

## NAVAL AIR STATION PENSACOLA HISTORY

by Timothy Deuell

Welcome to the Historical Trail aboard Naval Air Station Pensacola. This trail was established in May 1976, the Bicentennial year, to provide visitors with a background of naval history that has been recorded since the 1820's. This trail is sponsored by Troop 403 of the Boy Scouts of America, Gulf Coast Council, with the assistance of the United States Navy; National Park Service; Gulf Islands National Sea Shore; Santa Rosa Island; the Public Affairs Office, NAS Pensacola and the United States Coast Guard.

Pensacolians have looked approvingly at their military neighbor, The Naval Air Station, admiring it both as an economic asset and a friendly part of life along the Florida Gulf Coast.

The area we know today as NAS Pensacola was a Navy Yard from the 1820's to 1911 and served as an outpost and a point of perimeter defense. By 1861, it was considered one of the best equipped naval establishments in the United States. Between the period 1855-1859, for example, two frigates, the 800-ton *Seminole* and the 1,200-ton *Pensacola* were built along with numerous other craft. However, in 1861, Confederate forces seized and took over the Navy Yard after Florida seceded from the Union.

When New Orleans was captured by the Union Forces in 1862, the Confederate troops, fearing a flanking attack from the west, beat a hasty retreat northward, reducing the Navy Yard to a rubble. Later, the Navy Yard was built.

In 1913, the Secretary of the Navy appointed a Board off Aeronautics to select a site for the first Naval Aeronautic Station. Pensacola was selected as the location over several other choices and in 1914, was designated a Naval Air Station.

In 1939, Congress authorized the purchase of 15,000 aircraft. NAS Pensacola increased its pilot training activity while Corry, Bronson, Barin, Saufley, Ellyson and Whiting fields were built.

During the Second World War, Navy and Marine pilots who trained at NAS Pensacola proved their worth by destroying 15,401 Japanese planes while losing only 451 aircraft.

During the Korean Conflict, NAS Pensacola was transitioning to jets while pilot training was undergoing numerous changes. Helicopters, having proven their value during the Conflict, increased in importance.

## HISTORICAL TRAIL MAP

- |                           |                           |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Sherman Field          | 8. US Naval Hospital      |
| 2. Building 1854          | and the Wall              |
| 3. Light House            | 9. Barrancas National     |
| 4. Sea Wall and Sea Ramps | Cemetery                  |
| 5. Building 45 {omit}     | 10. The Advanced Redoubt  |
| 6. The Wall               | of Fort Barrancas         |
| 7. Naval Aviation         | 11. Fort Barrancas        |
| Memorial Chapel           | 12. Battery San Antonio   |
|                           | 13. Naval Aviation Museum |

Advanced Redoubt and Fort Barrancas Tours

Call Barrancas Information Center for Visiting Hours.

(850) 455-5167

Tours: Self-Guided

Camping: For information, Call (850) 452-2311

TRAIL: Approx. 10 mile round-trip hike

## HISTORICAL TRAIL QUESTIONS

1. What is the field elevation at the Sherman Field Control Tower, Building \_\_\_\_\_ 1852?  
\_\_\_\_\_ \*omit)\_\_\_\_\_
2. At Building 1854, what is the name of the famous US Navy flying team \_\_\_\_\_ that \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_ stationed there? \_\_\_\_\_ (omit)\_\_\_\_\_
3. When was the US Coast Guard Pensacola Light Station built? \_\_\_\_\_
4. The ramps along the sea wall were used in US Navy history for seaplanes. How many ramps are there? \_\_\_\_\_
5. This old building was a sail drying loft, what is the building used for today? \_\_\_\_\_ (OMIT) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. In what year was this wall built? \_\_\_\_\_  
Why was it built? \_\_\_\_\_
7. What are the colors of the windows in the front part of the Naval Aviation Memorial Chapel? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Why were the US Naval Hospital and the hospital wall built on this site? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Who has the responsibility to run and take care of the Barrancas National Cemetery? \_\_\_\_\_
10. What year and why was the Advanced Redoubt of Fort Barrancas built? \_\_\_\_\_
11. How many fortifications were built upon the present day site of Fort Barrancas? \_\_\_\_\_
12. For what purpose was Fort Barrancas built? \_\_\_\_\_
13. Naval Aviation Museum:
  - a. Name the type of aircraft that is mounted in front of the museum. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Name the ALL-Navy crew on the Space Skylab flight on May 14, 1973. \_\_\_\_\_

