



# Ewa Battlefield Interpretive Plan

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# Introduction





# Introduction

The U.S. Navy has long maintained control over approximately 1,055 acres of lands encompassing the military installations which once existed in the present-day Kalaeloa area. Most of these lands have been conveyed or will soon be conveyed by the U.S. Navy to various public agencies and private interests in accordance with a 2001 Programmatic Agreement.

Since development of the Programmatic Agreement, many individuals and organizations have devoted themselves to compiling an historical account of the area once known as Ewa Field, and later as Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS), Ewa. This area has a rich and varied history, in large part as a military installation associated with the December 7, 1941 Japanese attack on Hawaii. Recognition of the association of the area with the battle, and the understanding of the background, context and the events before and after December 7, 1941, resulted in the listing of the Ewa Field Battlefield on the National Register of Historic Places in 2016.

Although most of the buildings and structures associated with Ewa Field and MCAS, Ewa no longer exist, the area represents an important historic resource which warrants preservation, protection, public access, and interpretation. However, the relatively remote location of Ewa Field and the conditions which currently exist in the area have prevented a full understanding of the battle which took place there. Even the most knowledgeable visitor would have difficulty appreciating the history and important role of Ewa Field on December 7, 1941 and throughout World War II. Without assistance, locating the surviving elements of Ewa Field would be virtually impossible.

With permanent preservation of a large area of Ewa Field currently under discussion among the key parties, an essential step in the sequence of actions towards providing public access is to develop interpretive materials to be deployed on site. Based on the resources extant, this Interpretive Plan has been developed to provide information and images for permanent exhibition at key locations as well as location maps and a pathway for visitors to access those historic resources. This Interpretive Plan is intended to further advance the planning process leading to the eventual access to, understanding and appreciation of the Ewa Field Battlefield.





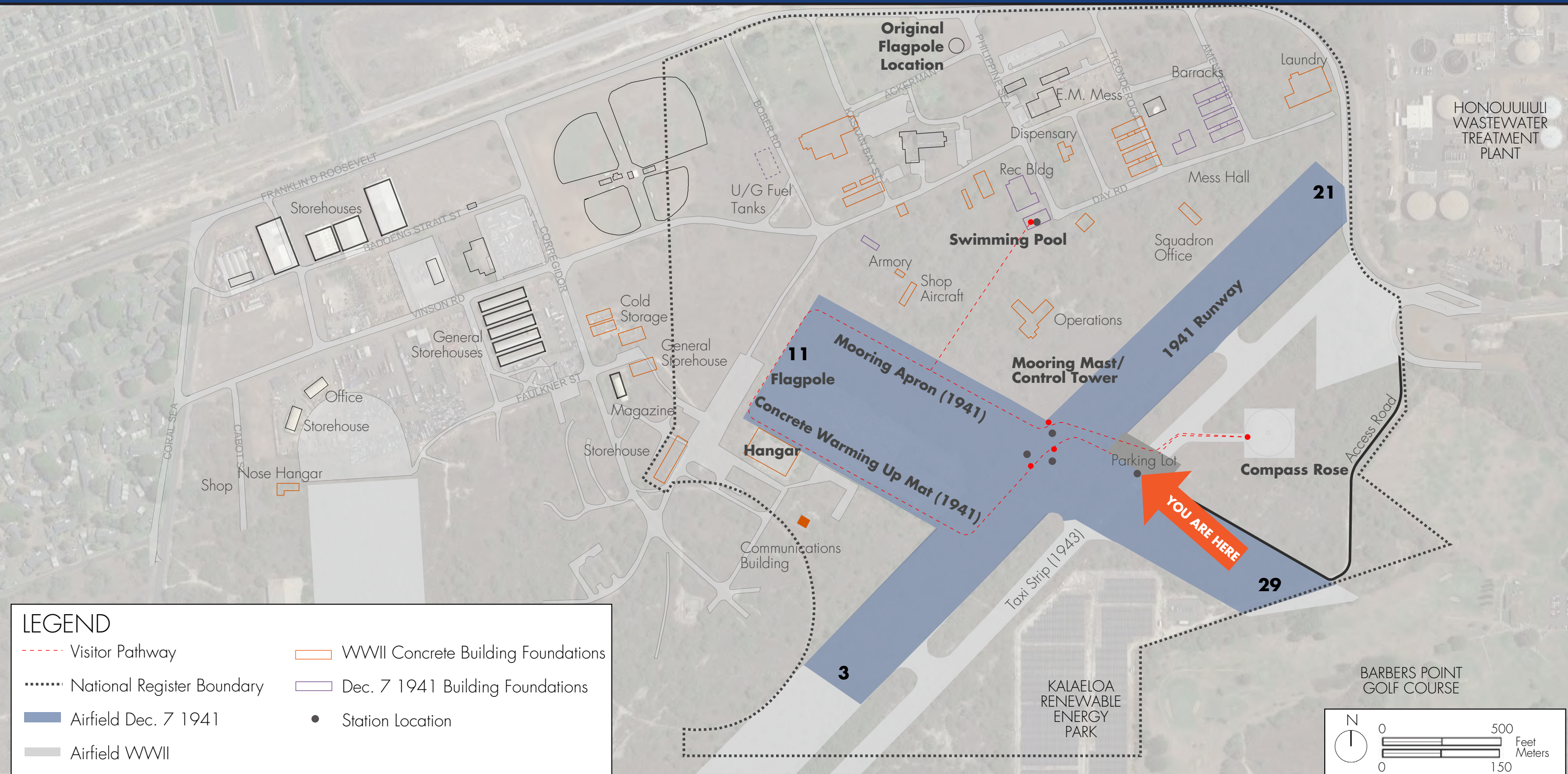
# Orientation





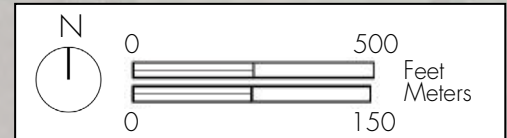


# Marine Corps Air Station, Ewa Historic Battlefield



**LEGEND**

- Visitor Pathway
- ..... National Register Boundary
- Airfield Dec. 7 1941
- Airfield WWII
- WWII Concrete Building Foundations
- Dec. 7 1941 Building Foundations
- Station Location



## Ewa Field

Initially conceived as an airship mooring mast site, MCAS, Ewa gained importance as one of the battlefields of the December 7, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor and the rest of Oahu. This map and the pathways shown will guide you to the important surviving locations which remain along with providing information about MCAS, Ewa's early development; MCAS, Ewa before, during and following the December 7, 1941 attack; and other features where important events took place or were important later during the World War II.





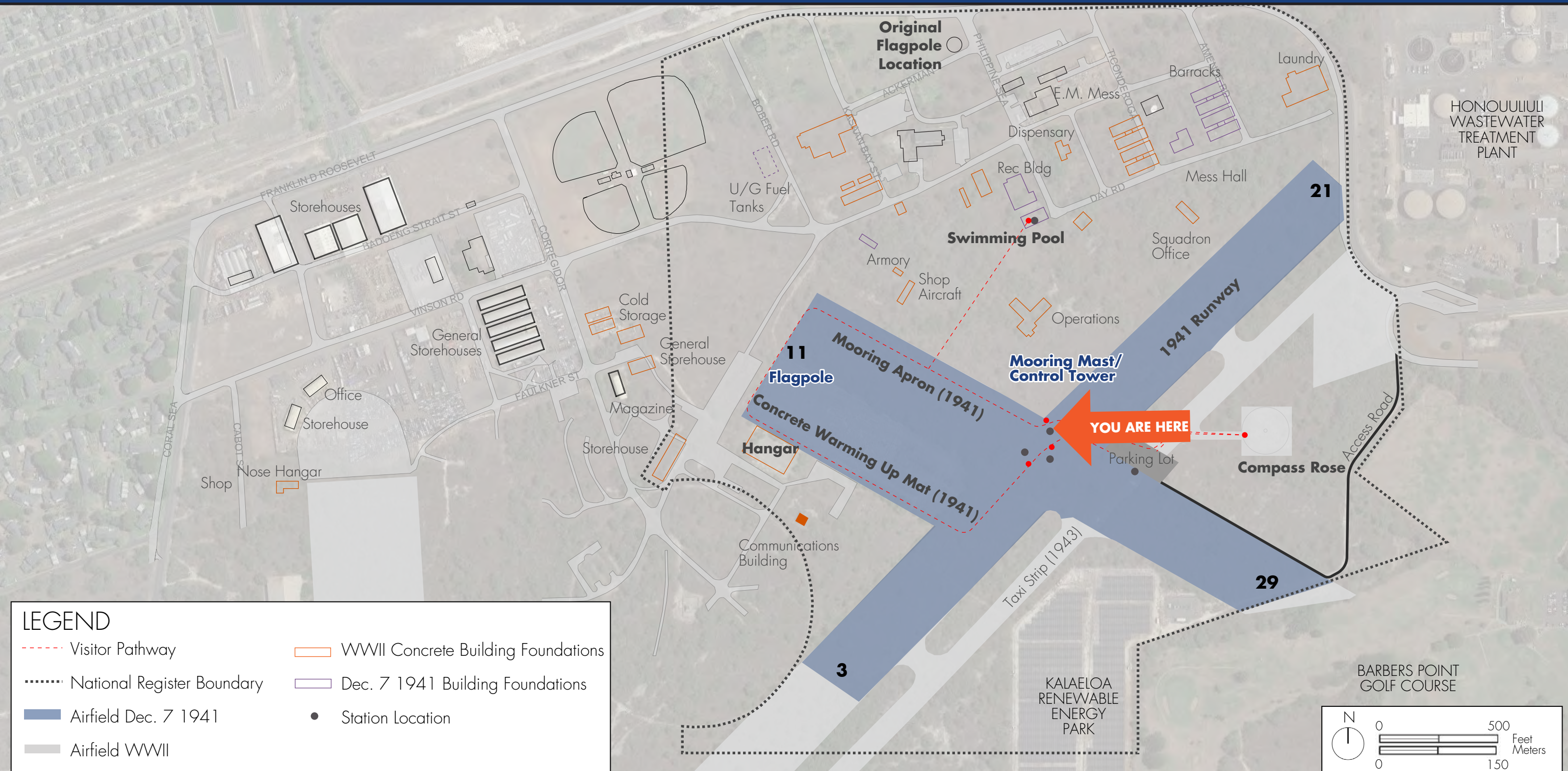
Station 1







# Marine Corps Air Station, Ewa Historic Battlefield



## Station 1

The origins of Ewa Field are largely the result of the Navy's Rigid Airship Program. A 160-foot tall mooring mast was installed in 1925 although never used, followed by conversion into a Control Tower to support Ewa Field as an emergency airfield and a training site, and later as a Marine Corps Air Station.



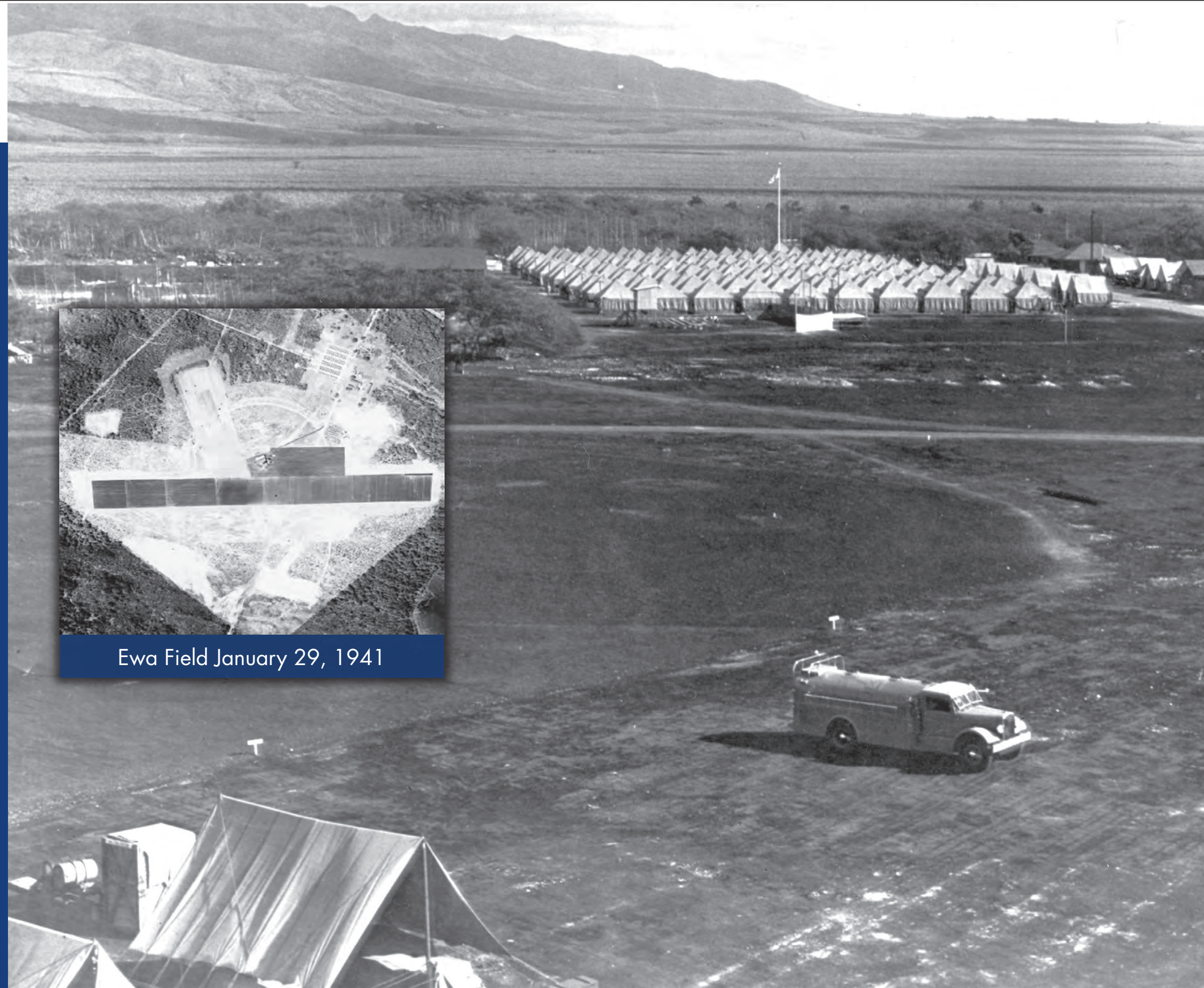


# Marine Corps Air Station, Ewa Historic Battlefield



## Marine Corps Aviation Arrives

In 1939, as part of the military buildup before WWII, Congress allocated \$30 million for national defense in Hawaii. At least \$200,000 was to be used to extend the Ewa field runway. Work was started by a large contracting firm, but when the Marines arrived in January 1941, one runway was almost finished and a tent city started so that by February 1941 the runway was operational and enlisted men had tents.



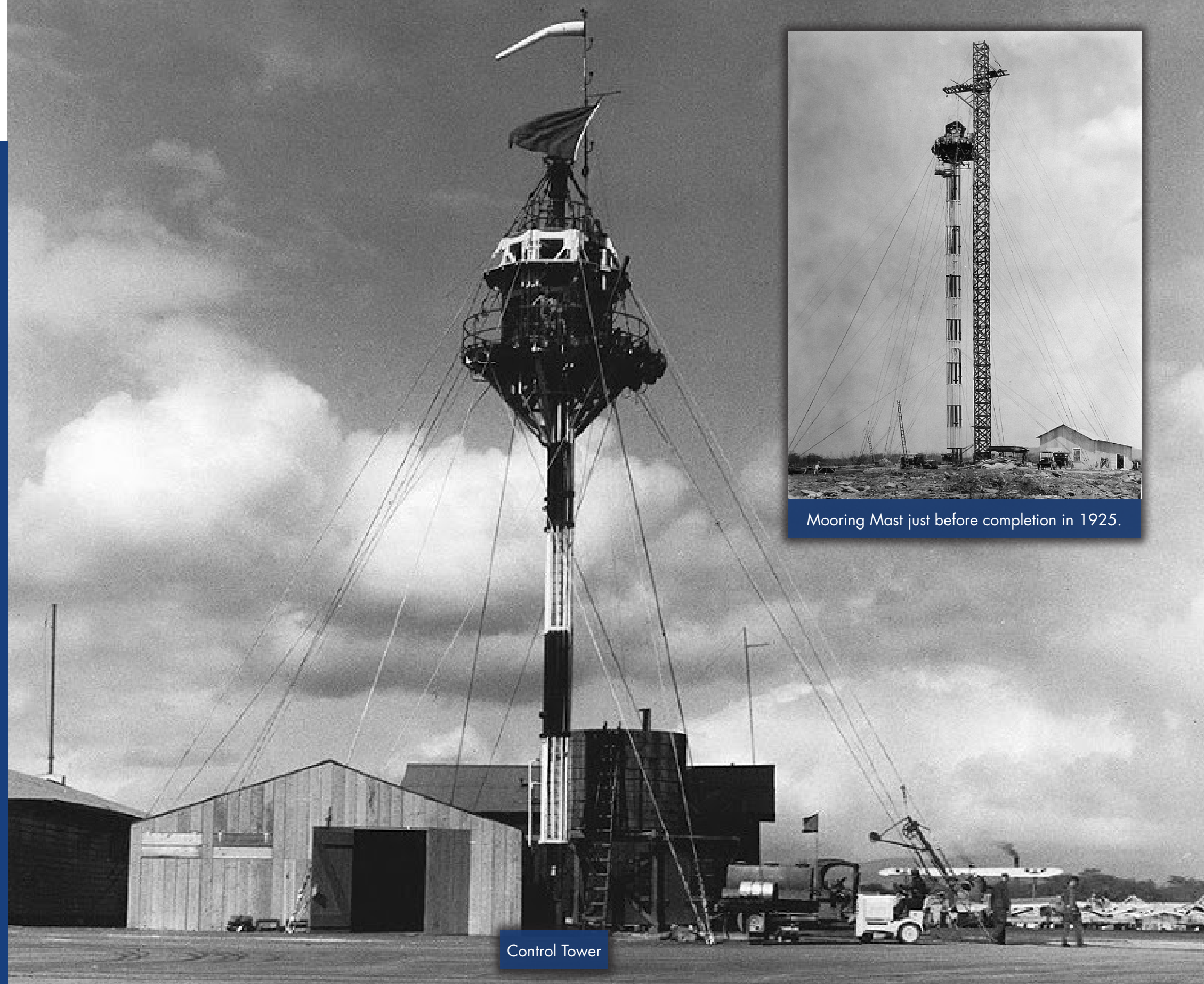
Ewa Field January 29, 1941





## Mooring Mast

Before 1924, Ewa field was part of a sisal plantation. In the 1920s the Navy planned to use Rigid Airships as part of their Naval Forces in the Pacific. In 1924, this site on Ewa plain was chosen as the mooring location and in 1925 a 160-foot tall Mooring Mast was built and then cut down to 77 feet in 1932, and the field remained with its tower, quarters and machine room. In 1935 a 1,300-foot coral landing mat was built southeast of the mooring mat.







## Control Tower Area

The Control Tower Area comprised a grouping of pre-1941 buildings together with the shortened Mooring Mast designed for the Navy Z-Class airships and retained by the Marines, later converting the Mooring Mast into a temporary control tower platform. The three large buildings located adjacent to the Mooring Mast at the juncture of the two runways originated from the Campbell Estate (the previous land owner) and were repurposed into a storehouse, Link trainer, and the Mooring Mast winch house, which was converted to a machine house.

The shortened Mooring Mast, painted in broad stripes to enhance its visibility, served as an open-air control tower platform for the airfield. Measuring approximately 75 feet in height, it was accessed via an exterior ladder fastened to the side of the structure. The tower was also stabilized with guy wires anchored into large concrete blocks positioned below ground. Due to its height, painted exterior, and location adjacent to the runways, the Mooring Mast would have been the most prominent structure at Ewa Field.





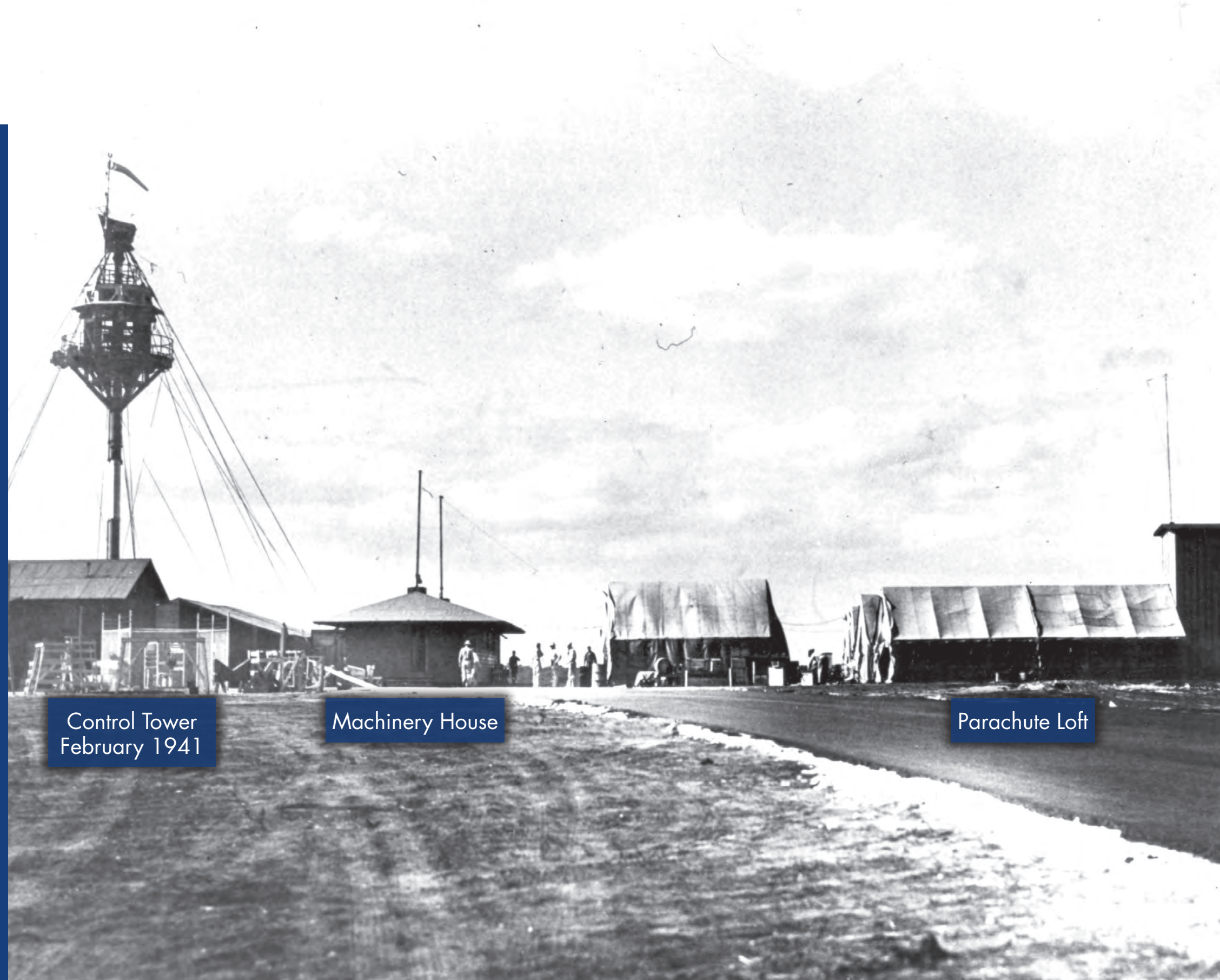


## Control Tower Area

A paved area around the northwest quadrant of the control tower was used for squadron tents, aircraft parking and aviation support. In December 1941, there were five groupings of squadron tents/activity areas lining the north side of Runways 11-29 and 3-21.

The Headquarters & Service Squadron (HQ&SS-21) had their operations tents located close to the Mooring Mast, while the service squadron supporting headquarters staff aircraft parked just north of the Mooring Mast. The Marine Utility Squadron (VMJ-252) was positioned farthest north, occupying four tents along Runway 3-21 with a paved area on the old Mooring Mast apron for utility aircraft parking and aircraft under repair. Marine Scout Bombing Squadron-VMSB-232 was the center squadron, also made use of four tents. The rear echelon of Marine Fighting Squadron-VMF-211 operated within four tents and was positioned farthest west along the north side of the tie down apron (Runway 11-29). In 1941, this area along the apron was considered the Flight Line.

During the attack on December 7, 1941, Marines used the Control Tower as an observation post and to provide a field of fire.





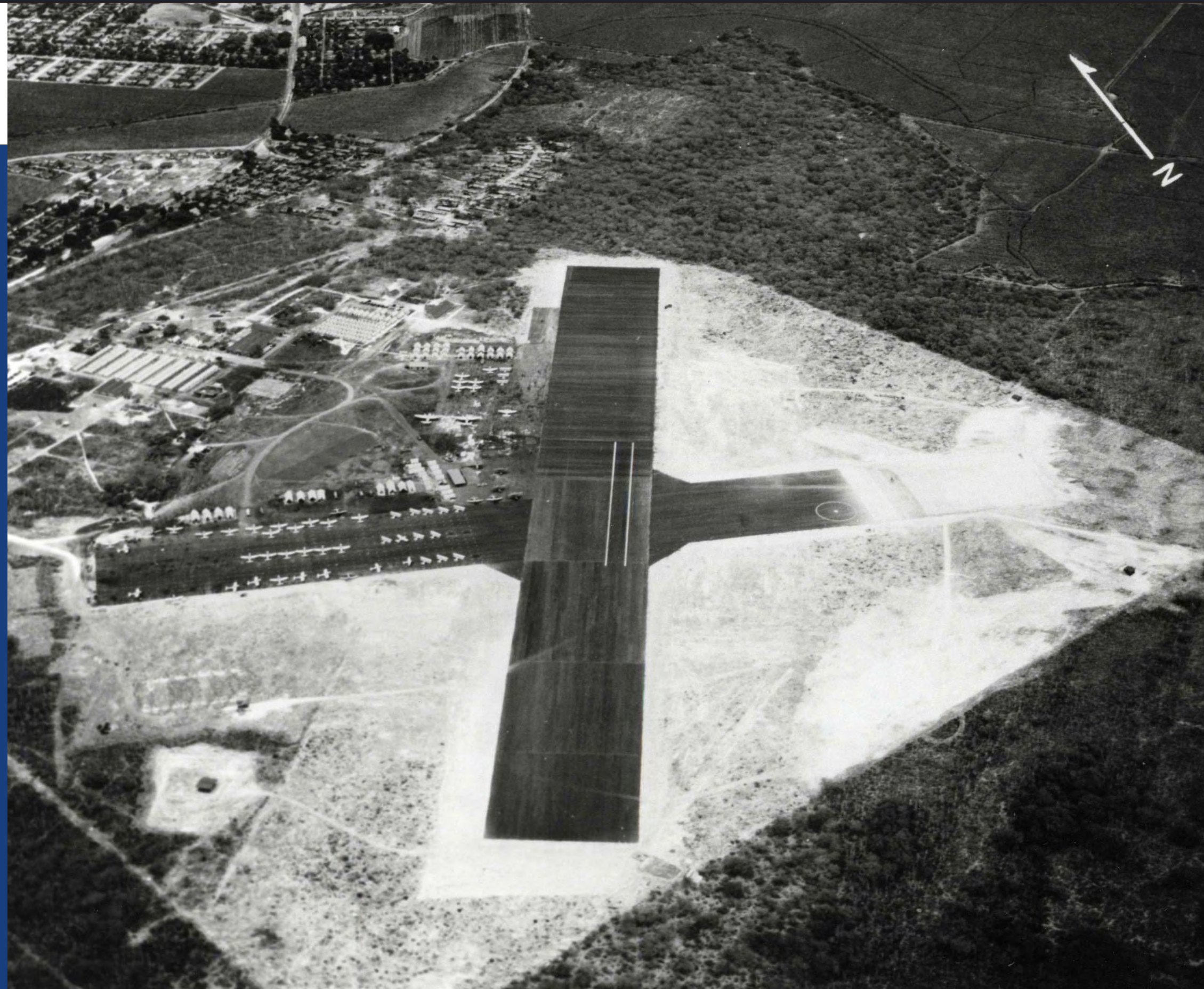


# Marine Corps Air Station, Ewa Historic Battlefield



## Ewa Field Before December 7, 1941

In January 1941, one runway was almost finished and a tent city started so that by February 1941 the runway was operational. Enlisted men and Junior Officers lived in tents and all shops were housed in tents next to the Warm-Up apron. The former Mooring Mast was used as a control tower.







# Marine Corps Air Station, Ewa Historic Battlefield



Recent ceremonies at current flagpole location



## Ceremonial Flagpole

The original flagpole area was located southwest of the main gate and it was here that the American flag was flown every day. Every installation had a flagpole and it was here that reveille had just blown as the attack began. Coming over the mountains, the Japanese planes would have flown over this area as they began their initial strafing runs.

Although not the historical location of the Ewa Field flagpole, it has long been the location for memorial remembrance ceremonies honoring Marine Corps veterans and those who perished at Ewa Field during World War II.

Original flagpole near base entrance, August 21, 1941





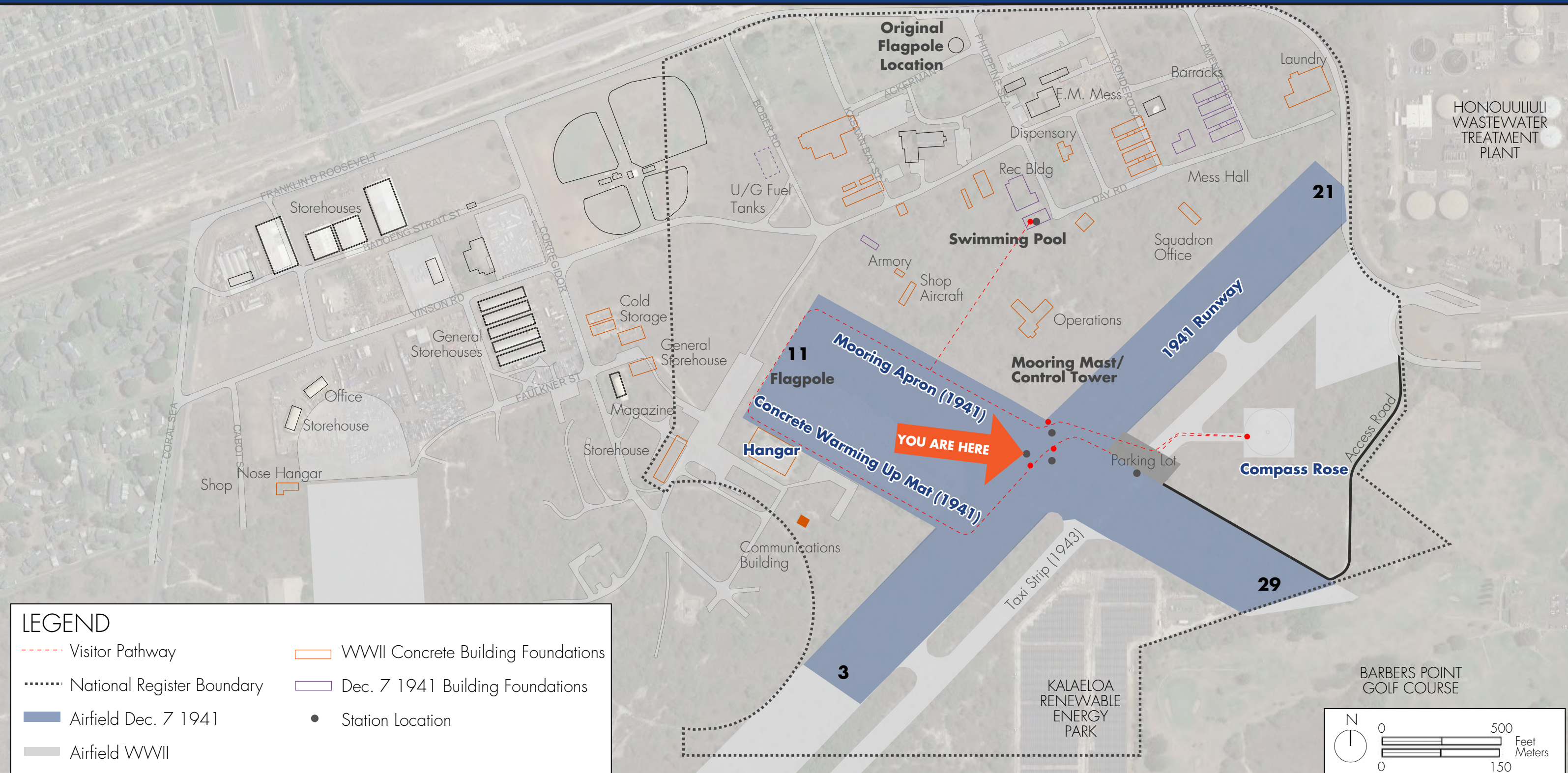
# Station 2







# Marine Corps Air Station, Ewa Historic Battlefield



## Station 2

MAG -21 was made up of two squadrons of fighter planes (F4F-3, and F2A-3), two squadrons of scout bombers (SBD-1, SBD-2 and SB2U-3), one utility plane squadron (R3D-2, J2F-4, JRS-1, JO-2, SBD-1 and SB2U-3), and one observation squadron. Not all MAG-21 aircraft were at Ewa Field on December 7th as some were already on Wake Island to support the Marines there and others were aboard the aircraft carriers Saratoga and Lexington.





# Marine Corps Air Station, Ewa Historic Battlefield



Ewa Marines clearing Sisal Field

## Runways and Warm-up Platform

In 1941, Ewa Field was a new Marine base comprised of an airfield, an assortment of airplanes, and a temporary Marine camp. The nearly 200-acre base, established on a 3,000-foot by 3,000-foot parcel, was situated within a dense forest of sisal, kiawe and native trees on a relatively flat, ancient coral limestone reef. Most of the vegetation within the base had to be cleared in order to construct the camp and aviation facilities.

The largest elements of the base are the two runways containing intersecting 300-foot-wide, paved asphalt landing strips forming a large "X" and surrounded by exposed coral. The runways were developed by expanding an emergency landing field from approximately 1,500 feet long by 150 feet wide to 3,000 feet long by 300 feet wide as well as construction of a cross runway oriented northwest-southeast, approximately 2,300 feet by 300 feet. Runways 3 and 21 formed the main runway and Runways 11 and 29 formed the cross runway (Runway 3-21 and Runway 11-29).



Preparing the runway 1940





# Marine Corps Air Station, Ewa Historic Battlefield

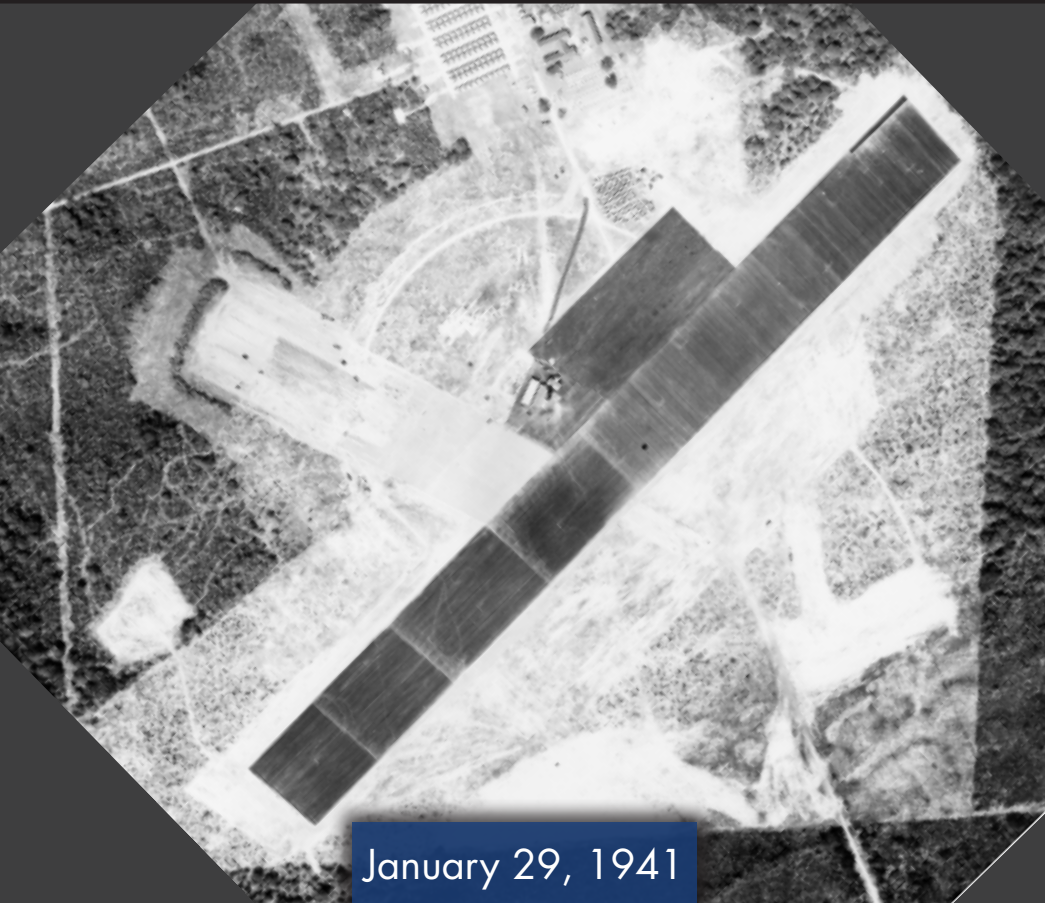


## Runways and Warm-up Platform

By January 29, 1941, the extension of the main runway was completed, including paving. The northern half of the cross runway appears to have been cleared and partially graded. By February 19, 1941, the entire cross runway was cleared and graded and a portion of the northern half was paved. Within a month, the entire cross runway was paved. By September 4, 1941, a compass rose was added to the southern portion of the cross runway and an area was cleared for an extension of the cross runway. By October 1, 1941, a 500-foot extension of the cross-runway and grading for the 950-foot by 300-foot warm-up platform had been completed. By December 2, the concrete warm-up platform was completed. For lack of a mechanical paver, some of the early work was done by hand-spreading the paving mix resulting in linear patterns and distinct periods of paving were reflected in the direction of the linear patterns.

The northern portion of the cross runway, Runway 11, the first area constructed with tie downs for aircraft placed at 20-foot intervals, served as the initial parking apron. That part of the runway and the mooring apron adjacent to it were used as warm-up platforms as well. Two parallel lines, marking the length and width of a carrier landing surface, were painted on the main runway (Runway 3-21) for both Navy and Marine pilots practicing carrier landings at Ewa Field.

Credits: National Archives and Naval History Heritage Command



January 29, 1941



March 14, 1941



December 2, 1941





## Mooring Apron and Warm-up Platform

Planes lined up along the mooring Apron (1941).



In December 1941, Ewa Field comprised runways, a mooring apron, concrete warm-up platform, hangar, control tower (former Mooring Mast), two support structures and wooden water tank (near the control tower), and a paved area around the northwest quadrant of the control tower used for squadron tents, aircraft parking and aviation support. A 300-foot by 960-foot concrete warm-up platform, with tie downs, was constructed along the southwest side of Runway 11. Typically, tactical aircraft were parked clustered together on the warm-up platform and aircraft associated with their respective squadrons were parked along the north sides of Runways 11-29 and 3-21. On December 6, 1941, planes were lined up for inspection and were in this position at the time of the attack, clustered together to prevent sabotage of individual planes.

Today, the surface of the concrete warm-up platform exhibits spalling from Japanese aircraft strafing and the burning of aircraft which occurred on December 7, 1941. There are large lineal pavement strikes believed to be from the low flying Japanese planes firing 20 millimeter cannons and tight clusters of spalls thought to represent 7.7 millimeter strafing from fixed wing guns as well as machine guns from tail gunners who systematically strafed the airfield. The metal U-shaped tie downs on the warm-up platform and the mooring apron are still visible.



Damage to concrete Warm-up Platform from Japanese strafing.



Warming-up platform



Metal tie down on mooring apron.





## The Aircraft

### Lockheed JO: U.S. Navy transport/gunnery trainer

The Lockheed Model 12, known as the JO by the U.S. Navy, was a 6-passenger light transport aircraft. It first flew June 27, 1936, and with its small capacity only about 130 Model 12s were built at Lockheed's Burbank plant. The aircraft was a competitor of the Beech Model 18 and although it was regarded as more advanced and sophisticated, it was also more expensive than the Beech Model 18 which was produced in much greater numbers. With the advent of World War II, Lockheed focused on building combat aircraft and although the Model 12 was not explicitly produced for military service, about half were acquired as light transports and bomber-trainers.

### Navy JRS

Manufactured by Sikorsky Aircraft Company, the JRS-1 is the military version of a 15-seat passenger plane called the S43. Fifty three were made, and the Navy purchased 17 of them. Two were given to the Marine Corps., the U.S. Army got five, and two were built for private use. Ten JRS-1s were at the U.S. Naval Base when the Japanese attacked during World War II. The Navy immediately sent these unarmed utility craft to search for the enemy fleet. The JRS-1 were in use from 1937 to 1944.



Navy JO-2



Navy JRS

NACA  
LMAL 43727





## The Aircraft

### Douglas SBD-2

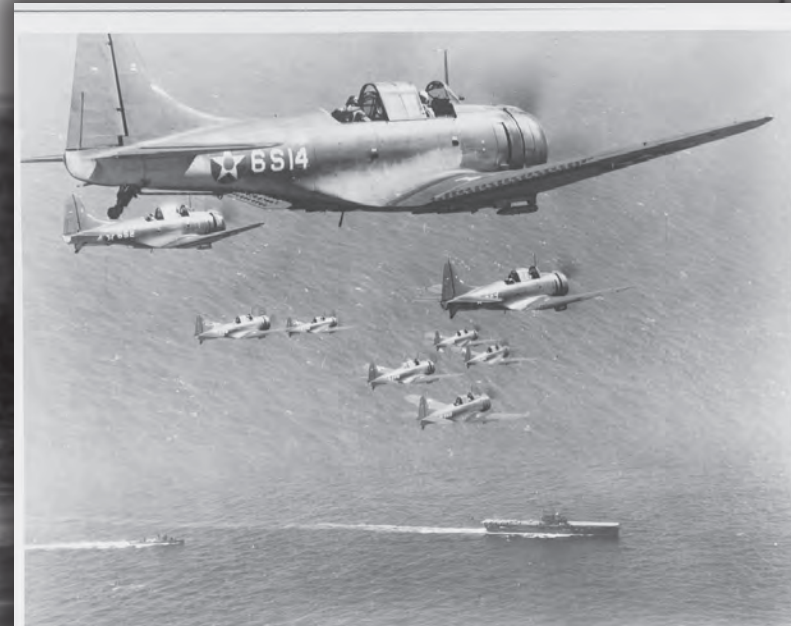
The SBD ("Scout Bomber Douglas") was the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps scout plane and dive-bomber from 1940 to 1944. They first saw action at Pearl Harbor flying off the USS Enterprise, but are best remembered as the bomber that delivered the fatal blows to Japanese carriers at the Battle of Midway in June 1942. In total, the aircraft sank more enemy shipping than any other Allied bomber.

### Navy F4F-3 Wildcat

First flown in February 1939, the rugged and heavily armed F4F Wildcat became the Navy/Marine Corps premier fighter and a mainstay during the first year of the war. By the end of 1942, Navy and Marine F4F pilots had amassed a 9:1 kill ratio over the Japanese, despite the reputation of the vaunted Mitsubishi A6M Zero. By war's end the F4F Wildcat had accounted for 1,006 enemy aircraft, and listed 58 aces among its pilots.

### Navy R3D

Before the war, the U.S. Navy ordered seven DC-5s and designated them as the R3D; three R3D-1s flew with the Navy as 16-seat personnel carriers and four R3D-2s became 22-seat paratrooper versions with the U.S. Marine Corps. Two of the Marine Corps planes were assigned to Marine Air Station Ewa in Hawaii in 1940. In November 1941, one of those was assigned to "Commander, Air, Battle Force, US Fleet" at Ford Island. The other was shot down by a Japanese submarine off the coast of Australia 55 days after the Pearl Harbor attack.



Douglas SBD-2



Navy F4F-3



Navy R3D





## The Aircraft

### Douglas SBD-1

The SBD (Scout Bomber Douglas) Dauntless was derived directly from the Northrop BT-2 design of 1935. The first orders for the SBD-1 and SBD-2 were placed by the Marines and the Navy respectively in 1938, both entering service near the end of 1940. As the standard carrier-borne Navy dive-bomber, SBDs flew from the carriers Lexington, Yorktown, Enterprise, and Saratoga and first engaged the Japanese fleet in the Battle of the Coral Sea. A month later, SBDs accounted for three of the four Japanese aircraft carriers sunk in the Battle of Midway on June 4, 1942.

### Navy JD Duck

The Grumman JD Duck is a single-engine amphibious biplane used by each major branch of the U.S. armed forces from the mid-1930s until just after World War II. It was primarily used for utility and air-sea rescue duties. It was also used by the Argentine Navy, which took delivery of their first aircraft in 1937. After the war, J2F Ducks saw service with independent civilian operators, as well as the armed forces of Colombia and Mexico.

### Navy SNJ

A well-conceived and well-built Navy trainer, the SNJ entered service before World War II and served into the 1950s. The SNJ with over 17,000 examples delivered to the U.S. military and numerous foreign nations, was the most widely used trainer ever. The earliest version was an open cockpit monoplane with fixed landing gear and a fabric covered fuselage, but with the 1938 introduction of the SNJ-1, it evolved into an all-metal aircraft with retractable landing gear. During the World War II era, the SNJ served the purpose of transitioning pilots from biplanes to monoplanes, and they were also employed as gunnery and instrument trainers.



Douglas SBD-1



Navy SNJ



Navy JD Duck





## Aircraft Hangar (Building 123)

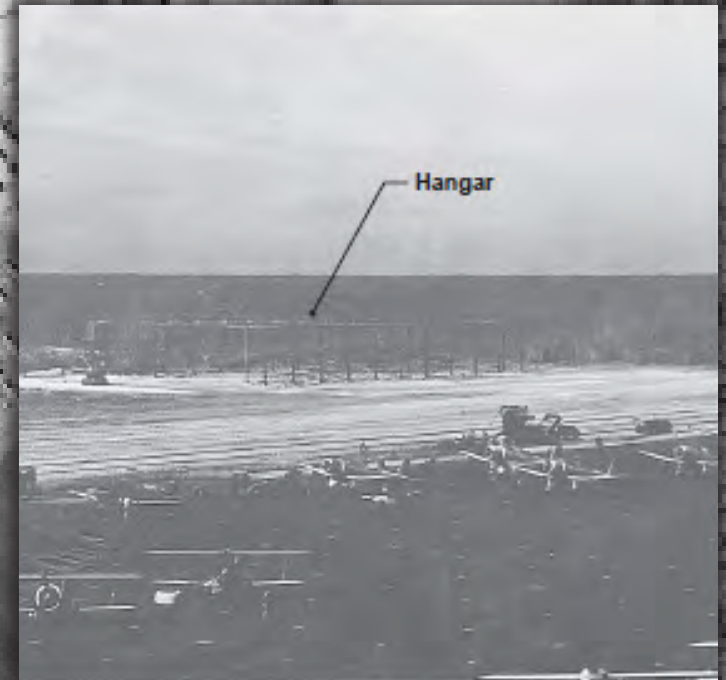
In November 1941, a steel aircraft hangar was erected at Ewa Field adjacent to and south of the concrete warm-up platform. Rather than building a new hangar, Marines received a twice-recycled hangar – it once stood at Luke Field on Ford Island and before that, at Wheeler Field. Until the 200-foot long hangar (Building 123) was assembled, much of the aircraft maintenance at Ewa Field was conducted on the parking aprons adjacent to the airfield.

At the time of the battle, the hangar was under roof but lacked the installation of sheet metal siding at its walls. Ironically, while the hangar survived the attack on December 7, 1941 it was later set on fire for the filming of an attack scene in the movie "Tora, Tora, Tora."

A concrete building pad containing the remnant bases of I-beams and a row of vertical cast iron piping are currently exposed at the location of the former hangar. Spalling was observed on the concrete surface but their origin cannot be determined. Based on design plans for the hangar, the linear row of cast iron sanitary pipe toilet flanges are in the approximate location of the (officers and enlisted) latrines situated in the northern portion of the building.



Hangar, December 2, 1941



Hangar 1941



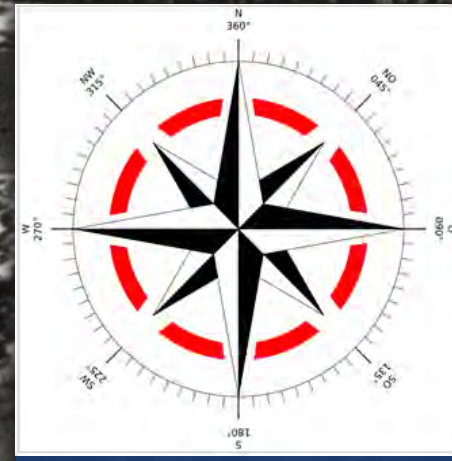
Hangar Foundation (2020)



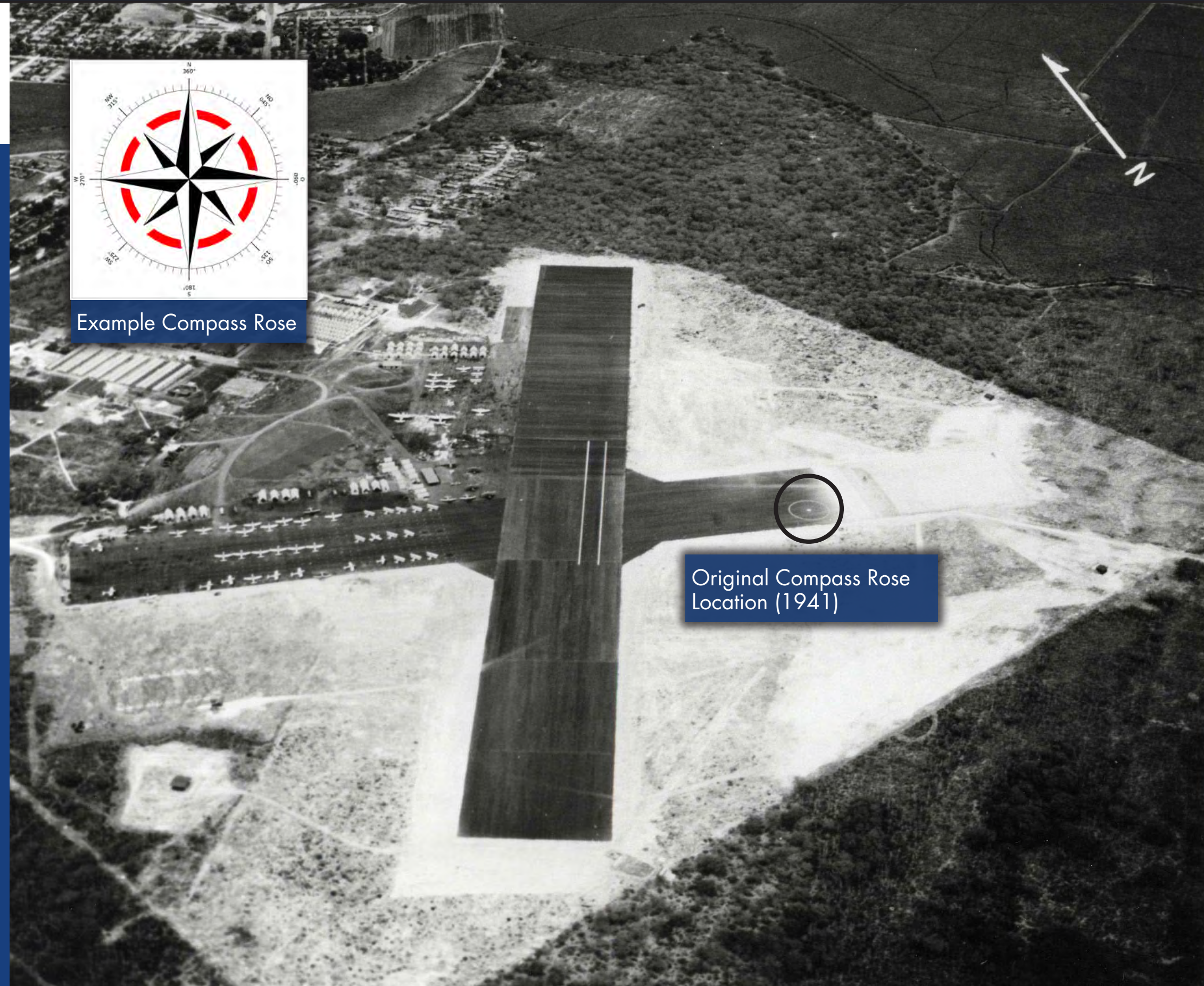
## Compass Rose

A compass rose, sometimes called a windrose, or Rose of the Winds, is a figure on a compass, map, nautical chart, or monument used to display the orientation of the cardinal directions: North (N), East (E), South (S), West (W), at 90° angles on the compass rose. Ordinal (or intercardinal) directions are Northeast (NE), Southeast (SE), Southwest (SW) and Northwest (NW), formed by bisecting the angle of the cardinal winds. Today, the idea of a compass rose is found on, or featured in, almost all navigation systems including nautical charts, non-directional beacons (NDB), VHF omnidirectional range (VOR) systems, global-positioning systems (GPS), and similar equipment.

The compass rose has appeared on charts and maps since the 1300's when the portolan charts first made their appearance. The term "rose" comes from the figure's compass points resembling the petals of the well-known flower. It helped to orient a map in the proper reading direction and gave the relative directions for certain points on the chart. Before compass roses were used on maps, lines were drawn from central points.



Example Compass Rose



Original Compass Rose Location (1941)





## Compass Rose

During World War II, most navigation was done by magnetic compass. The magnetic North Pole, where a magnetic compass points, is not collocated with the geographic North Pole. Additionally, the magnetic forces on the earth's surface vary by location. In aerial navigation, the difference between true and magnetic directions is called variation which can be accounted for by adjusting course to account for this variation.

Magnets in a compass will also align with any magnetic field which in aircraft include flowing electrical current, magnetized parts, and conflicts with the Earth's magnetic field. These aircraft magnetic fields create a compass error called deviation and unlike variation, depends on the aircraft heading and the aircraft itself. Unlike variation, the aircraft's geographic location does not affect deviation. While no one can reduce or change variation error, there is a maintenance technique that can provide the means to minimize deviation error by performing the task known as "swinging the compass." To swing the compass, the aircraft is positioned on a series of known headings at a compass rose. A compass rose consists of a series of lines marked every 30° on an airport taxiway, oriented to magnetic north. There is minimal magnetic interference at the compass rose. The aircraft is taxied to the compass rose and maneuvered to the prescribed headings



Compass rose (2020)

Original Compass Rose Location (1941)





## Compass Rose

As the aircraft is “swung” or aligned to each compass rose heading, a technician adjusts a compensator, positioning compensating magnets to minimize the difference between the compass indication and the actual aircraft magnetic heading. Any remaining error is recorded on a compass correction card which is placed in a holder near the compass. Pilots determine and fly compass headings using the deviation errors noted on the card.

The first compass rose at Ewa Field was set into Runway 29. After Runway 11-29 became an active part of the expanded runway in 1942, the original 1941 compass rose was moved in 1943 to the taxi area just northwest of the south end of main Runway 3-21. This later larger compass rose was built to accommodate twin-engine and later four-engine air transports. Non-magnetic brass pins were used to mark its center and various compass bearings around the circle.



Present day Compass Rose location (2020)



Compass rose (2020)





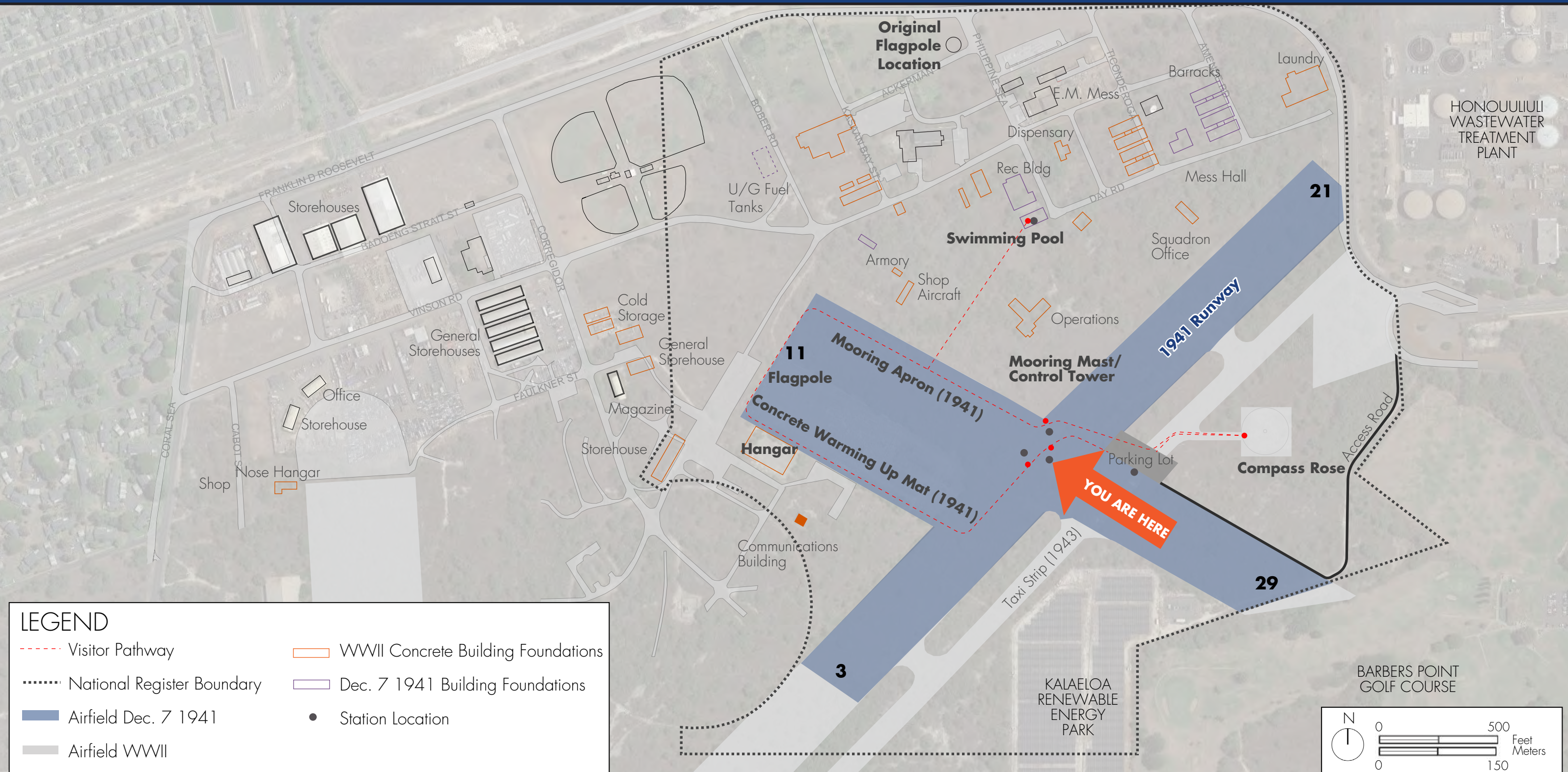
# Station 3







# Marine Corps Air Station, Ewa Historic Battlefield



## Station 3

Although the Japanese attack caused considerable damage to installations, machinery, tents, and buildings, the Ewa Field runway received only minor damage that was repaired quickly. As a result, aircraft from other bases landed at Ewa Field Air including four U.S. Army P-40s and one P-36 to refuel on December 8th and fighter squadron of 12 aircraft from Wheeler Field were transferred to Ewa because the runways were relatively undamaged.





## The Attack

On December 7, 1941, Japanese aircraft bombed and strafed MCAS Ewa just minutes before attacking Pearl Harbor. Attacking from the northwest approximately two minutes prior to the Pearl Harbor attack, the first group of Japanese Imperial Navy (JIN) Zekes targeted the aircraft parked on the warm-up platform and around the perimeter of the landing areas.

The Commander of Ewa Field, LT COL Claude Larkin, reported that "enemy airplanes approached as low as 20 to 25 feet over the ground, attacking single airplanes with short bursts of gunfire." Based on eyewitness accounts, the First Wave lasted 10 to 15 minutes, enough time for Japanese planes to make eight passes over Ewa Field with the installation suffering casualties as well as the destruction of planes and buildings.



Akagi Map Board Depicting Ewa Field





## The Attack

A second attack came from the east approximately 10-15 minutes after the first, targeting parked aircraft then strafing the camp area, buildings, installations, vehicles, and personnel. The two attacks left many of the aircraft and buildings on fire. The third attack was lighter than the first two due to the Marines' defensive gunfire. Approximately 15 Japanese fighter aircraft of the rear guard flew in from the east, strafing personnel before heading west to rendezvous with the remaining rear guard.



Japanese planes circling crash site, Ewa Plain, December 7, 1941.



Nakajima B5N Kate Torpedo Bombers flying inbound to Pearl Harbor over Lualualei

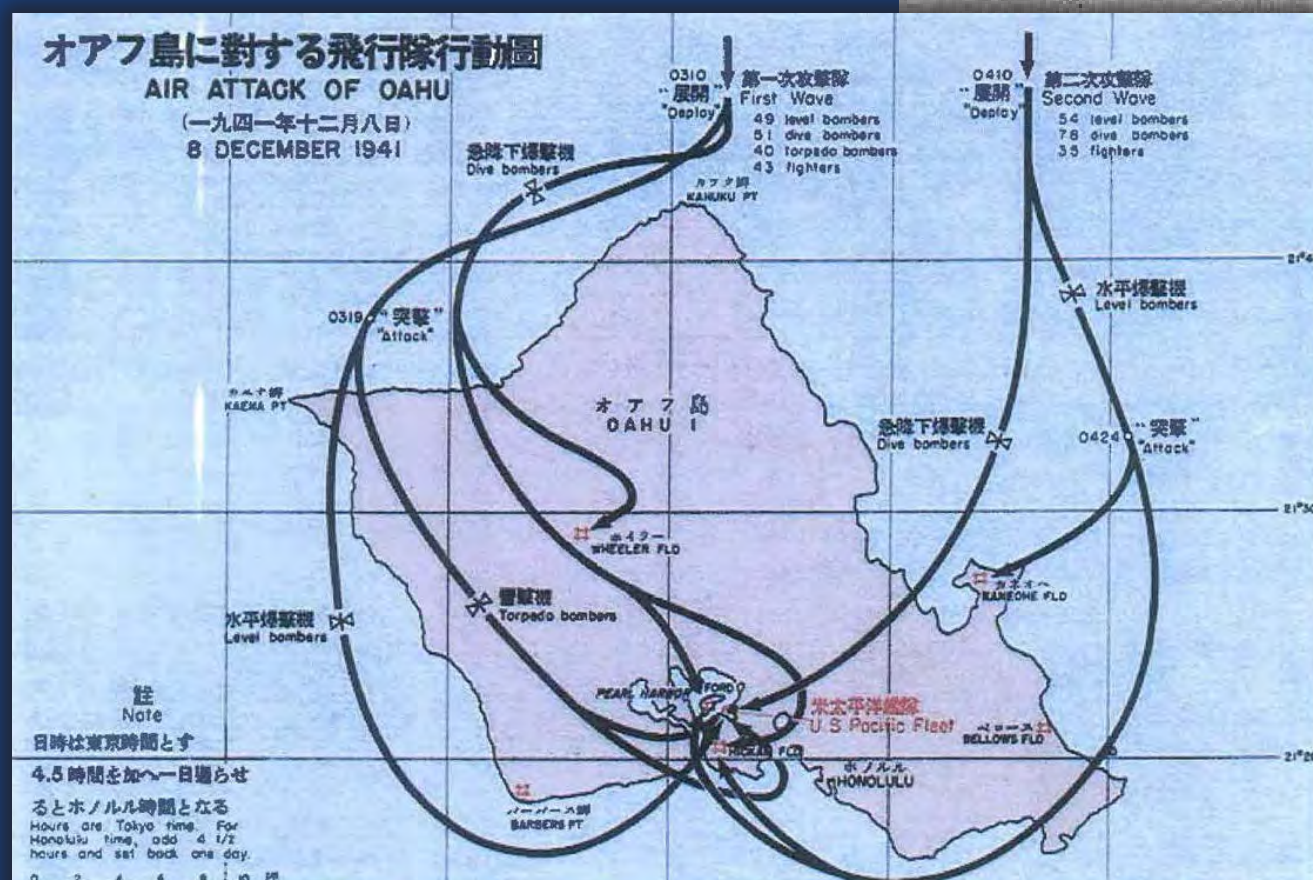


Nakajima B5N Kate Torpedo Bombers flying outbound over burning Ewa Field and yet to be constructed NAS Barbers Point

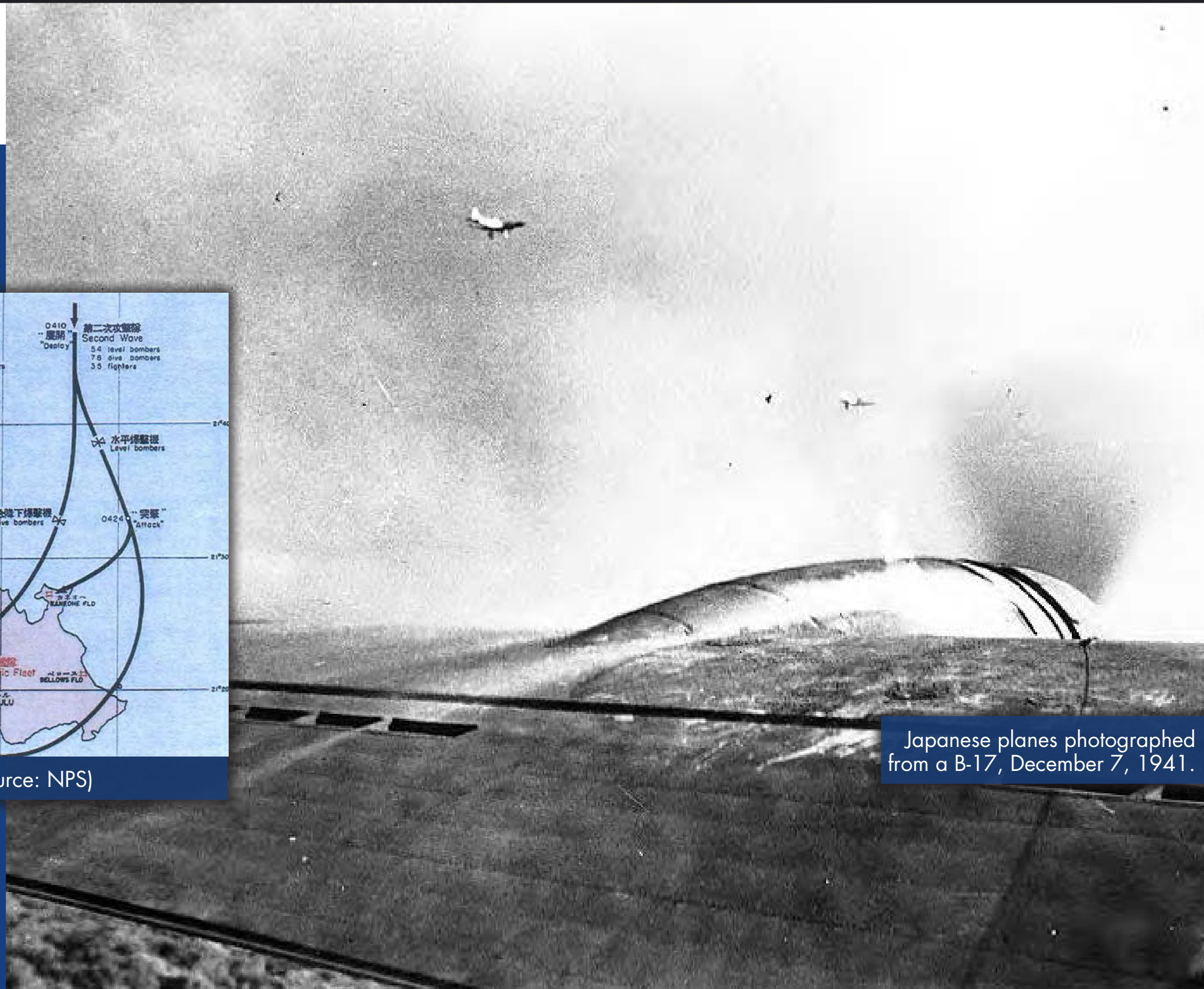
Downed Japanese Aircraft



## The Attack



Map of Japanese Attack Routes (Source: NPS)



Japanese planes photographed from a B-17, December 7, 1941.





# Marine Corps Air Station, Ewa Historic Battlefield



View towards Wai'anae Mountains and direction of first wave



## Attacking from the Air

Attacking from the northwest approximately two minutes prior to the Pearl Harbor attack, the first group of Japanese Imperial Navy Zekes targeted the aircraft parked on the warm-up platform and around the perimeter of the landing areas. The First Wave lasted 10 to 15 minutes, enough time for Japanese planes to make eight passes over Ewa Field with the installation suffering casualties as well as the destruction of planes and buildings.





# Marine Corps Air Station, Ewa Historic Battlefield



View towards Pearl Harbor and direction of second wave



## Attacking from the Air

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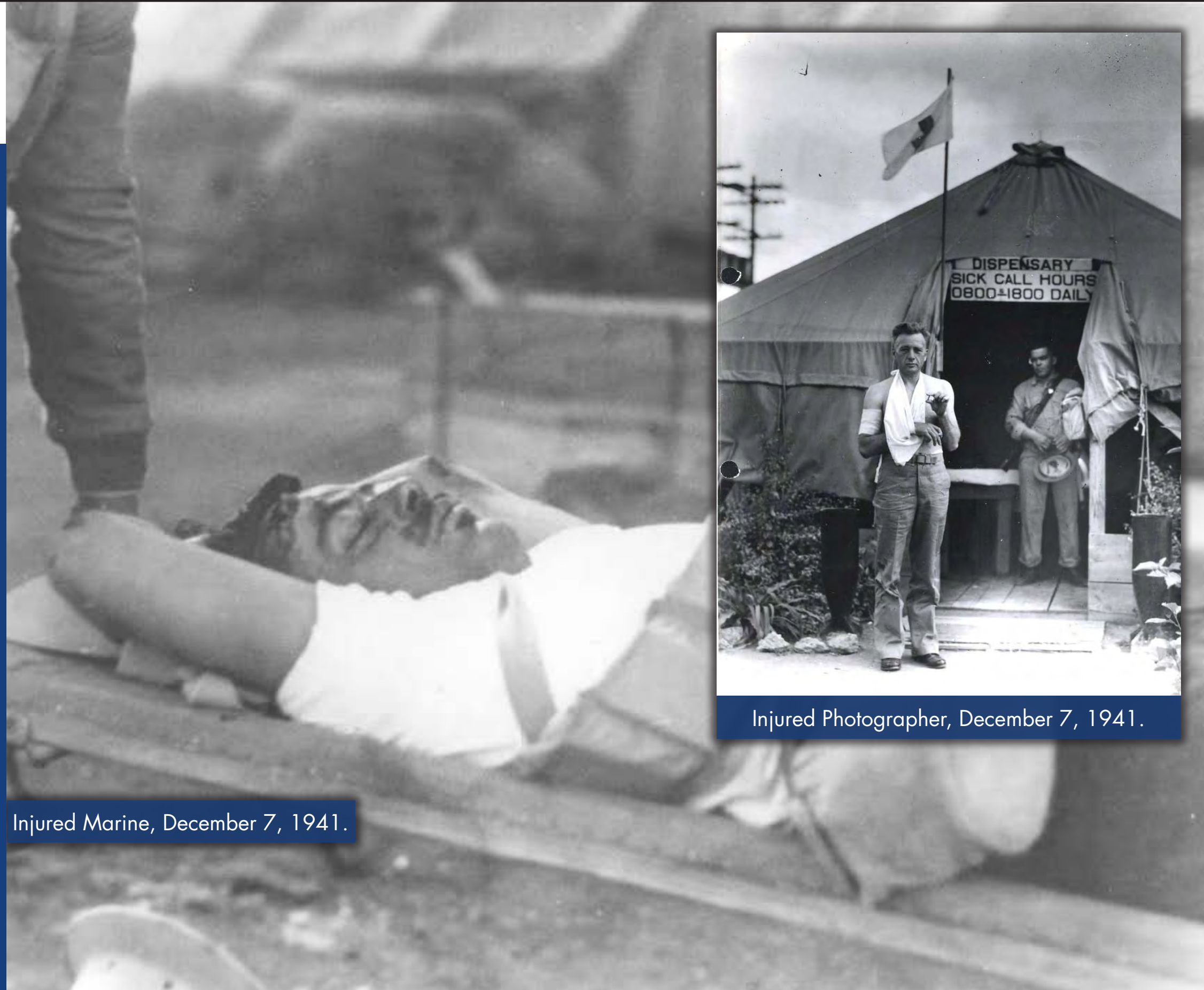




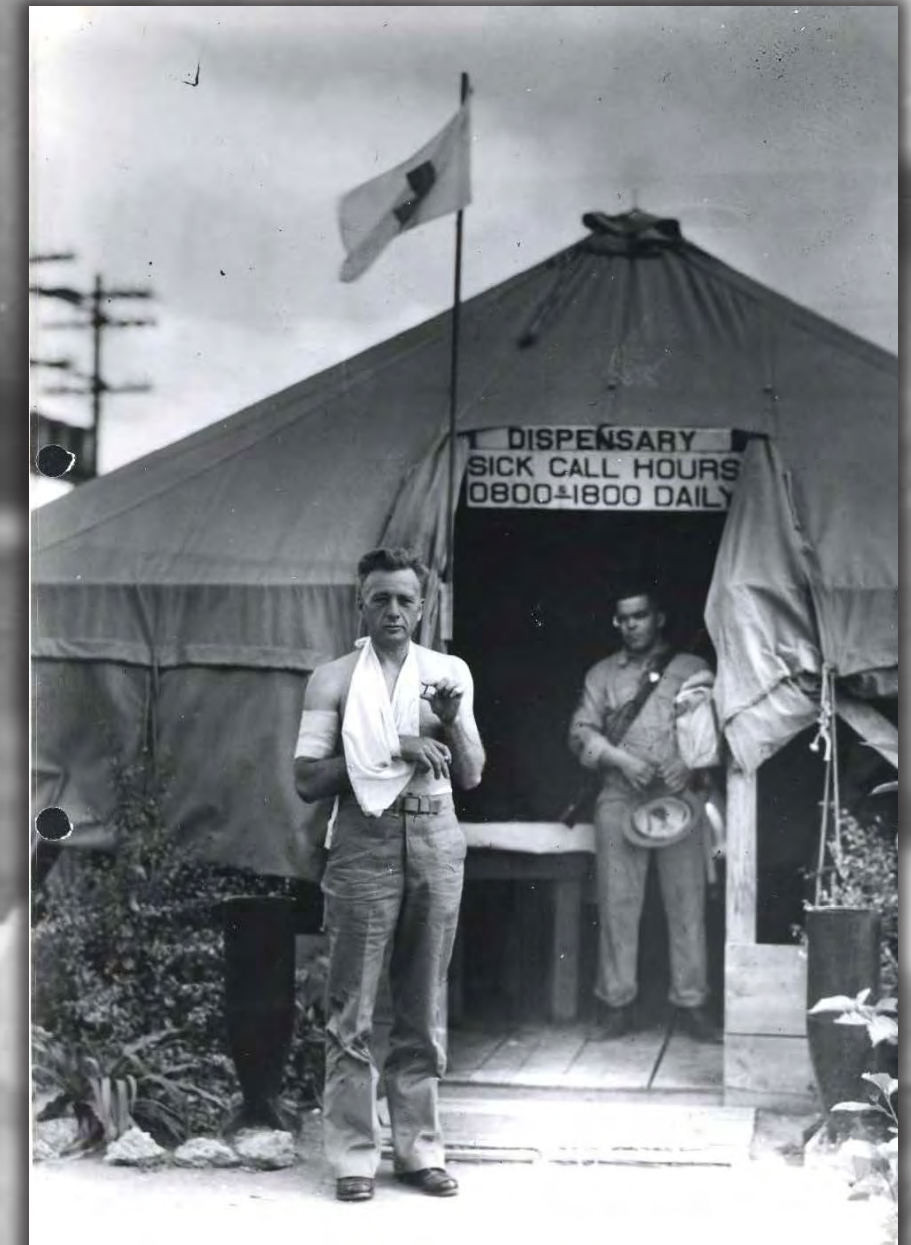
## Aftermath of the Attack

As a result of the attacks, many of the aircraft were ablaze and buildings and tents, including the Dispensary and Sick Bay canvas tent had also caught fire. Despite this, the medical officer and his assistants continued to care for wounded throughout the attack with the most seriously wounded evacuated to the Ewa Plantation Hospital or other medical facilities on the island.

Because the runway received only minor damage that was repaired quickly, aircraft from other bases landed at Ewa Field. However, the Japanese attack caused considerable damage to material, installations, machinery, tents, and buildings. Damage to aircraft was extremely heavy owing to the use of explosive incendiary bullets fired from extremely low altitudes; nine Wildcat fighters and 18 Scout Bombers among other aircraft were lost on the ground. While almost all of aircraft at Ewa Field were destroyed, Ewa Marines suffered the lowest percentage of casualties in the area of the attack. Four enlisted men and two civilians were killed while 13 marines, including Lt. Col. Larkin and Captain Mil Haines, the Assistance Group Engineering Officer, and the base photographer were wounded.



Injured Marine, December 7, 1941.



Injured Photographer, December 7, 1941.





## Aftermath of the Attack

According to a Marine history of the battle: "Contrary to the expectations of the Japanese, the reaction of the Marines at Ewa station was not one of hopeless discouragement at the beating their field had taken at the hands of the enemy. On the contrary, the reaction was one of bitter anger, and revengeful outraged justice. The energy and ambition of the entire force was devoted to the building up of their outfit against the day when they could take the battle to the enemy grounds and inflict a permanent and overwhelming defeat upon him, in revenge for the reverses they had suffered initially."



SNB Expeditior burning at Ewa



Burned out shell after attack



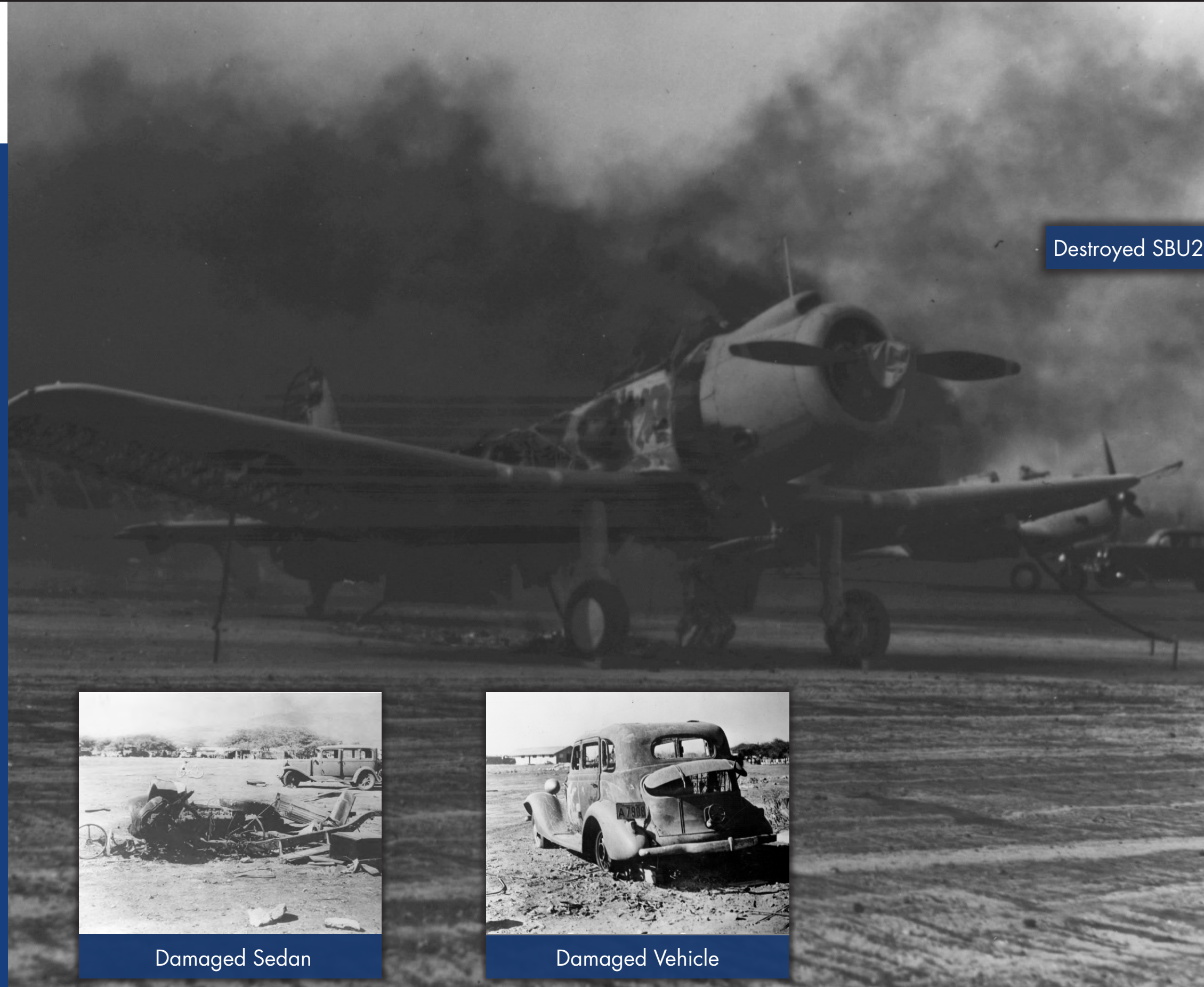
Damaged Ambulance





## Aftermath of the Attack

After the attack, the U.S. military prepared for future attacks from Japan including the possible invasion of the Hawaiian islands. The Marine Corps base at Ewa was transformed into "the hub of Marine Corps aviation in the Pacific war." In the early months of the war, Marine pilots from Ewa Field formed the lead squadrons of America's air effort against Japan.



Damaged Sedan



Damaged Vehicle





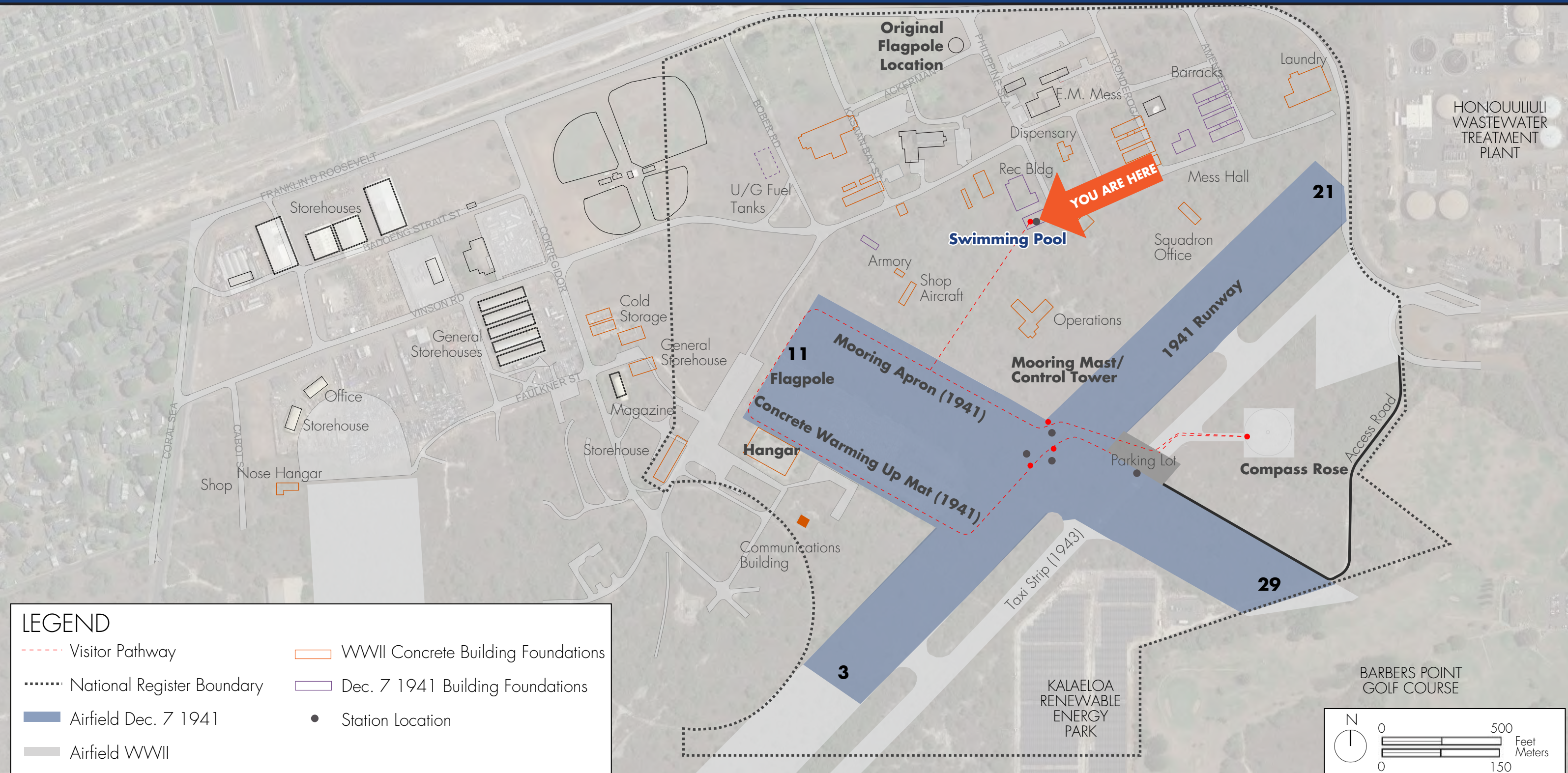
Station 4







# Marine Corps Air Station, Ewa Historic Battlefield



## Station 4

Recreation served as a social and physical outlet from the stress and routineness of daily military life and was encouraged as a way to reduce stress, build skills, bond with fellow soldiers, and encourage fitness. The information provided here focuses on how recreation was integrated into the soldier's life. Also located in this area of the base were barracks, mess halls, dispensary and other structures and where a large portion of a soldier's daily life took place.





# Marine Corps Air Station, Ewa Historic Battlefield



## Life at Ewa Field

In December 1941, Ewa Field included clusters of wooden buildings and canvas tents supporting housing, mess hall, dispensary, recreation, and other activities that occupied the enlisted soldier when not in training. It is where a large portion of a soldier's daily life occurred whether it be to help operate the installation efficiently or personal time and time spent socializing with their fellow servicemen.





# Marine Corps Air Station, Ewa Historic Battlefield



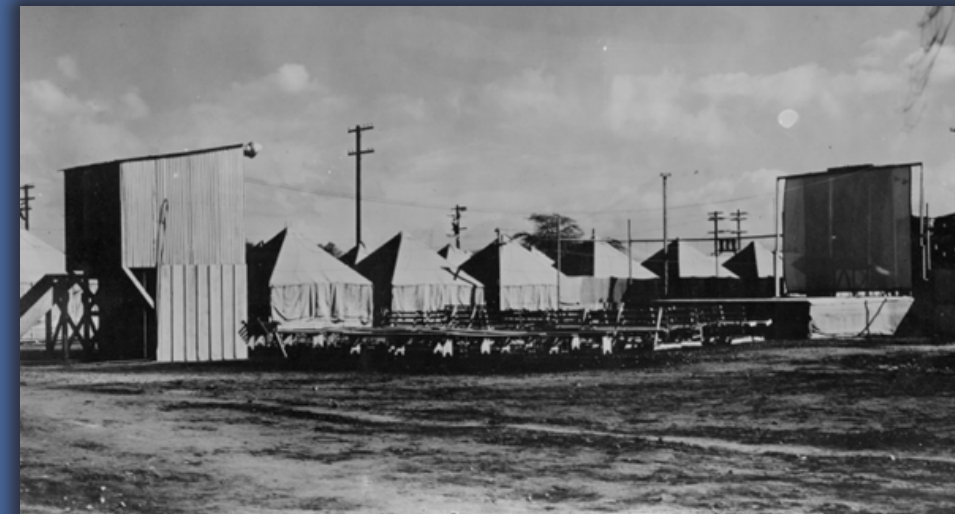
Ewa Field Camp Area (February 1941)



Recreation Building



Officers' Mess Hall



Movie Arena



Enlisted Mens' Mess

Credit: National Archives

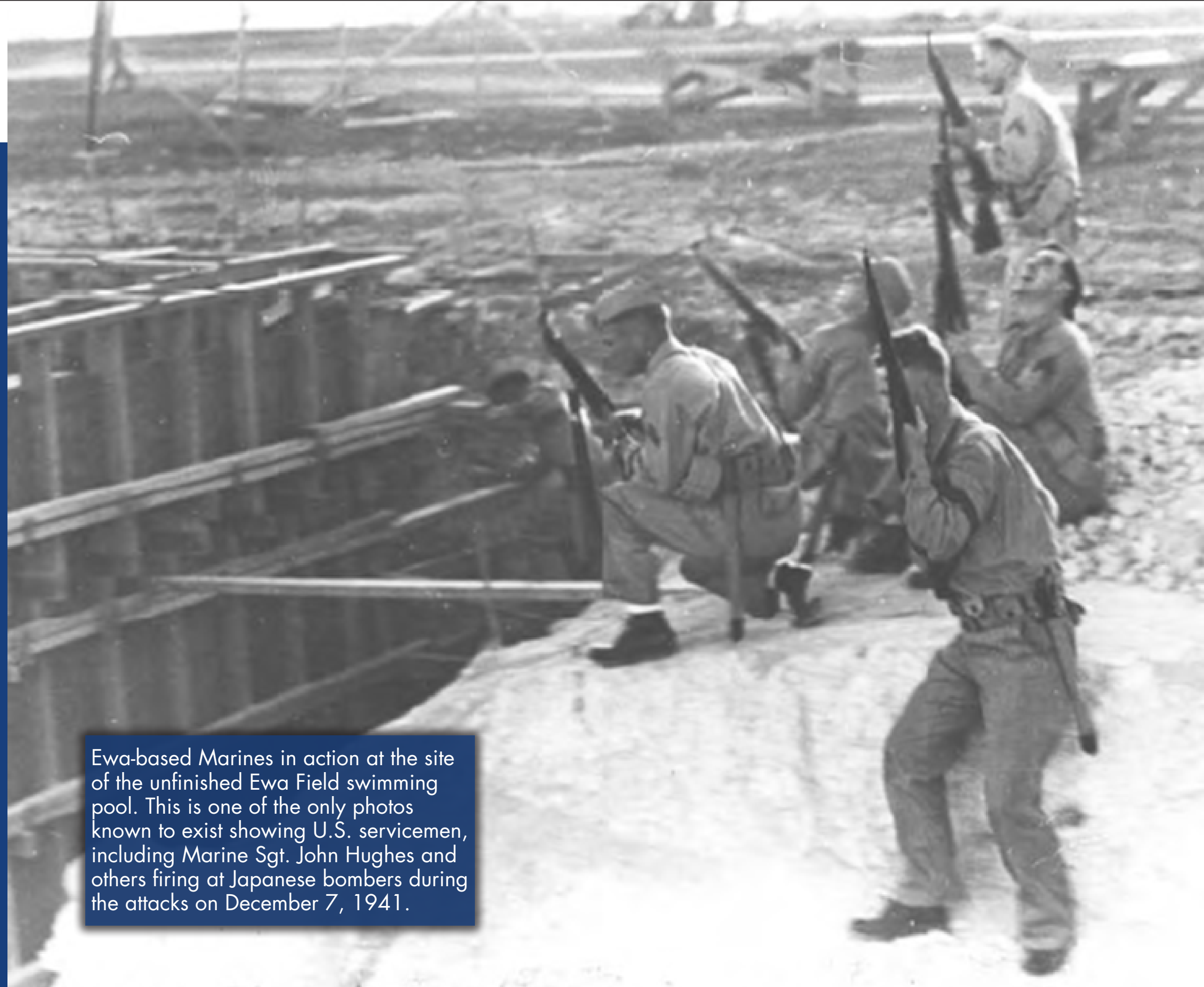
## Life at Ewa Field





## Swimming Pool

Recreation served as a social and physical outlet from the routineness of daily military life and the stress of training and preparing for battle. By December 1941, a recreation hall and portable boxing ring were added to the list of camp amenities. Excavation for an outdoor enlisted men's swimming pool was completed and construction underway in the south-central part of the camp south of the intersection of Philippine Sea Road and Vinson. On December 7, 1941, the concrete of the swimming pool was not yet poured, only the forming boards were set up in the excavated pool area.



Ewa-based Marines in action at the site of the unfinished Ewa Field swimming pool. This is one of the only photos known to exist showing U.S. servicemen, including Marine Sgt. John Hughes and others firing at Japanese bombers during the attacks on December 7, 1941.





## Swimming Pool

Marines could not defend the base while under the cover of buildings because of the limited visibility. One location that provided visibility and which afforded some protection was the swimming pool. It was a key cover and concealment feature for the Marines as it afforded some measure of protection. It also served as a point of observation and field of fire as it offered a vantage point for observing and targeting Japanese aircraft.

Many marines used the wooden framework (for the concrete pour) for protection while also having a view of the sky in all directions (under construction). The gathering of marines in this area near the Privately-Owned Vehicle (POV) parking area was an objective for Japanese pilots. One of the few photographs of the battle action shows several Marines poised with rifles along the pool's wooden formwork.



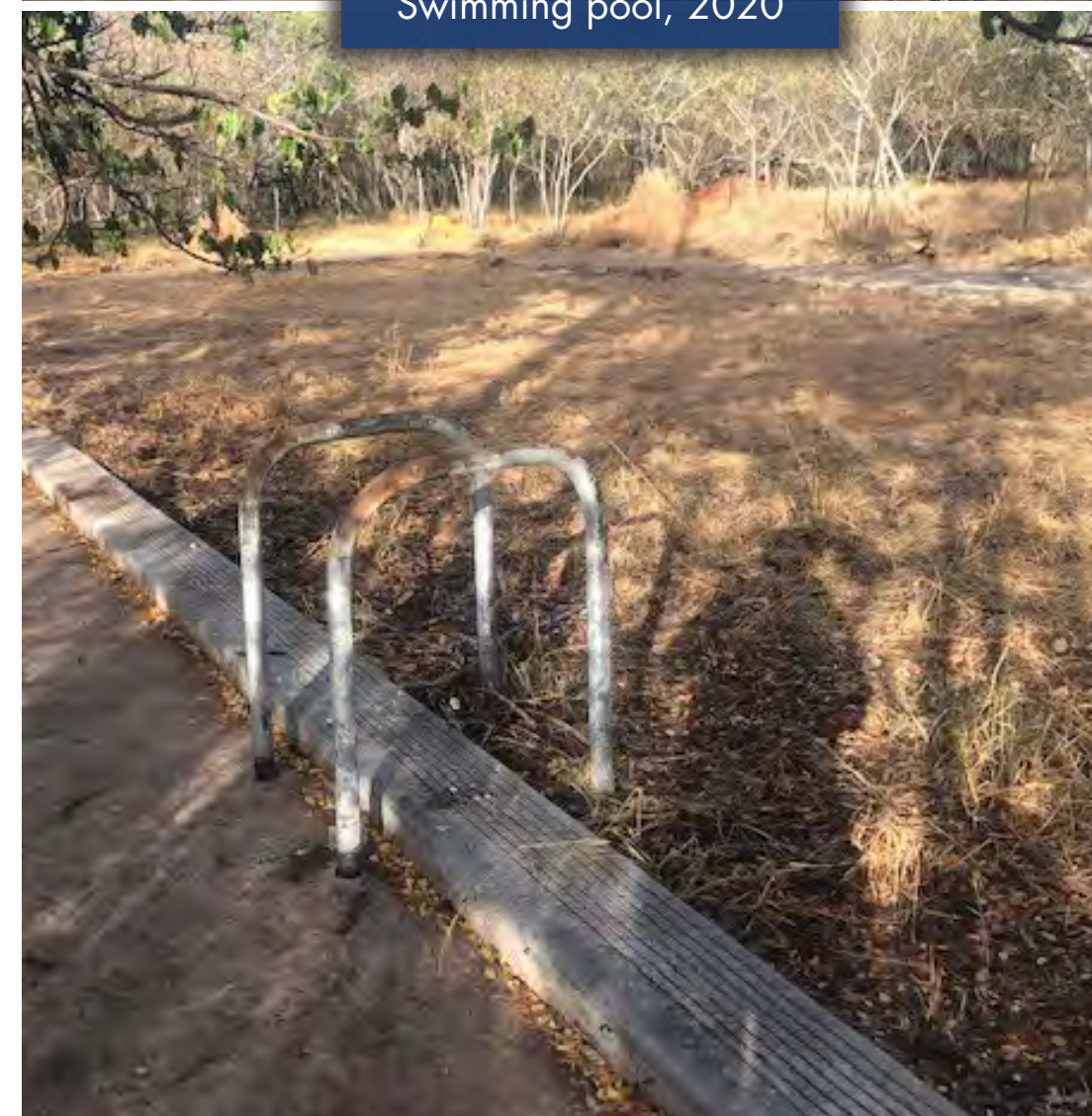
Swimming pool, 1941



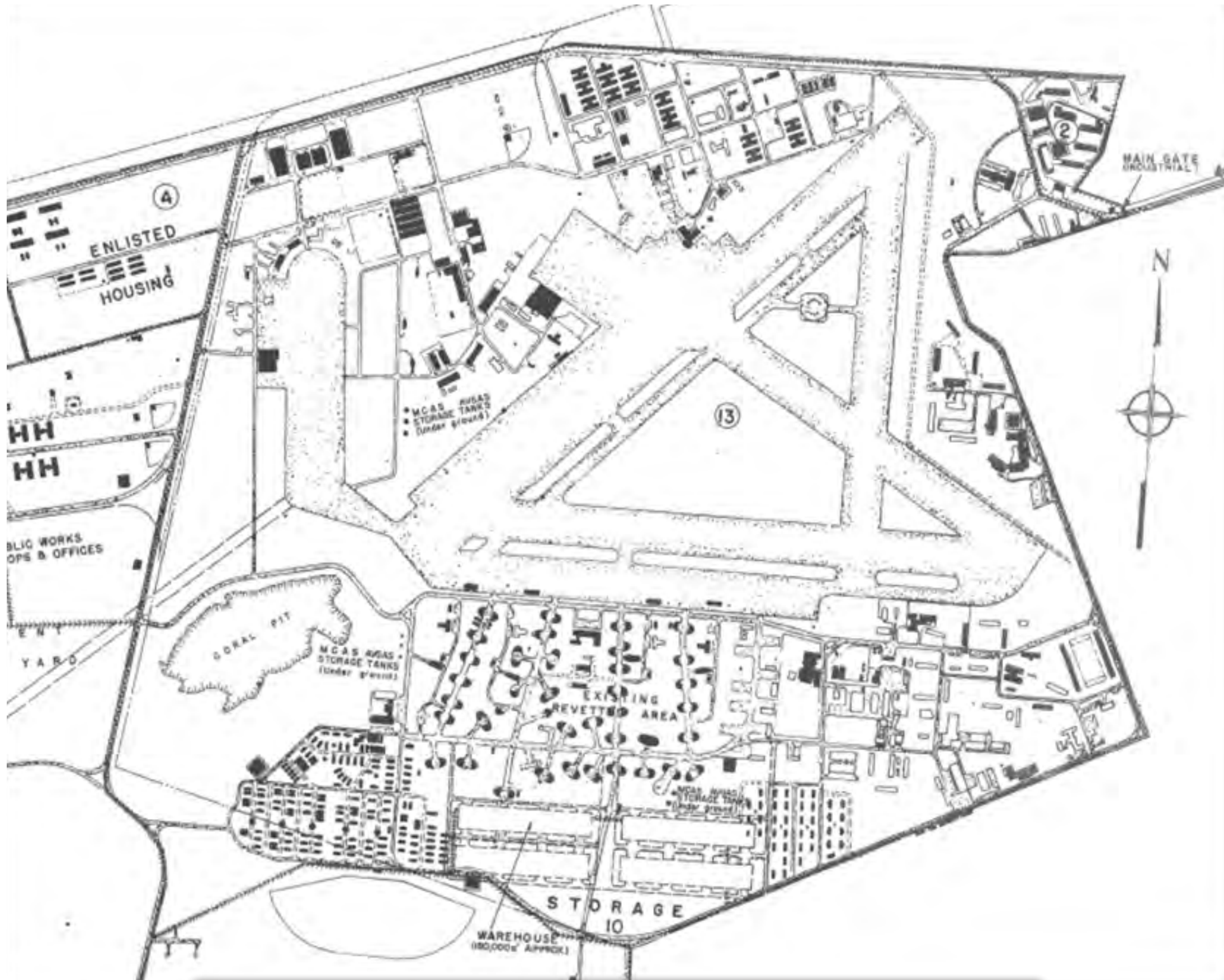
Swimming pool, 1942



Swimming pool, 2020







## The Story Ends

Following the end of World War II, most activities at MCAS, Ewa quickly demobilized, however, the base continued to support actions on islands in the Pacific and in China where assistance was provided to the Nationalist Chinese. Units from Ewa also assisted in the Berlin Airlift. The global Military Air Transport Services Squadron continued at MCAS Ewa until 1949.

In February 1949, 14th Naval District Headquarters announced the upcoming closure of MCAS Ewa. MCAS Ewa's short runways were unable to accommodate the latest Marine jet aircraft and its proximity to Barbers Point runways led, in part, to the closing of the station. At the time, there were 1,800 marines stationed at Ewa and 269 civilian employees worked there.

In March 1949, naval air activities in Hawaii were consolidated at Naval Air Station (NAS) Barbers Point and MCAS Ewa was officially deactivated on June 18, 1952. MCAS Ewa facilities were used by NAS Barbers Point for interim military housing and recreational activities until ca, 1960.

NAS Barbers Point General Development Plan showing former MCAS Ewa (1953).





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