Winter 2008

The Daytona Beach International Airport in Uniform

Tim Brady
bradyt@erau.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://commons.erau.edu/jaaer

Scholarly Commons Citation

This Forum is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Journal of Aviation/Aerospace Education & Research by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact commons@erau.edu.
THE DAYTONA BEACH INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT IN UNIFORM

Tim Brady

The story of Daytona Beach International Airport is one which includes a mixture of politics and pioneers, depression and recovery, and peace and war. It represents a microcosm of life that slices across America's aviation experience and even deeper into her social consciousness. Today the airport is one of the top two or three busiest general aviation airports in the country owing mostly to the presence of Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University and its high volume flight training activities.

The airport has been in its current location since 1930, but this does not represent the beginning of aviation in the area. The earliest flights into the Daytona Beach area used the beach as a landing area. The beach, in fact, became the first "airport" in Florida. Ruth Law, one of only three female pilots at the time, landed on the beach in front of the (then) Clarendon Hotel in Daytona Beach on July 12, 1913. She was flying a Curtiss biplane. Glenn Curtiss himself visited the Daytona Beach area several times just after the turn of the century, not because of an airplane interest but because of his first love, motorcycles and gasoline-powered engines. He brought his Curtiss powered and built motorcycles to the Daytona Beach area in 1904, 1905, and again in 1907. In those days the racing was conducted on the beach. In 1907, Curtiss clocked an amazing 136 MPH run on the beach using a V-8 powered motorcycle. This engine was the forerunner of his famous OX-5 engine that powered so many Jennies (JN-1 training aircraft) during World War I. The beach was used for several years as a center of aviation; in the mid to late 20s a Pitcairn Mailwing aircraft made daily airmail runs from its sandy shore.

Curtiss at Daytona Beach riding his Curtiss V-8
The Daytona International Airport

The Daytona Beach airport got a huge infusion of capital and labor in 1936 through the WPA (Works Progress Administration) project. The WPA was the product of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's "New Deal" administration and was designed to put people to work who had been displaced by the devastating depression that started in the late 1920s. By the time Roosevelt took office, the gross national product had dropped 45%.

The WP A was in force for six years ending from 1936 until 1942. During that time more than 8 million unemployed men and women across the nation built schools, hospitals, airports, libraries, hospitals, and other public works facilities. They also constructed water lines, sewer lines and miles of farm-to-market roads. The WPA also had a great influence on the arts. Owing these dire depression days, more people attended WPA shows and listened to WPA music performances than at all other concerts and performances combined. Theatre and symphony music came to places that had never before known live performances. According to some historians, the WPA was the most successful relief operation in American history.

The WP A was in force for six years ending from 1936 until 1942. During that time more than 8 million unemployed men and women across the nation built schools, hospitals, airports, libraries, hospitals, and other public works facilities. They also constructed water lines, sewer lines and miles of farm-to-market roads. The WPA also had a great influence on the arts. During these dire depression days, more people attended WPA shows and listened to WPA music performances than at all other concerts and performances combined. Theatre and symphony music came to places that had never before known live performances. According to some historians, the WPA was the most successful relief operation in American history.

The Daytona Beach airport had been at its current location since 1930, but with the infusion of some $465,000 of WPA money financed under the heading of national defense needs, the Daytona Beach airport now sported four new runways, three of which were 4,000 feet long and the fourth was 3,500 feet. All runways were 150 feet wide. From start to finish the job took nine months to the day, completing on October 28, 1941. All that was left was to build two new hangars, an administration building, and install a night lighting system; these were projects that had already received WPA funding. Work on these projects began on December 15, 1941, eight days after the "day that will live in infamy," the bombing of Pearl Harbor by the Imperial Japanese Navy on December 7th. The future of the Daytona Beach airport and the surrounding community, like most of the rest of the world, was about to undergo a dramatic change.

When war was declared, many new Navy activities were established in Florida with the emphasis centered around two main functions: first, the protection of shipping because of the proximity of the sea lanes to the Florida coast; second, extensive naval training on land, sea, and in the air because of Florida's excellent climate.

Getting spun up to control the sea lanes of the Gulf Sea Frontier, which included the waters off both coasts of Florida and the Gulf of Mexico, was critically important. There were 107 attacks of American shipping in this region in 1942. Of these attacks, 25 occurred off Louisiana, 9 in mid Gulf, 26 south of Cuba, 17 off the southwest coast of Florida and between Florida and Cuba, 20 off of the east coast of Florida (furthest north was at Cape Canaveral), 4 off the Texas coast and 1 off of Mobile. Ninety two of these ships were sunk.

One such attack occurred on February 21, 1942 on the tanker Pan Massachusetts from an unseen submarine. Two torpedoes exploded in quick succession and three or four more hit the ship after it was ablaze. Of the 38 men aboard the ship, 20 perished in the attack. Coast watch stations were set up all along each of Florida's coasts and strict blackout rules were imposed. The citizenry were jittery that the German Navy would invade. But by April of 1943...
the attacks were under control so that from May onward to the end of the war there were no other attacks on American shipping in Gulf Sea Frontier.12

Months before the attack on Pearl Harbor, community and political leaders in Daytona Beach were negotiating in secret with Navy officials in Jacksonville. Work was progressing nicely on the Daytona Beach airport under the WPA. This made the airfield ideal for naval air operational training, so argued Mayor U. W. Cunningham and several City Commissioners. Senator Claude Pepper and Representative Joseph Hendricks were also attempting to convince military leaders of the wisdom of locating military training activities in Florida. They were hugely successful.

Not only was an agreement hammered out to make Daytona Airport a training facility for the Navy and redesignated as the Daytona Beach Naval Air Station (NAS), but the area was also selected as a training site for WAAC (Women's Army Auxiliary Corps). In time, the area would see some 8,000 WAAC trainees stationed at Daytona Beach. President Roosevelt had signed into law an act giving the women's corp members the same pay as that of men in the regular army which meant that 8,000 WAAC who each received $50 per month would give the city access to a payroll that amounted to $4.8 million per year13.
In terms of the Navy only, Florida became a vast training ground as shown in the diagram below. There were other outlying airfields not shown on this chart that were used as auxiliary airfields for various elements of the training such as carrier landing practice or dive bombing training. For example, NAS Daytona Beach used auxiliary fields at Bunnell, Tomoka (now Ormond Beach), New Smyrna Beach, and Spruce Creek. One navy commander remarked that “so many air stations and satellite fields were set up that pilots said that if their motors conked out, there was always an army or navy landing field within coasting distance.”

During the summer of 1941, the transfer of Daytona Beach municipal airport to the Department of the Navy was worked out. The city received no monetary remuneration for its efforts nor was any intended or sought by city government; rather, the city officials wanted to express the community’s eagerness to contribute their full share to the defense program. The city did, however, wish to have the airport returned to the community once the “emergency” was over. (Note that it was the summer of 1941; the Japanese had not yet attacked Pearl Harbor and war had not yet been declared.) The official language in the agreement stated that, “at the end of six months after termination of the existing national emergencies declared by the President of the United States or twenty years from the date hereof, whichever is sooner, the Government, for $1.00...will convey to the city...the airport.”

Converting the airport to a Naval Air Station officially began in May, 1942 when Lt. John W. Richardson arrived in Daytona Beach to assume his duties as the officer in charge of construction. It would be necessary to widen all four runways to 200 feet and to lengthen the 3,500 foot runway to 4,000 feet. Initially buildings for administration and hangars for operations were going to be constructed on the south side of the field, which, unfortunately was covered with water. Before construction could begin on these facilities, the area was to be drained by means of two canals. The more northerly canal had previously been cut but it was necessary to widen and deepen it. Work on the southerly canal was begun immediately but proved to be too tough a nut to crack. To complete the canal would have required digging fifty feet deep in some places, an expensive proposition to be sure. Rather than continue with this effort, the southern canal was abandoned and the decision was made to locate most of the air station buildings on the north side of the field which required the sacrifice of a golf course. Construction on the airfield was completed and the airfield commissioned on December 15, 1942. The two photos show how the airfield looked a bit later, in January 1945, and how it looks today (January, 2006). Both photos were taken from the same altitude, 6,000 feet, and from the same geographic location.
Daytona Beach Naval Air Station, January 1945

Courtesy Naval Historical Foundation Historical Service
The Daytona International Airport

Daytona Beach International Airport, January 2006

Courtesy Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University
While the airfield was being built, war was raging on both oceans and some of the most meaningful and bloody battles in the Pacific campaign were being fought. The first commander of the Daytona Beach Naval Air Station, Commander Maxwell F. Leslie, was central to one of those battles, one called by many historians as "the incredible victory," the Battle of Midway. It is important to describe of the battles of the Coral Sea and Midway to place the yet to be commissioned Daytona Beach Naval Air Station in perspective.

With the devastating attack on Pearl Harbor, the Japanese had crippled the U.S. Pacific fleet. It could have been worse, however. The main long range striking power of the fleet, the aircraft carriers, were on various maneuvers away from port at the time and were thus spared. But still, the outlook was bleak for the U.S. forces in the Pacific. It would take some time to build the fleet back up and there was also Europe and Africa to worry about. The Japanese continued to make gains in the Pacific, the Philippines fell, Java was taken, Australia was attacked by air, Wake Island fell as did Guam.

Six months after Pearl Harbor, the U.S. Pacific fleet warships engaged a Japanese invasion fleet intent on capturing Port Moresby, New Guinea. It was the front door to Australia which had been weakened militarily by its support of the British forces in North Africa which drew away many of its fighting men. The Japanese had to be stopped here if Australia was to be spared. Thus was the stage set for the Battle of the Coral Sea. It was the first naval battle in which neither of the opposing forces spotted the other from a ship nor came within range of each other's guns. It was a battle fought entirely with airpower. In terms of winners and losers, it was probably a toss up. Both sides had heavy losses. The Americans lost the carrier Lexington and the Yorktown was heavily damaged. Strategically the battle was won by the U.S. because the Japanese turned back, giving up on their immediate conquest of Australia. A Medal of Honor winner, Lt. William E. Hall, who had a hand in sinking a Japanese aircraft carrier was soon to be a dive-bombing instructor pilot at the new Daytona Beach Naval Air Station.

Less than a month later, U.S. intelligence had picked up radio traffic that something big was under way. The Japanese were going to attack a major American Pacific target but which one was uncertain. Although the U.S. had succeeded in breaking the Japanese code, they did not know the code word within the code that identified the target. Thinking it was Midway, the intelligence staff initiated a ruse. They had Midway send a radio message in the clear stating that its water desalination plant had broken down. A bit later, U.S. intelligence picked up a coded Japanese message stating that the water plant had broken down at their target. Bingo!

The Japanese force assembled by Admiral Yamamoto for the attack on Midway consisted of 4 large aircraft carriers (Akagi, Kaga, Hiryu, and Soryu), 9 battleships, 10 heavy cruisers, 3 light carriers, 45 destroyers and twelve transports loaded with 5,000 troops. Their mission was to capture Midway and establish bases in the Aleutian Islands. Opposing this armada, the Americans had 3 carriers (Yorktown, Hornet, and Enterprise), 2 cruisers and 20 destroyers. The Yorktown had been badly damaged during the battle of the Coral Sea and was slated for three months of repairs. The Japanese admiralty thought that the Yorktown had been sunk. Admiral Nimitz gave the repair team three days to prepare for combat. The task force sailed from Pearl Harbor on May 29, 1942 with some of the repair team still aboard the Yorktown.
The outcome of the battle depended on a number of crucial decisions and some good luck. The Japanese were 30 minutes late on one search sector, and that sector was where the American carriers were located. The Japanese search plane that spotted the American fleet had radio failure so word of its location had to wait until the pilot landed. Planes from the Japanese fleet attacked Midway, but did not get the job done. Japanese aircraft that had been loaded with armor piercing bombs and torpedoes to attack the American fleet were unloaded in order to arm them with general purpose bombs for another attack on Midway. At this time the Japanese command did not know the location of the American fleet. The bombs that had been unloaded were placed along the edge of the hangar decks rather than sent below to bomb storage areas. For this reason, the Japanese carriers became floating powder kegs.

Meanwhile the American forces had been launched from the three carriers, but because of differences in aircraft performance and cloud cover, the SBD dive bombers and the TBD torpedo planes became separated. The SBDs led by Lt. Commander Wade McClusky arrived at the point where the Japanese fleet was supposed to be but there was no fleet in sight. His flight of SBDs had already been airborne for three hours and were reaching a critical fuel situation. McClusky decided to push on. He spotted a Japanese destroyer speeding in a north-easterly direction and decided to follow. His hunch was correct.
But before McClusky’s thirty dive bombers could get there, the torpedo bombers arrived and the Japanese command ordered their fighter cover down to attack the TBD torpedo bombers. The TBDs were decimated (thirty-five of the forty-one torpedo bombers were lost in this battle) but the serendipitous result was that when the dive bombers arrived several minutes later, there was no enemy fighter aircraft to oppose them and the Japanese fleet lay fully exposed. McClusky’s dive bombers began the attack without fighter aircraft opposition. Six minutes after McClusky led the first dive-bombing attack, Lt. Commander Maxwell F. Leslie arrived over the Japanese fleet leading sixteen dive bombers from the Yorktown. Leslie was as surprised as McClusky had been to find no opposition from enemy Zeros. He pushed over into a steep dive followed by his squadron mates. The American bombs from the attacking dive bombers struck the flight decks of the carriers setting off fires and explosions which ignited the bombs and torpedoes left on the edges of the flight decks. Devastation of the carriers was the result.

While the Japanese fought on, this attack sealed their fate. The U.S. lost the Yorktown for good this time but the Japanese lost four large carriers, 250 airplanes and nearly 45% of their most experienced airmen. Midway was clearly an incredible U.S. victory.24

Since the Yorktown was disabled, the other carriers made every attempt to recover her airplanes as well as their own. But in some cases it was necessary for pilots to ditch their airplanes such as shown in the next photo. While the records are not certain, the pilot most likely shown ditching his aircraft is Commander Leslie.
SBD Ditching alongside a cruiser after attacking the Japanese fleet during the Battle of Midway; the aircraft was presumably out of gas. The pilot (perhaps Commander Maxwell Leslie) and crew were rescued by boat.

Courtesy of the Naval Photographic Center
On a mid December morning in 1942, the first commanding officer of NAS Daytona Beach, Commander, Maxwell F. Leslie, a hero of the Battle of Midway, took the helm of the just-commissioned airfield. The mission of NAS Daytona Beach reflected the needs of the Navy in the Pacific, the need for trained dive bomber crews. The first aircraft arrived on December 26, 1942 were not dive bombers, those would come later, but were actually basic training aircraft, the SNC-1 Falcon and the SNJ Texan as pictured below.

Within three weeks the first SBD dive bombers arrived and on January 28th the first training flights took place. One of the prime features of the training was the experience level of the flight instructors. Most had recently returned from the fleet and had very recent combat experience. Their input into the training syllabus helped make the program practical and efficient.

Typical of these instructors was Lt. William E. Hall, a Medal of Honor winner at the Battle of the Coral Sea. During that campaign he shot down three enemy aircraft and laid down a 1000 pound bomb on the deck of a Japanese aircraft carrier. Hall went by the affectionate name of Pappy. “Pappy’s boys always got the real word on dive-bombing, and students always considered themselves lucky to be assigned to his flight.”

In setting up the training, several collateral activities were placed in operation. A boat facility was set up in New Smyrna Beach to assist in crash recovery work for mishaps that occurred during dive bombing practice off shore. In addition there were naval auxiliary gunnery fields set up at New Smyrna Beach and Bunnell airport. The Tomoka airport (Ormond Beach airport today) and
The Daytona International Airport

Spruce Creek airport were also used in the training plan, the former being used for carrier landing practice.27

During the early days of training, it was next to impossible to synchronize ground school lessons with flight lessons, a familiar problem to aviation educators today. A class of pilots might get a training film on dive-bombing procedures several weeks after they had been out practicing those maneuvers. Or the other extreme, they might receive the film so far in advance of the flight training that they would have forgotten many of the salient points by the time they actually got to fly them.28

The SBD airplanes were another problem. Many of the airplanes were "beat up" and had already seen fleet service, some in combat with the Japanese flags still painted on the fuselage as proof. In addition, there were two dangerous problems. The first is that the dive flaps would work shut during a dive resulting in the aircraft picking up terrific speed without the pilot noticing it. When he then tried to pull out of the dive at the proper altitude, he didn't have enough altitude to break the high speed dive and would hit the water. To correct this problem, the pilots adopted a procedure where their aircrewman (back seater) monitored the condition of the dive flaps during a run.

The second problem was the use of the telescopic sights used for lining up the bomb run. The sight was a long tube that the pilot looked through. But when his eye was glued to the bomb sight, he couldn't see the altimeter. He had to keep ducking in and out of the cockpit to watch both the target and the altimeter, a perilous cross-check indeed. More than once a pilot would get target fixation, ignore or forget to check the altimeter until it was too late to pull out of the dive. Once again the aircrewman proved to be the solution. Pilots instructed them to call off altitudes during the descent eliminating the need to look at the altimeter during the run.29
About a year later, in February 1944, the base switched from training dive-bomber pilots to training fighter pilots. During its tenure as a dive bomber training base, NAS Daytona Beach sent 832 trained dive-bomber pilots to the fleet. The change in mission for the base reflected the change in combat needs in the Pacific theatre. After the losses at Midway, the Japanese had begun to employ Kamikaze pilots as a defense against the American Navy. In general, Kamikaze pilots were university students motivated by loyalty to family and country. The Emperor's call for these suicide-pilot volunteers produced a remarkable response. Three times as many young Japanese men applied for training as the number of planes available. The airplane was the A6M2 Zero outfitted with a half a ton of bombs and purposefully flown so as to crash into American warships. 

When the first fighter pilot instructors and students arrived, the base had not yet been equipped with Wildcats. The student fighter pilots were forced to undergo training in the clunky SBD, almost beneath the dignity of the fighter pilot. Those pilots who trained in the SBD had trouble when the tricky little Wildcat arrived with its narrow baby carriage landing gear.

The mission, then, of NAS Daytona Beach was to train fighter pilots to shoot down these suicide aircraft and to train intercept directors to guide the pilots to the targets. Shortly the airfield was to receive its fighter aircraft, the F4F Wildcat, and a group of WAVES (Women Accepted foe Volunteer Emergency Service) to train as intercept directors.

Japanese Kamikaze pilot receives orders. 
The USS Missouri under attack by a Kamikaze pilot.

When the first fighter pilot instructors and students arrived, the base had not yet been equipped with Wildcats. The student fighter pilots were forced to undergo training in the clunky SBD, almost beneath the dignity of the fighter pilot. Those pilots who trained in the SBD had trouble when the tricky little Wildcat arrived with its narrow baby carriage landing gear.
The SBD would practically land itself; the Wildcat, on the other hand, was a snarling beast. There were four bad landing accidents on the first day alone.

In terms of a training schedule, students either flew in the morning and had ground school in the afternoon or vice versa. Students would fly either the F4F aircraft built by Grumman or the FM-1 (both aircraft were Wildcats) built by General Motors. The FM-1 was identical to the F4F except that most had four guns instead of six. The aircraft were identified by a white “DF” painted on the fuselage of the airplane which meant “Daytona Fighter.”

Notice the narrow landing gear on the F4F Wildcat. This proved to be a challenge to pilots transitioning from the more docile SBDs.
One of the instructor pilots at NAS Daytona Beach had previously been chosen and participated in the testing of a captured Japanese Zero. This proved to be valuable experience. He was able to pass along his knowledge of the zero's strengths and weaknesses to the students.

Gunnery training was also a significant part of the syllabus and it was important for the trainees to gain the correct firing perspective. Two sleeves were set up at proper ranges and angles so that they could be viewed and ranged through a Mark 8 gun sight installed on the top of a hangar. Students could look at these sleeves and get the proper perspective on when to begin firing at a target and when to stop firing. Careful records on what each student pilot accomplished in ground school, gunnery practice, rocket
The Daytona International Airport

runs, and the myriad of other graded functions were kept. Graphs told each student how he was performing in each event. For the duration of fighter pilot training, nearly 700 pilots were trained and sent to the fleet. At the same time that fighter pilots were being trained, a group of intercept directors were also being readied for combat. These students were mostly enlisted women (WAVES). The goal of this training was to give the intercept director the skills to use radar to both detect enemy aircraft, particularly Kamikazes, and then guide the Navy fighter to the enemy aircraft. The fighter would then engage the enemy Kamikaze and destroy the airplane before it could impact a ship.

At the same time that fighter pilots were being trained, a group of intercept directors were also being readied for combat. These students were mostly enlisted women (WAVES). The goal of this training was to give the intercept director the skills to use radar to both detect enemy aircraft, particularly Kamikazes, and then guide the Navy fighter to the enemy aircraft. The fighter would then engage the enemy Kamikaze and destroy the airplane before it could impact a ship.

The training involved instruction in fighter direction, intercept plotting, fighter direction vocabulary, radio discipline, and radio homing gear.

The equipment used were three Link trainers which were connected together and manned by pseudo pilots, a faux radar station manned by a radar operator, a large plotting board on which the tracks of incoming aircraft could be plotted, and intercom equipment that connected all of the players together on a common line. The Link trainers were equipped with a “Tally-ho” light which was turned on at an appropriate time during the intercept to show the pilot silhouettes of Japanese aircraft. The WAVES trainees were taught to call in plots on the intercom, to plot positions on the display board, and to direct the pilots in the Link trainers toward the target. In bringing these training elements all together, first a demonstration was given by a fighter director officer who directed three pseudo pilots (enlisted men) in the Link trainers. Three raids by enemy fighters were reported simultaneously and plotted on the main board. As the fighter director launched and directed the three intercept aircraft (Link trainers), the positions of the enemy planes were plotted on the board as well as those of the interceptors using dead reckoning techniques.
When the interceptors were within visual range of the enemy the Tally-ho lights were flashed inside the Link trainers and the “kill” was complete. The intercept directors then instructed the pilots to return to the carrier using the radio homing equipment.³⁴

In May of 1944, the base began to transition from the F4F Wildcat to the F6F Hellcat. By September of that year, the transition was complete. This new Grumman fighter was superior to the F4F and, in time, would record the highest kill/loss ratio in World War II of any other American fighter aircraft from any service.³⁵
The Daytona International Airport

The F6F Hellcat replaced the F4F Wildcat in May 1944 at NAS Daytona Beach
When NAS Daytona Beach was first commissioned there was some concern about the culture of the area and its impact on the training mission. Some commanders felt that special curfew laws would have to be enacted to control the thousands of men in the Army and Navy being trained “in the midst of a tourist, night-club, fun-making atmosphere.”

One must wonder at the size on the grins on the faces of the navy trainees when they learned that they were being sent to Daytona Beach where 8,000 WAAC were being trained as well as a significant population of WAVES. Indeed, the number of shore patrol personnel stationed at Daytona Beach were steadily increased and during the weekends special units from Jacksonville were added to the force. During the base’s period of activation, there were some 792 men put on report for various offenses, 738 enlisted men and 54 commissioned officers. Leading the list of offenses was: Out of Uniform, 321 citations; Drunk and Disorderly, 124; Disorderly Conduct, 105; Fighting, 101; plus a long list of other infractions. There were even two citations for Using a Navy Ambulance for Private Use. (One can, perhaps, understand one such indiscretion but two?) From such whimsical information, great novels are born.

NAS Daytona Beach ended its noble military service in the cause of the country on September 7, 1945 at which time it was deactivated. It was returned to the city of Daytona Beach on August 30, 1946.

Between those two dates the Navy gave Eastern Airlines and National Airlines permission to use the field. Eastern was awarded an airmail route from Detroit to Miami on November 15, 1945 with Daytona Beach as one of its stops. Soon air travel in the area returned to normal. The data box below shows a chronology of the Daytona Beach Naval Air Station. It is interesting to note that the flight hours (195,000+) accumulated during the two intense periods of Navy flight training (December 15, 1942 to December 31, 1944) is approximately equal to two years worth of hours flown today by Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. This reflects the great flight training tradition of the Daytona Beach International Airport established while she proudly wore the Navy uniform.

### NAS Daytona Beach Chronology of Major Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 15, 1942</td>
<td>NAS Daytona Beach Commissioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 26, 1942</td>
<td>First Aircraft arrived (SNC -1 Falcon)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 11, 1943</td>
<td>First SBD arrived</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 28, 1943</td>
<td>Facility open for dive-bomber training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 4, 1943</td>
<td>First air crash (non-fatal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 6, 1943</td>
<td>First air crash (fatal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 17, 1944</td>
<td>First F4F and FM-1 Wildcats arrive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 17, 1944</td>
<td>First WAVES arrive for intercept training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 24, 1944</td>
<td>Begin switching from Wildcats to F6F Hellcats</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| By December 31, 1944 | 1,500 pilot students had completed training: | 832 SBD pilots (24 washouts)
|                    |                                                                      | 560 fighter pilots (20 washouts)
| September 7, 1945  | NAS Daytona Beach Deactivated                                         |
|                    | Total flight training hours from December 15, 1942 to December 31, 1944: 195,028.3 |
The Daytona International Airport

Tim Brady is the Dean, College of Aviation, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. A USAF veteran, Brady flew the C-130 for 20 years and was twice awarded the DFC in combat. He holds the Ph.D., MS, and BS degrees and the Air Transport Pilot rating. He is a widely published aviation scholar in education, history, and simulation.
The Daytona Beach International Airport

REFERENCES

Books


Military Publications


Articles

“8,000 Women Troops Will Train Here; Halifax Hospital Leased for the Army School.” Daytona Beach News-Journal. October 19, 1942.


JAAER, Winter 2008
The Daytona International Airport


“Here’s Our New Modern Airport with Room to Grow On.” Daytona Beach News-Journal, October 30, 1941.

How and Why the WAAC was Started. Halifax Historical Society Museum (pamphlet), (June 2004).


“New Airport Project to Provide for Two Hangars and Administration Building at Local Field.” Daytona Beach News-Journal, November 25, 1941.


“WPA Inspector Okehs (sic) Airport, City Assumes Operation.” Daytona Beach News-Journal, October 5, 1941.

Other


Web References

Airport History (Daytona Beach International Airport). http://volusia.org/airport/history/htm.

Battle of Midway (the tide turns...). http://www.everblue.net/1942/midway.php.


Endnotes

1 http://volusia.org/airport/history/htm
3 Carpenter, P. 73.
4 http://volusia.org/airport/history/htm.
5 Brady, p. 177.
6 “Legacy...” p. 4B.
7 “WPA Inspector Okehs (sic) Airport.”
8 “Here’s Our New Modern Airport...”
9 “Airport Lights to be Installed ...” and “New Airport Projects...”
10 Commandant, Seventh Naval District...
11 Commander, Gulf Sea Frontier.
12 “Tanker Sunk Off of Coast...”
13 “8,000 Women Troops...”
14 Shettle, (appendix).
15 Commandant, Seventh Naval District, p. 12.
16 Naval Air Station Daytona Beach Official History, p. 8.
17 Lord (title page).
18 Brady, pp. 200-203.
19 http://microworks.net/pacific/battles/midway.htm
20 Brady, pp. 202, 203.
22 www.everblue...
23 Brown, pp. 161-162; www.users.bigpond.com/pacificwar/Midway
24 Brown, p. 162.
25 Naval Air Station Daytona Beach Official History, pp. 25, 26.
27 Ibid, p. 26A.
29 Ibid. p. 26B.
30 http://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h1740.html
31 Tillman, p. 174.
32 Naval Air Station Daytona Beach Official History, p. 26E.
33 Ibid, pp. 64, 65.
34 Ibid. p. 65.
35 http://www.aviation-history.com/grumman/f6f.htm
36 Commandant, Seventh Naval District, First Draft Narrative
37 Naval Air Station Daytona Beach Official History, p. 112.
38 “Conference Set on Civil Airline Use of Air Base...”
39 “Eastern, National Airlines...”