

U.S. Army Air Corps Era

With the loss of the USS Macon also went the Navy's need for Sunnyvale Naval Air Station and Moffett Field.

On October 25, 1935, just months after the demise of the USS Macon, the base was turned over to the War Department. Secretary of the War Department, George H. Dern announced that the Navy was trading Moffett Field to the U.S. Army in exchange for Army air fields at North Island field in San Diego, Ford Island in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, and Bolling Field in Washington, D.C. The airfield was renamed *Moffett Field, U. S. Army Air Corps*.

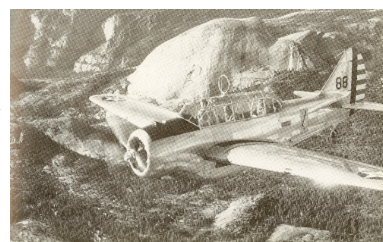


Although Peninsula residents were saddened by the Navy's departure, the Chambers of Commerce along the Peninsula welcomed the Army with open arms.

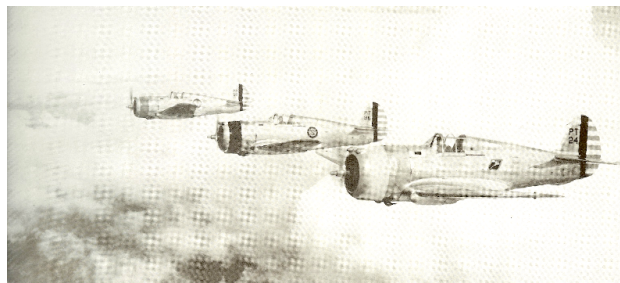
For the next three years the airfield became home for the 82nd Observation and the 9th Airbase Material Squadrons. During this time, the **19th Airship Squadron** was housed in the cavernous Hangar One along with other Army aircraft. One of the largest “non-rigid airships”, **TC-13** was flown to Moffett Field from Scott Field, Illinois, arriving on November 21st, 1935. In addition to other Army-related operations, TC-13 assumed the duties of patrolling the Pacific coast line, flying approximately 3,400 hours. TC-13 continued these missions at Moffett Field until June 12th, 1937 when Army airship activity was discontinued, and the airship was turned over to the Navy at NAS Lakehurst, New Jersey.



The **82nd Observation Squadron** was formed at Moffett Field in 1937. Aircraft employed in its operational mission were the Douglas O-31A, Douglas O-43, North American O-47A (pictured) and Martin B-10 bomber. The command transferred to Hamilton Field north of San Francisco in 1940.

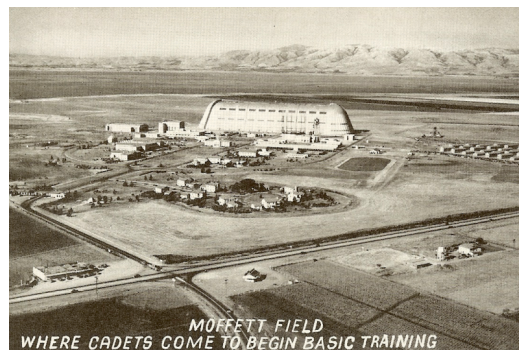


The **20th Pursuit Group** with the 55th, 77th, and 79th Pursuit Squadrons transferred to Moffett Field from Barksdale Air Base in Louisiana in 1939, flying the Army's P-36 Mohawk aircraft. The base's population



ballooned to over 5,000 enlisted men and 300 officers. The **35th Pursuit Group (Interceptor)** was activated at Moffett Field on February 1, 1940. Initial squadrons of the group were the 18th, 20th, and 21st Pursuit Squadrons, flying the P-36 Hawk aircraft (pictured). However, by the end of the year, both groups had also transferred to Hamilton Field.

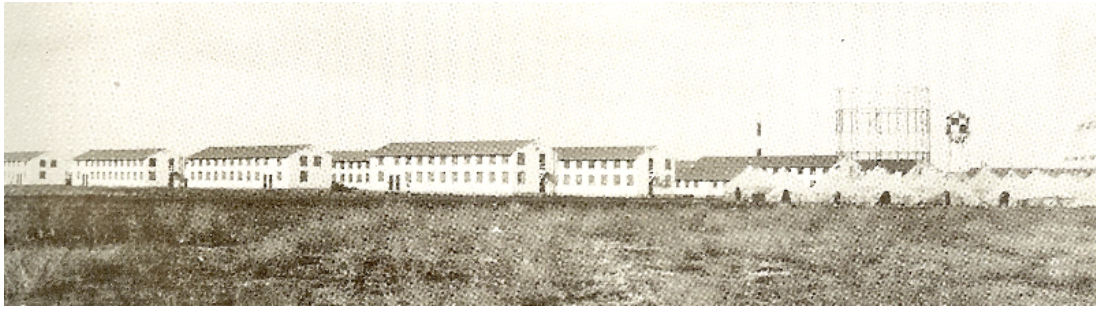
This allowed Moffett Field to become the West Coast Basic Training Center for the U. S. Army Air Corps on July 8, 1940. The purpose of Moffett Field was now to train Air Corps flying cadets or student officers. The **West Coast Air Corps Training Center**, under command of Brigadier General Henry Harms, became the unit responsible for all Army Air Corps training west of the 108th meridian.



The **Air Corps Basic Flying School**, under command of Colonel Edwin Lyon, was responsible for all Army Air Corps cadet basic training on the west coast. The platform used for basic aviation training was the Vultee **BT-13 Valiant**, commonly known as the "*Vultee Vibrator*" (pictured on the left), while advanced training was conducted using the cadre of **AT-6 Texans** (pictured on the right).



During this period of greater use, a housing shortage grew so critical that some enlisted men had to live in tents set up on the base. This situation necessitated the hasty construction of a series of wood buildings on the west side which became known affectionately as "Splinter City."



But all was to change by the events that occurred on December 7, 1941.