

# ORIGINS OF MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP LEJEUNE

## Evolution of Amphibious Assault and Base Defense Missions

The Marine Corps is one of the several armed services that constitute the Armed Forces of the United States. Established by the Continental Congress in 1775, and re-established in 1798 after the American Revolution with a total of 83 officers and enlisted men, the Marine Corps had evolved by the twentieth century into a distinctive branch of the military with over 170,000 personnel that fulfills the need for a general-purpose, task-organized, amphibious force in readiness. The Navy and the Marine Corps, together with the Coast Guard in time of war, form the naval branch of the Armed Forces (the other branches are the Army and the Air Force). Although under the direct control of the Secretary of the Navy, the Marine Corps remains a separate military service with its own specific roles and missions. The Corps is assigned "the missions of seizure and defense of advanced naval bases, as well as land operations incident to naval campaigns," provides security to the ships and shore stations of the U.S. Navy, and is primarily responsible for the "development of amphibious warfare doctrines, tactics, techniques, and equipment employed by landing forces."

Prior to World War II the missions of the Marine Corps had included the second task mentioned above, the detachment of security units to the ships and shore stations of the U.S. Navy, plus expeditionary duty in support of the State Department and cooperating with the Army in protracted land campaigns. As part of the first task, Marines were to defend the Navy's far-flung advance bases in conjunction with the Navy's plans for defending U.S. territorial possessions and other "interests" in the Pacific and Atlantic-Caribbean regions. The concept of the Marine Corps as an advance base defense force therefore emerged between 1900 and 1917, mainly from a conscious decision by Marine Corps leaders to tie the future of the Corps to a mission of importance to the Navy, and the Navy's reluctance to "depend upon the small, overextended, and uncooperative U.S. Army to defend [its forward] bases."

The development of amphibious assault doctrine also began to emerge during the early years of the twentieth century. Amphibious assault would involve sending in Marines to seize a designated area in order to establish advanced bases for subsequent naval and land campaigns. This approach was thought to be especially important in the Pacific region, where Japan had emerged as a substantial naval power and potential threat—a contingency for which the Navy began to prepare by drafting an elaborate plan of war, known as War Plan ORANGE. By 1920 the Navy had determined that all of its future development would proceed in accordance with War Plan ORANGE, and it strongly recommended that the Marine Corps be prepared to launch—at short notice—an expeditionary force from the West Coast for a naval campaign in the Pacific. Although the Pacific was generally regarded as the Marines' first priority, the Navy also recommended that the Marine Corps establish a similar force on the East Coast for Atlantic and Caribbean contingencies.



Lieutenant General John A. Lejeune (1867-1942), a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy and Commandant of the Marine Corps from 1920 to 1929, was an early proponent of the amphibious assault plan. In 1921 he directed that all planning, field exercises, equipment development, and officer education would be guided by Operation Plan 712, the Marine Corps version of the Navy's War Plan ORANGE and the first rudimentary handbook on amphibious assault doctrine. General Lejeune reorganized the Corps to reflect its new wartime mission, and ordered substantial improvements in training for the seizure by amphibious assault and defense of advanced naval bases, in addition to general education for officers and troops.

Once the idea of seizing and defending advance bases had been more or less accepted among the Marine Corps leadership, debate centered on the issue of how exactly to carry out an amphibious assault. At that time a successful amphibious landing on a hostile shore was considered to be almost impossible. World War I had provided few successful examples of such operations, so the Marine Corps resorted to trial and error in a series of maneuvers and operational exercises—the latter in conjunction with the Navy and occasionally the Army—between 1921 and 1941. Many lessons were learned in these exercises, but it was very difficult for the Marines to implement them because of decreased defense spending in the 1920s and 1930s, caused by widespread economic malaise and isolationist sentiment throughout the country, and because of limited manpower, mainly due to the diversion of its expeditionary units to Asia and Central America on behalf of the State Department. As a result of the exercises and continued refinement, by the early 1930s Marine Corps doctrine was committed to the new primary mission of amphibious operations in support of the fleet, which General Lejeune considered to be the *raison d'être* of the Corps, but there had been very few opportunities for the Corps to put their mission into actual practice.

With the return of its units from China and Nicaragua in the early 1930s, the Marine Corps took advantage of the opportunity to integrate its expeditionary forces into the fleet's organizational structure. This created a more cohesive organization united under the newly adopted doctrine of amphibious warfare. This integration in 1933 solidified the Marines' existing relationship with the Navy and also replaced the old expeditionary force with a new command known as the Fleet Marine Force (FMF). The creation of the FMF marked a turning point in amphibious development, because with it "the Marine Corps acquired the tactical structure necessary to carry out its primary wartime mission[:] to serve the fleet by seizing advance bases for naval operations, and, once captured, to occupy and defend these bases." Between 1933 and the entry of the United States into World War II in 1941, the Navy and Marine Corps prepared jointly and with unprecedented vigor to fight an amphibious war.

## The U.S. Prepares for War and Marine Barracks New River Is Established

### *Toward War: Marine Corps Mobilization 1939-1941*

In response to the rising tension in international politics during the 1930s, the United States began moving from a peacetime status to a state of increased military preparedness, despite a strong current of isolationist sentiment. By late 1939 the onset of war in Europe and further deterioration in international affairs



elsewhere so alarmed the Roosevelt administration that the President placed the country in a state of limited emergency. But it was not until 1940, when Germany invaded Scandinavia, France, and the Low Countries, that the U.S. Congress finally authorized a two-ocean navy and an accompanying naval building program.

Marine Corps strength increased accordingly. President Roosevelt had authorized an increase to 25,000 enlisted men in 1939, and in the fall of 1940 he approved the recall of Marine Corps retirees and the mobilization of Reservists, which added another 15,000 men to the Corps. This early mobilization had little immediate impact on the remainder of the Corps, but the physical plants and staffs of the two Marine Corps

recruit depots, at Parris Island, South Carolina, and San Diego, California, were overwhelmed by the influx of trainees. To keep up with rising numbers of recruits, facilities at both stations were improved and expanded in 1938-39 and 1940.

The national emergency was upgraded to "unlimited" status in May 1941, in response to the worsening global crisis. In mid-1941 the maximum figure for Marine Corps total strength was bumped to 50,000 officers and enlisted. The Navy and Marine Corps soon realized this would be insufficient if the fleet were to prepare for an Atlantic and Pacific war; they requested authorization to expand the Marine Corps to over 150,000. Congress assented and by December 1941 over 65,000 men wore a Marine Corps uniform.

As war escalated in Europe during 1940, the U.S. awakened to the possibility of German attacks against American possessions in the Atlantic and Caribbean, and, worse, an attack against the U.S. itself. As a result, in early 1941 the FMF was reorganized, expanding the 1st and 2nd Marine Brigades into the 1st and 2nd Marine Divisions (MarDiv), to be quartered on the East and West coasts, respectively; the 1st and 2nd Marine Air Wings (MAW) and the defense battalions rounded out the FMF. The 2nd MarDiv and 2nd MAW operated out of Marine Corps facilities at San Diego, but on the East Coast there was no facility, including the Marine training centers in Quantico, Virginia, and Parris Island, South Carolina, remotely capable of accommodating the 1stMarDiv and its complementary air wing.

The German threat, increasing mobilization, and the space limitations at Parris Island and Quantico all underscored the need for one large East Coast Marine base that could serve as a training center for approximately 15,000 men. Furthermore, at that time the Army-Navy Joint Board (predecessor of the Joint Chiefs of Staff) still assumed that joint Marine Corps and Army amphibious forces would be needed if the U.S. were called upon to liberate its European allies. The Corps would need an operational staging area of its own, but Parris



President Franklin D. Roosevelt delivers a wartime radio address.

Island and Quantico were already overcrowded and too small to serve this purpose. The need for a new Marine base was critical, and haste was required.

## Marine Barracks New River

### *Selection of a Site*

In the summer of 1940 then Major General Thomas Holcomb, Marine Corps Commandant, ordered Major John C. McQueen to "select a pilot . . . get a plane . . . and find us a training center." Within a month McQueen and his pilot, Captain Verne McCaul, embarked on an aerial survey that would ultimately cover the Atlantic and Gulf coasts from Norfolk, Virginia, to Corpus Christi, Texas. As they circled over the Onslow County coast, they saw below them 14 miles of undeveloped beach interrupted only by Brown's inlet—the only remaining beach on the East Coast, it was determined, where two divisions could be landed abreast and move inland. Flying up the New River, the vast acreage behind the beach showed evidence of some cultivation and unsurfaced roads, but was mostly forest, bereft of any large amount of urban or industrial development other than the small town of Jacksonville. It was an ideal area for training, maneuvering large formations, artillery firing, and the construction of a major facility. Because of the generally underdeveloped and underpopulated character of the area, the land was available and inexpensive. The area also met most of the technical site selection criteria established by the Corps. It held access to deep water ports and was an area at least 10 miles square with minimal human habitation that was free of interference from aircraft, industry, and roads. Landing beaches were available, as were "suitable sites . . . for the operation of land and sea planes." With the exception of nearby recreational areas and power sources, the New River area met all the criteria.

In spite of a long history of Euroamerican settlement in the area, much of the land for the new Marine base lay undeveloped in 1940. The area was flat and generally covered with oak-pine forests punctuated by small fields, creeks, marshes, and swampy areas. The New River, which divided the base roughly in half, along with numerous creeks draining into the river, several bays, and 14 miles of ocean frontage, offered excellent opportunities to practice amphibious warfare. The area encompassed 174 square miles (approximately 110,000 acres), of which about one-fourth (26,000 acres) was covered with water.

General Holcomb then named a board of senior officers headed by Colonel Julian C. Smith to follow up on McQueen's recommendations. They concurred with the findings and the recommendation was passed to the Navy. On 30 December 1940 Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox (the namesake of Camp Lejeune's Camp Knox) approved the site selection for the East Coast divisional training center at New River. Major McQueen and Captain McCaul received Letters of Commendation for having found and recommended the New River area for the training site.



Henry Weil's Lodge at French Creek. Hunting and fishing camps developed throughout Onslow County during the late nineteenth century. Some wealthy visitors, such as Weil, established seasonal homes in the county.



The Pearson House, formerly located near the town of Marines, was a typical example of the homesteads located in the area taken over for the development of the Marine Barracks.



Understanding the Marines' need, President Roosevelt responded quickly and in February 1941 authorized an initial outlay of \$1.5 million for the survey and purchase of the tract. Congress passed the Fifth Supplemental National Defense Appropriations Act on 5 April 1941, which authorized \$14,575,000 for the base's construction.

### Development Begins

Marine Barracks New River was formally established on 1 May 1941 (the base's official birthday), but construction of base facilities had begun the previous month. The base's thick pine forests, dense underbrush, swamps, and hot, humid climate made it difficult to develop, not to mention unpleasant to inhabit. The vegetation, insects, and snakes reminded the Marines of the 1st MarDiv, who were initially assigned to the base, of a jungle, and one officer reportedly grumbled that after training here "[the] division . . . won't be fit for anything but jungle warfare," rather than the amphibious assaults for which they were training. Of course, this statement proved both ironic and prophetic, for by the summer of 1942 it had been determined that Marines would go to the Pacific, where they fought under conditions somewhat similar to those encountered at New River. Indeed, at Guadalcanal another Marine was quoted as saying, "If this place had more snakes, it would be just like New River."

From April through October 1941 the federal government acquired land in 14 separate transactions, including condemnations. More than 600 families, most of whom lived on small tobacco farms, had to be relocated from the property. This caused some discontent among the local populace, but overall the land acquisition proceeded quickly. Each of the 14 parcels was assigned a letter designation, A through N. Parcels A (Tent Camp, later Camp Geiger), B (Montford Point, later Camp Johnson), and C (Hadnot Point) were purchased in April 1941 and were the first to be developed.

In late summer 1941 the Marine Corps also acquired 8,000 acres of land on the southern bank of the Neuse River near the small community of Havelock, located about 18 miles from both New Bern and Morehead City, to construct for East Coast aviation the counterpart to the division training center at New River. The site was known by its geographic place name of Cherry Point. Its first expected occupant, the 1st MAW, however, deployed from Quantico during December 1941 for the West Coast before the base was commissioned as Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Cherry Point, on 20 May 1942.

Marine Barracks New River provided the Marine Corps for the first time with an area large enough to train a division, under conditions as realistic as



No. 69 Marine Barracks  
New River, N.C.  
31 October 1941  
Area 4, Subline of Service Road and  
17th Street, Loading South West  
Regimental Area  
Contract WJ-4750

October 1941, construction activities at the Marine Barracks at full throttle. This image shows road grading and construction in Regimental Area 4 along "J" Street.



No. 88 Marine Barracks  
New River, N.C.  
17 November 1941  
1st TD, Haseb's crew handling clearing  
operations at Airport.  
Regimental Area  
Contract WJ-4750

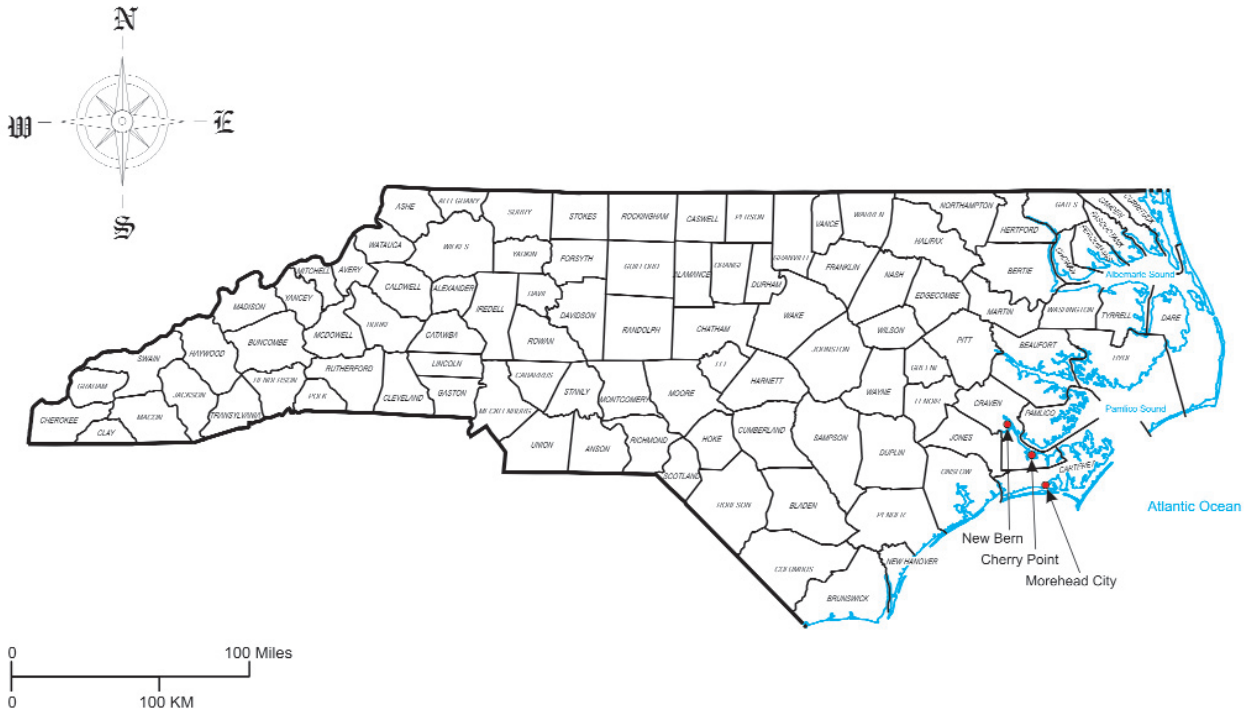
November 1941 land clearing activities in the area of the "airport," Peterfield Point.

The Onslow Recreation Center, also known as the Onslow Rod and Gun Club, was an existing structure that was used as by the Marines as an Officers' Club.



December 1941 image of an African-American cemetery located within the periphery of the Marine Barracks. Several such cemeteries existed in the area at the time of the base's construction. Some graves were moved, while others, such as the Verona Loop Cemetery, were left in situ.

possible, in the general amphibious warfare skills that were sure to be needed in a global conflict.



Locations of Camp Lejeune, New Bern, Morehead City, and Cherry Point. A Marine Corps Air Station was commissioned at Cherry Point on 20 May 1942.

### *Beginnings of a Base*

In its preliminary planning for the new training base, the Marine Corps assigned to New River the 1st MarDiv, four defense battalions, and one amphibian battalion, in addition to a permanent battalion of post troops. The Corps also planned to move some specialist training there to relieve pressure at Quantico. Division training activities to be conducted at New River were extensive:

rifle range firing; long-range and anti-aircraft machine gun firing; combat practice firing; anti-aircraft artillery firing; light and medium field artillery firing; seacoast artillery firing; boat and anti-boat gun firing; troop landing operations in surf; maneuvering and training in rubber boats; land and water training with amphibian vehicles; maneuvering and training with artillery and tank lighters; maneuvering and training landing boat crews; ship and boat loading; tank and anti-tank training; parachute troop training; barrage balloon training; infantry and artillery land tactics and maneuvering; beach defense training; and training of hospital units.

The first step in setting up the base was a detailed study of the acquired land to determine the placement of the various training activities. This, too, was accomplished by a board headed by Colonel Julian Smith. In devising the overall site plan for the base, the Marine Corps balanced these activities against the physiographic constraints of the reservation (climate, topography, soil conditions, etc.). Infantry combat and field weapons training and artillery firing required sizable acreage free of obstructions. Boat training needed a sheltered basin near

the ocean, with the capacity to hold the number of landing craft needed to train the division's Marines. Parachute troops and barrage balloon units needed large, open areas well away from the firing ranges or approaches to airfields. And, among all these activities, the attendant industrial, administrative, housing, and hospital facilities had to be placed in such a way that they were convenient without interfering with training.

The study concluded that the large undeveloped area generally east of Sneads Ferry Road lent itself well to infantry and artillery combat training. Antiaircraft artillery practice could be conducted from the beach, as could seacoast artillery firing at offshore targets. Boat and anti-boat guns could be fired in the New River, which varied in width from one to four miles. Both the ocean frontage and the New River shoreline provided ideal conditions for training in beach defense and landing operations of any scale, with or without supporting fire. Courthouse Bay needed to be dredged but would otherwise provide an excellent site for the main boat basin. The airfield and landing zone to be used by the parachute troops would be on the western side of the New River, along with a 10,000-man tent camp, later known as Tent Camp No. 1, for housing the 1st MarDiv until their permanent quarters were finished.

The principal housing and administration areas of the base were located at the upper end of the reservation and along the river because this area was most accessible to the existing railroad and highways, and it benefited from the breezes blowing in from the river. The eastern bank of the river between Wallace Creek and French Creek was selected for the site of the post headquarters, division headquarters, and regimental barracks groups. This area, Hadnot Point, was centrally located with respect to the rest of the base, and close to the training areas; it had relatively good drainage, attractive views, and was comparatively free of mosquitoes.

Since the Navy was charged with providing civil engineering support to the Marine Corps, the Navy's Bureau of Yards and Docks was tasked with planning, using Corps criteria, and contracting the construction of Marine Barracks New River. The Bureau managed the design and construction of the base under the supervision of the Liaison Officer and with the approval of the Commandant and the Quartermaster of the Marine Corps. Lieutenant Colonel William Pendelton Thomason (W.P.T.) Hill, acting as Liaison Officer and also the barracks' first Commanding Officer, represented the Corps on site and maintained close contact with the Commandant via the Quartermaster. Hill and the Quartermaster, Brigadier General Seth Williams, were instrumental in the layout and design of the New River base, and much of Camp Lejeune's built environment still bears the stamp of their influence. It was Hill, for instance, who proposed the Neocolonial style of architecture that prevails at Camp Lejeune.

The Bureau of Yards and Docks contracted with the Carr and J.E. Greiner Company of Durham, North Carolina, and Baltimore, Maryland, for architectural and engineering services. Construction was completed by three firms from Charlotte, North Carolina: Goode Construction Corporation; Blythe Brothers Company; and the Harrison-Wright Company.

The Marines inventoried and evaluated for potential use the buildings and structures acquired with the land, and as a result several became temporary



The Construction Officer inspects the progress of buildings at Marine Barracks New River.



LtCol W.P.T. Hill, first Commanding Officer of Marine Barracks New River (May-September 1941).

quarters and offices for Marine, Navy, and civilian personnel. A small number of barns and other agricultural outbuildings in good condition were used for storing equipment and supplies until facilities could be built. Buildings that were not required were either torn down or used for target practice. In addition, all known burials on the property were relocated either to a "white" cemetery near the present entrance to Camp Johnson, or to a "colored" cemetery along U.S. Route 17 in Verona.

### *Marines Arrive*

During the latter part of April 1941 the first Marines began arriving in the area. They consisted of technicians and specialists from Quantico to help prepare for the pending arrival of additional liaison and barracks personnel. Arriving with them was Quartermaster Clerk (equivalent to today's warrant officer) Hubert G. Bozarth, a highly competent and resourceful young officer who would devote half of his career to the construction and maintenance of the New River base.

On 1 May 1941 Lieutenant Colonel W.P.T. "Pete" Hill was designated as the first Commanding Officer of Marine Barracks New River, and on that date the post was officially established. He had served as a naval aviator in World War I, fought fires in the Navy's mines in Alaska, commanded the Marine Detachment of the American Legation in Peking, China, served as a member of the Roy Chapman Andrews expedition to the Gobi Desert in Mongolia, and conducted a top-secret reconnaissance by submarine of the Japanese-held Mariana Islands prior to World War II. Hill's, and Camp Lejeune's, first headquarters was located in the former Gurganus farmhouse in Tent Camp. On 27 April, however, ground was broken for a headquarters building, Building B-1-3, an SH-9 type wooden storehouse at the corner of 1st and "C" streets in the tent camp. After the remarkably short time period of eight days, the new headquarters building was opened on 8 May, the first building erected on the base and the base's second headquarters. The Gurganus farmhouse was then occupied by the 1st MarDiv, which used it as its first headquarters.

At Montford Point, Quartermaster Sergeant Morris Miller had taken over an abandoned tobacco barn to help accommodate the initial influx of administrative supplies and equipment. This previously unremarkable structure then gained the distinction of having been the "First Base Warehouse." Marines, construction workers, and officials from the Navy and contracting firms converged on the construction site, occupying all available space in the courthouse, Riverview Hotel, and commercial establishments in Jacksonville; former dwellings, schools, and churches; and particularly any structure with a water view, as construction began in earnest.

On 5 May Lieutenant Colonel Arthur D. Challacombe convoyed up from Parris Island with the first significant contingent of Marines, 180 strong, and occupied Walter Simpson's old hotel on Simmons Point. They were there to serve as an advance guard and for fire protection.

### *Phases of Construction*

The initial construction at the Marine Barracks New River occurred in four phases from early 1941 through the end of 1943. During the first phase, April 1941 to September 1942, construction in all of the principal areas of the base was completed or begun, with the exception of the Beach Area. The completed areas



The Gurganus Farmhouse, located in the Tent Camp area, was converted for use as the first base headquarters. It was later used as the headquarters for the 1st MarDiv.



Ground breaking for the construction of Tent Camp, 1941.





included Tent Camp No. 1; the Division Training Area, which housed the regiments; and the naval hospital at Hadnot Point.

Construction of the Tent Camp Area (now known as Camp Geiger) began at the end of April 1941, with the post command established there on 1 May. The 1,000-tent camp was almost complete and ready for use when the Secretary of the Navy and the Commandant of the Marine Corps made their first inspection of the base in July. The 1st MarDiv, for which the camp was built, began arriving in September, and by October the Tent Camp was 98 percent complete. Billeting consisted of tents on wooden platforms secured to wooden frames with associated wood-frame washroom buildings, mess halls, storehouses, and other support facilities. Approximately 6,000 Marines were stationed at the base at that time, most billeted in the Tent Camp.

An extension to the Tent Camp, appropriately named Tent Camp No. 2, was approved in December 1941 after the U.S. entered World War II. Wood and canvas had been rationed as part of the war effort, so the new "tent camp" actually consisted of 667 16-man portable Homosote huts, which were built of paraffin-impregnated particle board panels hung on a wooden frame. By the end of World War II these two camps together held nearly 2,000 tents, huts, and other structures. Similar huts were also erected in a tank battalion camp, along the western edge of the base near U.S. Route 17, and a special camp for the emergency training of Coast Guard personnel and the amphibious warfare training of Marines at Courthouse Bay.

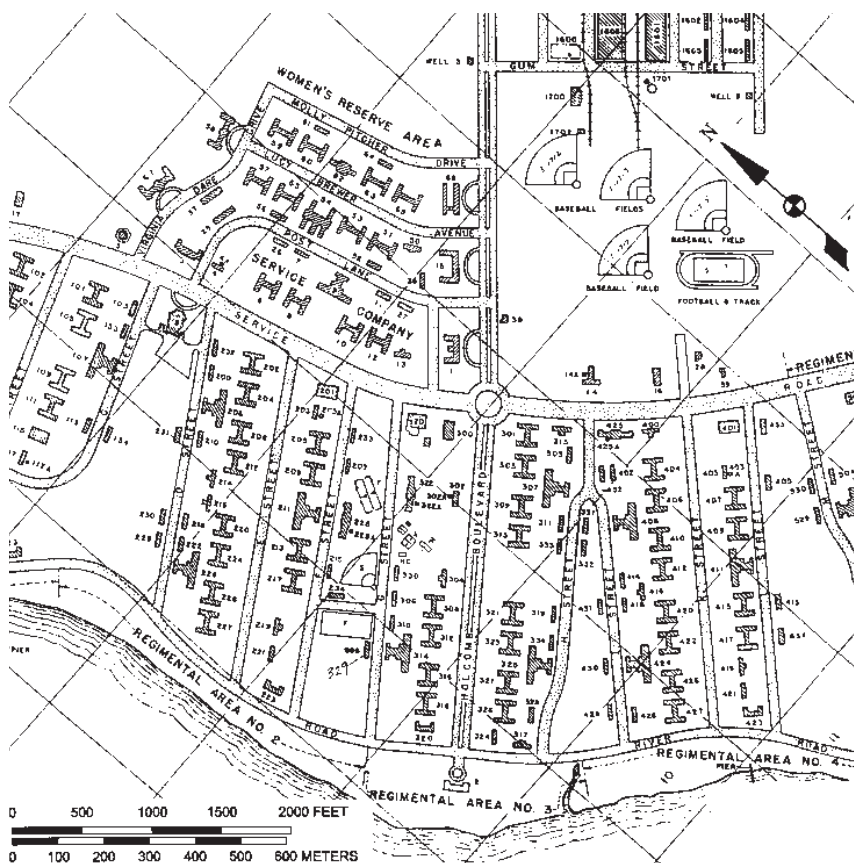
#### *Construction at Hadnot Point*

Planning of the Division Training Area at Hadnot Point commenced in late April 1941. This area was to contain the permanent administrative, housing, and subsistence buildings for the 1stMarDiv. Although the original plans called for six regimental areas, funding was available for only four. After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, a fifth regimental area was approved and added to the southeastern end of the other regimental areas; a barracks area for the post troops was also constructed outside the division area near the new post headquarters building.

The regimental groups of buildings and facilities, each planned to accommodate about 3,000 men, were constructed along the eastern shoreline of the New River. Each regimental group, arranged according to the organizational structure of a Marine regiment, was designed for three battalions, with four companies to each battalion. Twelve two-story, H-plan barracks of concrete, brick, and steel; three mess halls; six battalion storehouses; and an infirmary were provided in each regimental area. In February 1942, 19 platoon-sized barracks of



Tents on platforms at Tent Camp No. 1, 1941.



Map of Hadnot Point area showing Holcomb Boulevard at the center, and Regimental Areas and the New River at the bottom.

frame construction were also built to provide billeting for about 1,400 men, which raised the base's capacity to 42,000 men.

The permanent Post Headquarters and Division Headquarters buildings were also erected in the Hadnot Point area. Division Headquarters (Building 2), a two-story brick building with a centrally located cupola, was located at "Bluff Point," a commanding position overlooking the New River and the point where Holcomb Boulevard (named after Commandant Holcomb) terminated at River Road (now known as Seth Williams Boulevard, named after General Williams). The "command service" facilities included the Post Headquarters (Building 1), post exchange, industrial and supply facilities, and a naval hospital with nurses' quarters and corpsmen's barracks. Most of the command service structures were arranged along the main access road into the base (Holcomb Boulevard) and the Main Service Road (now named McHugh Boulevard after Sergeant Major Thomas McHugh), opposite the regimental areas. The Post Headquarters was built facing Holcomb Boulevard and the parade ground, now W.P.T. Hill Field, with the permanent barracks for the post troops behind it.

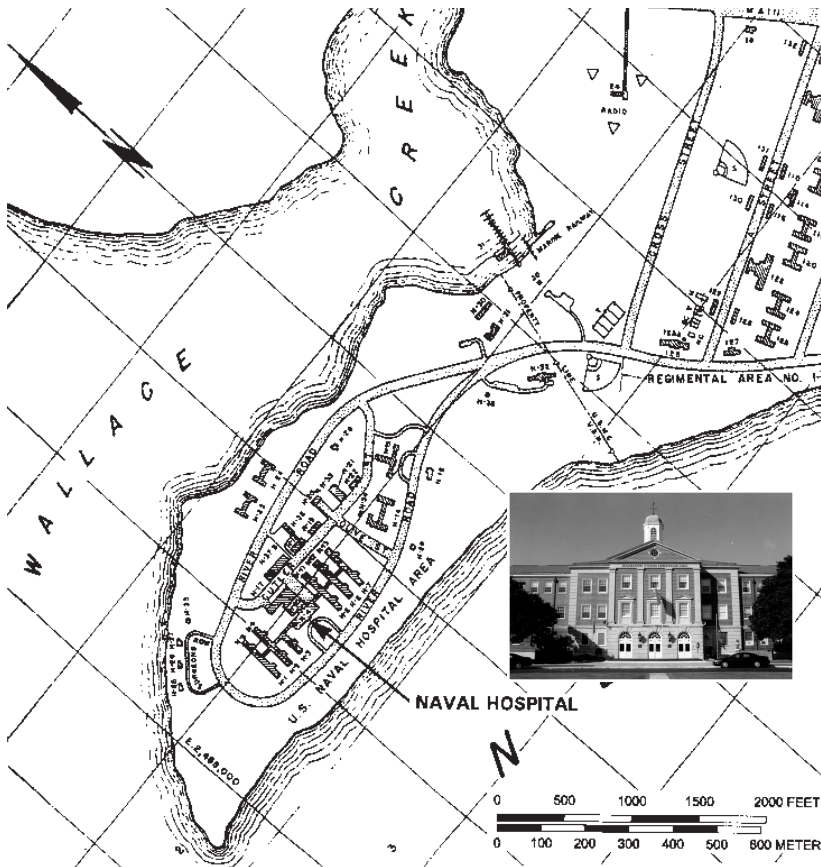


View looking southwest at Building 2, originally the Division Headquarters, now headquarters of the 2d FSSG.

### U.S. Naval Hospital New River

With the establishment of the vast new training base at New River, the Marine Corps realized an urgent need existed for a naval hospital. Construction of a hospital at New River was viewed as "essential" because there were no hospitals within 50 miles of the new base and because several thousand servicemen, civil servants, and their families would soon live in the area. Based on an estimated future population of approximately 18,000 Navy and Marine Corps personnel, the first construction plans in late 1941 called for a temporary building with a 500-bed capacity, but after Pearl Harbor this number was soon revised upward and permanent construction was recommended.

Between 1942 and 1943 the U.S. Naval Hospital New River and its associated structures were constructed on a 144-acre tract on the tip of Hadnot Point where Wallace Creek enters the New River. The hospital was redesignated U.S. Naval Hospital Camp Lejeune on 1 November 1944. From its completion until the late 1980s, when a new naval hospital opened at Paradise Point, this facility served as the main hospital for the entire Marine Corps base. The Command Element, II Marine Expeditionary Forces



Map showing location of Naval Hospital, 1941.

(MEF) Headquarters; 2nd MarDiv; and II MEF Augmentation Command Element currently occupy the former naval hospital.

The main hospital was typical of other hospitals in its design, with two-story wings attached to a three-story central administration and subsistence block (Building H-1). Medical wards were in long rectangular wings, parallel to the main block. New wards could be added as needed, and all were connected to the central block by a continuous covered or enclosed walkway through the middle or at the ends of the wings. This arrangement permitted almost endless expansion of medical facilities.

At New River two wings were added to the original 500-bed hospital construction plan in order to provide space for an additional 120 beds. The entire building and several of the dependent buildings were to be brick with slate roofs, in order to hasten completion of the project. (Because of wartime rationing, wood was reserved for only the highest priority projects, whereas brick was cheap and locally available.)

In addition to the main hospital, a 200-bed temporary dispensary was built at Tent Camp and a 75-bed permanent infirmary was built at the post headquarters. Ultimately, infirmaries, staffed by naval medical personnel, were constructed in each of the regimental areas and outlying areas of the base. These smaller facilities were necessary because Camp Lejeune was so large and the resident activities so dispersed that the main hospital could not serve all of the new station's medical needs.

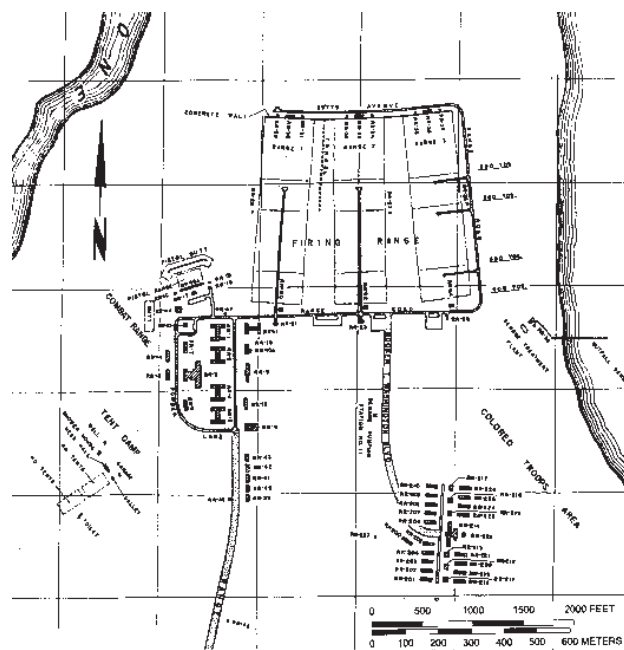


Construction of the hospital, 1941.

### Construction Continues, 1942-1943

The second phase of construction, from October 1942 to March 1943, called for additional contracts totaling about \$1.5 million to complete roads, piers, athletic fields and recreational facilities, plus dredging portions of the New River. The third phase of construction, from March to September 1943, totaled \$5.6 million and provided accommodations for the Women's Reserves (WR); expanded facilities at Montford Point, the separate training and housing facilities for the African-American Marines (Camps Nos. 2, 2A, and 3); and erected a segregated cantonment for African-American Marines at the Rifle Range, as well as a cantonment for the "Colored Labor" Battalion planned to be assigned to the Supply and Industrial Area, located east of the regimental areas along Holcomb Boulevard. This phase also featured construction of 30 "school buildings," mostly long one-story clay tile buildings clad with stucco and trimmed with brick, in the Division Training Area at Hadnot Point and at the Rifle Range, located in the southwestern portion of the base at Stones Bay.

The fourth and final phase of the initial base construction, which extended through the last three months of 1943, provided a variety of utilities installations, erection of the three training pools, and a small cantonment for the Signal School at the Beach Area. The Signal School facilities consisted of three barracks, a mess hall, two school buildings, and a central heating plant.



1943 map of the Stone Bay Rifle Range showing segregated area for "colored troops."



Present-day photo of one of the classroom buildings constructed at the Rifle Range. Due to wartime shortages, these buildings were constructed of stucco and clay-tiles.

By the end of 1943 the majority of World War II construction at Camp Lejeune, both temporary and permanent, was finished. The base had been planned from the beginning with an eye to long-term use, and much of the construction was completed as originally planned. Additions to the original layout raised the capacity of the East Coast Training Center to approximately 42,000 Marines, but because the preponderance of Corps activity was on the West Coast, Camp Lejeune did not reach its capacity until August 1945, after hostilities had ceased. Nevertheless, thousands of Marines received all or part of their training at Camp Lejeune, and the base lived up to its billing as the most complete Marine Corps training base ever built.

## Housing

Housing in the New River area was an immediate concern. No rental properties existed in the Jacksonville area at that time, since housing had not been a pressing need in the community prior to the Marines' arrival. In 1941 the first federally financed, low-cost military housing, later named Midway Park after the victorious Battle of Midway (June 1942), was constructed and made available to military personnel and civilians hired to work at the new base. From funds provided by the Federal Public Housing Administration, the Low Cost Defense Housing Project, which provided 750 frame units, was built just beyond the base's main gate and across State Route 24. Three additions of 464 units were built at Midway Park in 1944, including the units built for African-American residents and known as Piney Green or "Colored War" Housing. By the end of the war 1,164 units were available at Midway Park. Sufficient



Aerial view of officers' quarters at Paradise Point shortly after construction, October 1942.

Houses like this one in Midway Park were offered to civilian employees working at New River in 1944.



housing provisions were a problem throughout the remainder of the war, however, and aside from the construction of officers' quarters at Paradise Point and the opening of two trailer parks on base, there would be no additional federally funded housing projects undertaken at Camp Lejeune until the Korean War. One state-financed project, the Holly Ridge Housing Project, provided an additional 250 units. The Holly Ridge project was

located in the small town of Holly Ridge, which was located across U.S. Route 17 from the site of Camp Davis, the former Army Air Corps World War II antiaircraft artillery training base located in what is now the Greater Sandy Run Area.

With incoming Marine and civilian personnel came dependents and the requirement for schools, which were developed on base. Midway Park provided the first elementary school in the nascent base school system in 1942. In 1944 the next school, the Camp Lejeune High School, now the Russell Elementary School, was built and as served both junior and senior high school. The school was dedicated in honor of the "Devil Dogs," the name of its athletic teams. The third school to join the base system was a segregated school in Piney Green Housing

for dependents of African-American Marines. Another school would not be built on base until the beginning of the Korean War.

## Architectural Character of the New Base

In planning Camp Lejeune, the Marine Corps sought to create a facility that could accommodate every aspect of Marine training during the immediate global crisis and for a long time thereafter. Because of this objective and the short span of time during which the base was planned and constructed, the buildings of Camp Lejeune largely reflect a single design concept. This effect is achieved mainly through the repetition of certain construction materials, building types, and one or two architectural themes throughout the base.

At Camp Lejeune the development of building designs also was influenced by the military's need for functional structures, "the necessity for general economy, the limitations on the use of strategic materials, and the shortage of craftsmen." A shortage of wood for construction and the fact that this was to be a permanent installation led to the selection of strip steel framing and brick as the principal building materials for most of the base. The Navy's Bureau of Yards and Docks awarded a contract in June 1941 to the Truscon Steel Corporation for the framework of the permanent buildings. Brick veneer was chosen over a sprayed cement mixture known as gunite or another type of exterior finish because of the "exceptionally low cost of brick in this vicinity," and its superior insulating value, low maintenance, and generally fireproof qualities. Foundations were made of concrete, and asbestos shingles were used for roofing.

All of these conditions "dictated a simplicity and severity of treatment" that undoubtedly handicapped the creative talents of the architects. As the Marine Corps Liaison Officer Lieutenant Colonel Hill noted, because the construction materials had already been determined, not much choice was left to the architects in the treatment of the buildings in the regimental areas. Hill proposed employing "a simple colonial design and detail pleasing in appearance and low in cost," one that was "familiar in character to many of the early buildings of Tidewater Carolina (Modified Early American)." This proposal was approved, and all the original permanent buildings at the New River base were designed in a "modified early American" style, except in the Industrial and Supply Area, where buildings and structures were built of concrete, concrete block, and wood in a forthrightly utilitarian style.

The largest concentrations of frame buildings were in the housing areas of Paradise Point and Midway Park, both of which were laid out with curvilinear street patterns like those in civilian suburban developments. At Paradise Point officers and their dependents lived in two-story, single-family dwellings



Building 1, Post Headquarters, at the corner of Holcomb Boulevard and Main Service Road.



A two-story BOQ constructed as part of Montford Point Camp No. 2.

along gently curving tree-lined streets. Here the "modified early American" architectural theme took the form of the garrison colonial house type, in which the second floor projects over the first. Midway Park, constructed for officers, enlisted personnel, and civilian workers and their dependents, employed a plainer, "minimal traditional" style of exterior treatment.

Frame buildings and temporary structures were scattered throughout the reservation as needed. Tents and huts prevailed as housing for the troops in the Tent Camp Area and Montford Point, while wood-frame structures were used for subsistence functions (for example, mess halls and washrooms). None of these structures, which were temporary and therefore intentionally plain, possessed any architectural distinction.

For the late 1942-early 1943 expansion of Camp Lejeune, the architectural theme had to be modified because of shortages of steel and wood. The 36 additional battalion storehouses built at Hadnot Point, Courthouse Bay, and the Rifle Range were of load-bearing brick with wooden rafters, because restrictions had recently been placed on the use of strip steel for building construction. This project involved no change in the outward appearance of the storehouses, but the new construction projects at Montford Point were too large to use all-brick masonry construction. Out of necessity, the architects created a different type of construction for many of the new projects after October 1942. Called the "Montford Point style" because of the concentration of the design in that part of the base, this construction type "owes its character largely to the materials and skills which were available for the project. [The] scarcity of wood for framing, sheathing and siding led to the selection of hollow tile for walls; the walls were stuccoed to improve weathering qualities; and all openings were trimmed with exposed brickwork to simplify the application of stucco." In this type of architecture certain features of the original brick design were retained, such as windows, doors, roof shape and pitch, and (on some larger buildings) the floor plan and ornamental details.



Washrooms at Montford Point Camp No. 2.

This type of architecture was employed extensively at Montford Point and in separate encampments for those Marines at the Rifle Range and the Industrial and Supply Area. This same construction type was also used for 30 classroom buildings erected throughout the reservation, and for the Signal School facilities at Onslow Beach.

## United Services Organization

The United Services Organization (USO) was formed in 1941 as a joint effort of the Salvation Army, YMCA, YWCA, National Catholic Community Services, National Travelers Aid Association, and the National Jewish Welfare Board to help provide off-duty recreational opportunities for members of the U.S. Armed Forces.

The Jacksonville USO building on Anne Street was formally dedicated on 19 April 1942. A separate USO for African-American Marines operated during World War II, first on Newberry Street and then on Poplar Street. Members of Marine Corps Women's Reserves, and also female civilian workers at Camp Lejeune, enjoyed a special USO annex established for them on New Bridge Street during the war.

The Jacksonville USO is the oldest continuously active USO in the world.



The USO building located on Tallman Street. As many as 12,000 personnel per month visited the facility during World War II.



Marines in training.

