

Newport Airport


the
War Years

1942 - 1946

NEWPORT ARMY AIR FIELD



NEWPORT, ARKANSAS



NEWPORT AIRBASE
1942 THRU 1946
USAAF
USMC
US NAVY
BASE OPEN 1942
CLOSED 1946

At base main gate, top metal sign vanished over the years

HISTORY OF NEWPORT ARMY AIR FIELD



November 1, 1942², was a fateful day for the members of the Axis, for it was on this day that the Newport Army Air Field at Newport, Arkansas, was activated to assume an important role in the chain of flying training schools in the Eastern Flying Training Command.

Standing at attention near the foot of the flagpole, the small group of officers and enlisted men who formed the cadre for the new station heard the order of activation read by Colonel Daniel A. Cooper, project officer, the first Post Commander. The Newport High School Band played the National Anthem as the Stars and Stripes slowly climbed to the peak of the pole to snap proudly and smartly in the chill November wind. Thus began the career of service which has been outstanding in helping to mold the United States Army Air Forces into the formidable branch it is today, admired by the Allies and feared by the enemy.

The engineers, both military and civilian, who had undertaken the task of building the new Air Field, were forced to work under an unceasing barrage of nature for weeks. During this time, the section was hit by two severe windstorms. Undaunted by these setbacks, this lusty group of pioneers worked on to convert the broad expanses of rice fields into the monument of engineering skill that the Newport Army Air Field is today.

As the weeks went by, new buildings were erected to accommodate the ever increasing number of officers, cadets and enlisted men who were arriving daily to take on their newly assigned duties. One of the most important of these new buildings was the Troop Ground School. It is here that the aviation cadets of the Newport Army Air Field study the elements of flight, navigation, code and various other subjects that are an intrinsic part of the cadet training program. Under the supervision of skilled instructors, and with the best planes, instruments and equipment in the world at their disposal, these pros-

pective flyers are given an education that is second to none.

With the training of cadets under way, the Commanding Officer, Colonel Daniel A. Cooper, was doing everything in his power to provide adequate recreational activities for the men of his command. A spacious recreation hall was built that could be used as an athletic floor for squadron and interpost contests as well as an auditorium where such entertainment as USO camp shows are presented to as many as 1,000 men at a time. In addition to this, a post theater was erected and a post exchange with an adjoining refreshment parlor was built in order that the men might spend their leisure hours on the field rather than search for entertainment and amusement elsewhere.

One of the largest swimming pools in the Southeast and numerous other facilities such as the Service Club, the Post Library and the ultra-modern bowling alleys, all stand as a tribute to the first Commanding Officer of the field as a leader who understood the necessity of recreation as a vitally important factor in the training of a soldier.

When Colonel Cooper made his departure for the new assignment, Colonel Louis A. Guenther, commanding officer of the Pre-Flight School at Maxwell Field, was designated as his successor. Less than three weeks after his arrival, Colonel Guenther was ordered to Washington, D. C. Lieutenant Colonel Richard F. Bromiley, Director of Training for the post since its activation, assumed command, serving until the arrival of Colonel Robert W. C. Wimsatt from a tour of duty in Greenland, as Commanding Officer.

From rice fields and marshes to an established Army Air Field in one year, just one of the many instances in which the American people have proven their ingenuity and resourcefulness.



Lt. Colonel Cullus Z. Walker, USAF, Retired, *left*, was stationed at the Newport Army Airfield 1943-44. His duty was Squadron Commander at the Basic Flying Training School. Some of the planes located at Newport were like the BT-13 Aircraft, *above*.

NEWPORT AIRBASE

Newport not only gave of its man-power during World War II, but the Home Folks rented rooms, manned a USO and gave of their time and hospitality to welcome the two branches of the Armed Forces stationed at the Newport Airbase.

Newport and Jackson County citizens felt and saw the actual preparations for war through the training at the Airbase. The U.S. Government constructed the Newport Airbase during the summer and fall of 1942. The Airfield was activated November 1, 1942. The order of activation was read by Col. Daniel A. Cooper, first post commander, while the Newport High School Band played the Stars & Stripes.

The field was complete in every detail with all training facilities for cadets, as well as recreational and religious buildings. Four commanders of the base were stationed here.

The Army Air Force evacuated the Base July 1, 1944 and the Marine Corps took over for the duration of the life of the Base.

The Airbase, together with 1250 acres of farm land, was deeded to Newport in 1947. In 1973 the county passed a bond issue for \$775,000, creating the Jackson County Air Industrial Park, utilizing \$375,000 in government assistance to rebuild the railroad bridges and spur track, separate water and sewer systems, an elevated water tank and eventually a fire station and terminal building. Joe Ballard is the airbase manager.

Aerosonic Corporation

Aerosonic, Inc. opened the Newport operation on April 28, 1974, presently employing twenty-two, with a peak employment of approximately fifty. It manufactures aircraft instrument components to highly-technical and exacting dimensions. The parent corporation is located in Clearwater, Florida. The president is Herbert J. Frank and David S. Goldman is Executive Vice President and Treasurer. Thurlo "Cotton" Halford is manager of the Newport Division.

We are proud to be a part of the Jackson County Industrial Community!



MAIN GATE OPENS

To All Members of This Command:

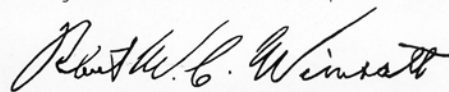
From rice fields to one of the larger basic flying training schools within a year is the history of Newport Army Air Field. This record is a tribute to the wholehearted support and unflagging effort of the officers and men who have cooperated to the fullest extent in making this project an accomplished fact.

The knowledge that their efforts were contributing directly to the war effort by assisting in the training of the thousands of pilots needed to swell the ranks of our rapidly growing Army Air Forces has been the stimulus behind the work of the officers and men.

The task of carrying out the training program while the actual work of construction was under way has not been an easy one, and has necessitated the surmounting of innumerable hardships and difficulties. But with the full knowledge that every aviation cadet that could be trained added to the war effort and brought closer the day of final victory, these hardships have been cheerfully endured and those difficulties overcome.

These officers and men, these aviation cadets, have come from all parts of this vast country. From cities, towns and farms, from myriad occupations, from all walks of life, yet with that great American capacity for adjustment to existing conditions and ingenuity in overcoming obstacles, they have adapted themselves to their new life and coordinated their efforts to the full accomplishment of the task in hand. The manner in which this task has been and is being accomplished is the greatest tribute to their wholehearted devotion to the service of their country.

The privilege of being associated with the officers and men of this command I prize most highly. Working together, our efforts will contribute to the successful prosecution of the war and hasten that final day of victory when we will have attained our goal and will again be free to return to our peace.



ROBERT W. C. WIMSATT,
Colonel, Air Corps,
Commanding.

FROM BASE COMMANDER



Col. Robert Wimsatt Base Commander



The following aircraft were used for primary flight training prior to coming to Newport for intermediate flight training.



Picture above: Stearman PT-17, used after the war for many years as crop dusters.



Waco UPF-7 used at some bases but in fewer numbers than the Stearman PT-17's



Civilian Waco UPF-7



Civilian Fairchild PT-19



Fairchild PT-23 was PT-19 equipped with Pratt and Whitney 450 HP radial engine



The Fairchild PT-26 is a PT-19 with enclosed canopy

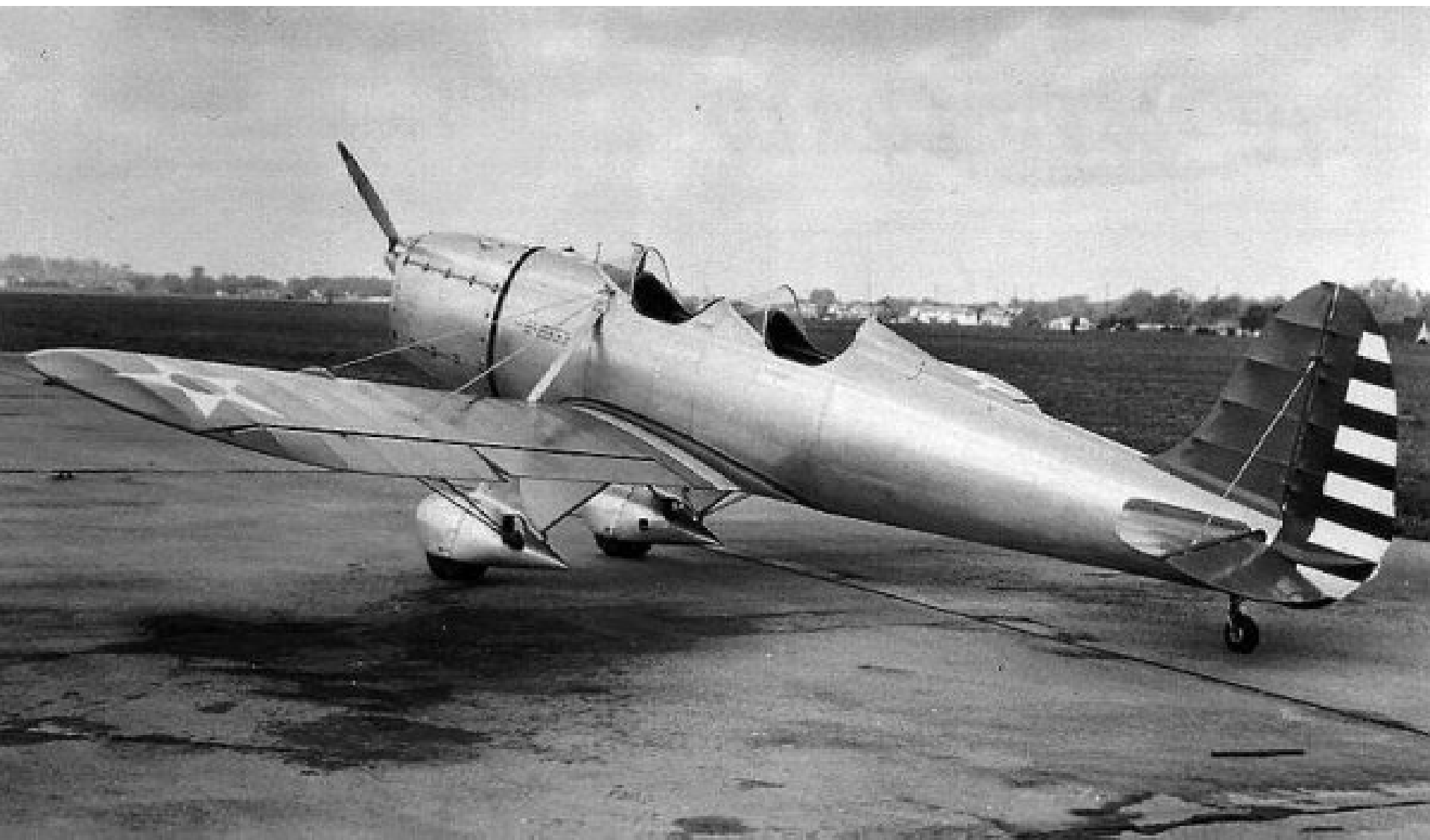


Fairchild PT-19

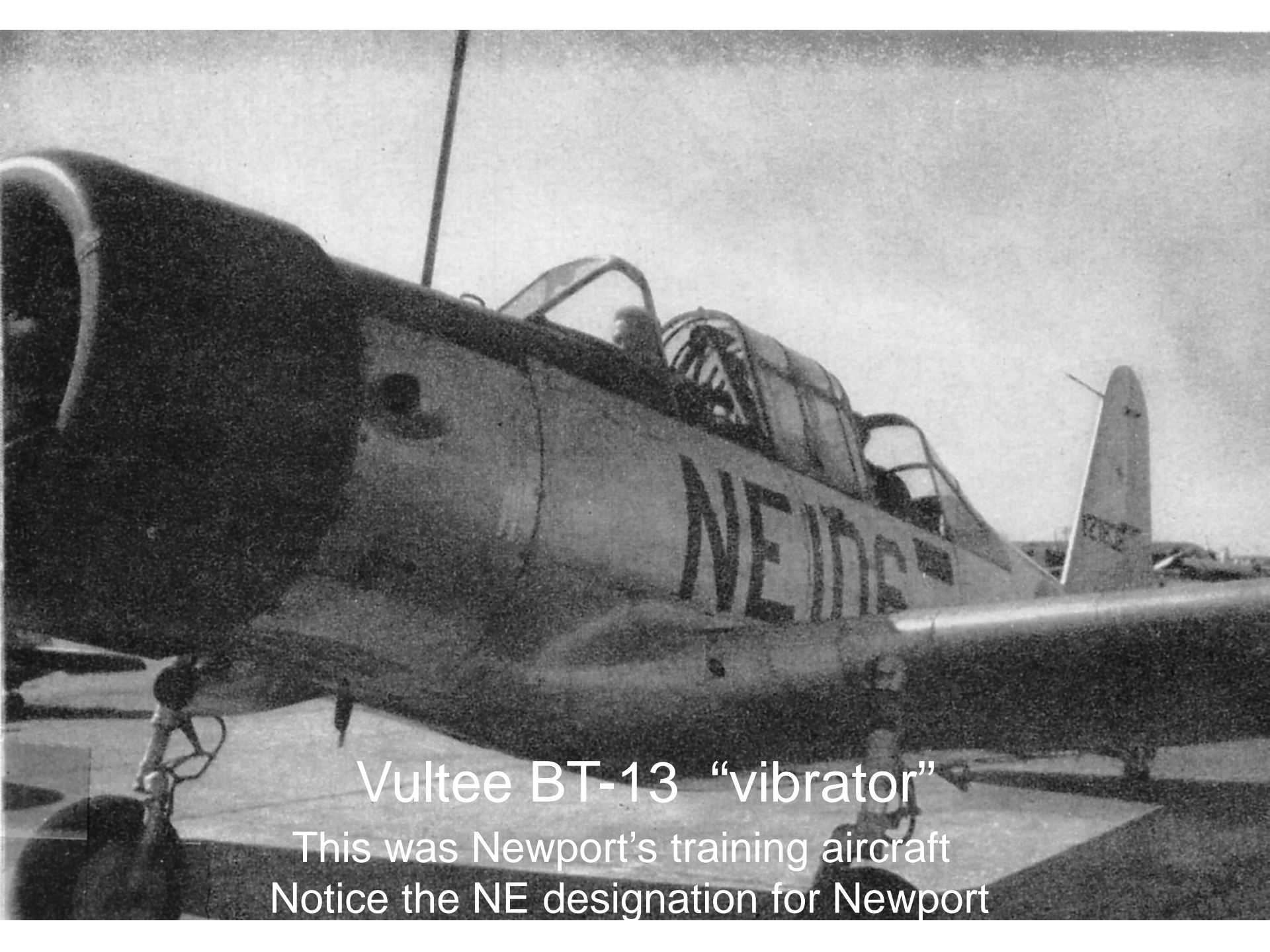
Ryan PT-22 with a Kinner radial engine



U.S. Air Force Photo



The Ryan ST-A is a PT-22 with a Ranger in-line engine

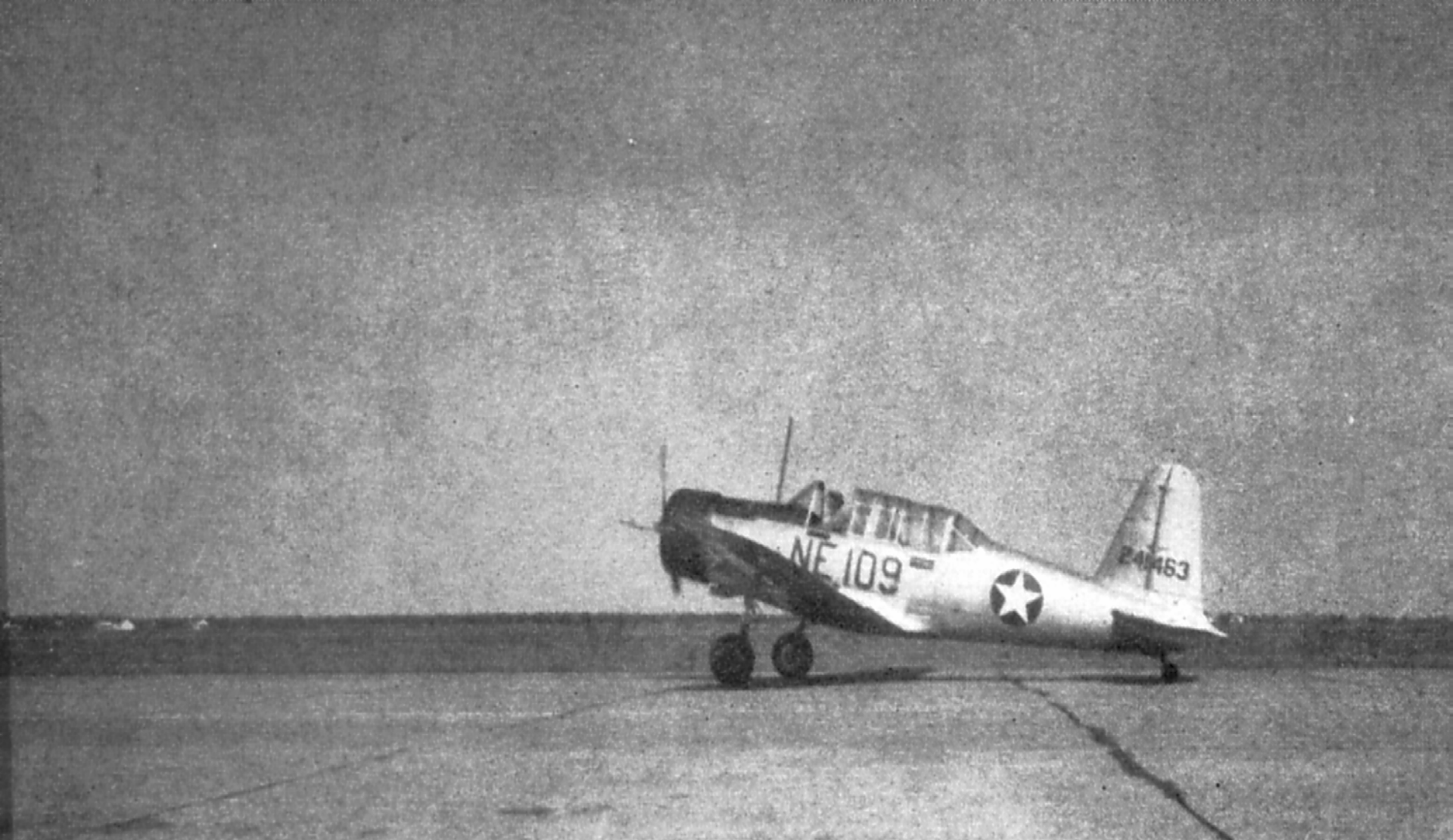


Vultee BT-13 “vibrator”

This was Newport’s training aircraft
Notice the NE designation for Newport



From the aircraft numbers, you can see that between 100 and 200 BT-13's were based at Newport

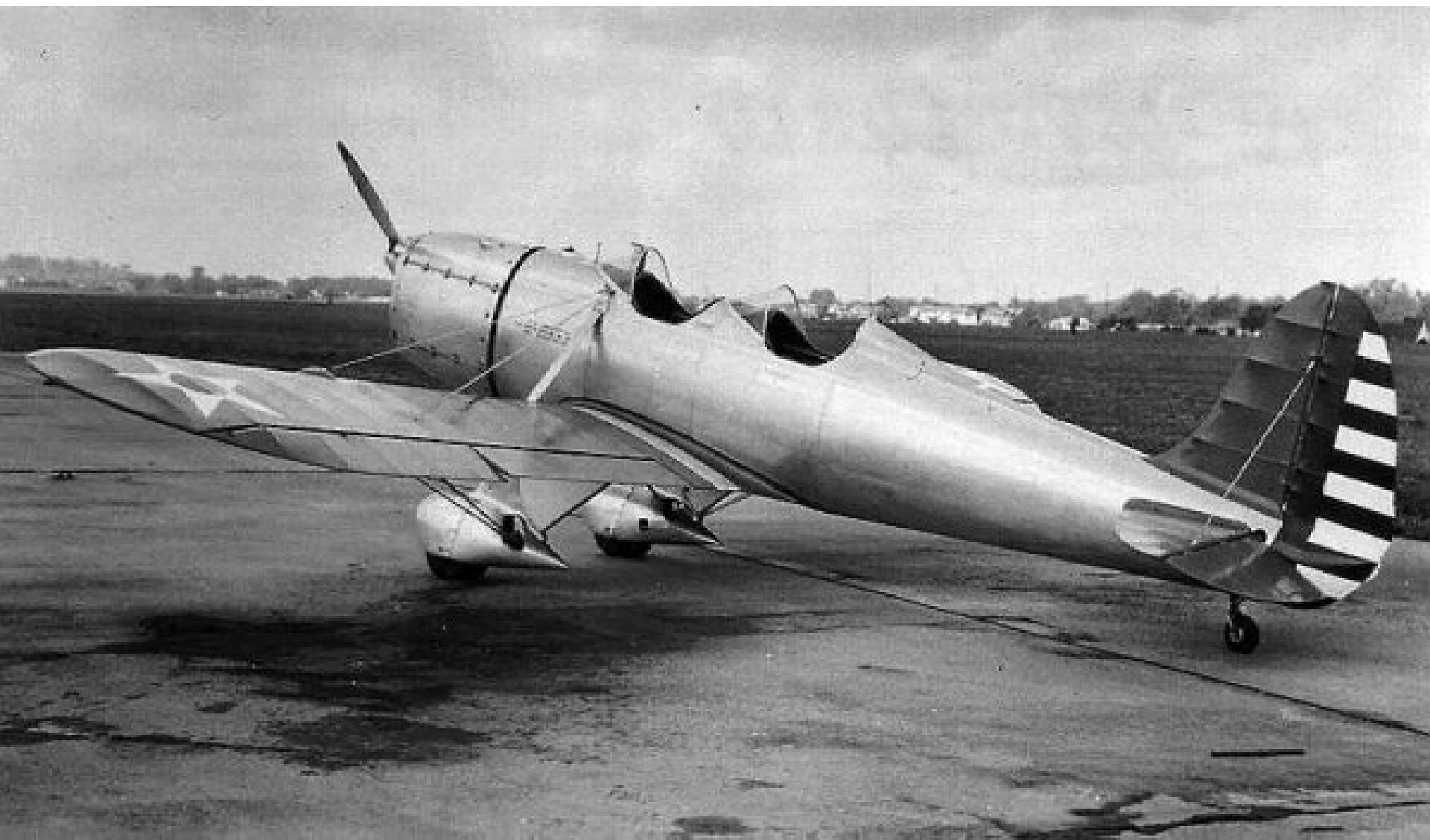


BT-13's flew out of Newport but also used auxiliary fields throughout Jackson County. One auxiliary runway complex was south of town and was later used for U of A AG experiment station

Ryan PT-22 with a Kinner radial engine



U.S. Air Force Photo



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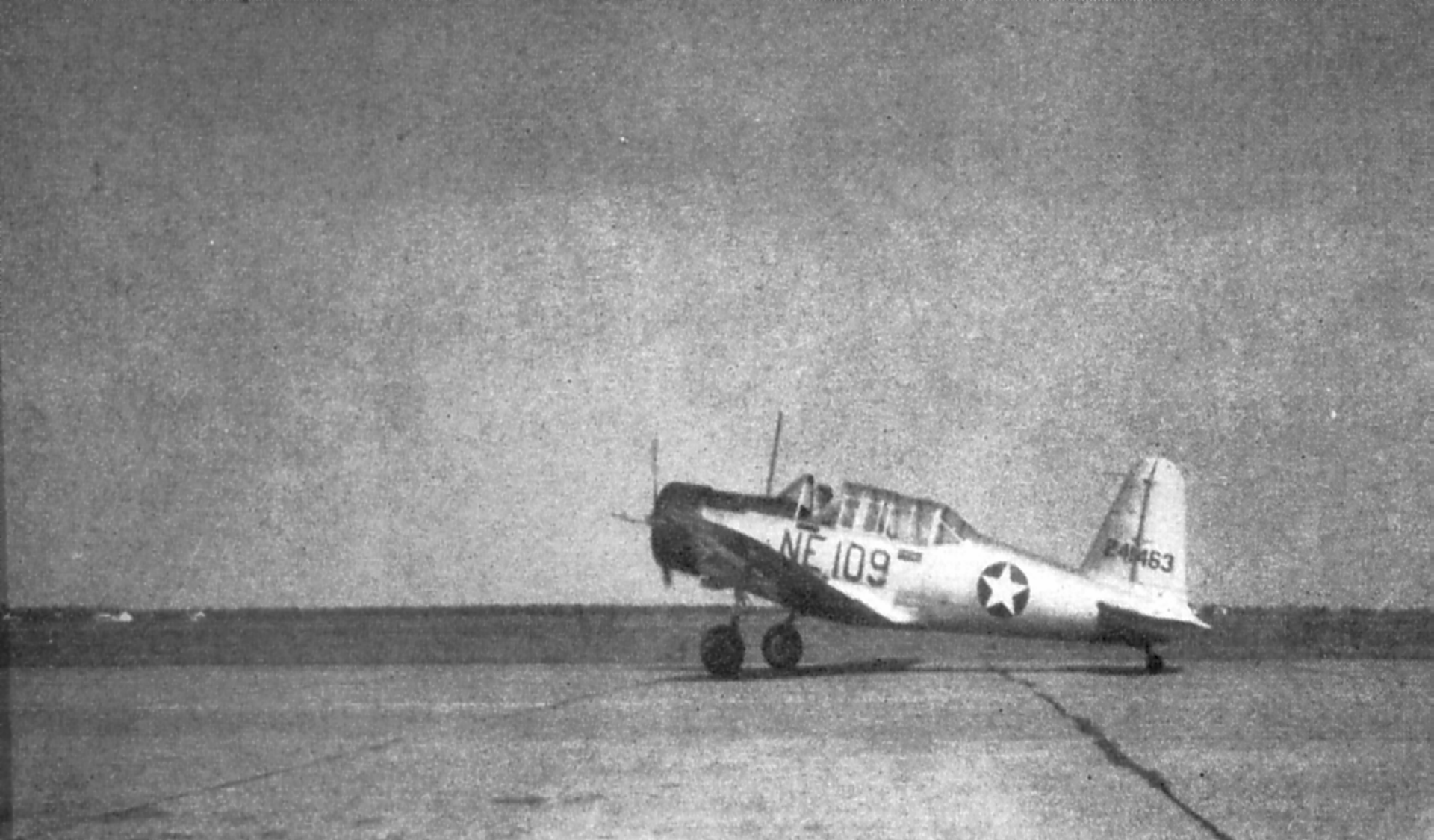


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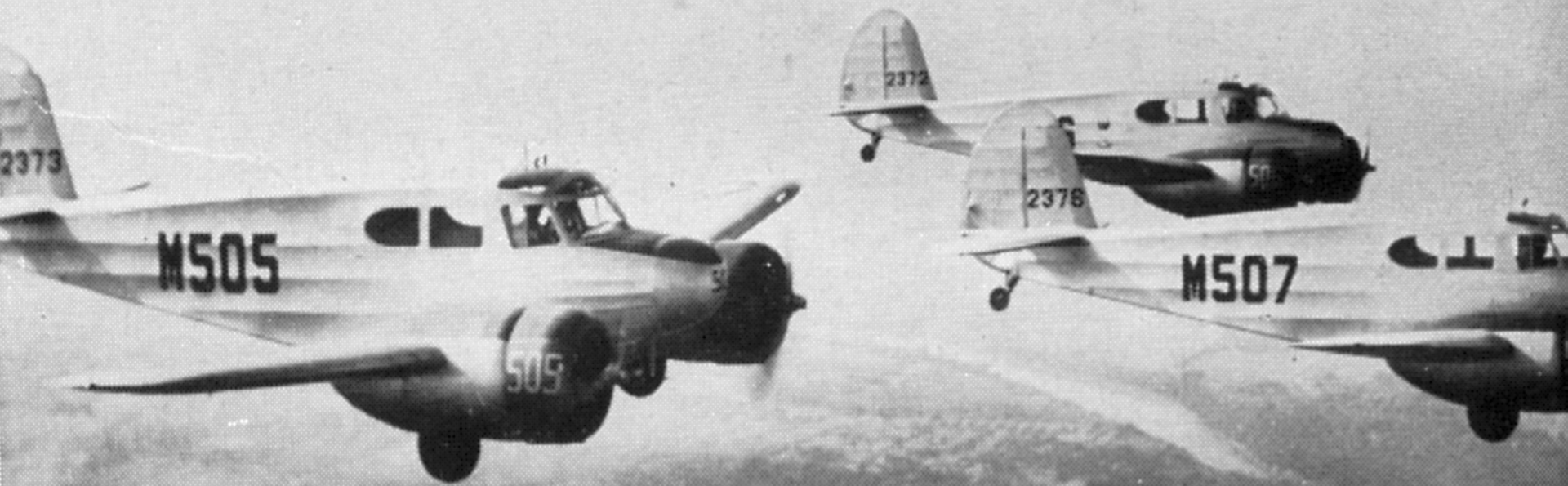
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The North American AT-6 "Texan" was used at other bases and had larger engines and retractable landing gear



The Cessna T-50 “Bobcat” was nicknamed the “Bamboo Bomber” because it was made primarily out of wood. They were used at other bases to train bomber pilots.

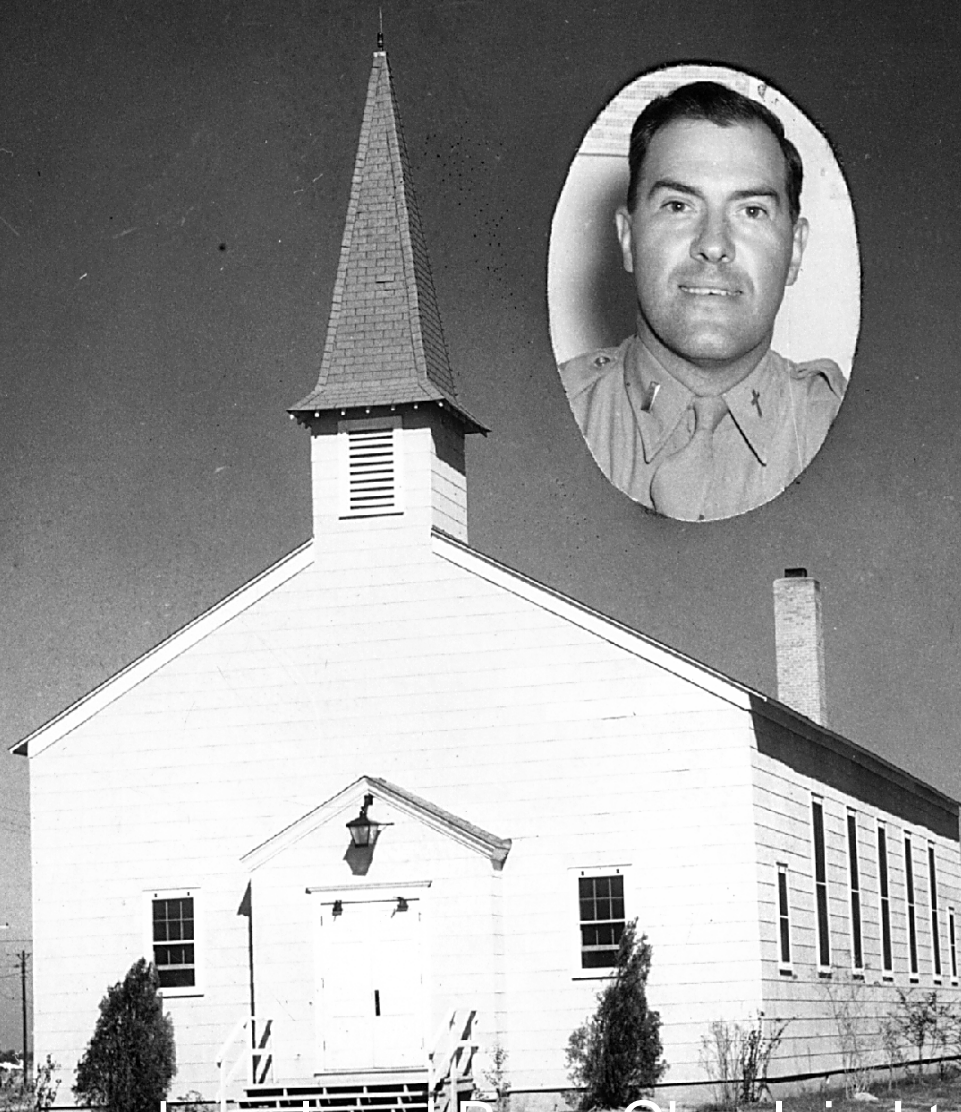
This aircraft was seen on early TV at the plane of “Sea King”



Restored T-50 passing through Newport several years ago



T-50 Front View



Newport base chapel and Base Chaplain Lt. Edward Merrill



LIAISON

Newport Base Operations Where are the computers?



Newport Base Dental Office



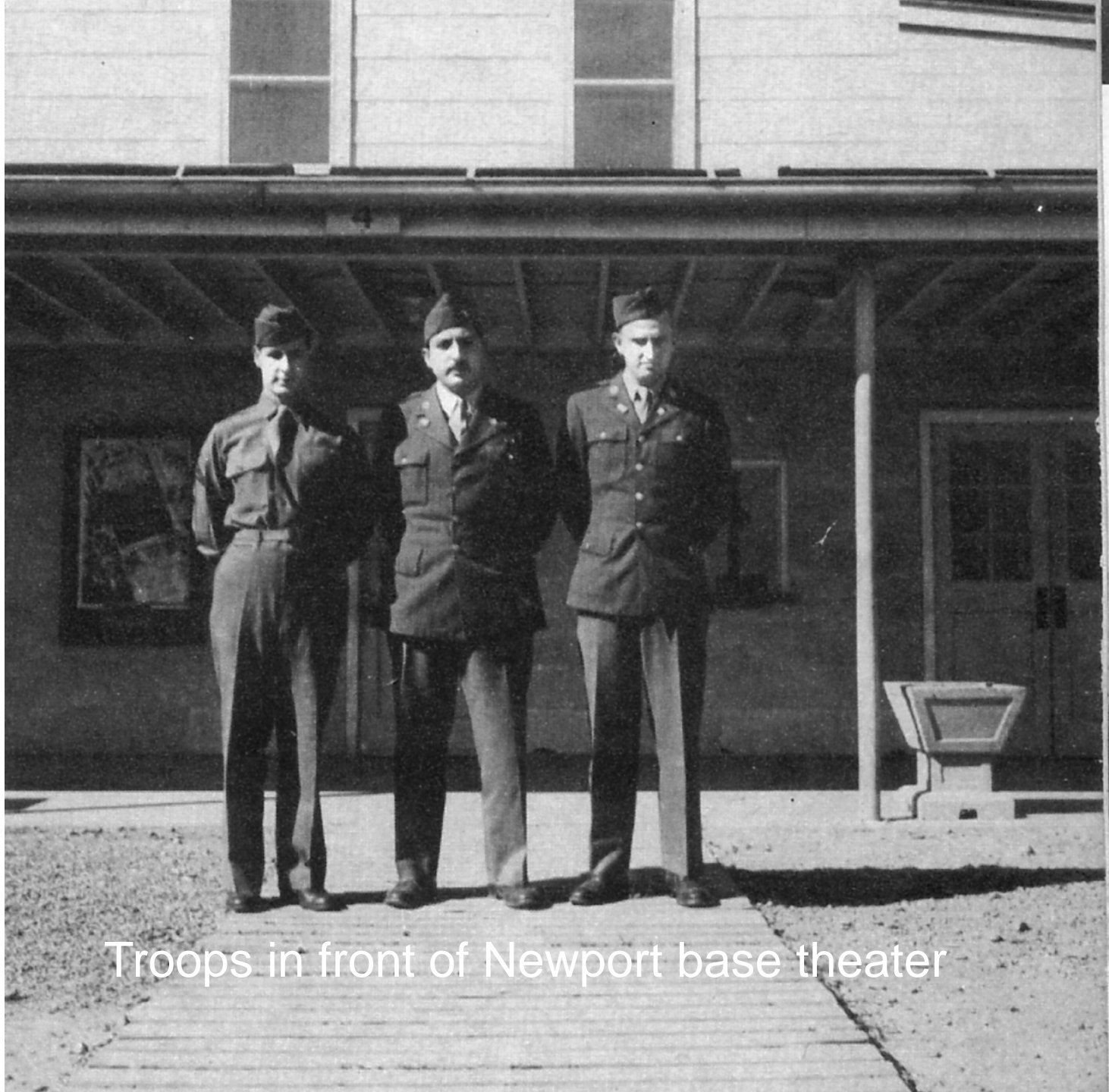
Base Hospital X-Ray



Newport troops just received shots and appear to be checking shot records



Ditching practice for pilots in Newport Base swimming pool



Troops in front of Newport base theater



Wiley Albright readies for a mission off the aircraft carrier Antietam in his FG-F Hellcat navy fighter

Newport's own

Cullus Walker

as operations officer
and instructor pilot for
the 1068th flying training
squadron



WILLIAM W. EVANS, JR.
Captain
Commanding

HAROLD W. HENKE
First Lieutenant
Adjutant

CULLUS Z. WALKER
Captain
Operations Officer

1068TH BASIC FLYING TRAINING SQUADRON

(Reading from Left to Right)

First Row: Master Sergeants Brieger, Edwin M.; Reese, Leo E.; Strunk, George W.; Technical Sergeants DeBree, John T.; Giardina, Frank A.; Nuss, Kenneth E.

Second Row: Technical Sergeants Richmond, Walter K.; Tomlin, Robert H.; Travis, Lee S.; Tully, John F.; Staff Sergeants Barton, Joe T.; Bell, Clarence A.

Third Row: Staff Sergeants Boggs, Dick; Bookout, John H.; Connolly, James S.; Hoffman, John D.; Justice, James N.; Kensinger, Fred D.

Fourth Row: Staff Sergeants King, Harvey L.; Lindauer, Phillip; McGovern, Frederick; McIntyre, James J.; Montano, Guadalupe; Papai, William J.

Fifth Row: Staff Sergeants Rodgers, Clayton C.; Schendei, Burton C.; Sommer, Albert R.; Swafford, Porter B.; Sergeants Antonelli, Joseph C.; Caloia, Amadeo J.

Sixth Row: Sergeants DeVault, Roy E.; Ewell, George R.; Free, Miles K.; Higginbotham, Ralph S.; James, C. E.; Jordan, Lewis E.

Seventh Row: Sergeants Joy, Harold F.; Kaplan, Jack S.; Larrance, John A.; Manevitch, Harold; Morgan, M. C.



Wingsport, Ark.

Sq. IV Wins April Safety Award

Before the entire group of instructors and cadets of Squadron IV Col. Robert W.C. Wimsatt, last Tuesday afternoon made the monthly flying award to Capt. Cullus ~~E~~ Walker, commander of Squadron IV. The coveted flying safety plaque was won by the instructors and cadets for having a record of no accidents during the month of April.

In receiving the plaque for his squadron, Capt. Walker assured the Col. every effort would be put forth to keep the award by maintaining the squadron record of no accidents of any kind. Squadron IV also flew the most hours during the month of April.

Capt. Cullus Walker and other Newport based flight instructors





Capt. Walker in front
of a Newport BT-13
with all his winter
flying gear on

FLIGHT INSTRUCTORS



ROY T. FLING
Captain
Commanding Flight Instructors



HERBERT J. WAGNER
First Lieutenant
Commanding Flight Instructors



JOHN A. MARCACCI
First Lieutenant
Commanding Flight Instructors



STANLEY B. BALBACH
First Lieutenant



DONALD E. ADAMS
Second Lieutenant



GLEN V. BLOOM
Second Lieutenant



JOSEPH M. BOYER
Second Lieutenant



WENDELL D. BYRD
Second Lieutenant



REUBEN V. CHANDLER
Second Lieutenant



DAN M. COATS
Second Lieutenant



EDWARD E. CONNER
Second Lieutenant



JOHN W. CORBIN
Second Lieutenant



FRED M. COX
Second Lieutenant



SAM DEINES
Second Lieutenant



FRANCIS A. DELLORTO
Second Lieutenant



GARTH B. DETTINGER
Second Lieutenant



ALLEN F. EASTHAM
Second Lieutenant



JOHN D. ENFINGER
Second Lieutenant



ARNOLD B. FELLOWS
Second Lieutenant

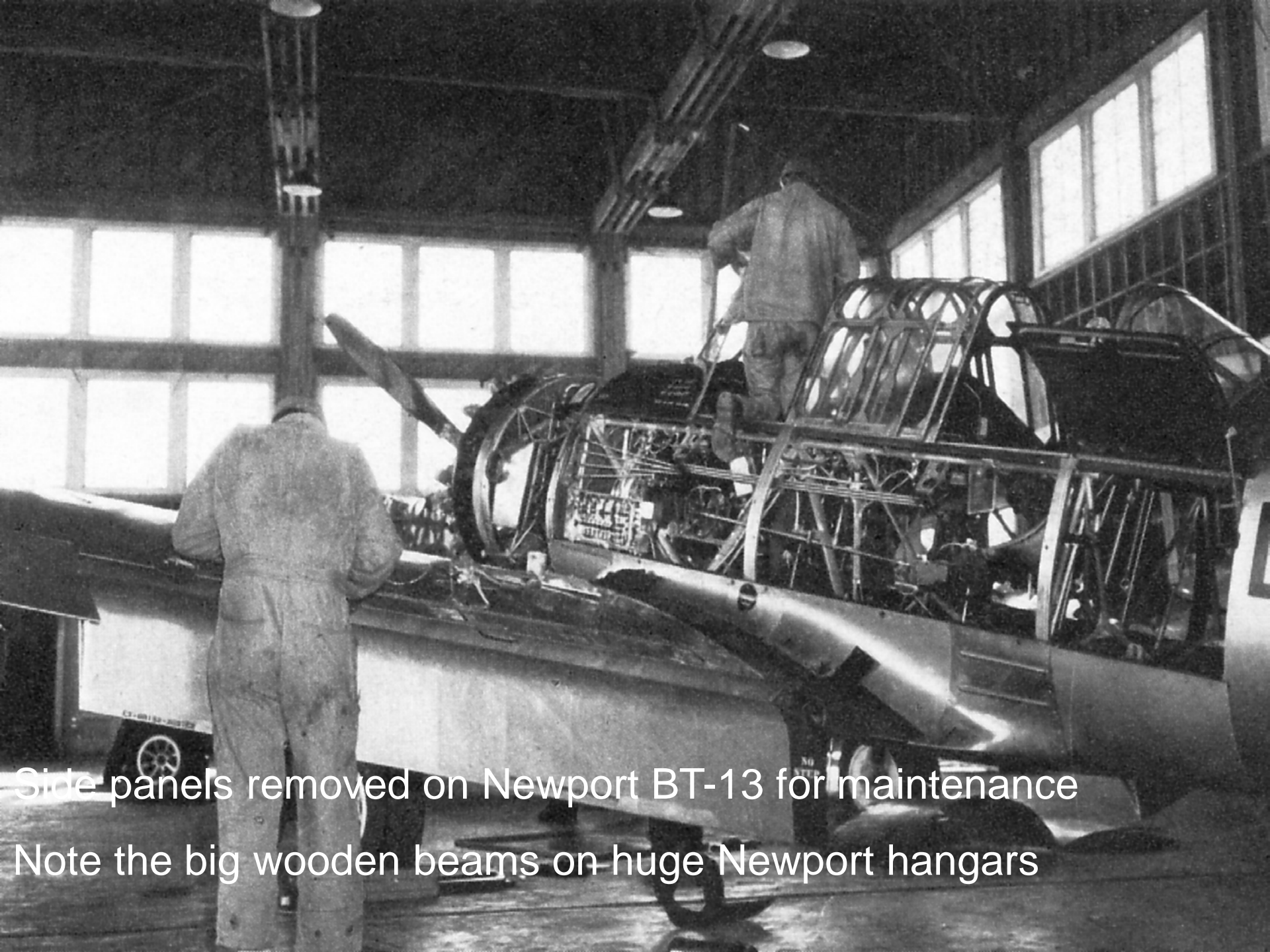


EDWIN E. FORT
Second Lieutenant

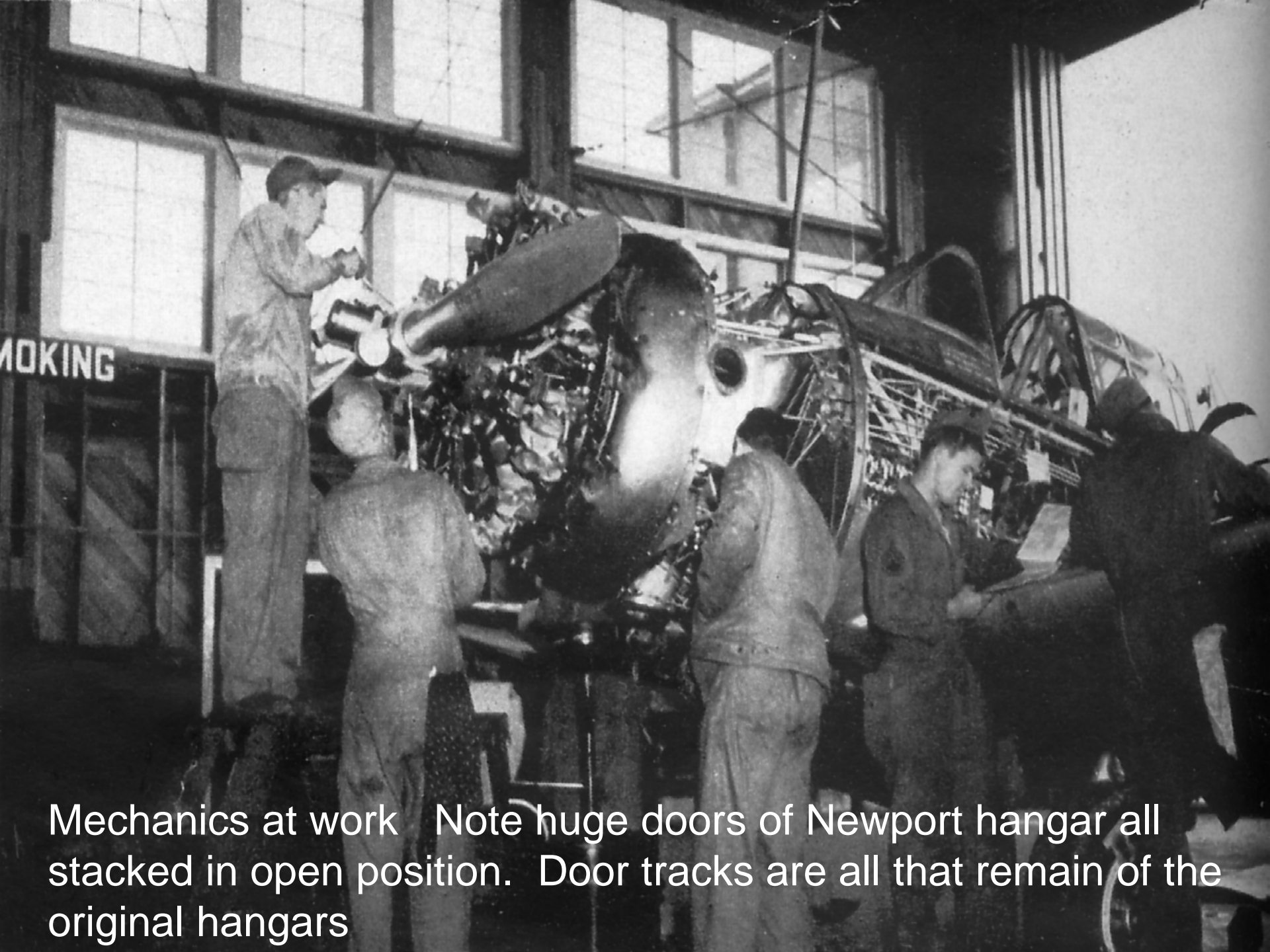
Another Newport Flight
Instructor Arnold B.
“Buzz” Fellows



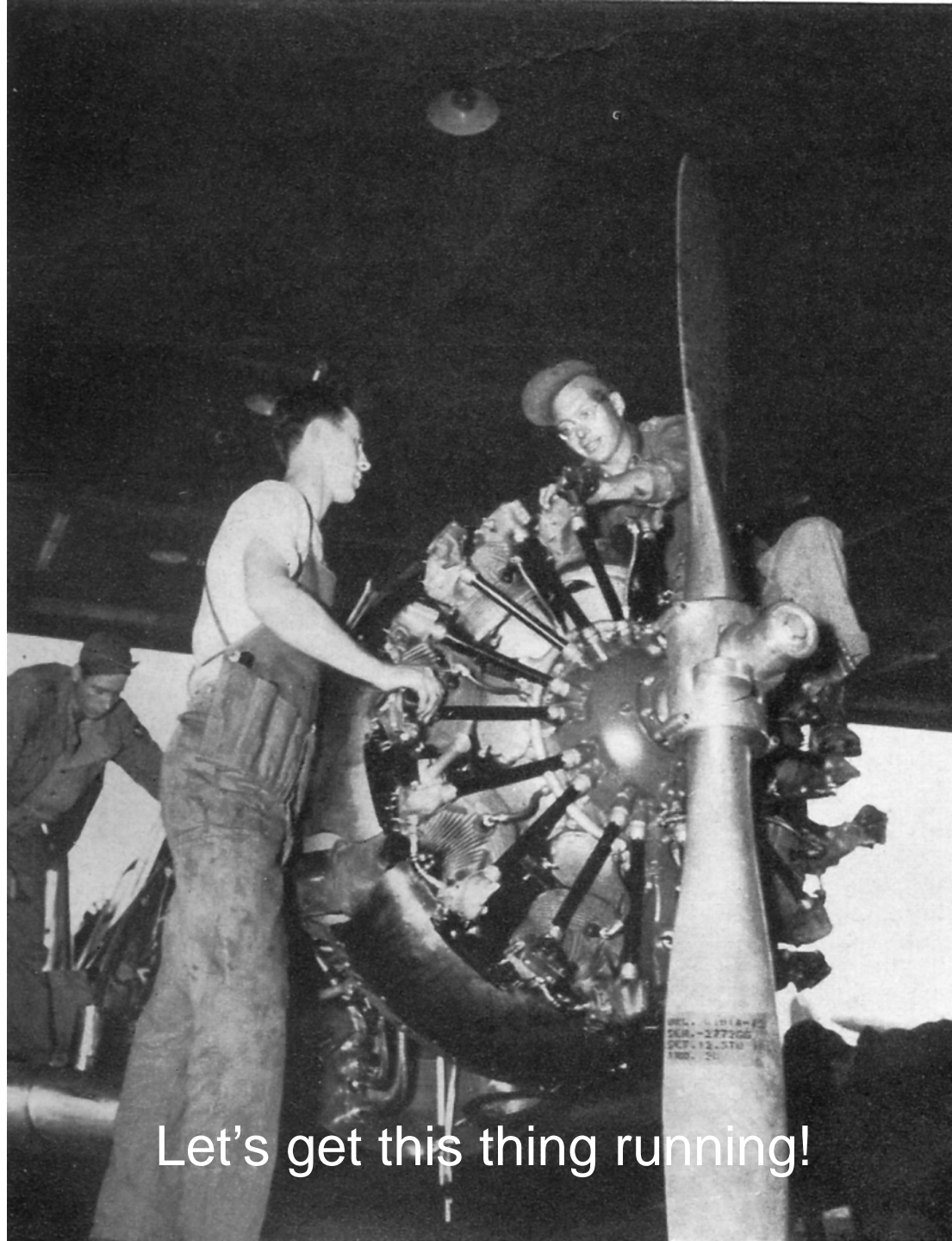
Mechanics working on 450 HP Pratt and Whitney engine on a Newport BT-13



Side panels removed on Newport BT-13 for maintenance
Note the big wooden beams on huge Newport hangars



Mechanics at work Note huge doors of Newport hangar all stacked in open position. Door tracks are all that remain of the original hangars



Let's get this thing running!



Instructor and student on Newport ramp after a long day flying

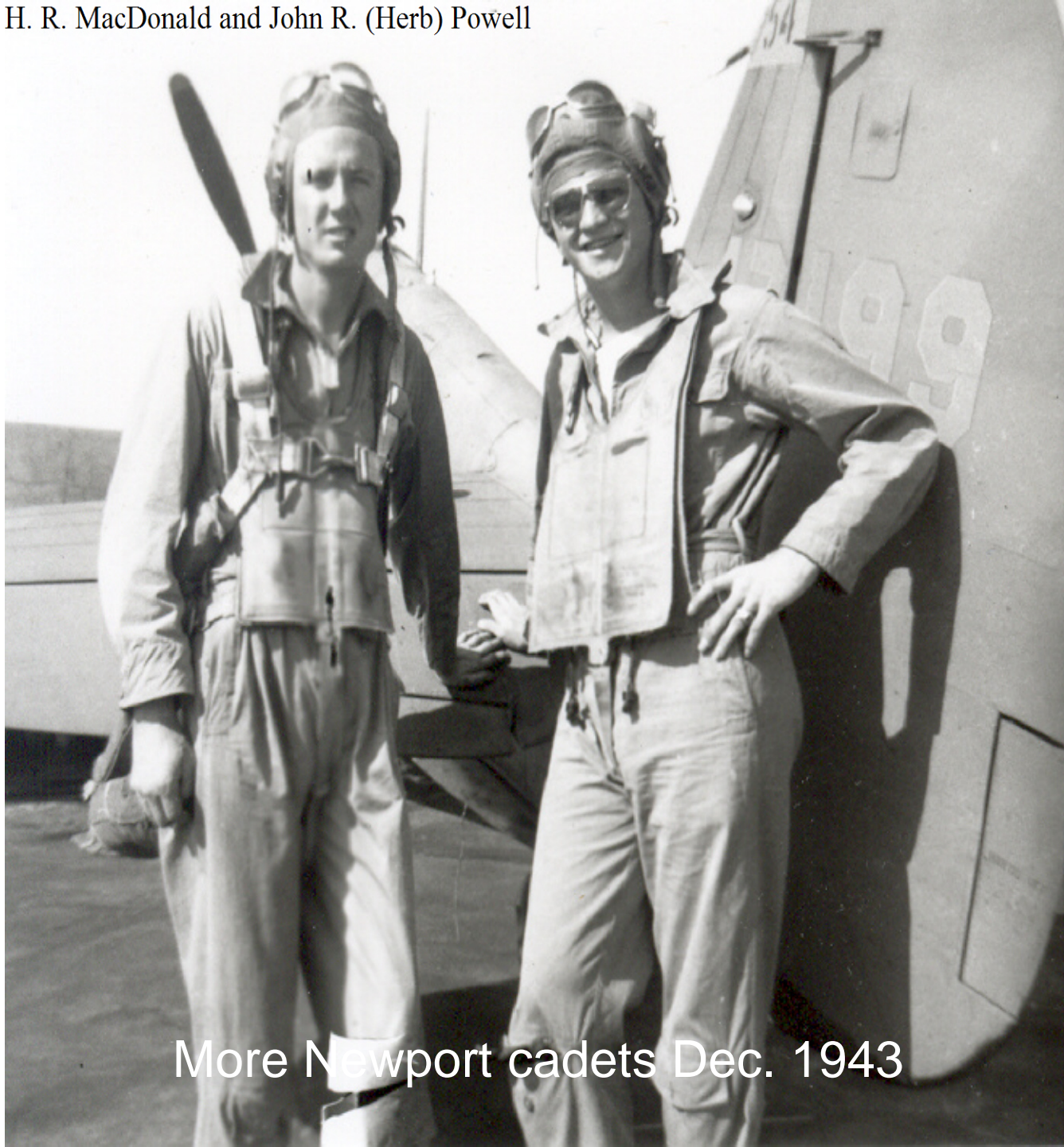


Newport student pilots marching to their planes

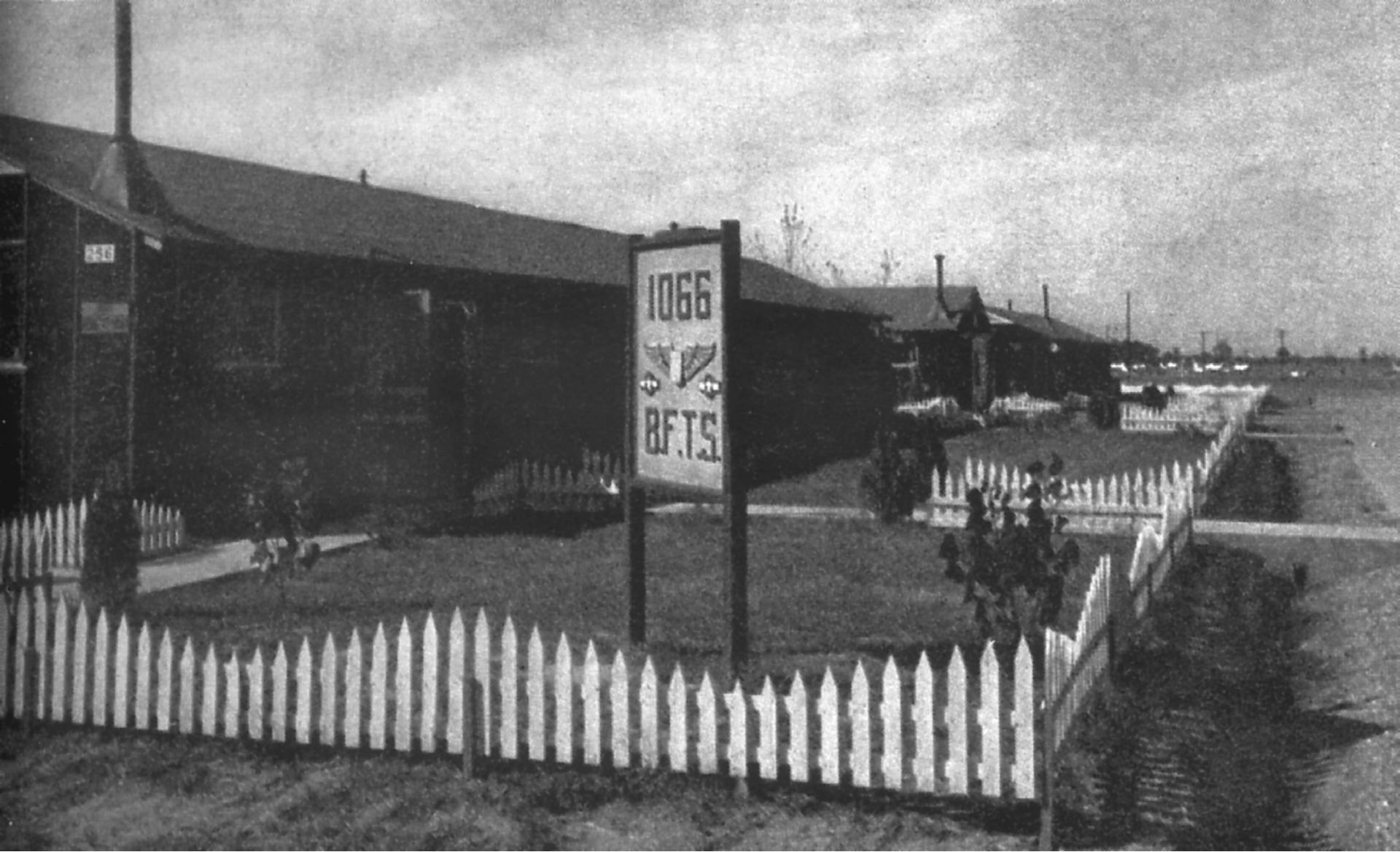


Newport cadet in Dec. 1943 Notice the Mae West life vest, I guess in case they went down in White River

H. R. MacDonald and John R. (Herb) Powell



More Newport cadets Dec. 1943



Headquarters for Newport 1066th Flight Training Squadron



Newport Air Base Hospital complex



Newport barracks Where's the dryer?

Newport Officers

S P E C I A L S T A F F



HARRY C. MURPHY
Lieutenant Colonel
Post Quartermaster Officer



PRESTON BROWN
Major
Director of Training



CHESTER W. TERRY
Major
Post Engineering Officer



LLOYD M. BERGEN
Captain
Special Service Officer



EMIL J. CRESCENZI
Captain
Provost Marshal



THOMAS B. HOWARD
Captain
Signal Officer, General



GRAYDON J. JONES
Captain
Commandant of Cadets



ARTHUR A. MENDONSA
Captain
Base Transportation Officer



JONATHAN A. MYERS
Captain
Assistant Post Engineering Officer



ERNEST E. RAY
Captain
Base Statistical Officer



J. R. CLIFTON BROWN
First Lieutenant
Budget and Fiscal Officer



BARBARA G. CHAPPUIS
First Lieutenant
Assistant Post Classifications Officer



JOSEPH S. GRUTSCH
First Lieutenant
Assistant Adjutant



EDWARD R. MERRILL
First Lieutenant
Chaplain



MAX SCHIFFMAN
First Lieutenant
Judge Advocate



SHIRLEY K. SMITH
First Lieutenant
Post Operations Officer



RUSSELL P. TAYLOR
First Lieutenant
Post Engineering Administrative Officer



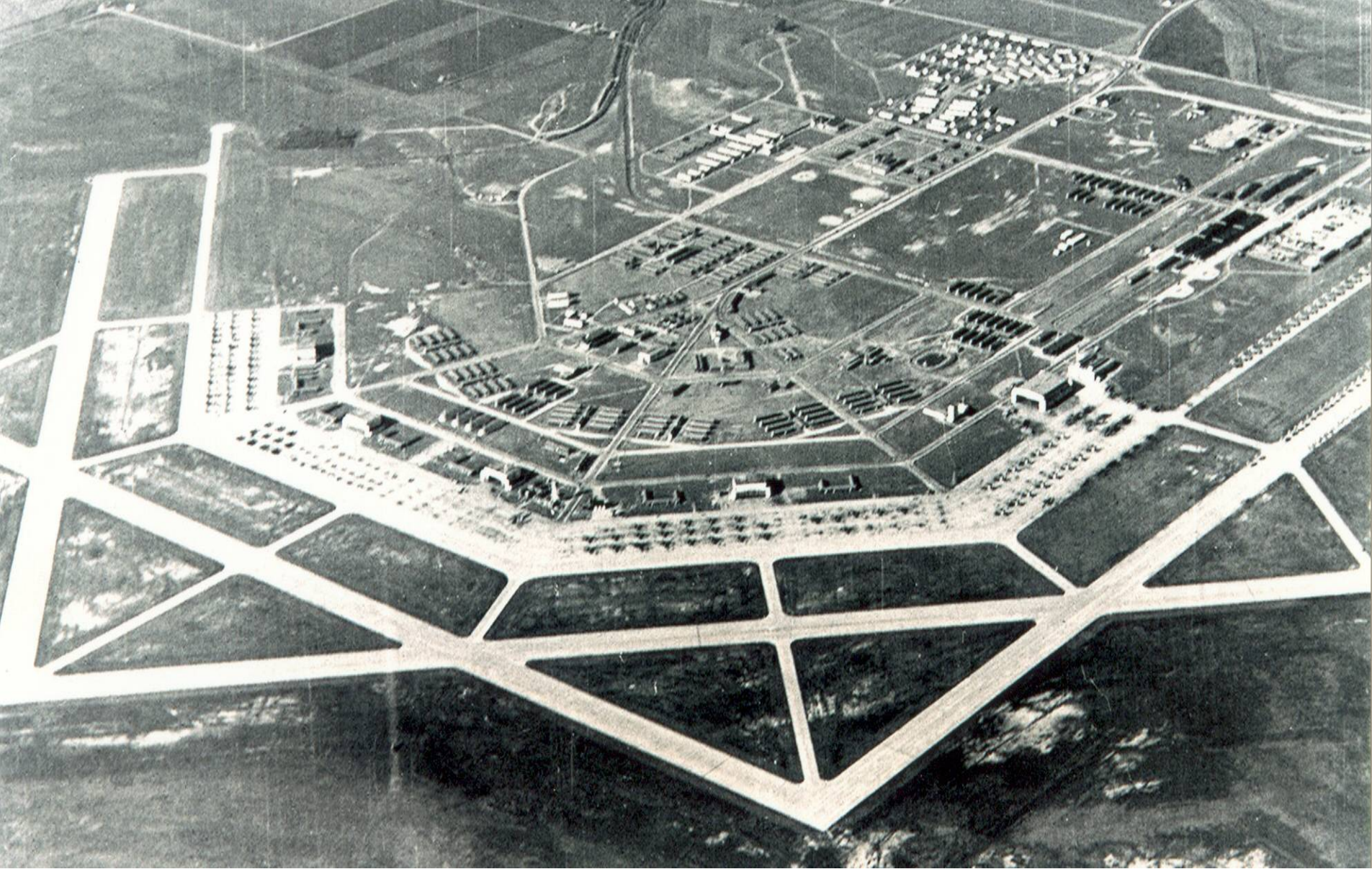
ALBERT W. WINTER
First Lieutenant
Public Relations Officer



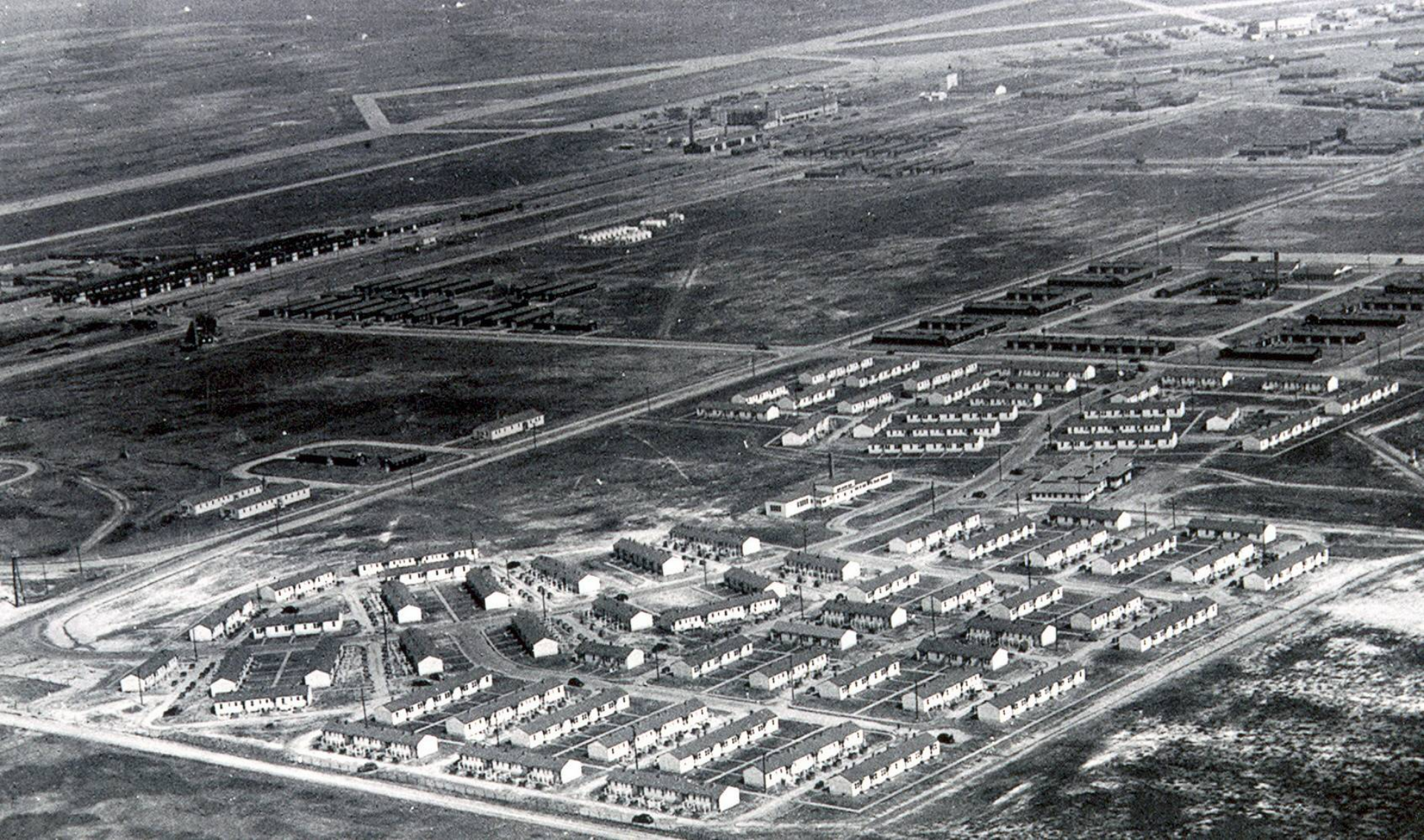
HOMER A. MAIZE
Second Lieutenant
Assistant S-4



WALTER RESCE
Second Lieutenant
Photographic Officer



Newport Air Base 1942



Newport Air Base nears completion in late 1942



Mid 1950's Last of the original hangars burn. Mack Bro's Piper Cub and Lovell James's Stearman crop duster were removed from the hangar, but not in time.



Newport Municipal Airport as it is today



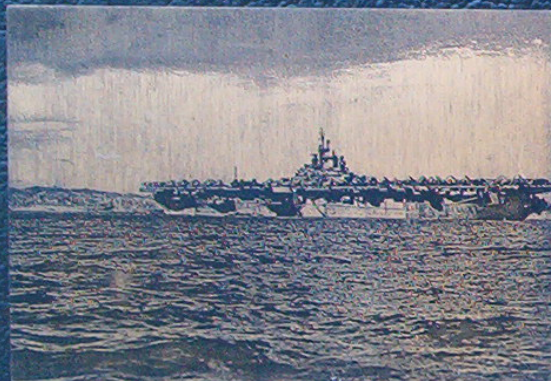
Wiley Allbright, Jr.
Aug. 22, 1923-Dec. 17, 1999

Wiley Allbright, Jr. Air Terminal Newport, Arkansas

This terminal is dedicated to the memory of
Wiley Allbright, Jr.

for his devotion to his country through active military service
as a Navy carrier pilot on the U.S.S. Antietam from November
1942 to January 1, 1946, and active Navy Reserve duty from
1946 to 1963.

Also, for serving on the Newport Airport Commission from
September 26, 1977 to December 17, 1999
Commission Chairman, January 1985 to December 17, 1999.



U.S.S. ANTIETAM

Dedicated Aug. 19, 2000
by the Newport Airport
Commission:
Burton Ford, Chairman
Joe Taylor, Jr.
Jim McCartney
Randy Ramsey
Ernest Evans
Dorsey Block, Airport Manager



WILEY ALLBRIGHT "The Kid Wheels"

Dedication of Newport Airport Terminal to Wiley Albright Jr.

August 19, 2000



Newport Municipal Airport as it is today

Newport Terminal



NEWPORT AIRPORT



A.S.U. Newport Aviation Program
Cessna 172



A.S.U. Newport Hangar



Newport Municipal Airport
Jet A Fuel Truck



Newport Municipal Airport Rental Hangars