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# UNITED STATES NAVY AND MARINE CORPS BASES, DOMESTIC

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remained on board the Naval Shipyard, Recreation Center, Receiving Barracks, Training Center, Naval Supply Depot, Fuel Depot, Harbor Craft Base, Fire Fighters School, Radio Station, Marine Barracks, Boat Pool, Naval Training School (Electronics), Port Director's Office, Registered Publications Issuing Office, Motion Picture Exchange, and District Accounting Office. Base complement on 1 October 1946 was 2,700, while personnel at the Naval Shipyard included 129 officers, 135 men, and 9,100 civilians. By that time the bulk of the ships assigned for decommissioning was completed, but more ships were still coming from overseas, twenty-nine ships were undergoing deactivation for the Pacific Reserve Fleet (they had no crews on board), and thirty-one ships were undergoing repairs and alterations. The major reductions had been accomplished, but the special problems remained that the reduction in the personnel ceiling had been set without a proportionate decrease in base workload. In addition, an inventory had to be made of all items valued at more than \$50 on hand between 1 January and 1 June 1946.

The ship inactivation program by December 1947 involved the loss of 2,200 people, while the paperwork had to be done for others who shifted from temporary wartime to permanent positions. Yet plans were being drawn for a 30,000-man yard in case another war occurred. Even if the ship inactivation program would be completed by 1 July 1947, a large employee training program had to be instituted for newcomers.

As of 1 April 1947 San Pedro Naval Shipyard had fifteen ships undergoing inactivation, thirty-four active vessels under repair, and four Pacific Fleet Reserve vessels being repaired by a work force of 110 officers, 100 men, and 8,300 civilians, or a loss of 800 civilians during the last half year. On 28 February, meanwhile, Pier 6, begun in January 1945, was completed at a cost of \$3,632,371, and at an additional cost of \$1,443,965 an extension had been constructed to the machine shop. By the end of 1947 the \$5,492,644 Terminal Island Freeway Bridge across Ceritos Channel opened. Two reinforced concrete finger piers started on 25 January 1946 and costing \$2,017,552 were 60 percent completed.

Naval Supply Depot San Pedro in 1947 had 364,288 square feet of covered storage space and 749,847 square feet out in the open. Space leased on Berths and Transit Sheds Nos. 59 and 60 and Pier No. 1, Los Angeles Outer Harbor, cost \$64,800 in annual rent, but a warehouse on the same pier was returned to the owners, thereby saving an annual rent of \$54,000. During that same year the Landing Craft Pool was disestablished, its 1,226 boats being turned over to the Naval Supply Depot. Meanwhile the press of work was so great that the preservation of Pacific Fleet Reserve ships and repair work on fifty-six destroyers and destroyer escorts had to be farmed out to private shipyards. Sales of surplus ships, beginning with the end of the war, still averaged five to six per week.

In 1947 NOB San Pedro had its name changed to Long Beach and came under the administrative command of NOB Los Angeles-Long Beach (q.v.).

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#### SANTA ANA, CALIF., NAVAL AIR STATION (LTA), 1942-1949

Before World War II the Navy had only two lighter-than-air (LTA) stations, at Lakehurst, N.J. (q.v.), and Moffett Field, Calif. (q.v.). During the war the Navy planned to build eight others whose semirigid craft would be extremely useful for coastal and harbor patrol. One of these stations was at Santa Ana, Calif., about thirty-five miles southeast of Los Angeles. Like the other seven stations built during the war, Santa Ana would have six blimps, later increased to twelve. Of the desirable characteristics of an LTA site—a strategic coastal location, flat land with natural windbreaks, and soil capable of supporting heavy structures—Santa Ana lacked one. It suffered from the so-called Santa Ana winds that occasionally would reach 60 mph. Yet funds for construction were provided in the Second Deficiency Appropriation Bill for 1941, passed 3 July 1941. In addition to the hangars, helium plant, and other facilities, barracks were to be erected to house and mess 456 men.

The timber hangars at Santa Ana consisted of a shell, which was half-egg shaped in cross section, and two end doors.

As already noted, only six months, between 1 April 1942 and its commissioning date of 1 October 1942, were required to build the major facilities at Santa Ana, which included thirty-seven projects. The hangars and the helium facilities cost more than \$11 million. The hangars were the largest clear span wooden buildings then in the world, being 171 feet high (equivalent to an eleven-story building), more than 1,000 feet long, and nearly 300 feet wide at the base. No steel was used in order to save special materials. The doors were hung independently of the hangars. These were supported on railroad rails at the top and bottom. The doors were 120 feet high and folded accordion-like. The site was used twice by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, once to make training films for men engaged in LTA, a second time in a film that included the use of blimps.

It was not until 2 September 1943 that a detachment of Blimp Headquarters Squadron 33 was formed to provide maintenance support to Blimp Squadron 31, and not until 1 September 1944 that a utility squadron came on board—only to depart on 15 October 1945. Meanwhile, on 13 September 1945 there was established under the Naval Air Technical Training Command a Target Aircraft Training School, and on 29 November 1945 an Aircraft Storage Department.

In keeping with peacetime directives, Santa Ana began early in 1946 to transfer as many of its maintenance functions as possible from military to civilian personnel. Its Blimp Headquarters having been decommissioned on 25 December 1945, it was left with little more than its target drone school. On 1 February 1946, in accordance with a planning directive issued by the Chief of Naval Operations, it was placed in reduced status. Thereafter, until mid-1947, while seamen replaced the Marine Guard detachment and it retained Blimp Squadron 31 and a utility squadron, it served principally to service aircraft engaged in drone control operations.

On 6 September 1945 the first of a series of Aviation Planning Directives determining the postwar status of outlying auxiliary air stations and facilities was received and a "roll up" program was initiated. Effective 1 October 1946, a revocable permit covering the use of a hangar and lean-to space was issued to Douglas Leigh Sky Advertising Corporation by the Bureau of Yards and Docks. Inspected by the staff of the Eleventh Naval District on 4 March 1946, conditions at Santa Ana were found to be "good to very good." A similar inspection held on 13 May 1947 noted that conditions were only "fair." On 6 June 1949 it was decommissioned and designated an outlying field. In January 1951 Marines reported aboard and began to clear the vegetation that cluttered the site, on 1 May 1951 it became a Marine Corps Air Facility, and on 1 September 1969 it had its name changed to Marine Corps Air Station (Helicopter), Tustin, Calif. (q.v.).

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#### SANTA BARBARA (GOLETA), CALIF., MARINE CORPS AIR STATION, 1942-1947

Santa Barbara is located along the Pacific coast of California about 110 miles northwest of Los Angeles. With the urgent need following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor for air stations at which to train Marine Air Groups (MAGs), a most unpromising site near the city was selected. From a swamp with a slaughterhouse and hog farm as neighbors arose a 1,500-acre station that accomplished more than double the task originally assigned to it.

Because MAG-24 took its records when it departed the station and because early personnel were overworked and the station was understaffed, a completely documented history of the station cannot be provided. Nevertheless, the record shows that Santa Barbara had built a municipal airport during the mid-1930s on

a tidewater swamp in the town of Goleta. Its two short runways were used by privately owned aircraft and a small flying school, and occasional use was made of it by United Air Lines (UAL) Boeing 247s. In 1941 the city bought 568 acres through a bond issue for \$149,000, filled in the swamp, and laid out runways with about \$1 million in Civil Aeronautics Administration funds. By the end of the year, UAL opened the three-runway field. Shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor, however, Mayor Patrick Maher of Santa Barbara sought to interest the Navy in acquiring the airport. Talks with a naval representative led to nothing, but Lt. Col. William Fox, USMC, declared the airport suitable "except for that road going through the middle of it." When Fox inspected the station, he found three 4,000-by-500-foot runways and five taxi strips. On the northeast side were the UAL office and two hangars; to the south, near the beach, was the beacon tower. Best of all, the runways could be used immediately for operational training. In consequence, when he visited Washington in February 1942, Fox listed Goleta among the four West Coast stations the Marine Corps had been authorized to build. Meanwhile the Army made its desire to lease the airport known to Mayor Maher, who immediately called his councilors together in special session and obtained a letter from them agreeing to lease it to the Navy. Thereupon Marines moved onto the field and persuaded the pilots of a number of Army bombers and P-40s to move elsewhere. A sticky problem remained the rerouting of the objectionable highway that ran through the base.

The first construction lumber arrived at Santa Barbara on 29 May 1942; the first Marines, on 15 June. The latter were soon followed by MAG-24, which would organize and train itself as a combat unit. The twelve officers and 125 men in the first draft for Santa Barbara left San Diego and at first lived in tents on firm ground along the northeastern end of Runway 21. The easternmost UAL hangar became a barracks, the other a messhall for both officers and men with some space left for the quartermaster. Operational headquarters were originally set up in three revetments the Army had built for some scout bombers between Runways 21 and 25. Meanwhile dust, mud, and mosquitoes made life combat-rugged for MAG-24. The incoming tide so flooded the landing field that men had to wear rubber boots, only jeeps could navigate the mud, and pilots felt that they were landing on water instead of land. The water available locally was strongly flavored with iron. Therefore water was obtained from town, chlorinated, and issued in lister bags. In addition, the prevailing winds brought strong odors and flies from the nearby slaughterhouse and hog farm. Nerves were not helped early in 1942 when a Japanese submarine shelled the Ellwood oil fields near Santa Barbara. For a long time the men of MAG-24 stood a port and starboard watch, lookouts were posted along the beach, and one of the three planes on board, a J2F, was kept loaded with depth charges. By the fall, however, the J2F, the one SNJ-3, and an old biwing SBC-4 had given way to F4Fs.

Although MCAS Santa Barbara was commissioned and organized on 13 August 1942, much construction proceeded for another year. During the winter storms of 1943, the weather made work impossible for protracted periods. There