions, on August 6 and August 9, suddenly brought the war to its unexpected end. Not everyone was surprised. Col. Tibbets and some of his senior officers of the 509th Composite Squadron knew differently. Since arriving on Tinian to fly bombing attacks against Japan, the 509th continued practicing their special techniques for dropping the new and special bomb. Early on August 6, Tibbets took the yoke of his B-29 for a mission against the Japanese homeland armed with one secret bomb, nicknamed “Little Boy.” The nose art painted on the aircraft fuselage bore the name “*Enola Gay*,” for Tibbets’ mother, who lived in Florida.⁵⁴⁸ Six of the twelve crewmembers had trained in Florida. At 0815 the *Enola Gay* flew over Hiroshima and dropped the atomic bomb.⁵⁴⁹ When no immediate response came from the Japanese government, a second bombing was ordered for August 9. The Nagasaki raid also had Florida connections: The pilot, Captain Charles W. Sweeney, had served as an Eglin test pilot. The co-pilot was 1LT Charles Donald Albury, a Miami High School

⁵⁴⁶ Craven and Cate. Vol. VII. 217.

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid. 558.

⁵⁴⁸ The apartment house in Miami where Tibbets grew up still stands in the neighborhood there.

⁵⁴⁹ Matloff. 526.

graduate who dropped out of the University of Miami to join the Army Air Corps.⁵⁵⁰ At 1102 hours the second atomic bomb exploded.

The next day, Japan opened negotiations for surrender, their government asking only that terms would not “comprise any demand which prejudices the prerogatives of the Emperor as sovereign ruler.” August 15, Emperor Hirohito ordered the Japanese people to lay down their arms and surrender. The war came to an end, just as suddenly as it had begun, and two years ahead of time.⁵⁵¹

Euphoria gripped the victors. Celebrations erupted all over Florida, as they did across the rest of the US. The wartime population and production centers of Jacksonville, Tampa Bay, and Miami were ecstatic, with none happier than the thousands of soldiers in Florida on their way to join the invasion. On September 2, 1945, a Japanese delegation formally signed surrender documents aboard the *USS Missouri* in Tokyo Bay.⁵⁵² The Governor of Florida issued a proclamation of victory. He declared a solemn commemoration for the 24-hour period to follow. The proclamation urged all liquor package stores, bars, tap rooms, juke joints and other places dispensing alcoholic beverages to remain closed during that period. Across the State Floridians went wild with celebrations. The ban on alcohol was ignored.

The war was over.

⁵⁵⁰ The Miami Herald. June 4, 2009. 1. Albury returned to Florida and flew for many years for Eastern Airlines in relative anonymity.

⁵⁵¹ The ceremony was delayed by Gen. MacArthur for the arrival of US Gen. Wainwright, and British Gen. Percival, who had recently been freed from POW camps. They stood among the victors at the surrender.

⁵⁵² There is some confusion over which date is V-J Day. One may consider any of three dates as V-J Day. August 14, 1945, the day the Japanese government signalled to the US its intent to surrender. August 15, 1945 was when news of this was announced to the world. President Truman declared September 2, 1945, the date of the surrender aboard the *USS Missouri*, as VJ Day.

The impact the war had on Florida was one of its great legacies. Conversely, the affect Florida's role in the war had on the US military is the other. The Census of 1950, conducted in the spring of that year, provides metrics for measuring the impact of the war on Florida and its people. The census reported a phenomenal increase in population for Florida. Between 1940 and 1950 the population of the State had grown from 1,897,414 to 2,771,305, a 46 percent increase.⁵⁵³ Florida's growth is especially significant within a national context -- only California and Arizona exceeded Florida's increase. Florida's decade of growth more than tripled the national increase of 15 percent.⁵⁵⁴ The war marked a huge demographic watershed.

The census revealed another demographic shift: the rural State was urbanizing. The 1940 Census records a roughly 50/50 split between urban and country dwellers.⁵⁵⁵ The 1950 statistics counted city dwellers at 65 percent of the population.⁵⁵⁶ As revealing, people moved to larger urban centers, thus the number of towns with populations under 1,000 actually shrank during the war, from 144 in 1940, to only 136 such towns in the 1950 census.⁵⁵⁷ The established urban areas grew apace. Metropolitan Miami in 1950 boasted nearly a half-million population. A new metropolitan center arose in Central

⁵⁵³ US Census of Florida 1950. Table 1.--Population of Florida, Urban and Rural: 1830 to 1850. 10-6.

⁵⁵⁴ Tebeau. 417.

⁵⁵⁵ It should be understood this does not mean actually residing within municipal boundaries. The 1940 Census counted urban residence as within a few hours travel proximity to the urban core.

⁵⁵⁶ US Census of Florida 1950. Table 2: --Population in Groups of Places According to Size: 1950. 10-6.

⁵⁵⁷ US Census of Florida 1950. Table 3.—Population in Groups of Places According to Size: 1900 To 1950. 10-7.

Florida with Orlando.⁵⁵⁸ Counting 52,367 within the city limits, and another 20,796 immediately adjacent, Orlando, boasted a metropolitan population of 73,163, the first urban area in the interior of the State.⁵⁵⁹

Florida counties witnessed a pattern of growth. Clay County, near the metropolitan and military center of Jacksonville, witnessed the greatest expansion in Florida, with a 121 percent increase. Perhaps not surprisingly, Camp Blanding, the largest wartime base in Florida, was located there. In the Florida panhandle, Bay County and Okaloosa County experienced triple-digit growth. Bay County, host to the Wainwright Shipyards doubled in population. Okaloosa County, home to Eglin Military Reservation, grew by 112 percent.⁵⁶⁰ South Florida counties also registered very large gains in population. Broward County and Monroe County experienced increases of 110 percent and 112 percent, respectively.⁵⁶¹ Situated between them, Dade County registered the sixth largest growth increase with an 85 percent gain.

The smaller municipalities (less than 50,000) grew both in number and in size. The largest municipal increase in Florida was North Miami, a modest township in 1940 of 1,973 residents. The war decade brought explosive growth to 10,734 residents, a 444 percent increase. The neighboring municipality of Hialeah witnessed the second-largest increase in the State: its pre-war population of 3,958 soared by 397 percent to 19,676,

⁵⁵⁸ US Census of Florida 1950. Table 9. – Population of Urbanized Areas: 1950. 10-16.

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁰ US Census of Florida 1950. Table 5.—Area and Population Of Counties, Urban and Rural: 1930 To 1950. 10-9.

⁵⁶¹ Ibid.

practically quadrupling.⁵⁶² The satellite municipalities of Coral Gables, Fort Lauderdale, and Hollywood doubled in size. The big metropolitan cities of Miami and Miami Beach, themselves experienced 45 percent and 65 percent population increases, respectively.⁵⁶³ Miami Army Airfield, Naval Air Station Miami, the Miami Beach Army Air Forces Training Base, and the Navy Subchaser Training Center, major wartime installations, were in the immediate community. The critical aerial port of the South Atlantic Route did not close with the end of the war. In 1947, it simply renamed itself Miami International Airport.

Municipalities in the Florida panhandle grew likewise. Pensacola expanded so much it was itself a metropolitan center in all but name, while Panama City's municipal population more than doubled in the war decade, from 11,610 persons in 1940 to 25,814 persons, an increase of 122 percent. In looking for cause and effect factors, the wartime shipyards of the city and nearby Tyndall Army Airfield were the only variables. The State capital of Tallahassee only grew by 67 percent, a relatively modest increase in comparison to the rest of Florida. But even that increase must be seen in context to the growth rate of 15 percent nationwide.

Key West represents an example of phenomenal growth that can only be attributed to the war. The island town always lacked a source of fresh water, except for rain collected in cisterns. The exponential growth of its wartime garrison demanded a better supply. Navy engineers drilled wells on the mainland in Florida City, installed

⁵⁶² US Census of Florida 1950. Table 4.--Population of Urban Places Of 10,000 or More From Earliest Census To 1950. 10-8.

⁵⁶³ Ibid.

pumps and constructed a 130-mile pipeline through the islands of the Florida Keys. The pipeline brought potable water in plenty to the barren islands for the first time in history. This ready supply of water enabled the Florida Keys to develop into a tourist haven.⁵⁶⁴ Military improvements to public works such as this facilitated Florida’s post-war growth.

Figure 19.⁵⁶⁵
Smaller Municipalities of Florida-1950

<i>Municipality</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Municipality</i>	<i>Population</i>
Bradenton	13,604	Brownsville	20,269
Coral Gables	19,837	Daytona Beach	30,187
Fort Lauderdale	36,328	Fort Myers	13,195
Fort Pierce	13,502	Gainesville	13,502
Hialeah	19,676	Hollywood	14,351
Key West	26,433	Lakeland	30,851
Lake Worth	11,777	North Miami	10,734
Ocala	11,741	Panama City	25,814
Pensacola	43,479	Sarasota	18,896
St. Augustine	13,555	Warrington ⁵⁶⁶	13,570
West Palm Beach	43,162		

⁵⁶⁴ Ogle. 198-199.

⁵⁶⁵ US Census of Florida 1950. Table 34. General Characteristics of the Population, For Metropolitan Areas, Urbanized Areas, and Urban Places of Ten Thousand or More: 1950. 10-56-58.

⁵⁶⁶ Warrington was a “census-designated place,” containing NAS Pensacola and base housing contiguous with the city of Pensacola. If Warrington were counted with Pensacola, it would make a fifth metropolitan area of over 50,000 in population in 1950.

Florida's singular preponderance of males to females during the war subsided quickly. The gender distribution of Florida in 1950 was 1,366,917 males to 1,404,388 females, a ratio of 49:51, conforming to national population norms.⁵⁶⁷ The population of Florida aged slightly, too. The median age had risen to 30.9 years in 1950, from the 1940 median of 28.9 years.⁵⁶⁸ In 1950 ninety-three percent of the adult population of Florida, those persons 21 years of age or over, were native to the US. Naturalized citizens were 5.2 percent. Aliens were just 1.3 percent.⁵⁶⁹

The census indicates the war brought on a marrying bee among Floridians. Between 1940 and 1950, the institution of matrimony grew noticeably. Of the marriageable population in Florida in 1940, 31 percent of the men were unmarried, as were 22 percent of the females.⁵⁷⁰ By 1950 the percentage of unmarried men had dropped to 22.7 percent, while unmarried women decreased to 17 percent.⁵⁷¹ A boom of childbirth followed. In 1940 there were 151,968 children under 5 years old and 152,968 children between 5 to 9 years; 16 percent of Floridians were between infancy and ten years of age.⁵⁷² In 1950 there were 290,745 persons under 5 years of age, and 238,229 between the ages of 5 and 9 years; in 1950 those between infancy and age ten amounted

⁵⁶⁷ US Census of Florida 1950. Table 13.—Color By Sex, For the State, Urban and Rural, 1930 To 1950. 10-31.

⁵⁶⁸ US Census of Florida 1950. Table 16. – Age By Color And Sex For The State: 1880 TO 1950. 10-35.

⁵⁶⁹ US Census of Florida 1950. Table 17. –Citizenship And Nativity Of The Population 21 Years of Age and Over, For The State. 10-37.

⁵⁷⁰ US Census of Florida 1950. Table 21. –Marital Status By Color, For The State, Urban And Rural, 1950, And For The State, 1940. 10-38.

⁵⁷¹ *Ibid.* 10-38.

⁵⁷² US Census of Florida 1950. Table 15. – Age By Color And Sex, For The State, Urban and Rural: 1950 And 1940. 10-34.

to 20 percent of all Floridians.⁵⁷³ In 1950, one of ten Floridians was born after the war. The numbers show a steady increase: 50,943 babies born in 1945, 113,806 babies born between 1946 and 1947, and between 1948 and 1949, 120,602 babies born. In the spring of 1950 there were 56,337 babies under 1 year of age. In 1950 –directly corresponding to the end of the war in 1945, there were 290,745 children 5 years or younger. The birth rate had doubled.

But the 238,229 children born during the war, and the post-war 290,745 children provided only one source of the population increase. Returning GIs constituted another. Florida’s own soldiers were augmented by another 594,917 adults. Many were former soldiers themselves, who liked what they saw in Florida during the war and began returning after their military service. Sergeant William E. Bills of Dallas, Texas, was typical in stating: “I’ve been to a lot of places since I got in the Army, and this is where I want to live.”⁵⁷⁴ After the war, air-conditioning, a pre-war rarity, made living in the Sunshine State idyllic year-around. The wartime invention in Florida of DDT graced its citrus groves with bumper harvests.⁵⁷⁵ Lots of cheap land, homestead exemptions and GI-Bill mortgages were plentiful spurs to suburbanization. The young ex-GIs, empowered by the Veterans Readjustment Act of 1944, would change the landscape of Florida.

They were joined by another group coming to Florida, known generically as Displaced Persons. It should be remembered that President Truman set December 31,

⁵⁷³ US Census of 1950. Table 15. 10-32.

⁵⁷⁴ “Sergeant Rates Miami No. 1 Town.” The Miami Herald. June 7, 1945.

⁵⁷⁵ Tebeau. 419.

1946 as the end date for wartime service. Chaotic conditions prevailed in much of the world long after V-J Day. Europe and the Soviet Union were devastated. The British Empire was falling apart. Its former domain of the sub-continent of India was tearing itself apart with religious and tribal and ethnic bloodshed. China polarized into civil war. Confused battles of liberation raged in the former Dutch East Indies, and French Indochina. Japan was a ruin under the US Army of Occupation, as was Germany. Amid the anarchy moved millions of homeless Displaced Persons, among them the remnant of the Jewish community nearly annihilated in the war. Many sought refuge in the US, and evinced a preference for settling in Florida. Certainly the benign weather was a big factor. Practically speaking, they came also because the transportation infrastructure left by the war made Florida relatively easy to get to. It may be also that war survivors preferred the safety offered in settling in what Florida in a very real sense had become: a military base surrounded by a moat on three sides.

The census shows stable post-war employment. The war boosted tourism to new heights in Florida. The Great Depression had devastated tourism, but the war restored it.⁵⁷⁶ Florida embraced the wartime visitors who flooded the peninsula: soldiers, sailors, and airmen, as another type of tourist. As the war went on, Florida even courted northern war workers, as well. By 1950 Florida had not only recovered its civilian tourist market but had increased it to 5 million visitors annually.⁵⁷⁷ As tourism boomed, in concert with civilian aviation, so did employment in general, showing in 1950 a marked improvement

⁵⁷⁶ Tebeau. 414.

⁵⁷⁷ Raymond A. Mohl and Gary Mormino. "A Social History of Modern Florida." The New History of Florida. 437.

over 1940 levels. The 1950 Civilian Labor Force numbered 1,057,479 workers, male and female. Of these, 47,864 persons were unemployed: 4.5 percent of the males, and 4.7 percent of the females. The employed numbered 1,009,615 persons. Florida's 1940 Civilian Labor Force constituted 786,804 workers, male and female, of whom 677,833 were employed. The 1940 Census counted 103,471 unemployed, more than double the 1950 number. The unemployed were also a much larger percentage of the whole: 13.5 percent of the males, and 12.7 of the females. In other words, between 1940 and 1950 Florida grew 331,782 paying jobs (1,009,615 less 677,833).⁵⁷⁸

The census reveals a new transition towards a government-oriented economy in Florida. In 1940 there were 5,500 persons holding paid non-civilian positions in the total Labor Force. Military positions counted in the Labor Force, but specifically not as part of the Civilian Labor Force. In 1950 there were 89,166 such persons counted. A legacy of the war was that from 1940 to 1950 the number of paid military garrison positions grew by 83,666 jobs. National defense positions in Florida boomed by a stunning 1,600 percent. The federal military 'occupation' of Florida during the war did not disappear at its end.⁵⁷⁹ Additionally, civil service government workers doubled, from 52,987 in 1940, to a 1950 count of 107,969 such workers.⁵⁸⁰ Female participation in government work also doubled, from 19,053 workers to 38,860 workers. The related industry of Public Administration also grew from 21,942 persons to 51,959 persons, an increase of 250

⁵⁷⁸ US Census of Florida 1950. Table 26. – Labor Force, 1950 And 1940, And Gainful Workers, By Color and Sex, For The State. 10-41.

⁵⁷⁹ US Census of Florida 1950. Table 27. – Employment Status By Color And Sex, For The State: 1950 And 1950. 10-41.

⁵⁸⁰ US Census of Florida 1950. Table 29. – Class of Worker And Major Occupation Group Of Employed Persons, By Sex, For The State: 1950 And 1940. 10-44.

percent. Public Administration workers were over 25 percent female, triple the number in 1940. Conversely, the category of Unpaid Family Workers in the home, a predominantly female category, had no increase in ten years, and shrank slightly from 14,740 persons in 1940, to 14,442 persons in 1950, despite the population boom.⁵⁸¹

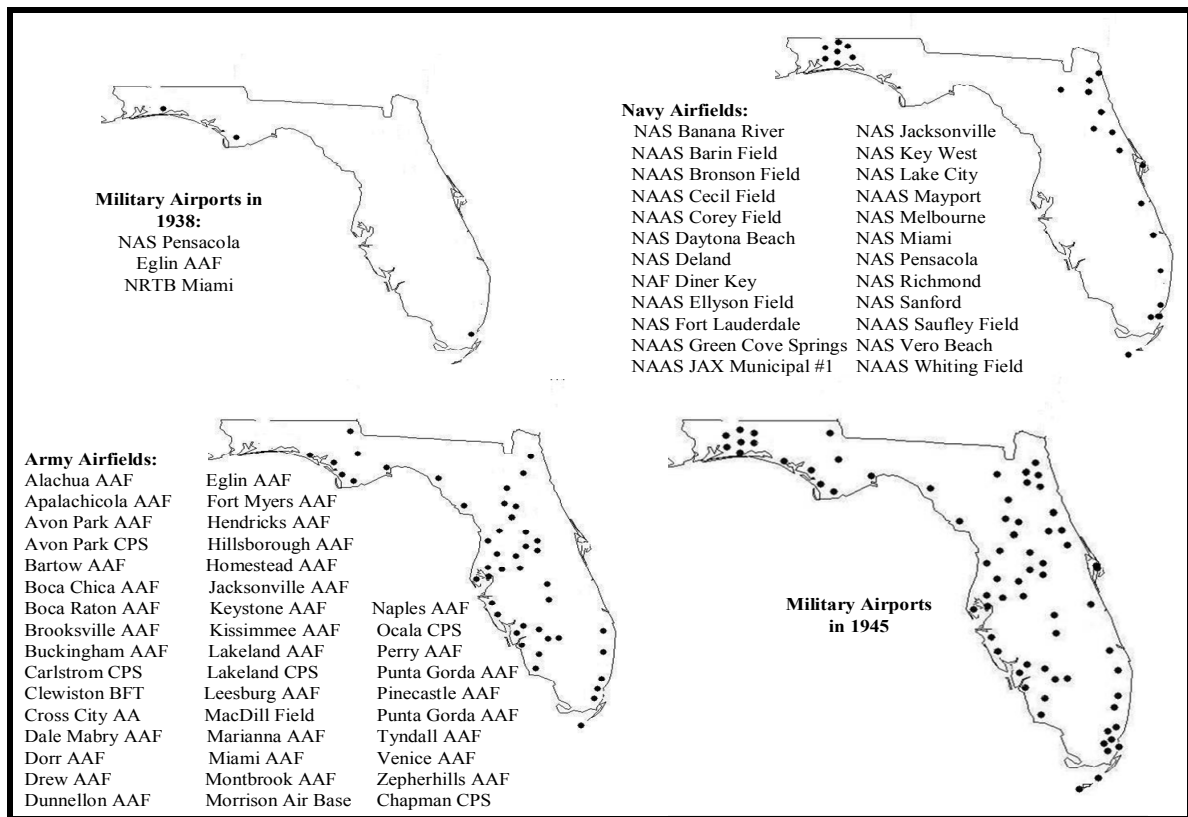
The war forged a permanent alliance between Florida and the aviation industry. Florida, a mainstay of the air war as an aviation academy and a launch pad for projecting aerial power, retained its aviation infrastructure. Tallahassee International Airport, Jacksonville International Airport, Orlando International Airport, Tampa International Airport, Miami International Airport, and Fort Lauderdale International Airport were all military airfields donated to the civilian community. Every airport in the State was either created in the war, or enhanced enormously by it. These federal airbases, undamaged, pristine, and operating with military precision, were a tremendous endowment to Florida. A few airfields were abandoned or devolved into summer training camps for baseball teams, but most were within a few years turned over to the State and local civilian authorities.⁵⁸² Those kept in federal hands as part of the military complex remained a valuable employer and useful economic adjunct to the aviation industry. With peace and the end of the ban on private flight, Florida expanded the identity it assumed during the war: a leading aerial port for the nation and the world. The State itself is today a terminal for worldwide cargo and passenger travel, because of the war.

⁵⁸¹ US Census of Florida 1950. Table 29. – Class of Worker And Major Occupation Group Of Employed Persons, By Sex, For The State: 1950 And 1940. 10-44.

⁵⁸² Some functioned as dual civilian/military airports throughout the Cold War.

Figure 20.

Growth of Florida Airports During the War⁵⁸³



The new aerospace industry was another Florida beneficiary of the war. Its genesis was in the wartime Nazi V-1 and V-2 rockets captured and brought to Eglin Military Reservation for study. Nearby Apalachicola Gunnery School tinkered with the rockets and test fired them into the Gulf of Mexico. Navy airships from NAS Richmond were positioned over the Gulf to observe their accuracy.⁵⁸⁴ In July, 1945 the blimps observed 16 of the classified test firings.⁵⁸⁵ After the war, émigré German scientists and

⁵⁸³ Compiled from Shettle.

⁵⁸⁴ Fleet Airship Wing Two War Diary. 16-24 March, 23-24 May, 1945.

⁵⁸⁵ Navy Airship Squadron ZP-21 War Diary. July 1945.

engineers settled into a government enclave at Huntsville, Alabama.⁵⁸⁶ In 1947, NAS Banana River at Cape Canaveral was selected to become a guided missile experimentation station.⁵⁸⁷ The WWII anti-submarine seaplane base had several advantages of location and place. It was an isolated site easily secured. Its location fronting the Atlantic shore meant rockets could be fired great distances with little impact on the vast ocean. US outposts in the Bahama Islands were well-situated downrange for observation and recovery. NAS Banana River was absorbed by the new Air Force and renamed Patrick Air Force Base. Cape Canaveral would develop into NASA Cape Kennedy Space Center. Florida would be a major component of the US aerospace program for decades to come.⁵⁸⁸

If the war left a legacy of government interest and authority in Florida, it also fostered political domination of Florida by the victors, as well. In the US Senate, Florida's wartime governor, Holland, moved up from Tallahassee to Washington in 1946 to assume the seat of dying Senator Andrews. Holland would serve in the Senate for the next twenty-five years. He was joined by George A. Smathers, marching home from 39 months in the Marine Corps to take a seat in the US House and challenge Claude Pepper for the other Senate post. The New Deal was past and FDR was gone; Pepper's post-war influence was diminished. The emergence of the Cold War and the new enemy of Communism made his left-leaning suspect, and the GIs derisively dubbed him "Red

⁵⁸⁶ Ken Lipartito and Orville R. Butler. A History of the Kennedy Space Center. University Press of Florida. Gainesville. 2007. 34.

⁵⁸⁷ Ibid. 47.

⁵⁸⁸ Ibid. 37.

Pepper.” Smathers defeated him and ascended to serve 18 years in the US Senate. The Florida WWII cohort of veterans dominated the governorship of Florida after the war. Between 1949 and 1979, seven of the eight Governors of Florida were former GIs.⁵⁸⁹ This practically unbroken line of leadership with military experience was a powerful legacy to Florida directly linked to the war.

Gradually, Florida ceased to be a part of the “Old South,” realigning itself instead as something of a fief of the federal government. The pre-war political system in which the rural conservative representatives of North Florida exercised authority beyond their numbers would not survive the war by long. Political change would begin with the Supreme Court mandated reapportionment of the State, transferring power from rural, under-populated North Florida, to its urban centers, especially population-rich South Florida.⁵⁹⁰ Florida would enter the New South, re-emphasizing itself as a place to visit, while linking itself as a destination to its new powerhouse industrial engine of aviation.⁵⁹¹ The outlook of its people became more transient, urbane, and internationalist in character. Florida since the war has become a global center of travel and movement.⁵⁹²

Florida’s legacy to the US military was the other great impact of the war. The war prompted great changes within the standing military, which in the wake of WWII has

⁵⁸⁹ Mormino. 340. Only State Senator Charles Eugene Johns, named Acting Governor when McCarty died in office, was not a veteran. At that time the State had no Lieutenant Governorship and Senate President Johns filled the position un-elected per Florida’s constitution for 15 months. Running for the office in 1955, he was defeated by Navy veteran, LeRoy Collins, who won handily by 66,125 votes.

⁵⁹⁰ Tebeau. 440.

⁵⁹¹ The Greater Miami area acquired the nickname “The Sixth Borough,” in reference to its specific connection with the northern metropolis of New York.

⁵⁹² Colburn. 357-8.

remained standing. Between 1946 and 1952, President Truman made 11 working vacations to Naval Station Key West, amounting to 175 days. Although President Truman's affection for Key West was real enough, that alone does not account for the almost six months of his time in office spent there. Much of the time was devoted to creating the Department of Defense, establishing the Air Force, and military reorganization. Executive Order 9981, abolishing segregation in the armed forces, was planned and drafted by Truman with his Joint Chiefs of Staff at the Little White House.⁵⁹³ His sojourns in Key West should be seen within context: in the immediate post-war era Florida was a bastion of the US military and a proven center of its force projection around the world, especially important with the abrupt emergence of the Cold War. Florida was an integral component of the US military ensemble. Key West during Truman's tenure was a military city. All the disciplines of naval warfare: surface warships, submarines, and aviation were represented by major fleet installations there. Those inhabitants of the island who were not in the Navy were employed by it, or dependents of it. Key West and the rest of the State were at the highpoint of a robust military presence during the post-war reorganization of the US military.⁵⁹⁴

Florida contributions to the military reorganization may be seen most readily in its wartime role facilitating the emergence in 1947 of the Air Force as an independent branch of service. This momentous change did not begin when the war ended.

Throughout the conflict it was a conscious pursuit by higher echelons of the US

⁵⁹³ Morris J. MacGregor, Jr. Integration of the Armed Forces, 1940-1965. Center of Military History. US Army. US Government Printing Office. Washington, DC. 1985. 291.

⁵⁹⁴ GIs returning stateside on terminal leave at the end of their enlistment continued to be sent to the Miami Beach "R&R" Centers throughout 1946.

government, and by 1945 was the subject of active deliberation in Congress. If only informally, Florida provided much of the impetus for realizing General Mitchell's vision. In addition to providing the place and space where a large part of the AAF combat forces formed up to fight WWII, the peninsula was moreover the boarding school for a large percentage of its personnel.

The establishment in Florida of the independent Officer Candidate School of the AAF Corps was a critical element. A military service is led by its officer corps. Entering WWII the AAF was led by Army Officers from West Point. It emerged from the war led by its own officers. When the AAF Officer Candidate School moved out of its Miami Beach hotels late in the war, it did not reintegrate with the Army. Instead, the AAF OCS moved into permanent quarters especially prepared for it at San Antonio, Texas, Aviation Cadet Center. By then, it was the Army Air Forces in name only. During the war approval for new bases and missions often involved inter-service and governmental wrangling, not to mention the lead time of construction, and the consensus and agreements required first. If not for the island-full of empty hotels Florida provided, nestled within a state full of operating air bases, matters may have gone differently. Whether by serendipity, or accident, the unique urban environment of Florida that allowed the first AAF OCS Class to quickly convene within days after Arnold gave the order, was nowhere else to be found.⁵⁹⁵

Moreover, Florida strengthened the hand of the AAF with another important card: air transport. The unexpected emergence of a third form of air power, airlift, owes much

⁵⁹⁵ Arnold. 220.

to the South Atlantic Route that Florida hosted. By the end of the war, the AAF had this new military capability, tried and proven. When the Air Corps first came to Florida it had two developing components: a strategic component of bombers, and a tactical component of fighter planes. Florida provided the air space in which those two air combatant arms tested and perfected their techniques. When the United States Air Force was created in the wake of the war, it had three components. Its two original combat arms developed into the Strategic Air Command (SAC) made up of bombing forces, and the Tactical Air Command (TAC) composed of fighter aircraft. Yet the Air Force was born with a new and distinct third specialty derived from its Air Ferrying and ATC experience: Military Airlift Command (MAC). Much of the expertise of MAC (albeit an unexpected result of the war) came from flying Florida's long-drawn-out South Atlantic Route, hauling air cargo and passengers halfway around the world for years under profoundly arduous conditions, and overflying the tallest mountains on earth at the far end in order to deliver the goods.⁵⁹⁶

Florida hosted much of the planning and implementation for the new Department of Defense at the Key West stronghold. The unwieldy troika of War Department, State Department, and Navy Department was due for change, especially with the birth of the US as global hegemon. The creation of the atomic bomb was reason enough to reorganize the US defense establishment. Florida was instrumental in training the pilots and crew of the *Enola Gay* and *Bock's Car*, just as it trained tens of thousands of air force

⁵⁹⁶ The new weapon of the military airlift would soon be put to use in the Berlin Airlift of the emerging Cold War.

officers, and hundreds of thousands of enlisted personnel.⁵⁹⁷ Florida facilitated the birth of the Air Force. Without an independent Air Force as a party to it, no Department of Defense would have been realistic.

One of the underlying concerns to be addressed by the new Department of Defense was the need for inter-service cooperation in the increasingly complex mission of modern warfare. Florida's experience in the war was in some respects a model of joint service and the absence of rivalry. The twenty naval air stations and forty-seven Army airfields of Florida worked together within the peninsula's airspace to create air forces that were as capable of reducing powerful industrial states, as they were at controlling the 70 percent of the world that is water. Navy instructors from Pensacola helped train the Doolittle Raiders at Eglin.⁵⁹⁸ Army pilots from MacDill helped fly the ASW patrols that drove back the U-boats. At the amphibious training centers of Camp Gordon Johnston and Fort Pierce, tens of thousand of soldiers and sailors trained together on all aspects of littoral warfare in relative harmony. During the several years of the military reorganization following WWII, Florida's experience was an example of joint service cooperation.

Topographically, the beaches of Florida were essential to winning the war. It has been said: 'the Battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields at Eton.'⁵⁹⁹ Words to that effect may apply to WWII and the Florida beaches. Florida was the US Army

⁵⁹⁷ The only crewman aboard both atomic missions, Radar Countermeasures Officer, 1Lt. Jacob Beser, was trained at Boca Raton.

⁵⁹⁸ Morison. 139.

⁵⁹⁹ Attributed to Wellington.

Amphibious Training Center of the war. JANET was in Florida.⁶⁰⁰ The beaches of the State were crucial to developing the strategic doctrine, and the tactical methods for prosecuting the war of seaborne invasions the US waged. Its dozens of invasions from the sea were often executed against the least hospitable of coastlines on earth, and the most formidable of opponents. The disasters at Anzio and Tarawa, and the pyrrhic victories at Salerno and Iwo Jima testify to the difficulties such combat presented. Florida was the elementary school where hundreds of thousands of GIs from shock troops to meteorologists were first exposed to the precise and dangerous art of amphibious warfare that ultimately brought victory. Again, whether by serendipity or accident, nowhere else in CONUS was there a State full of isolated, benign beaches to practice in privacy and acquire the essential playbook and experience to face the rocks and shoals, riptides, reefs, running currents and vagaries of the littoral environment, manned by the hostile garrisons, which the GIs faced. It was perhaps apropos that the US command and control ship for many of its amphibious invasions, *USS Biscayne*, was named for a prominent Florida bay.⁶⁰¹

In the broader sense of strategic geography, the many US seaborne invasions of the war may also be said to owe some of their success to the location and place of Florida. The predominant attack boat of the WWII landings, the Higgins Boat, was mass produced at New Orleans, adjacent to Florida. ATS transport ships full of Higgins boats

⁶⁰⁰ See Chapter VI.

⁶⁰¹ The Hawaiian Islands replicate many of the same tactical advantages. But practicing to invade Europe there required monumental logistics across 2,500 miles of blue water, rather than the easy access afforded by the rail system linking Florida with the rest of the East Coast. Above all, training in Hawaii confounded a Grand Strategy of Europe First.

routinely plied the Florida SLOCs heading east and west to the war. Furthermore, the majority of the larger amphibious landing vessels of the war such as the LSTs, sometimes called the “Prairie Navy,” were built along the inland rivers of the US interior. Almost 700 LSTs of the cornfield fleet reached the open sea and the war via the principal ward of the Florida maritime marches: the Mississippi River. Such traffic, specifically required for seaborne invasions, joined munitions and supplies of a more general nature that transited these sea lanes to the war only because of the protection afforded by having the Florida peninsula in US hands. One reason for pouring troops and infrastructure into the peninsula before the outbreak of the war not explicitly articulated at the time (perhaps purposely), was the geographic fact that had the enemy gotten ground troops to French Guiana or Yucatan, then Florida --with its inviting beaches-- was the barbican to the US. The stronger it was in those early days, the better.

It is impossible to quantify how much the US victory in the war benefited from Florida’s control of its sea lanes; a control it had to fight for desperately, as Admiral Mahan had foreseen. It is impossible even to quantify how much war material passed through SLOCs of Florida (at least ten percent of it in Florida-built bottoms).⁶⁰² But a single example may serve to illustrate the importance of the realm: the significant psychological victory of the Doolittle Raid in the otherwise-disastrous spring of 1942 occurred because the new aircraft carrier *USS Hornet* took on the Florida-trained B-25 bombers at NAS Alameda, California and carried them deep into the Pacific Ocean to within range for the attack. *Hornet* was built in Newport News, and was on its first

⁶⁰² An application of the “hidden hand of the marketplace” driving the marketplace in situations of Total War may be the fact that every ship sunk off Florida equated to the laying of a new keel.

patrol. To reach its rendezvous with the Doolittle Raiders it first had to transit the Florida SLOCs and the Panama Canal. A single enemy torpedo strike in Florida waters, or a bomb exploding at one of the canal locks, and the Doolittle Raid would never have happened.⁶⁰³

To this day the Florida peninsula retains a centrality to the US military and to the defense establishment. Three of the nine Unified Combatant Commands of the US Armed Forces are headquartered in Florida. The reasons for the military fondness are manifest. For example, the geographic appeal of Mayport Naval Station is a constant. Warships shoving off from Mayport can be out to sea in a matter of minutes, underway on any one of 180 degrees of headings. Likewise, friendly vessels seeking ingress have 180 degrees of approach. Today Mayport is home to the 4th Fleet. At Camp Blanding, 73,000 acres of pristine Pine Barrens held by the Florida National Guard are exempt from Base Re-Alignment Committee (BRAC) closure. The largest Coast Guard Area of Responsibility (AOR) in the world, Coast Guard 7th District (the old 7th Naval District) is based in Florida. Avon Park is still a bombing range. The longest runway in Florida remains at Homestead Air Force Reserve Base. The multitude of airports in Florida constitute a national strength, reaching as they do around-the-world. Florida is meanwhile home to the third-largest population of veterans in the United States.

The factors of military geography, climate and topography argued for Florida as the mobilization site for turning out great numbers of trained soldiers, sailors, airmen, and merchant mariners. This arsenal produced over two million participants: riflemen, pilots

⁶⁰³ Loaded troop ships never transited Florida's risky sea passages, but always launched from the East Coast and West Coast ports of embarkation straight onto the safety of the open seas.

of all types, bombardiers, navigators, aircrews, mechanics, anti-submarine warfare experts, radar and sonar technicians, attack boat drivers, beach masters, commandos, frogmen, and logisticians. Owing to its place in the Western Hemisphere it simultaneously stood watch over the Straits and the passes of the Caribbean. Had Florida lost the Battle of the Gulf Sea Frontier, had the Straits been closed; such strategic reverses could have decided the outcome of the war far differently. The daily combat air patrol that flew over the realm from a dozen Florida bases and island outposts, joined by the Piper Cubs of the CAP, the splinter fleet keeping station at sea, and the coast watchers ashore, all contributed to the war effort. US possession of the Florida peninsula was critical to its victory.

The GIs returned to Florida in large numbers after the war. But where those soldiers went in the between times, between their first visit to Florida, and when they returned after the war, is seldom tracked. From Florida they went into the crucible of war. They went over the Aluminum Trail, and down the Stilwell Road; to Pointe du Hoc and Hiroshima. After such places their preference for Florida was understandable. The approximately 5,000 Floridians who did not return also deserves audit.⁶⁰⁴ To the 4,674 service members KIA or missing, between 1941 and 1945, may be added the many fatal training accidents, and the merchant mariners, pan-military, and airline personnel who shared their fate. By itself, 4,674 is a small number, but those losses suffered by the Floridians at the time, represent as proportionately great a loss as that experienced by the entire US population in the Vietnam War. Moreover, the sacrifice of Floridians in WWII

⁶⁰⁴ Florida WWII Heritage Trail. 3.

occurred in a time span compressed to less than half the time of Vietnam, and took place in a location infinitesimally smaller than the entire United States.⁶⁰⁵

Figure 21.

Florida's Black GIs Building the Burma Road⁶⁰⁶



Behind the dreamy iconic memories of the war, of big band music and newfound employment, uniforms and travel and excitement, a life and death struggle with profound ramifications was underway in the world. This dissertation argues for its remembrance, and for consideration of the importance of Florida's place and space in the world war.

Florida was central to the war effort, figuratively and literally. That is the message of a State of War in Florida from 1939 to Nineteen forty-five.

THE END

⁶⁰⁵ Two-thirds of the 58,282 US killed in Vietnam came in the late 1960s: 1967, 1968 and 1969. The median US population at the time was 200,706,052 in 1968. The civilian population of Florida during WWII of approximately 1,647,414, suffering 4,674 lost actually experienced loss as great numerically, suffered within a infinitely smaller population, as the entire US as a whole in Vietnam.

⁶⁰⁶ "The Ledo Road." Life Magazine. August 15, 1944.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. - WWII BASES IN FLORIDA⁶⁰⁷

NORTHWEST FLORIDA BASES:

Naval Air Station (NAS) Pensacola⁶⁰⁸
Bagdad OLF, NAS Pensacola⁶⁰⁹
Auburndale OLF, NAS Pensacola
Bauer OLF, Naval Auxiliary Aviation Facility (NAAF) Bronson Field
Bayou OLF, Naval Auxiliary Air Station (NAAS) Corry Field
Bell OLF, NAAS Corry Field
Choctow OLF, NAAS Whiting Field (adjacent Bagdad)
Chevalier Field, NAS Pensacola
Fountain Auxiliary Air Field, NAS Pensacola⁶¹⁰
Gonzalez OLF, NAS Pensacola
Holm Airport (outside Pensacola)
Holley OLF, NAAS Whiting Field
King OLF, NAS Pensacola
Milton OLF, NAS Pensacola
Navarre OLF, NAS Pensacola
Pace OLF, NAAS Ellyson Field
Pensacola Field #1
Pensacola Field #5 (near Gonzalez)
Pensacola Field #6 (near Gonzalez)
Pensacola field #7
Pensacola Field #8 (near Muskogee)
Pensacola Field #9 (near Gonzalez)
Pensacola Municipal Outlying Field
Spenser OLF, NAAS Milton
Stump OLF, NAAS Corry Field
US NAAS Barin
US NAAS Bronson Field

⁶⁰⁷ Compiled from: Richard E. Osborne. World War II Sites in the United States: A Tour Guide and Directory. Riebel-Roque Publishing. Indianapolis. 1996. 56-67., and Florida World War II Heritage Trail. Florida Department of State. Tallahassee. 2000.

⁶⁰⁸ Grades of Naval establishments are thus: NAS is the acronym for Naval Air Station, the largest facilities. NAAS references Naval Auxiliary Air Station. NAF references Naval Air Facility.

⁶⁰⁹ OLF in a naval acronym for Outlying Field.

⁶¹⁰ Grades of Army Air Corps establishments are so: the term "Field" as in MacDill Field, was applied to the largest installations. "Army Air Field" referred to medium installations. Army Auxiliary Air Field referred to the smaller establishments. In the cases of Orlando Army Air Base and Morrison Field Army Air Base, the station was officially designated an "Air Base."

APPENDIX A –NORTHWEST FLORIDA BASES CONTINUED:

US NAAS Corry Field
US NAAS Ellyson Field
USS NAAS Saufley Field
US NAAS Whiting Field
Crestview Army Air Field
Eglin Army Field (near Valparaiso)
Eglin-Hurlburt Airdrome (Hurlburt Field)
Florosa Field (near Valparaiso)
Garniers Field (Eglin auxilliary #4)
Holt Field (Eglin auxilliary #6)
Mary Ester Field (Fort Walton Beach)
Mossy Head Field (Eglin auxillary #1)
Niceville Field (Eglin auxillary #2)
Tyndall Army Flying Field (Panama City)
Marianna Army Air Field
Alliance Auxiliary Army Air Field (near Marianna)
Bascom Auxiliary Army Air Field (near Marianna)
Ellis Auxiliary Army Air Field (near Marianna)
Malone Auxilary Army Air Field (near Marianna)
Appalachicola Army Air Field
Camp Gordon Johnston (Carrabelle)
Dale Mabry Army Air Field (Tallahassee)
Monticello Auxiliary Army Air Field
Quincy Auxiliary Army Air Field
Perry Army Air Field

NORTHEAST FLORIDA BASES:

Naval Air Station Jacksonville
Jasper OLF, NAS Jacksonville
Branan OLF, NAS Jacksonville
Campville OLF, NAS Jacksonville
Cummer OLF, NAS Jacksonville
Fernandina OLF, NAS Jacksonville
Fleming Island OLF, NAS Jacksonville
Francis OLF, NAS Jacksonville
Hart OLF, NAS Jacksonville
Herlong OLF, NAS Jacksonville
Madison OLF, NAS Jacksonville
Maxwell OLF, NAS Jacksonville
Middleburg OLF, NAS Jacksonville
Mile Branch OLF, NAS Jacksonville
Paxon OLF, NAS Jacksonville
Pomons OLF, NAS Jacksonville

⁶¹¹ LTA is the naval abbreviation for Lighter Than Air.

APPENDIX A. – NORTHEAST FLORIDA BASES CONTINUED:

Putnam OLF, NAS Jacksonville
St Marys OLF, NAS Jacksonville
Switzerland OLF, NAS Jacksonville
Trout Creek OLF, NAS Jacksonville
Kay Larkin OLF, NAS Jacksonville (near Palatka)
Jacksonville Army Air Field
Jacksonville Army Air Field #2
U.S. NAAS Cecil Field (near Jacksonville)
U.S. NAAS Mayport (near Jacksonville)
Whitehouse Airport (near Jacksonville)
Fort Clinch #3 Army Post
St. Augustine Coast Guard Training Station
St. Augustine OLF, NAS Jacksonville
Camp Blanding (near Starke)
Belmore OLF, NAS Jacksonville
Carlisle OLF, NAS Jacksonville (near Green Cove Springs)
Crystal Lake Air Base (Camp Blanding)
Naval Air Station Lake City
 Lake Butler OLF, NAS Lake City
Starke Army Air Field
US NAAS Green Cove Springs
Cross City Army Air Field
Horseshoe Point Auxiliary Army Air Field
Tennille Auxiliary Army Air field
Alachua Army Air Field
Gainesville Municipal Airport
Keystone Heights Army Air Field
Montbrook Auxiliary Army Air Field (near Williston)
Stengel Field (Gainesville)
Bostwick OLF, NAS Jacksonville
Palatka Air Operational Training Base
Naval Air Station Daytona Beach
 Bulow OLF, NAS Daytona Beach
 Bunnell OLF, NAS Daytona Beach
 New Smyrna OLF, NAS Daytona Beach
 Tomoka OLF, NAS Daytona Beach (Ormond Beach)
Flagler Beach Coast Guard patrol station
Daytona Beach Women's Army Corps Training Center
Army Signal Corps School Daytona Beach
Ocala Auxiliary Army Air Field
Taylor Auxiliary Army Air Field (Ocala)
Cedar Keys Auxiliary Army Air Field
Crystal River Field

APPENDIX A. – NORTHEAST FLORIDA BASES CONTINUED:

Dunnellon Army Air Field
Withlacoochee Auxiliary Army Air Field (Dunnellon)
Naval Air Station Deland
Spruce Creek OLF, NAS Deland
Altoona Auxiliary Army Air Field
Bushnell Army Air Field
Leesburg Army Air Field
Minneola Auxiliary Army Air Field
Naval Air Station Banana River (Cape Kennedy)
Ryan Field (Apopka)
Naval Air Station Sanford
 Titusville OLF, NAS Sanford
 Osceola OLF, NAS Sanford
Cannon Mills Auxiliary Army Air Field (Orlando)
Gotha Army Air Field (Windermere)
Hoequist Auxiliary Army Air Field (Orlando)
Holopaw Field
Kissimmee Air Air Field
Orlando Army Air Base
AAF School of Applied Tactics, Orlando
Pinecastle Army Air Field (near Orlando)
Wallace Auxiliary Army Air Field (Orlando)
Winter Garden Army Air Field (near Orlando)
Brooksville Army Air Field
Zephyrhills Auxiliary Army Air Field
University of Florida Army ROTC & Navy ROTC (Gainesville)

CENTRAL FLORIDA BASES:

MacDill Field (Tampa)
Albert Whitted Airport (Coast Guard Air Station)
Drew Field (Tampa)
Dunedin Amphibian Tractor Detachment
Fort DeSoto (Mullet Key, Tampa Bay)
Hillsborough Army Air Field
Peter O. Knight Field
Pinellas Army Air Field (Clearwater)
St. Petersburg Coast Guard Station
St. Petersburg US Maritime Service Training Station
Wimauma Auxiliary Army Air Field (St. Petersburg)
Armour Auxiliary Army Air Field (near Bartow)
Bartow Army Air Field
Coronet Airport (near Bartow)
Drane Army Air Field (Lakeland)
Halderman-Elder Field (Lakeland)

APPENDIX A. – CENTRAL FLORIDA BASES CONTINUED

Hampton Auxiliary Army Air Field (Lakeland)
Lake Wales Army Air Field
Lakeland Army Air Field
Lakeland Municipal Airport
Lincoln Army Flying School
Leesburg Army Air Field
Leesburg Army Service Center
Plant City Auxiliary Army Air Field
Winter Haven Auxiliary Army Air Field
Naval Air Station Melbourne
 Malabar OLF, NAS Melbourne
 Valkaria OLF, NAS Melbourne
Naval Air Station Vero Beach
 Roseland OLF, NAS Vero Beach
 Fort Pierce OLF, NAS Vero Beach
US NAAS Witham (near Stuart)
 Stuart OLF, NAAS Witham
US Naval Amphibious Training Base Fort Pierce
Passage Key Bombing Range
Avon Park Bombing Range
Avon Park Army Air Field
Conners Field (Okeechobee)
Hendricks Field (Sebring)
Okeechobee Auxiliary Army Air Field
Wauchula Auxiliary Army Air Field
Carlstrom Field (Arcadia)
Dorr Field (Arcadia)
Myrtle Beach Field (near Arcadia)
Wells Auxiliary Army Air Field (near Arcadia)

SOUTHWEST FLORIDA BASES:

Sarasota Army Air Field
Venice Army Air Field
Punta Gorda Army Air Field
Buckingham Army Air Field (in Fort Myers)
Fort Myers Air Field
La Belle Auxiliary Army Air Field
Page Field (North Fort Myers)
Bonita Springs Army Air Field
Naples Army Air Field
Immokalee Auxiliary Army Air Field
Belle Glade Auxiliary Army Air Field
Clewiston Army Air Field
Riddle Field (Clewiston)

APPENDIX A.– SOUTHEAST FLORIDA BASES:

Camp Murphy Army Signal Corps (Hobe Sound)
Lake Worth Auxiliary Army Air Field
Lantana Auxiliary Army Air Field
Morrison Field Army Air Base (West Palm Beach)
Palm Beach Coast Guard Training Station
Boca Raton Army Air Field
ETTC Radio and Radar Technical Training School Boca Raton
Army Air Forces Distribution Center Boca Raton
Griffith AAF Field (Boca Raton)
Naval Air Station Fort Lauderdale
 North Pompano OLF, NAS Fort Lauderdale
 Oakland Park OLF, NAS Fort Lauderdale
 Pompano OLF, NAS Fort Lauderdale
Naval Ball Gunner School, Hollywood
Naval Air Navigation School, Hollywood
Naval Ship Facility, Port Everglades
Port Everglades Coast Guard Patrol Base
US NAAF North Pompano
US NAAF West Prospect (Fort Lauderdale)
Naval Air Station Miami Mainside Field (Opa Locka)
NAS Miami Masters Field (Miami Gardens)
NAS Miami Municipal Airport Field (Miami-Dade College North Campus)
 Davie OLF, NAS Miami (Davie)
 Forman OLF, NAS Miami (Dania)
 Macarthur OLF, NAS Miami (Hollywood)
 North Perry OLF, NAS Miami (Hollywood)
 South Perry OLF (Miami-Dade College South Campus)
Miami 36 Street Airport
Miami Army Air Field
Miami Army Air Depot
Miami Beach Army Air Force Officers Training School
Miami Beach Army Air Forces Basic Training Camp #2
Miami Beach Army Air Forces Basic Training Camp #9
Army Personnel Redistribution Center #7 (Miami Beach)
US NAAF Dinner Key (Coconut Grove)
Coast Guard Station Dinner Key (Coconut Grove)
US Navy Navigational School (Coconut Grove)
Naval Air Station Richmond (Richmond Heights) LTA⁶¹¹
 Banana River OLF (LTA)
 Mechum OLF (LTA)
Chapman AAF Field (Pinecrest)
Homestead Army Air Field
US Naval Base Key West

APPENDIX A.– WORLD WAR II BASES IN FLORIDA CONCLUDED

Naval Sound Training School Key West
Naval Sub Base Key West
Naval Air Station Key West
Marathon OLF
Fort Jefferson Coast Guard Seaplane Station
US NAAS Boca Chica
University of Miami Army ROTC, Navy V-5 and V-12 Officer Programs

THESE GRAND HOTELS WERE COVERTED INTO MILITARY HOSPITALS

The Breakers of Palm Beach
The Nautilus of Miami Beach
The Biltmore of Coral Gables
The Don Cesar Resort of St. Petersburg
The Ponce de Leon Hotel of St. Augustine

THESE GRAND HOTELS WERE CONVERTED FOR TRAINING

The Boca Raton Club
The Beach Club of Miami Beach
The Surf Club of Miami Beach
The Hollywood Beach Resort
The McAllister Hotel of Miami
The Jacaranda Hotel in Avon Park
Don CeSar Hotel, St. Petersburg
The Everglades Hotel of Miami
The Columbus Hotel of Miami

THE FOLLOWING RACE TRACKS WERE USED AS SUPPLY DUMPS

Tampa Downs
Hialeah Racetrack
Tropical Park
Gulfstream Park

In addition many other venues including bowling alleys, jai-ali frontons, dogtracks, fairgrounds, and innumerable smaller lodgings and establishments were taken over by the military as well.

APPENDIX B.

SHIP ATTACKS IN THE GULF SEA FRONTIER 1942

	<i>Vessel</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Action</i>
1	<i>Pan Massachusetts</i>	Feb. 19	Tanker	Sunk off Cape Canaveral
2	<i>Republic</i>	Feb. 22	Tanker	Sunk off Hobe Sound
3	<i>Cities Service Empire</i>	Feb. 22	Tanker	Sunk off Cape Canaveral
4	<i>W.D. Anderson</i>	Feb 23	Tanker	Sunk off Hobe Sound
5	<i>Halo</i>	March 11	Tanker	Damaged in Gulf of Mexico
6	<i>Colabee</i>	March 13	Freighter	Damaged north of Cuba
7	<i>Esparta</i>	April 9	Freighter	Sunk off Fernandina Beach
8	<i>Gulfamerica</i>	April 10	Tanker	Sunk off Jacksonville
9	<i>Leslie</i>	April 13	Freighter	Sunk off Cape Canaveral
10	<i>Korsholm</i>	April 13	Freighter	Sunk off Cape Canaveral
11	<i>Federal</i>	April 30	Tanker	Sunk north of Cuba
12	<i>La Paz</i>	May 01	Freighter	Damaged Cape Canaveral
13	<i>Worden</i>	May 01	Freighter	Sunk off Cape Canaveral
14	<i>Sama</i>	May 03	Freighter	Sunk off Fort Lauderdale
15	<i>Ocean Venus</i>	May 03	Freighter	Sunk off Cape Canaveral
16	<i>Laertes</i>	May 03	Freighter	Sunk off Cape Canaveral
17	<i>Norlindo</i>	May 04	Freighter	Sunk NW Dry Tortugas
18	<i>Eclipse</i>	May 04	Tanker	Damaged off Delray Beach
19	<i>Munger T. Ball</i>	May 05	Tanker	Sunk NW Dry Tortugas
20	<i>Joseph M. Cudahy</i>	May 05	Tanker	Sunk NW Dry Tortugas
21	<i>Delisle</i>	May 05	Tanker	Damaged off Hobe Sound
22	<i>Alcoa Puritan</i>	May 6	Freighter	Sunk in Gulf of Mexico
23	<i>Java Arrow</i>	May 06	Tanker	Sunk off Fort Pierce
24	<i>Amazona</i>	May 06	Freighter	Sunk off Port St. Lucie
25	<i>Halsey</i>	May 06	Tanker	Sunk off Port St. Lucie
26	<i>Green Island</i>	May 06	Freighter	Sunk south of Cuba
27	<i>Empire Buffalo</i>	May 06	Freighter	Sunk south of Cuba
28	<i>Ohioan</i>	May 08	Freighter	Sunk off Delray Beach
29	<i>Ontario</i>	May 08	Freighter	Sunk in Gulf of Mexico
30	<i>Torny</i>	May 08	Freighter	Sunk in Gulf of Mexico
31	<i>Lubrafol</i>	May 09	Tanker	Sunk off Boca Raton
32	<i>Calgarolite</i>	May 09	Freighter	Sunk south of Cuba
33	<i>Gulfprince</i>	May 11	Tanker	Damaged Gulf of Mexico
34	<i>Virginia</i>	May 12	Tanker	Sunk in Gulf of Mexico
35	<i>David McKelvey</i>	May 13	Tanker	Sunk in Gulf of Mexico
36	<i>Gulfpenn</i>	May 13	Tanker	Sunk in Gulf of Mexico
37	<i>Amapala</i>	May 14	Freighter	Sunk in Gulf of Mexico
38	<i>Eastern Sun</i>	May 14	Tanker	Undamaged-Gulf of Mexico
39	<i>Potrero del Llano</i>	May 14	Tanker	Sunk off Miami
40	<i>Comayagua</i>	May 14	Freighter	Sunk south of Cuba
41	<i>Gulfoil</i>	May 16	Tanker	Sunk in Gulf of Mexico
42	<i>Sun</i>	May 16	Tanker	Damaged n Gulf of Mexico

APPENDIX B.

SHIP ATTACKS IN THE GULF SEA FRONTIER 1942 Continued

43	<i>William C. McTarnahan</i>	May 16	Tanker	Damaged in Gulf of Mexico
44	<i>Mercury Sun</i>	May 18	Tanker	Sunk south of Cuba
45	<i>William J. Salman</i>	May 18	Freighter	Sunk south of Cuba
46	<i>Ogontz</i>	May 19	Freighter	Sunk north of Yucatan
47	<i>Heridia</i>	May 19	Freighter	Sunk in Gulf of Mexico
48	<i>Ogontz</i>	May 19	Freighter	Sunk in Gulf of Mexico
49	<i>Halo</i>	May 20	Tanker	Sunk in Gulf of Mexico
50	<i>George Calvert</i>	May 20	Freighter	Sunk Yucatan Passage
51	<i>E.P. Theriault</i>	May 21	Freighter	Damaged Florida Straits
52	<i>Clare</i>	May 21	Freighter	Sunk south of Cuba
53	<i>Faja de Oro</i>	May 21	Tanker	Sunk W. Dry Tortugas
54	<i>Elizabeth</i>	May 21	Freighter	Sunk south of Cuba
55	<i>Samuel Q. Brown</i>	May 23	Tanker	Sunk south of Cuba
56	<i>Hector</i>	May 24	Freighter	Sunk south of Cuba
57	<i>Atenas</i>	May 26	Freighter	Damaged in Gulf of Mexico
58	<i>Carrabulle</i>	May 26	Tanker	Sunk in Gulf of Mexico
59	<i>Mentor</i>	May 28	Freighter	Sunk in Gulf of Mexico
60	<i>Cacalilao</i>	May 31	Tanker	Damaged in Gulf of Mexico
61	<i>Hampton Roads</i>	June 01	Freighter	Sunk in Yucatan Passage
62	<i>Knoxville City</i>	June 02	Freighter	Sunk south of Cuba
63	<i>Domino</i>	June 2	Freighter	Undamaged-Gulf of Mexico
64	<i>M.F. Elliott</i>	June 03	Freighter	Sunk off Key West
65	<i>Nidarnes</i>	June 04	Freighter	Sunk south of Cuba
66	<i>Velma Lykes</i>	June 05	Freighter	Sunk in Yucatan Passage
67	<i>Castilla</i>	June 07	Freighter	Sunk south of Cuba
68	<i>Hermis</i>	June 07	Freighter	Sunk east of Key West
69	<i>Rosenborg</i>	June 08	Freighter	Sunk south of Cuba
70	<i>Suwied</i>	June 08	Freighter	Sunk south of Cuba
71	<i>Merrimack</i>	June 10	Freighter	Sunk in Yucatan Passage
72	<i>Hagan</i>	June 11	Tanker	Sunk north of Cuba
73	<i>Sheherazade</i>	June 11	Tanker	Sunk in Gulf of Mexico
74	<i>City Service Toledo</i>	June 12	Tanker	Sunk in Gulf of Mexico
75	<i>San Blas</i>	June 16	Freighter	Sunk in Gulf of Mexico
76	<i>Managua</i>	June 16	Freighter	Sunk south of Key West
77	<i>Rawleigh Warner</i>	June 22	Tanker	Sunk in Gulf of Mexico
78	<i>Maj.Gen. Henry Gibbons</i>	June 23	Transport	Sunk in Gulf of Mexico
79	<i>Edward Luckenbach</i>	July 2	Freighter	Sunk in Gulf of Mexico
80	<i>Lalita</i>	July 06	Freighter	Sunk in Yucatan Passage
81	<i>Umtata</i>	July 07	Freighter	Sunk off Miami
82	<i>Paul H. Harwood</i>	July 7	Tanker	Damaged in Gulf of Mexico
83	<i>J.A. Moffett Jr.</i>	July 08	Tanker	Damaged off Matecumbe
84	<i>Nicholas Cuneo</i>	July 09	Freighter	Sunk SW of Key West
85	<i>Benjamin Brewster</i>	July 9	Tanker	Sunk in Gulf of Mexico

APPENDIX B.

SHIP ATTACKS IN THE GULF SEA FRONTIER 1942 Concluded

86	<i>R.W. Gallagher</i>	July 13	Tanker	Sunk in Gulf of Mexico
87	<i>Andrew Jackson</i>	July 13	Freighter	Sunk off Havana
88	<i>Pennsylvania Sun</i>	July 15	Tanker	Sunk SW of Dry Tortugas
89	<i>Gertrude</i>	July 16	Small craft	Sunk in Gulf of Mexico
90	<i>Baja California</i>	July 19	Freighter	Sunk NE of Dry Tortugas
91	<i>Port Antonio</i>	July 19	Freighter	Sunk SW of Dry Tortugas
92	<i>William C. Bryant</i>	July 21	Freighter	Damaged off Key West
93	<i>Onandaga</i>	July 23	Freighter	Sunk north of Cuba
94	<i>Robert E. Lee</i>	July 30	Liner	Sunk in Gulf of Mexico
95	<i>Santiago de Cuba</i>	Aug 12	Freighter	Sunk off Key West
96	<i>Manzanillo</i>	Aug 12	Freighter	Sunk off Key West
97	<i>R.M. Parker, Jr.</i>	Aug. 13	Tanker	Sunk in Gulf of Mexico

APPENDIX B.

SHIPS ATTACKS IN THE GULF SEA FRONTIER IN 1943

	<i>Ship</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Action</i>
98	Olancho	March 11	Freighter	Sunk in Gulf of Mexico
99	Lysefjord	April 2	Freighter	Sunk west of Havana
100	Gulf State	April 2	Tanker	Sunk in Florida Straits
101	Nickeliner	May 13	Tanker	Sunk north of Cuba
102	Mambi	May 13	Tanker	Sunk north of Cuba
103	Touchet	Dec. 3	Tanker	Sunk in Gulf of Mexico

VITA

ANTHONY D. ATWOOD

B.A., History
University of Miami
Miami, Florida

1981-2001

U.S. Navy

2003

M.A., History
Florida International University (FIU)
Miami, Florida

2003-2012

Adjunct Professor in History
Instructor of Record for 19 college courses taught at
FIU, Barry University, and Miami Dade College
Miami, Florida

2005

Museum Science Internship
Wolfsonian-FIU Museum
Miami Beach, Florida

2006

Excellence in Teaching Award
Florida International University
Miami, Florida

2009

Military History Instructor Certification
US Army Command and General Staff College
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

2012

Doctorate in History
Florida International University
Miami, Florida

PUBLICATIONS

“Standing Up the Standing Force: Transforming the US Military, 1941-1991,” Florida Conference of Historians Proceedings journal, February 2008.

“The Impact of Clausewitz on Strategic Thinking,” Florida Conference of Historians Proceedings journal, February 2007.

“Historiography Associated with Josep Broz Tito,” Atlantic Millennium, May 2005
“Nazi Propaganda Hoax Photos of the K-74," Naval Academy Proceedings, May 2003.
“The Blimp and the Sub,” Tropic Magazine, The Miami Herald, August 2000
“Naval Air Participation in the Berlin Airlift," Navy Aviation News magazine, May 2000
"Combat between the Blimp and the Sub," Navy Aviation News magazine, June 1999
"The Burning of Richmond Air Station," Navy Aviation News magazine, May 1998

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS AND SERVICE:

US Navy Reserve Officers Association

Dade Heritage Trust – Historic Preservation Advocacy

Executive Director, Military Museum and Memorial of South Florida

PROFESSIONAL INTERESTS

Public History, Historic Preservation & Museum Science

Fundraising, grantsmanship, foundations

AWARDS AND GRANTS

2011: Miami-Dade County community service award for work in Historic Preservation.

2011: \$1 Million Grant #293-70540 supplemental funding awarded by Miami-Dade County for field work in Public History creating Military Museum of South Florida.

2010: \$118,750 HUD Economic Development Initiative (EDI) Grant #B-09-SP-FL-0323 awarded by the United States Congress for field work in Public History.

2009: U.S. Presidential Inauguration: Selected to serve with the Armed Forces Inaugural committee (AFIC) in Washington, DC, for the Presidential Inauguration.

2008: Kauffman Doctoral Fellowship: Award by FIU Pino Entrepreneurial Center.

2005: \$2 Million Dollar Grant #283-70540, awarded by Miami-Dade County for historic preservation project in Public History restoring historic military barracks to serve as Military Museum of South Florida.