

**Historical Overview
Marine Corps Air Station
Miramar, San Diego, California**



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1. INTRODUCTION

The objective of this report is to document the historical development of the area that is now within Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Miramar (the Station). The land currently occupied by the Station has been used for diverse activities, and has passed through several hands throughout its history, including those of three nations, several private citizens, and all four branches of the United States military. Originally inhabited by local Native American groups, Franciscan missionaries, under the auspices of the Spanish flag, were the first Europeans to establish a settlement in the area. Following a successful revolution from Spain in 1821, the Mexican government controlled the region until 1846, when American forces fought for final control.

From its inception, San Diego has been a military town. It began as a Spanish territorial fort, and today is host to ten Navy and Marine Corps installations. The history of MCAS Miramar and its land, is very much tied to that of San Diego. A brief history of the region serves to place the Station within the context of the development of modern-day San Diego.

2. METHODS

In the past there has been minimal effort to compile a detailed history of the land that MCAS Miramar now encompasses. Some researchers incorporated the work of previous authors without question while few have completed a thorough review of the primary evidence to validate what was found earlier. The object of this study is to review work of previous researchers and the primary records to arrive at a reference that will serve as the foundation for future historical work on the Station.

To this end, archival and historical records were reviewed to create a database from which to compare previous studies. Documentary records that were reviewed included newspapers, letters, oral histories, historical texts, environmental compliance documents, maps and photographs. The archives and libraries of MCAS Miramar Natural Resources Division office and Public Works Facility, as well as the California Room of the San Diego Public Library, Central branch, the San Diego Historical Society, San Diego State University and the Marine Corps Recruit Depot were investigated. The results of this study follow.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Spanish Period (1542 -1821)

Less than twenty years after Hernán Cortés' conquest of Mexico the first European arrived on the Alta (Upper) California coast. Absorbed in the quest for the mythical Northwest Passage to the Orient, Don Antonio Mendoza, Viceroy of Mexico, sent Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo with a small party to explore the western coast of North America. In June 1542, Cabrillo, who had been part of Cortés' invasion of Tenochtitlán, set out with

two small vessels from Puerto de Navidad on the western coast of mainland Mexico. On September 28, 1542, after three months of travel along the California peninsula, Cabrillo entered a “closed and very good port,” naming it San Miguel (now San Diego Bay). The explorers stayed in the port for six days, scouting the area and waiting out a violent storm. In the course of their stay, they presented gifts to the local Indian population. On October 3, the group left to continue the exploration and mapping of the coast. Cabrillo suffered an injury during the voyage and died on San Miguel Island. Acting on Cabrillo’s instruction his pilot Bartolomé Ferrer continued the mission, ultimately reaching Oregon before returning to Navidad (Pourade 1960, Rolle 1987, Smythe 1907).

Regular trade with the Philippine Islands began in 1565. Galleons traveled from Acapulco with the northeast trade winds across the Pacific to Manila. After exchanging silver bullion for Oriental goods the overloaded and cumbersome ships returned to Acapulco by way of the California coast, generally putting in near Cape Mendocino. The trip east was fair sailing, taking approximately three months. The trip back however, could take as long as nine months. By the time ships landed, their crews were decimated by hunger and scurvy and many perished. English privateers, including the famed Sir Francis Drake, made easy prey of the lumbering Spanish galleons. In 1579 Drake formally took possession of California for England thirty miles north of San Francisco, in what is now known as Drake’s Bay (Pourade 1960, Rolle 1987, Smythe 1907).

Disturbed by the heavy losses and the desire to keep other nations out of their territory, the Spanish crown partially financed another exploratory trip into Alta California. On May 5, 1602, Sebastián Vizcaíno left Acapulco with four small ships. This expedition had strict orders to carefully explore and informally record the entrances to all large bays along the California coast from Cape San Lucas (Baja California) to Cape Mendocino. Vizcaíno was to make no settlements, he was to stay out of trouble with natives, and was not to change the names of landmarks already on the maps. Stopping at many of the same places Cabrillo recorded, Vizcaíno did indeed rename them, later claiming that Cabrillo’s descriptions were inaccurate and that a fresh start was needed. Because of Vizcaíno, Cabrillo’s San Miguel would be forever known as San Diego (Pourade 1960, Rolle 1987, Smythe 1907).

Arriving in San Diego Bay November 10, 1603, Vizcaíno noted in his journal that there was good wood, water and an abundance of fish. He also noted other game including rabbits and hares, quail, ducks, thrushes, and deer. On the second day in port, a group went ashore, built a hut and said mass in celebration. The ships were beached for cleaning and repair and the area was further explored. Vizcaíno and Father Ascensión (one of the three Carmelite friars among the crew) kept journals that describe the region favorably, including the description of large quantities of gold pyrites. This was taken as a sure sign that gold mines were located in the distant mountains. As Cabrillo had done, contact was again established with the local Indians and gifts were exchanged. When the party set sail, their course continued along the coast ultimately reaching Capo Blanco, north of Cape Mendocino near Drake’s Bay. At this point, owing to the terrible condition of the crew, the party turned about and headed back for Acapulco (Pourade 1960, Rolle 1987).

Continuing the effort to establish a safe harbor for Spanish galleons returning from Manila, the settling of Baja California began in 1683. Jesuit missionaries made the first attempt to colonize the peninsula by settling at La Paz and later that same year, at San Bruno, both on the eastern coast of Baja. La Paz was deserted in less than a year due to trouble with the local inhabitants. San Bruno however, remained until 1685, when the mission was abandoned due to illness and unhealthy conditions. Efforts at colonization of Baja California were resumed at Loreto, south of San Bruno, in 1697. The Jesuits then proceeded to establish seventeen missions from San Jose del Cabo in the south to the northernmost Santa Maria (Pourade 1960, Rolle 1987).

In 1767, the Jesuits of Baja California were removed by the new governor of California, Don Gaspar de Portolá. With the removal of the Jesuits, the missions came under the control of the Franciscan order and Father Junipero Serra was selected as superior (Pourade 1960, Rolle 1987).

Despite establishment of settlements and missions, a secure and permanent port had yet to be established anywhere along the California coast. English and Dutch privateers continued to prowl the Baja coast and Spain's increasing awareness of Russian exploration of the Pacific Northwest caused the inspector general of New Spain, José de Gálvez, to devise a plan to colonize Alta California (present day California). The plan focused on Monterey, with an intermediate post established at San Diego, between Monterey and Loreto. An expedition was planned that included two Divisions by land and two by sea. Gálvez chose Father Serra to lead the missionaries and Gaspar de Portolá to head the military. Serra and Portolá led one overland group while Captain Fernando Rivera y Moncada led the other. The maritime effort was conducted by two ships: the San Carlos, captained by Vicente Vila, and the San Antonio led by Juan Pérez.

The ships sailed from La Paz, Baja California carrying colonists and supplies to San Diego. The land expedition would follow, collecting cattle from the northern missions of Baja California to supply the new missions of Alta California (Pourade 1960, Rolle 1987). The San Carlos embarked on January 9, 1769. Five weeks later the San Antonio set sail. However, the San Antonio arrived first in San Diego on April 11, while the San Carlos landed on April 29, 1769. The crew aboard the San Carlos was so wasted with scurvy that none could make it to shore of their own accord. The journey for the San Carlos had been treacherous; the ship was in poor condition and had taken on water. Unfavorable winds had forced the ship far off course and with Vizcaino's erroneous coordinates, the craft landed near San Pedro. The ship sailed out around the Channel Islands before heading south, and was able to locate San Diego Bay by Vizcaino's description of the Coronado Islands. The San Antonio also met similar difficulties trying to locate San Diego and many of the men aboard suffered from scurvy. A third ship, the San José, had been dispatched with additional supplies, but was lost at sea (Pourade 1960, Rolle 1987).

Shortly after their arrival in San Diego, the expedition explored the bay looking for fresh water and a place to build shelter. On May 5, a suitable camp site near the bay was

selected. Those who were able, began construction of earth and brush shelters to house the sick. All available men were dedicated to the care of the sick and by the time Father Serra arrived, more than half of the men who traveled to San Diego by sea had died of scurvy (Pourade 1960, Rolle 1987).

On May 14, 1679, Captain Rivera and his party, tired and hungry, arrived in San Diego. The overland party, though weak, had not lost a single man on the two-month trip. After his arrival, Captain Rivera moved the entire camp further north to the base of a small hill (now Presidio Hill), nearer the water source. Again, huts of local material were built to house the men. Rivera's group rested and regained their strength while they waited for Father Serra and the final Division to arrive (Pourade 1960, Rolle 1987).

Leaving Loreto on March 28, 1769, Serra's party began the journey to the frontier mission in Santa María. The final expedition party, including Governor Portolá, was assembled there. The group departed on May 15, following the route of the previous expedition and successfully reached San Diego on July 1, 1769. Serra found the camp to be little more than a hospital, but was encouraged by the region's physical abundance and the prospects of his new work. Two days after his arrival Father Serra began to put together a temporary mission on top of Presidio Hill. The European occupation of California had begun.

Eager to complete his mission, Portolá, left Serra with a few soldiers and departed San Diego on July 14, 1769 to explore the coast up to Monterey. The members of this expedition were the first Europeans to cross the canyons and mesa lands that are now occupied by MCAS Miramar. Several journals of the time, including those of Portolá, and Father Crespi (a missionary with the expedition), offer a glimpse of pre-European life in and around the Station.

Portolá's group stayed their first night north of an Indian village, in the southern reaches of what is now Rose Canyon (they called it San Diego Canyon). The next day they followed the canyon north and then east as it turns, following much the same route as the modern day Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe rail line. They continued up onto the broad mesa, into Soledad Canyon, and on into Sorrento Valley. Crespi notes in his diary:

We ascended a large grassy hill, all of pure earth, and then found ourselves on some very broad mesas of good soft ground, all covered with grass, not encountering a stone since leaving San Diego...here we saw some small oaks and chaparral. We saw seven antelopes running together on this mesa and at every moment hares and rabbits came running out (Crespi from Bolton 1971).

The group noted the farm-like appearance of Soledad Canyon, where they encountered a group of Indians. The team made gifts of beads and continued north along the California coast. Vizcaino had described Monterey in such exaggerated terms that Portolá, and his expedition didn't recognize their destination when they arrived there. They continued north and instead, discovered San Francisco Bay on November 2, 1769. They realized that Monterey must be south, so turned back to San Diego. To Portolá's displeasure,

later discussions with Father Serra confirmed that the party had indeed found Monterey Bay, though had failed to recognize it (Bolton 1971, Pourade 1960, Rolle 1987). The expedition returned to the port of San Diego on January 24, 1770 and found the settlement suffering from severe lack of food. Many members were still debilitated by scurvy, including Fathers Serra and Parron. In addition, a skirmish with local Indians had resulted in injuries. The return of the seventy-four-man expedition caused a severe strain on the very limited food supply. If settlement at San Diego was to succeed, adequate provisions had to be obtained. Portolá sent Captain Rivera to collect supplies from the neighboring missions of Baja California.

Three institutions with very specific functions were used in the Spanish colonization of California: the mission, the presidio, and the pueblo. Fundamental to the process was the establishment of the mission system, generally the first of the three to be founded. The others cooperated in supportive and defensive functions to the mission. The objective of the missionaries was Christianizing and “civilizing” the California Indians. The patriarchal institution was established with the Indians as wards of the Franciscan friars; and as the labor force that would render the missions self-sufficient. The fathers not only taught Christianity, but also crafts such as weaving, carpentry, and leather working. Neophyte (newly converted) Indians also worked in the fields tending orchards, vineyards, and a variety of crops used by the mission. Presidios (territorial fortresses) were developed for the protection of missions from Indian uprisings and to protect Spain’s interests from foreign encroachment. Presidios were generally established at tactically important positions, mostly ports, as was the case of the San Diego Presidio. Pueblos, or towns, were of three types: presidial, such as San Diego, the town growing out of a presidio; mission towns, built up around missions; and civic pueblos that were established through secular efforts. Always situated around a plaza, the pueblo was the seat of civic life. As life in Alta California (the most remote territory of New Spain) was extremely difficult, the Spanish crown encouraged settlement of pueblos through enticements of free land and government allowances. Spanish settlement in the region was slow, but San Diego would serve as a station from which Alta California could be explored and colonized.

3.2. Mexican Period (1821-1846)

The Mexican revolution against Spain went almost unnoticed in Alta California. With the exception of revolutionary blockades seizing needed supplies, most of the settlers remained loyal to the crown. Pirates and privateers caused the region more alarm than the impending overthrow of their government. In 1821, after a ten year struggle, Mexican revolutionary forces defeated Spain and won their independence. It wasn’t until the spring of 1822 however, that a representative from the new government arrived in Monterey (the capital of Alta California) to oversee to the transition of state from Spanish to Mexican rule.

After the revolution, life continued much the same as it had under Spanish control. California was still a remote outpost, communication with the capital remained difficult, and San Diego continued to struggle for survival. The ties that bound Californians to the

new government were even less sturdy than those of the previous rulers. The entire populace of San Diego was confined within the walls of the presidio or the mission as the incidence of Indian attacks escalated.

Seeking to encourage settlement of frontier lands, the Mexican National Congress ratified the Colonization Act of 1824. The land policy of Spain had allowed only nineteen private ranchos (ranches) in all of California. Under Mexico's policy, there were approximately fifty by 1830 (Rolle 1987), and at least seven hundred ranchos at the onset of American occupation; 30 of these were in San Diego County (Cleland 1990).

The ranchos were large unfenced grazing tracts which served as the backbone of the California economy during the Mexican era. Much like the missions, ranchos were self-sufficient entities that had little interaction with the outside world. Each rancho generally employed several dozen Indian laborers as well as a handful of skilled vaqueros, or cowboys, to tend the vast herds. As required by the granting agreement, landholders were required to stock their land with at least two thousand head of cattle. Consequently, beef was the primary food item on the rancho and leather was used for everything from saddle making to door hinges. More importantly, hides were sold to merchants for manufacture in United States and England while tallow was exported to South America for candles and soap. In San Diego, most hides were cured on the ranchos and were subsequently transported to foreign hide houses (Russian, American, and English) constructed along the bay.

The Spanish recognized that California was well-suited to ranching, with climate and terrain similar to that of Spain. In addition to establishing their familiar industry of cattle ranching, sheep and hogs were raised along with agricultural products including olives, oranges, grapes, grains, and other common vegetables. Life on the ranchos was a humble one.

Rancho de la Misión San Diego de Alcalá, one of the Mission grazing tracts, may have occupied all of the land that now makes up MCAS Miramar. Following independence, the Mexican government required the California missions to submit an inventory of their land holdings and possessions. Misión San Diego de Alcalá reported property holdings to El Rosario, Baja California (approximately 40 miles south); to Santa Ysabel (50 miles east); and to San Dieguito Valley (about 20 miles north). The western boundary of the mission holdings adjoined those lands held by the presidio (Pourade 1964). Other descriptions of the rancho situate the northern boundary near the contemporary town of Clairemont, which would have included the southern portion of the Station (Moyer 1969). As with most land claims of the era, boundaries were loosely defined and were the subject of frequent dispute. Either description places church holdings well within the current boundaries of the Station. As additional grants were made, these boundaries were tested. Several other ranchos existed in the region surrounding the Station including Los Peñasquitos Rancho, to the north; San Bernardo Rancho, also to the north; El Cajón Rancho to the southeast, and Santa María Rancho to the northeast.

The first private land grant given in the county was Los Peñasquitos Rancho. The grant was made to Francisco Maria Ruiz in 1823 and was located within the limit of the mission rancho. Despite complaint from the Mission Fathers, Ruiz's grant was upheld, foreshadowing what was to come for the California missions.

With the passage of the Secularization Law of 1833, the Mexican Congress intended that mission holdings be disbanded and property, including vast tracts of mission land, be granted to local citizens. The missions were to become parish churches. In San Diego, secularization resulted in the mission rancho lands passing to an administrator while missionaries continued their duties. The last Mexican governor, Pio Pico, granted Rancho Misión San Diego de Alcalá to Santiago Arguello for services rendered to the territorial government. Arguello was a prominent citizen of San Diego as commandante of the Presidio and was later involved in pueblo politics. The grant was drafted in Los Angeles on June 8, 1846, and the last recorded baptism was performed at the Misión de Alcalá on June 14, 1846 (Cooley, Crawford & James 1996; Pourade 1963, 1964, Moyer 1969).

Throughout the Mexican occupation of California, foreign interests in the territory increased. The Mexican government had entered an agreement for trapping rights with the Russian-owned fur trading company, "Russian – American Company," which had long had an established colony at Fort Ross, north of San Francisco. English and American traders also became more accepted, providing ranchos a much-needed market for their hides and tallow. After the 1824 Colonization Act, foreigners, taking advantage of the security promised in the Act, began settling in Alta California. As the United States' interest grew in the west, American mountain men and trappers filtered into California. Many American immigrants married daughters of influential Californians, became Mexican citizens and established families in the region. These men opened the door for later American expansion (Rolle 1987; Pourade 1964; California Department of Parks and Recreation 2002).

In 1845, American President James K. Polk was elected on the expansionist ticket. His administration promoted the annexation of Texas, the suppression of England's activity in the Pacific Northwest, and the settling of the Oregon frontier. Manifest Destiny was deeply engrained in the American national psyche. Annexation of Texas threatened certain war with Mexico. A U.S. envoy was sent to the Mexican capital in November to try to purchase California and New Mexico but the delegation was denied a meeting with Mexico's president. Meanwhile Thomas Larkin, the first American Consul to California, relayed confidential reports to President Polk, reporting that many Californians would not oppose American intervention (Pourade 1963, 1964; Smythe 1907).

Congress declared war on Mexico on May 13, 1846. Colonel Stephen Watts Kearney left Fort Leavenworth, Kansas on June 30, 1846 with the Army of the West, headed for Santa Fe. Two days later, Commandant John Sloat arrived in Monterey aboard the USS Cyane, and proceeded to capture the town for the United States. Captain du Pont replaced John Sloat as commander of the Cyane, and advanced to San Diego, arriving in the afternoon

of July 29th. Without much resistance, the stars and stripes flew over the pueblo of San Diego by evening.

As the war continued throughout California, Americans occupied many of the major cities and by August, Los Angeles had fallen. However, those loyal to Mexico fought back, and Los Angeles was reclaimed for Mexico in November. There was uncertainty and chaos as some citizens fought for California as an independent nation, and as fighting continued between Mexican loyalists and U.S. forces, and between Mexican citizens supporting Americans, and those loyal to Mexico. Guerrilla fighters raised fear in most, including the small clusters of American forces thinly distributed throughout the state.

After taking San Diego, the USS Cyane sailed north, leaving soldiers to defend against occupation by Mexican forces. The town was repeatedly attacked as San Diego remained friendly to the United States. With great difficulty, American forces held the town throughout the war.

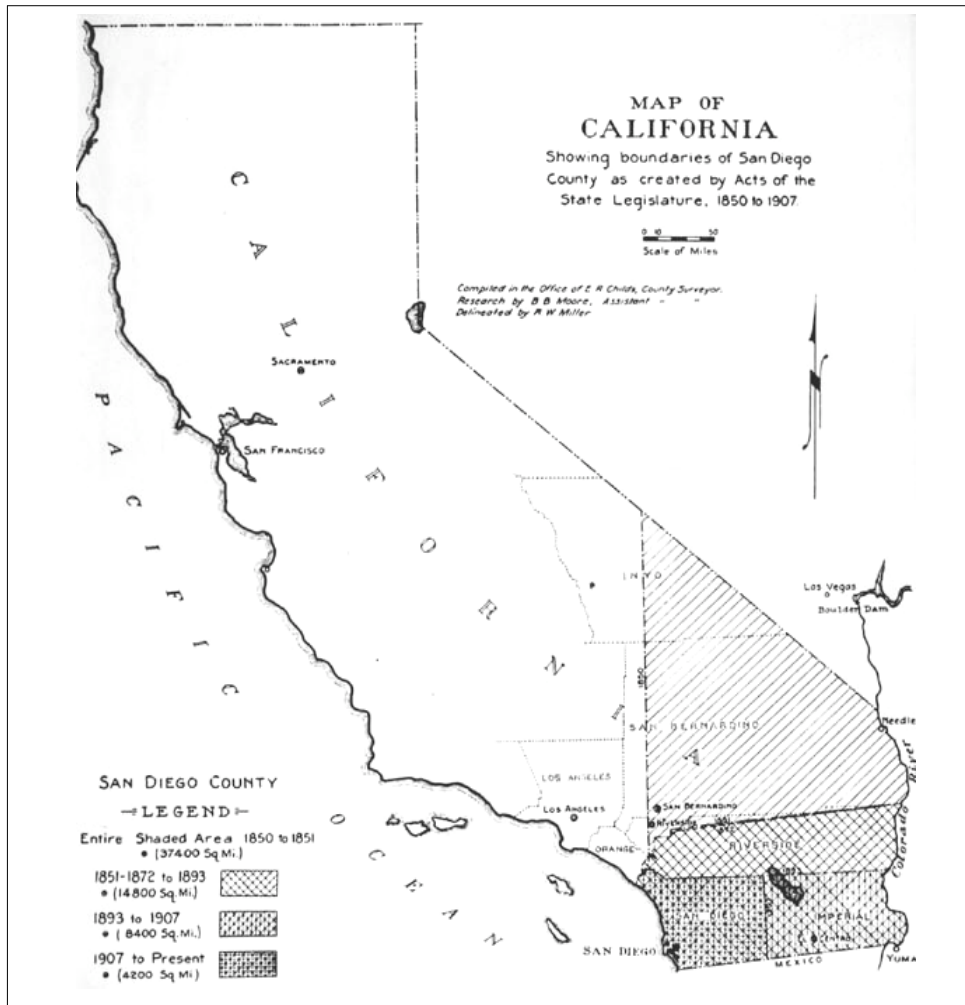
Following the capture of Santa Fe, newly promoted Brigadier General Kearney and his Army set out to reinforce American forces in California. Kearney was notified en route that California had been won and that additional forces would not be needed. By the time the message had reached the General however, the situation in California had completely changed. He unwittingly sent most of his men back to New Mexico, and continued on to California with a small detachment of dragoons. They arrived at Warner's Ranch on December 2nd. Tired and tattered following an arduous journey across the southwestern desert, the crew rested at the ranch for two days before continuing on to San Diego. They were joined by a group of volunteers led by Captain Archibald Gillespie, of the United States Marines. On December 6th, near the Indian village of San Pasqual, Kearney's force engaged a group of Californio Lancers led by Andres Pico, brother of Mexican governor Pio Pico. The conflict resulted in the loss of 21 of Kearney's men and was generally viewed as a defeat.

As the American grip over California became stronger, more Americans immigrated. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed on February 2, 1848, bringing an end to the war. The result of the war was that Mexico was forced to cede California and New Mexico to the United States and had to acknowledge the Rio Grande as the southern and western boundary of Texas. With the end of Mexican rule and the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill, the population of California grew tremendously, though San Diego remained largely a sleepy backwater.

3.3. American Agricultural Period (1848–1941)

Mexico ceded its interest in California to the United States and in 1850, California became the 31st state. San Diego continued for the most part, as a small town until the appearance of Alonzo Horton in 1867. He arrived from San Francisco determined to find an opportunity. At the time, the area now called "Old Town," served as the county seat. Horton was convinced that the town would never flourish in that location so he purchased 960 acres south of town, closer to San Diego Bay. Horton returned to San Francisco to

promote his investment, praising the qualities of the climate and the natural harbor. Immigrants from the East and abroad were eager to hear of the new town. Horton laid out lots, had a map made, and brought residents and commerce to his “New Town.” By 1869, the *San Diego Union* reported that the population had increased to roughly 3000 residents. The county courtroom and the clerk’s office were transferred to Horton’s “New Town” in 1871 and the area was officially included into the city of San Diego (MacPhail 1989).



Map showing development of San Diego County

As San Diego was becoming urbanized, there was a continued focus on ranching. Popular belief held that crops would not grow in the arid environment. That belief changed in 1880, when the first county fair was held. Experimental products from the Rancho de la Nación proved that crops of all sorts could be grown, including apples, grapes, olives and a range of citrus fruits (MacPhail 1989). The new interest and success in farming raised the need for efficient transportation to markets. The Southern California Railroad was successfully completed in 1883, providing San Diego with links to the north and the east.

The arrival of the railroad and some fantastic real estate promotion in the mid 1880's resulted in a regional "boom" that caused the population of San Diego to rise from approximately 5,000 residents in 1885, to 35,000 in 1887. By 1888, the height of the boom, residents numbered around 40,000 (MacPhail 1989). People stood in line for days to get first choice of lots in new subdivisions. Several small farming and ranching communities developed in San Diego's backcountry. Linda Vista and Miramar were two communities that grew within and near current Station boundaries. Linda Vista was established in 1886, while Miramar came later, in 1890. Linda Vista was centered in the eastern end of San Clemente Canyon and the surrounding mesa lands, and Miramar was on the mesa, situated at the current intersection of Miramar Road and the I-15 Freeway, northwest of Linda Vista.

3.3.1. Linda Vista

While the location of Miramar is well known, Linda Vista's location is vague and slightly confusing. An article appearing in the *San Diego Union* describes the region as follows:

The lands of the Linda Vista district may be classified under three heads. First – lands acquired from the United States government by homestead and preemption. Second – The ex-Mission lands, which were at one time the property of the Roman church. Third – The pueblo lands of San Diego (*San Diego Union* January 1, 1894).

This description places the community generally within the current Station boundary; however it seems more likely the article is referring to the location of what was called Linda Vista Mesa (now Kearny Mesa). Cooley et al. describes Linda Vista as "located primarily along San Clemente Canyon and the adjacent mesa and foothill lands between Interstate 15 and the Green Farm test site [now Range 100]" (Cooley et al., 1996). While the 1894 description is indistinct, later descriptions are more accurate with respect to what should be considered the village of Linda Vista. Van Wormer and Walter note a similar instance for the community of Bernardo where the name referred to two distinct but related units. In this example, as with Linda Vista, Bernardo the village, consisted of a few small shops while the larger community included the village as well as the surrounding farmsteads of the region (Van Wormer and Walter, 2002).

As was common in the late 19th century, rural communities relied on social networks to resolve mutual problems. They lived on farmsteads united through a common post office, school district and country store (Van Wormer and Walter 2002). Linda Vista was no different; most essential services were found within San Clemente Canyon, east of present day Interstate 15, while farms and homesteads were spread out on the surrounding mesa. The village included the Linda Vista School, post office, and cemetery, Episcopal Church, at least one store and a blacksmith. Unlike other county towns of the period however, these facilities were not arranged in a tight cluster; rather they were spread out over a square-mile area.

Linda Vista was said to be named by Colonel W. C. Dickinson who laid out several towns along the Atchison, Topeka, & Santa Fe Rail Road in 1886 (San Diego Union, 4-1-1887). Prior to 1886, the area had been used as range for cattle. According to Flower and Roth, the government survey of Townships 15 south, Ranges 1, 2, and 3 west in 1880 noted that there were no settlements within the area (Flower and Roth, 1981). An 1884 listing of county post offices appearing in the *San Diego Sun* showed an office in Poway as the nearest to Linda Vista (January 5, 1884). The earliest reference to the settlement appears in the April 23, 1886 edition of the *San Diego Union*:

A gentleman who yesterday came to the city from Linda Vista, says that new settlement is fast improving and is already quite a little town. Surveyor Fox and A.L. Bancroft are both putting in ten acre tracts in black wattle trees, and Mr. Biddle of this city [San Diego] will also put in about that number of acres in the same trees. He states that barley in the vicinity is very abundant and most of it already headed.

Explicit in this description is that in 1886, Linda Vista was in its infancy. A review of the annual County Directories for the years of 1886-1889, show no reference to the community. Another article describes the beginnings of the community: “the first locations were made on these lands in the eighties, but no general settlements were had until the boom of ’87 made cheap lands sought for” (*San Diego Union* 1-1-1894). During the 1870s and through the 80s, the most desirable agricultural lands in the county were quickly occupied, leaving the less sought after mesa lands to the late-comers. As the urban center grew, more agricultural lands needed to be developed to support the population. Increasingly, farming was seen as a profitable enterprise as long as one could acquire land at a reasonable price and had access to a sufficient water supply. Linda Vista was believed to be excellent agricultural property. The 1889-90 Directory lists the Linda Vista Horticultural Society with J. H. Gay as president and C. M. Schwarzauser secretary. By 1891, land was selling for \$35.00 an acre and was in good demand (*San Diego County Advertiser* 9-24-1891:6).

Typical of the boisterous time and fueled by the almost nonstop flow of eastern newcomers, residents and real estate promoters sought to make quick profits by pushing the virtues of the region. Several articles appeared in local newspapers touting its splendor. The following two examples from the *San Diego Union* are typical of the time:

Linda Vista covers a fertile area of many thousand acres and is sufficiently inland to escape the humidity of ocean fogs. Its exhilarating breezes laden with the perfume of countless wild flowers, aromatic herbs, its beautiful and extensive views, the softness of water, the range of glorious hills which form its eastern boundary, charming the eye with their changing lights and shadows which lie on sunny slopes and ferny canyons-all these combine to give sure promise that at no distant day San Diego’s most frequently visited sanitarium will be found at Linda Vista (4-1-1887 8:1).

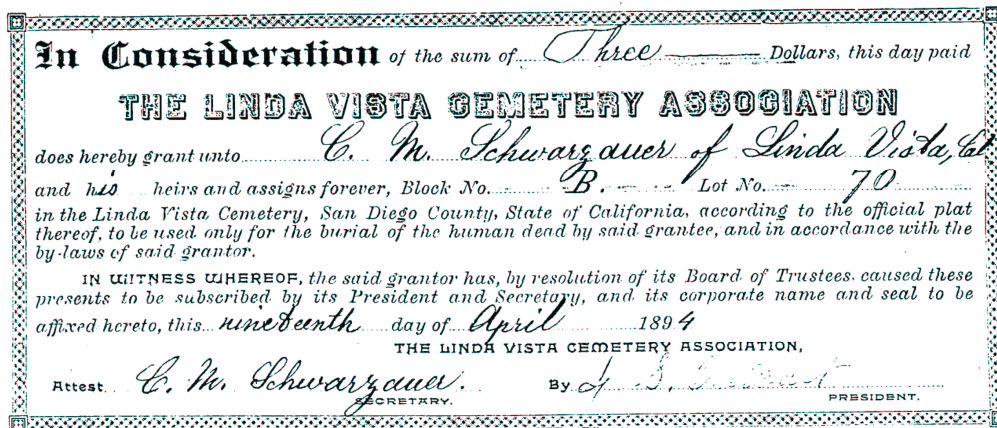
Another reads:

Linda Vista is becoming one of the prominent centers of the back country of San Diego. The land appears to be capable of producing almost anything and the specimens of fruit, vegetables, and flowers which have been raised without irrigation in that section have been commended by all who have seen them. Joe Lester's timber culture, which is being cared for by Max Derrick is one of the noticeable features of this place. He has some five acres of pepper trees, which, planted only a year ago, have already attained a height of over five feet, and every one of them is in an entirely healthy condition. He also has five acres of locust trees, raised from seed shipped from the east a year ago; and a watermelon patch which is a credit to the state. These have been all cultivated without irrigation. The magnificent crop of wheat belonging to Captain O'Brien is about to be shipped to the county's metropolis, and the splendid collection of cherry trees, peach, apricot, apple, pear, fig, and plum trees of Charles U. Bell bear healthy indications of great results in the future. The magnificent Surr property is progressing under the energetic care of Vincent, Joseph, and Howard Surr; whose labors in clearing and breaking the ground has increased its value a hundred fold. Their remarkable spring, capable of supplying the county with water for miles around, is one of the landmarks of the neighborhood, and the well which has been sunk about a mile and a half from the spring yields an abundance of water at a nominal depth. Linda Vista is prospering (10-31-1888 5:2-3).

Many came to the mesa with the hopes of finding their fortunes. Mr. Schwarzauer was apparently one of the first to homestead on the mesa. Charles Outcalt remembered that Mr. Schwarzauer had been a minister in San Diego during the 1886 "boom" and when the crash hit, his congregation fell apart and he moved to the mesa. He could often be seen sporting a plug hat and a Prince Albert coat; his wife in fine silk dresses. Mr. Schwarzauer admitted that these were the only clothes they had (*Kearny Mesa Sentinel* 11-1-1962). Mr. Schwarzauer opened a store and became very much involved in the promotion of the agricultural potential of the community. He is listed as justice of the peace for the Mission Township for 1891 (*San Diego County Advertiser*) as well as the years of 1895 and 1897 (*San Diego County Directory*). He is also noted as the postmaster for Linda Vista for 1897 (*San Diego County Directory*).

Not only was California's agricultural potential promoted, but also its temperate climate, which was claimed to be curative. Characteristic of the period, families would arrive in California hoping to escape the harsh winters and diseases plaguing the east. Appearing in an article in the *Kearny Mesa Sentinel*, Charles Outcalt chronicled his families' relocation to the Linda Vista region. Lewis, Charles' father, moved his family of three sons to San Diego from Illinois in 1891 after the boys' mother and three sisters died. Lewis wanted to move from the "Malaria Belt." Sometime after their arrival in San Diego, Lewis purchased a quarter-section on Linda Vista Mesa and a three-room house which was then hauled 14 miles from San Diego to Linda Vista (*Kearny Mesa Sentinel* 11-1-1962).

In 1893, Jasper Outcalt, Lewis' second son, succumbed to tuberculosis and was buried at Linda Vista. Jasper was the first to be interred in the cemetery, and in fact, it appears the young man's demise was the stimulus for the development of the graveyard. After his death, a meeting of the local residents was called where Sam Porter offered an acre of his land as a community cemetery (*Kearny Mesa Sentinel* 11-1-1962). In July 1893, Samuel Porter sold two acres of property to the Linda Vista Cemetery Association (Deed Book 221:448, Flower and Roth 1981). Charles M. Schwarzauer notarized the plan of the cemetery on February 10 1894, as surveyed by Irving Outcalt and presented by Lewis S. Outcalt. The plan was filed with the county in April 1894, and by the 19th of that month lots were being sold by the Linda Vista Cemetery Association, with C. M. Schwarzauer as its secretary and L. S. Outcalt as president. Though the Outcalt family had little when they arrived in San Diego, Irving went on to earn a doctorate degree and to teach English at San Diego Normal School, San Diego Teachers College and later San Diego State College where he also served as Vice President. In addition to his work as a professor, he was also an avid writer; in 1916 his Greek musical drama was performed at the Organ Pavilion in Balboa Park (Richard Amero Collection 1916). Dr. Outcalt retired from San Diego State College after 27 years of service (*San Diego Union* 4-10-1939; *Star News* 2-4-1949).



*Linda Vista Cemetery Lot
Block B.
Lot No 70 1' x 20ft.
Granted to C. M. Schwarzauer
April 19th 1894.*

Many families moved to the mesa seeking relief from ill-health. The Jessops were one of these families that rose to prominence. Joseph Jessop was trained as a jeweler by his father in Lytham England. Told by his doctor that a more benign climate could possibly prolong his life, he made a detailed study of world climates ultimately deciding on California (*San Diego Union* 8-18-1960 A20). Before leaving England, Joseph secured property in northern California. When he reached San Bernardino with his wife and eight children, the real estate agent informed the Jessops that the property had been sold. The agent recommended they go to San Diego where the family initially found conditions to

be miserable (*San Diego Union* 8-18-1960 A20; Alonzo de Jessop 12-2-1960 1). Adamant about finding a place for the family to settle, Joseph toured the west coast, reaching as far north as Seattle. Upon his return he told his wife: "Well, Mary, you know if we want to make money I think we ought to go to San Francisco; but if we want to live we had better stay here," to which she responded: "I don't care about money. I just want to live" (Alonzo de Jessop 12-2-1960 1). Shortly after his return, Jessop bought 50 acres of farmland from Benjamin Myers in Linda Vista and moved his family to the mesa. The first year's wheat crop was tremendous; however without an adequate water supply the following harvests were meager. After moving to Linda Vista, Joseph served as a blacksmith and continued to repair jewelry and watches. In 1891, Jessop opened the first watch repair and jewelry store in San Diego, near the harbor on "F" Street. His business in San Diego flourished and his health recovered. In 1898 he moved his family to Golden Hill and in 1903, to Coronado. He had the Linda Vista house razed to be used for material to build a new home (*San Diego Union* 8-14-1960 A20).

As the population increased, the community developed other essential services including the Linda Vista School District. As noted previously, a common school district was one of the most important mechanisms bonding the social network of rural communities. Even before a post office was established in the valley, the residents had a school. A notice of school opening, posted at the beginning of each semester, lists B. Combs as the teacher for the second semester of the 1885-1886 school year. The establishment of the Linda Vista School was discussed in an interview with Harry Stephens, whose parents homesteaded on the mesa:

When they tried to start a school out there they needed five children to be able to start it, and at that time I was just four and a half years old. So they accepted me as a pupil so they could get the school. The school was held in my mother's house. The schoolmaster's name was McCombs [Mr. Combs] and he boarded with us. There was nowhere for him to go and nothing else for him to do, so he stayed right with us while he taught school (*San Diego Union*, 2-24-1961 2).

The School Census Marshall's Report for the year ending June 30, 1886 listed 11 families within the district, including Walter Stephens, Harry's father. District records counted 11 children between the ages of five and 17, and ten children below five years of age. By 1888, a schoolhouse had been secured as the School Trustee's Report noted "the valuation of the site is not included in the amount as we have no deed as yet, as the land is government land and not proofed up." That year the School Census Marshall reported 16 families with 22 school-aged children living within the district; 15 of the 22 attended school. The district's population grew quickly and by the 1890-91 school year, there were 25 families and 50 school-aged children. The population dropped slightly over the following years with the number of families remaining in the low twenties until 1897. The population began to drop again, so in response to the trying times at the beginning of the 1899 school year, the teacher was given a five dollar pay cut. Though times were increasingly difficult, the school children were able to donate money to the construction of a monument, prompting mention of the school in the *San Diego Union*:

The only school in this county which has made a contribution for the Lincoln monument to be erected in San Francisco, is the Linda Vista School, of which Edith Pierce is teacher; four children gave ten cents each, making a total of forty cents donated by this county (3-10-1901 6:5).

Over the next few years the number of families in the district continued to drop, with 12 students from eight families attending the school in 1902. The 1905 report counted 15 students. The final Census Marshall's report known to exist dates to 1907 and documents eight families in the district, though curiously no students were counted. The 1907 report notes that the Scripps children were privately tutored at home. However, two Scripps children reportedly attended school: one in Mission Valley and one at Miramar. The inclusion of one student at Miramar adds confusion to the events of 1907, as all documentation regarding the Miramar school indicates that the schoolhouse did not open until 1912. As was common during the later years of the community of Linda Vista, the name Miramar may have been used in place of Linda Vista. The Teacher's Report lists Florence Chetham as teacher of the Linda Vista School in 1907, which would certainly indicate students were in attendance. Furthermore, district records show that Linda Vista School made purchases of supplies from Loring and Company in downtown San Diego. After 1907, records for Linda Vista School are limited. A 1909 invoice from Loring and Company shows additional purchases and an insurance policy issued by Sun Insurance of San Diego. The insurance policy coverage was for the period of September 25, 1909-September 25 1912 (Linda Vista School Trustees' Records n.d.).

In 1912, Linda Vista School was merged with the Garfield and Peñasquitos Schools (both located north of Miramar) to form the Miramar School. Much the same as other back country schools of the time, Miramar was a one-room schoolhouse. The new school was located at Miramar Road and US Highway 395 (now Kearny Villa Drive). Miramar School remained in operation until 1958 (San Diego Union 06-12-58; Vasseley 6-26-1958 2-3). Unfortunately, no additional information specific to consolidation of the three schools has been found and early records regarding Miramar School are scant. The merge was necessary, most likely, due to low attendance numbers at the three schools. Consolidating the schools would allow education to continue on the mesa. Based on the Linda Vista School District Census Marshall's reports and the County Directories in the years leading up to the consolidation, the mesa had fewer residents and it appears there was an increasing trend for the region's residents to associate themselves with Miramar rather than other towns in the area (Linda Vista School Trustees' Records n.d.; San Diego County Directory 1886-1930).

On September 23, 1886, William Gray opened the Linda Vista Post Office along the Escondido Road, in an old adobe (San Diego Union January 12, 1891). The office was in operation at this location for almost four years, until March 15, 1890 when service was discontinued. On May 19th, that same year Charles Wells reopened the office five miles northwest, along the railroad, where it remained until 1899 (Frickstad 1955; Salley 1991). A second spelling of the town name, Lindavista, appears in the literature at this time (Frickstad 1955; Salley 1991).

The relocation of the Linda Vista post office to a place alongside the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe railroad line (A. T. & S. F.) causes some confusion in the records. It appears there was an effort to develop a town site along the tracks as was described in the *San Diego Union*:

The little station of Soledad Summit, fifteen miles north on the Southern California, has begun to grow into a town since its name was changed from Alpine to Lindavista. Judge Schwartzaur [Schwarzauer] has opened a store and real estate office in the building with Postmaster Wells' new office and Mr. Wells is sketching a plan for a new townsite [sic] right there on his quarter section. He has given the land to the station and now proposes to try and build up a village around him. His own improvements are the best evidence that every sort of trees and fruit will grow vigorously on that mesa land (10/18 /1890).

The railroad was a vital connection for the agricultural communities in the area; rail provided easy and quick transport of goods to market in San Diego. Farmers as far away as Poway could cart their products over the grade on the Escondido Road to the train depot at Lindavista, saving them the additional mileage to San Diego. The establishment of a town site at the flag station would seem to be apparent. Until a station depot was built in 1919, the train did not make scheduled stops. Travelers would have to flag down the train if they wanted to board or depart. Following the construction of the depot, Lindav`ista remained a scheduled stop on the National City to Los Angeles and the National City to Fullerton routes until at least 1956 (JRP 2001:17). During the war years the depot also served a spur track that led to Camp Kearney and later to Camp Elliott and Marine Corps Air Depot Miramar.

The effort to establish the station as the community center was promoted by trying to secure businesses necessary to the community:

At the Lindavista Station, fourteen miles north on the Southern California Railroad, C.H. Wells offers a tract to any well disposed blacksmith for a college and shop. He says that such a workman would be certain of business, as at present all the ranchers of that region and the surrounding county have to take their tools and horses to the city for sharpening and shoeing, respectively (*San Diego Union* 1-13-1891 5:2).

Two weeks later it was reported that Mr. Jessup (certainly Mr. Joseph Jessop), who had recently purchased land on the mesa, would fill the need. Mr. Wells also started a small nursery with 6,000 orange seedlings and orchards of lemons, guavas and French prunes (*San Diego Union* 6-26-1891 5:4).

In an effort to protect their investments from the damage caused to their orchards and farmland by roaming herds of cattle, property holders in the area met to discuss organizing a pound district (*San Diego Union*, 1-2-1892 5:2). A pound district required livestock owners to fence in their animals and made them personally responsible for the

destruction of property outside fenced areas and within the district. On January 6, 1892, the Board of Supervisors approved the pound district (*San Diego Union* 5:4).

Many who purchased land on the mesa had little farming experience, particularly in arid environments such as southern California. A few early homesteaders had good luck farming at Linda Vista as Alonzo De Jessop described his family's first harvest on the mesa:

“Our crop was tremendous. The wheat was higher than the team and the stalks were as thick as my little finger. The mowing machine couldn't work it and we had to cradle it (San Diego Union, 12-2-1960 2).”

These high yields could not be sustained. Charles Outcalt had a different perspective on conditions:

A little hay could be grown in the creek bottoms, but nothing else...How did the residents live? What did they raise? ‘Nothing,’...There was a lot of talk about starting an irrigation district, but nothing came of it. My brother Irving started a chicken ranch; coyotes liked ‘em pretty well. We mostly ate jackrabbits and quail (*Kearny Mesa Sentinel* 11-1-1962).

The serious lack of water in the region inhibited sustained agricultural development. Water was always a problem for the community; every attempt was made to collect water; cisterns were dug and earthen dams were built across small drainages. Wells were dug in San Clemente Canyon; some of these pumped water to the mesa (Charles Vassey, 6-26-1958 4). Efforts were made to quench the mesa's thirst for water with the formation of the Linda Vista Irrigation District. As early as May of 1891, signatures were being collected to petition the board of supervisors for the district's creation (*San Diego Union* 5-30-1891 5:3). The petition was granted in July, and an election for a board of directors was set for August (*San Diego Union* 7-8-1891 5:4; 7-9-1891 5:4). The satisfaction of the mesa residents was well summed up in the following article, appearing soon after the approval of the petition:

Linda Vista's longing for plenty of water may soon be satisfied. 15 [sic] of Aug Linda Vista qualified electors will vote to determine on the organization of an irrigation district...It will be an inducement to thousands of people who are looking for homes – and who may in a short time settle up that large tract of now unused land, which only needs water to cause it to ‘blossom as the rose’...With many others, I settled on this land when it was opened to colonists over 6 [sic] years ago, and we have had hard struggling to pull through; still we hold on in anticipation of the day when we should be repaid for all our waiting, and we shall rejoice as only those can, who have looked forward to the fulfillment of these hopes being realized in a powerful supply of clear mountain water. Then we can sit and smoke our pipes under our own vine and fig tree (*San Diego Advertiser* 7-25-1891 5).

Their excitement was delayed as the petition was immediately protested by the Morena Company (a rival water company to those planned to supply water to Linda Vista) (*San Diego Union* 7-9-1891 5:4). The board of supervisors denied the objections of the Morena Company and a board of directors for the Linda Vista Irrigation District was elected in August (*San Diego Union* 8-16-1891 5:4).

Unfortunately for the mesa residents, these early difficulties foreshadowed what was to come for the irrigation district. Controversy and allegations of corruption brought about the ultimate demise of the district:

PAMO WATER SYSTEM: George Fuller's Comments on a Late Rumor. The report that the Pamo dam and water system would soon be constructed, and the lands of Linda Vista district irrigated therefrom, was denounced by George Fuller last evening as a fake. 'Nobody,' he said, 'but an idiot or a knave would consider for a moment dealing with that district, as the fact is now known to all men that it is a fraud, and illegal in its organization, and that its bonds are utterly illegal' (*San Diego Union*, 6-15-1898 3:4).

Without the development of the irrigation district, the community's agricultural potential declined further with a cycle of droughts which occurred in the late 1890s. The years of 1897 – 1899 were particularly dry and drinking water had to be hauled from Los Peñasquitos Rancho. Many people left the mesa during this period. The school district Census Marshall's records show a tremendous drop in regional population. The County Directories also reflect this; the 1897 index is the last to list residents of the community of Linda Vista. The index for 1899-1901 lists Linda Vista under the towns and post offices of the county, but no residents are listed, rather many who were previously listed as living in Linda Vista, are now shown as residents of Miramar. An inspection of the directories for the following years found no further mention of the community.

Irony struck in January 1916, when a devastating storm hit southern California. The torrential downpours caused flooding across the state. The destruction of property in San Diego was greatest in the drainages cutting through the mesas. Many homesteaders lost their homes as well as crops and livestock, which were generally kept in the canyons close to water sources. San Clemente Canyon, the center of Linda Vista, was hit particularly hard. The damage caused by the flood was recounted by a resident of Sorrento Valley:

We had more water in the valley than just from the rain [Sorrento Valley]. The Scripps dam broke and the Penasquitos dam broke; the water from both came down this valley. It of course was flooded from one side to the other...Our chicken house was in water, with the chickens inside...We could see all kinds of things floating down – automobiles, timbers, chairs and tables. Barns where they stored the apples taken from the orchards, chicken coops, all kinds of things came down (Diffendorf 1958:5-6).

The town of Linda Vista apparently ceased to exist as area residents now identified themselves with Miramar. The development of Camp Elliott displaced what remained of the community, and the handful of families that stayed in the area clustered around the village of Miramar.

3.3.2. *Virginia*

It is unclear why the post office was moved from its San Clemente Canyon location. It is clear however, that an office was still needed in the valley and on September 11, 1890, Virginia A. Tower established one on her property at the base of Poway Grade, a few miles north of the original location on the Escondido road (Frickstad 1955; Salley 1991, *San Diego Union*: January 21, 1891). The new office was called Virginia, after Miss Tower who served as the postmaster for the first few years. It seems the office was quite small and in 1932, Mrs. Maude Thayer Frary recalled in a *San Diego Union* article, the post office “was said to be the smallest in the world...It looked very much like it was made from a large upright piano box set up edgewise” (10-2-1932). This prompted a response from Mrs. Mary Williams, who had charge of the mail at Virginia for five years. She said “It [the Virginia post office] stood close to the road [Escondido Road] and had enough room for one ‘customer’ at a time. There were five boxes and the office handled mail for about 30 persons. The stage coach stopped twice a day” (*San Diego Union* 10-20-1932). In a later article appearing in the *Kearney Mesa Sentinel*, Mrs. Clarence Benson described the creation of the Virginia post:

The federal [sic] government provided the site, but the money for a structure was hopelessly entangled in bureaucratic red tape. Finally, a rancher on the mesa found a piano box in his barn that had been used to ship a grand piano from San Francisco...He donated the piano box for the postoffice [sic] and volunteer carpenters turned it into a cubbyhole postoffice [sic] and had enough lumber left over for a hitching rack in front, to which postoffice [sic] patrons tethered their horses (8-30-1973)

Not only did the Towers have a post office, they also ran a store and their property was used as a stage stop for travelers between San Diego and North County, before they made their way over the steep grade to Poway. In an interview with the San Diego Historical Society, Alonzo de Jessop, son of the prominent San Diego jeweler, lived on the mesa for several years and recalled the stage stop:

When they would be going to Escondido they would go from San Diego up Clemente Canyon and would change horses at this first stage station – Towner’s [sic]. There were always people coming and going through the country there – two or three teams going one way or the other. The fellows would make coffee and sometimes heat a can of something or other and cook their food over an open fireplace. They would kinda [sic] gossip and carry the news from Escondido or Palomar or San Diego back and forth.

There was a spring there at the station. Mr. and Mrs. Towner [sic] and their son, Max, lived there. They didn't serve meals, but they had a corral and they would keep teams for replacement for the stages. The stages would change horses at Towner's [sic] and take off up the old Poway Grade and come out where the old Stone Lodge is now (1960).

Although the Tower property served as the post office for those farmsteads at the eastern end of San Clemente Canyon, Virginia did not become the town center that Linda Vista was a few miles west. In fact, between the years of 1892 and 1901 just seven people were listed in the County Directory for Virginia. After 1901, Virginia was missing from the directories and those people previously listed were now noted as residents of Miramar.

No other services developed at Virginia beyond the post office and the Tower's store. Residents continued to identify themselves with Linda Vista and increasingly with Miramar. The Virginia post office operated at that location until October 1900, when it merged with the office at Merton, on the northern side of the Poway Grade. The Escondido Road continued to be an important artery to points north, and the Towers would have continued to offer supplies to locals as well as stage road travelers. The daily stage between San Diego and Escondido, which had began operation in 1887, was discontinued in 1912 when the postal service began transporting the North County mail from Escondido via automobile (van Dam 1985: 31-32).

3.3.3. *Miramar*

Miramar was located a few miles west of Linda Vista, on the Mesa along the Peñasquitos road. The community center was situated outside the current Station boundary and had a post office, general store, blacksmith and a cemetery. Later, a school and a gas station were built. E.W. Scripps, the newspaperman, and his family were the area's most notable residents and construction and maintenance of their estate was the foundation for the economy in the surrounding area.

The story of Miramar closely resembles that of Linda Vista. And in fact, as discussed earlier, the two names are confused many times in historic documents. As with Linda Vista, the residents of Miramar also struggled from the lack of a permanent water supply and were hit hard by the droughts of the late 1890s. Most of the residents came to the region to make their fortune in agriculture and ranching. The earliest reference to the community appears in the San Diego County Directory in 1895; prior to this time the only town listed in the area was Linda Vista.

The earliest school records for the Miramar School date to 1903 with a notice of school opening. This date appears quite early and no other evidence has been found to authenticate this date. Other sources place the school opening in 1912, with the consolidation of Garfield, Peñasquitos and Linda Vista Schools.

E.W. Scripps traveled from his home in Ohio for a vacation in San Diego in November 1890. He toured the Linda Vista Mesa, visiting land his brother had purchased the year before. E.W. was enthralled by the landscape which reminded him of Algeria, where he had once spent some time recovering from an illness. He was looking for a place to serve as a retreat from his busy life back east. Before leaving San Diego he acquired 400 acres on Linda Vista Mesa. In February the following year, E.W.'s brother Fred began establishing the family ranch. He cleared hundreds of acres, built dams and directed construction of the house (*San Diego Union*; Schaelchin 2003:120-123).

The Scripps family took up residence at their Miramar Ranch in November 1891. It was described as "highly improved by the building of irrigating reservoirs, fine buildings, and many other extensive improvements." The Miramar Ranch became a local landmark with construction ongoing until 1898. In the end, the ranch house was comprised of four wings surrounding a central courtyard with a total of 47 rooms. Several outbuildings were constructed including barns, an aviary, and a 32 room bunkhouse to house the hundred or so servants and ranch hands. E.W. Scripps was also responsible for the construction of several of the roads in the area and for a time, sat on the county Highway Commission (Casserly 1993:16-18).

During the years that followed, E.W. spent more and more of his time at Miramar, eventually retiring in 1908 and making the ranch his permanent home. Following a stroke in 1917, he spent the rest of his life on his yacht, the "Ohio," and died off the coast of Liberia on March 12, 1926 (Preece 1990:109).

The little community of Miramar thrived during the war years. Many families made a living serving the needs of military personnel stationed in the area. As San Diego County continued to grow though, Miramar was lost piece by piece. Construction of Interstate 15 required demolition of much of the original town so arrangements were made to relocate the graves and headstones of the small cemetery to Mount Hope Cemetery, in San Diego (San Diego Library: Scripps Ranch Vertical File 1966).

On July 29, 1969, the Miramar Ranch was sold by the Scripps heirs to the Macco Corporation, who subsequently developed the master-planned residential community of Scripps Ranch. They had planned to retain the mansion and surrounding grounds as a tourist and meeting place. The building was opened to the public but did not bring in enough revenue to be self sufficient. In 1972, the mansion was looted of architectural elements, including chandeliers, carved wood panels, tiles and marble mantles, and even the doorknobs! The house was finally demolished in 1973 (Preece 1990:115-116; Schaelchin 2003: 202).

3.3.4. *Camp Kearny–National Guard (1917-1920)*

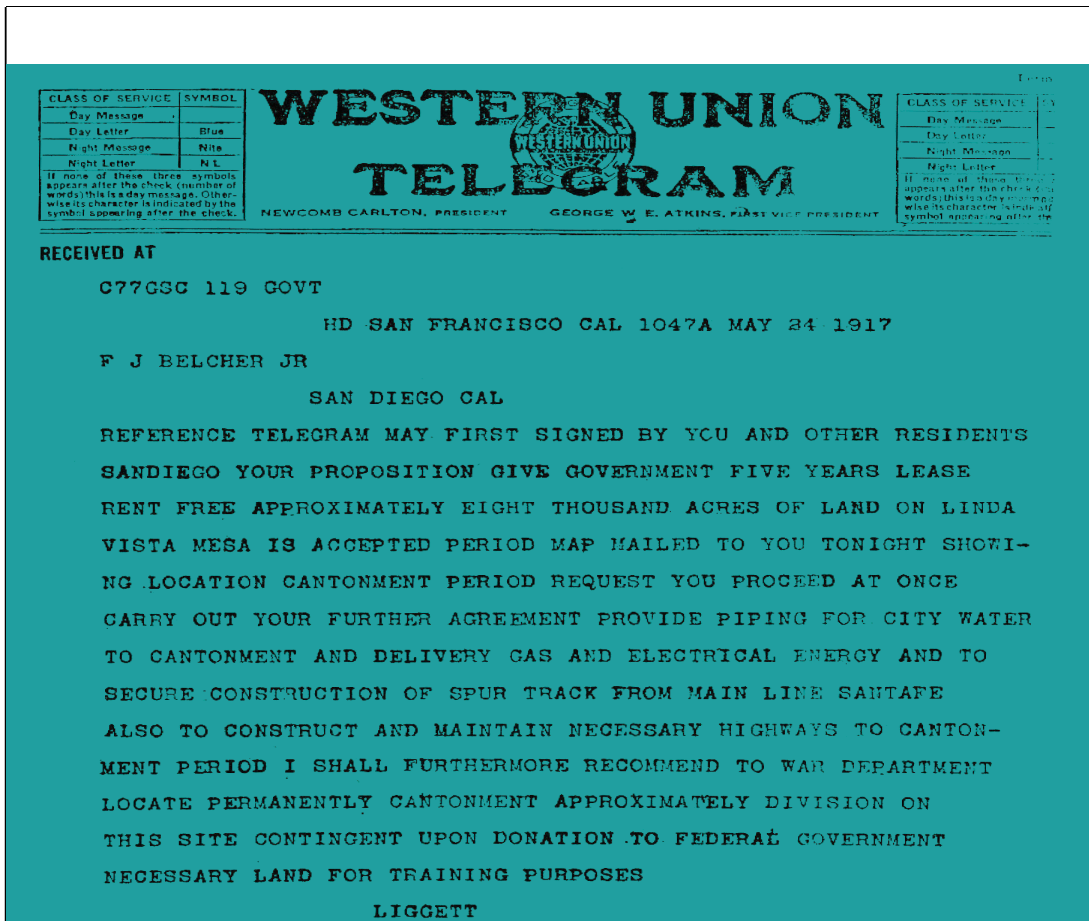
On April 6, 1917 the United States Congress declared war on Germany. A major nationwide defense campaign followed, including the establishment of Camp Kearny. The Army National Guard infantry training center was named for General Stephen Watts Kearney, distinguished Mexican War veteran and governor of territorial California. More

recent spellings have shortened “Kearney” to “Kearny” so the second spelling will be used in further references. The Camp was located within the current Station boundaries, in the area presently serving as the airfield.



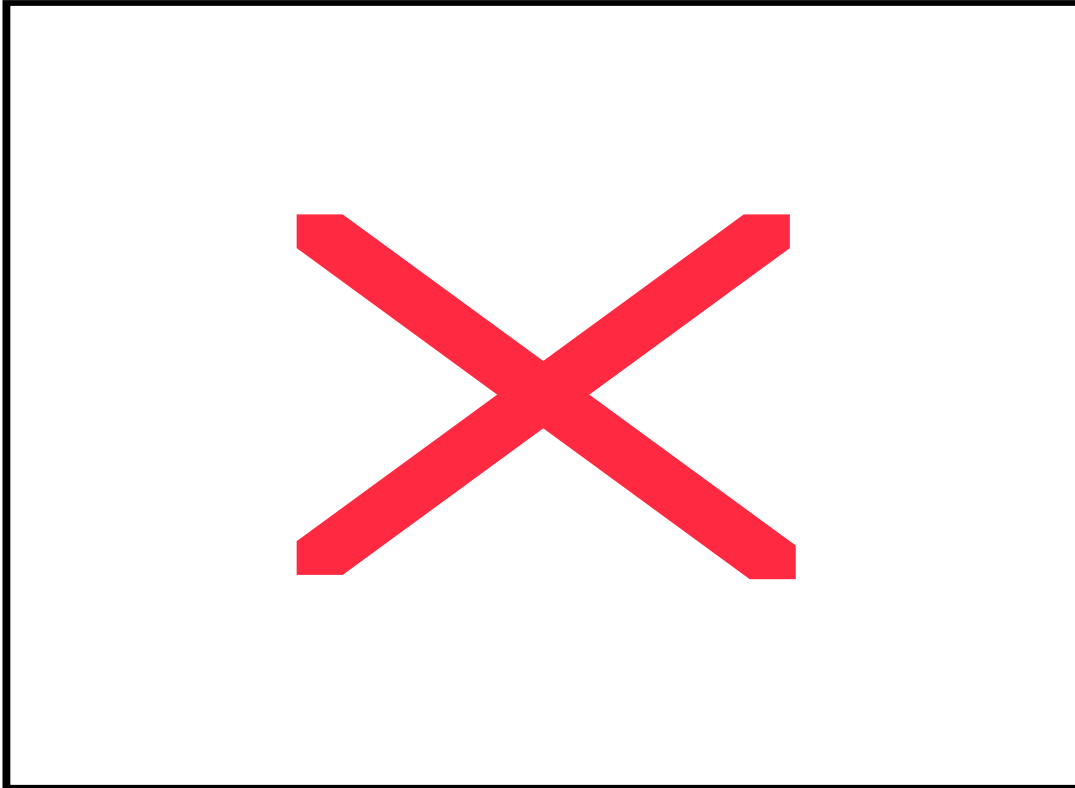
1913 reprint of the 1903 USGS La Jolla 15' quadrangle featuring the USGS later addition of the Camp Kearny boundary. San Diego Pueblo and Ex-mission Rancho boundaries also shown.

Prior to US engagement in World War I, San Diego was in the midst of a contentious mayoral race. The issue at the heart of the contest focused on what San Diegans preferred for the future of their city: smokestacks or geraniums. San Diego chose smokestacks. With its superb harbor perfectly situated to take advantage of the newly opened Panama Canal, San Diego hoped to compete with Los Angeles and San Francisco as the southern-most port on the west coast. Realizing the economic benefits of securing military bases in San Diego, democratic congressman William Kettner used his connections in Washington to push the cause of San Diego. Kettner was responsible for the acquisition of North Island for the joint use of the Army and the Navy.



In support of the war effort, the War Department set out to build 32 new camps (16 National Guard and 16 National Army), planning one for the Southwest. Kettner again championed San Diego, offering Exposition buildings in Balboa Park as well as land on the mesa near Linda Vista. A contentious debate between San Diego and Los Angeles over San Diego's ability to host such a large camp quickly developed in the newspapers. The fight became so vicious that the War Department eliminated both cities as potential locations. Following a meeting between representatives of both cities' Chambers of Commerce, Los Angeles retracted their claims against San Diego. The War Department was encouraged to reconsider southern California and after studying the

comparative costs, San Diego was selected. Particular attention was paid to the geographic advantages, especially the fact that troops could train year round. San Diegans were squarely behind the war effort. In addition to the offer of public lands, 300 people offered their personal automobiles for use by the government (Pourade 1966:225).



1919 Map of Camp Kearny and the surrounding region

In the hope that the Army would establish a permanent presence in San Diego, the city offered further enticements. These included a free five-year lease of 8,000 acres of mesa land, development of infrastructure such as gas, electricity and water, construction and maintenance of necessary highways to the cantonment, and construction of a railroad spur connecting the Camp with the Santa Fe line (SDHS Camp Kearny file). On May 24, 1917, San Diego received word that Linda Vista had been chosen for the Camp and the decision was made official with the immediate approval of the Secretary of War. (SDHS Camp Kearny file). The government also leased an adjoining 5,000 acres from private interests to be used as a practice and maneuver area. The War Department contracted Hampton Construction to build the cantonment.

Camp Kearny was truly an “instant city.” At the time, the Camp was considered one of the best ever designed by Army engineers. It was planned to accommodate 30,000 men and 10,000 cavalry horses and mules. These numbers were significant considering that the population of San Diego in 1910 was only 39,578 (U.S. Census 1910). The facilities were comprised of 1,162 buildings including 696 main structures. There were 10 warehouses and 140 mess halls, each capable of seating 250 men at one time; 35,000 men

could be served in a single seating (*San Diego Union* 8-22-1917 1:6; SDHS Camp Kearny file). Within the Camp there were almost five miles of concrete roads and over 15 miles of dirt roads (Kinman: 1920:2). Once fully operational, the Camp used as much electricity as the entire City of San Diego.

The main cantonment, which covered approximately 5.5 square miles, was organized around the parade grounds with company barracks to the north and south, and regimental storehouses beyond. Each company had two rows of tents arranged on a north-south axis with lavatory buildings in the center. Mess buildings were situated on the north side of the main cantonment road, which was paved (*San Diego Union* 8-22-1917 1:6; SDHS Camp Kearny file; JRP 2001:8). Stables were located around the perimeter of the Camp on both the north and south sides.

The Camp hospital constituted the second major collection of buildings. The complex covered approximately 60 acres and was situated northwest of the main cantonment. The hospital rivaled the best medical institutions in the country and could accommodate 1,000 patients. A total of 50 buildings were planned, each with dietitian kitchens and rooms for patients. Other buildings within the complex included laboratories, psychological clinics, barracks for the hospital staff, warehouses for supplies, and a Red Cross building for convalescents, constructed in the shape of a cross. The Knights of Columbus and the Y.M.C.A. also maintained buildings within the hospital complex (*San Diego Union* 8-18-1917 1:7; 3-5-1918 6:3; 3-12-1918 1:6; Van Wormer and Walter 2003 5-8).

The smallest area of the Camp was the remount station. Located one mile southwest of the main cantonment, the remount depot was responsible for supplying horses and mules for the cavalry and artillery units. The station was mainly comprised of large corrals capable of holding up to 10,000 animals. Beyond the corrals there were breeding quarters, feed storehouses, and veterinary buildings as well as officers' quarters and housing for several hundred enlisted men (*San Diego Union* 5-29-1917 1:5; 8-22-1917 1:6).

Construction of the Camp began almost immediately following the announcement of the proposed location. Work proceeded at a rapid rate. Crews worked around the clock to have the Camp ready for the troops who were to arrive in mid-September. Army engineers arrived in July to delineate the project sites for the various contractors and Army construction quartermasters were on hand throughout most of the project to oversee the work (*San Diego Union* 7-15-1917 5:4; 9-9-1917). Once construction began, ten carloads of building materials were transported by rail to the Camp each day (*San Diego Union* 7-28-1917 1:6).



1918 panoramic main cantonment, Camp Kearny (Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division)



1917 remount, Camp Kearny (Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division)

While the Camp was under construction, sightseers became such a nuisance that *the San Diego Union* ran a piece requesting that the public not interrupt the men constructing the Camp:

Don't bother the men who are preparing the big camp on the Linda Vista Mesa...Automobiles went to the camp by the hundreds yesterday, and the constant stream of these vehicles not only interfered with the running of army trucks, but clogged the road near the Linda Vista Station and had the guards busy with the task of keeping the road open for ordinary traffic. Some of the sightseers actually swarmed in among the tents, getting their heads bumped by the men carrying timber... (5-28-1917 1:2).

Construction costs of the cantonment were considerable. The Federal government disbursed more than one and one quarter million dollars to the Hampton Company, though the cost was reportedly as high as three million dollars (*San Diego Union* 5/23/1917 1:5; Cooley, Crawford and James 1996: 2-23). Another report estimates that construction costs totaled approximately \$4,253,000 by June 1919 (Hinds 1986:71). The City of San Diego invested \$156,000 in transportation and water, the installation of gas cost \$120,000, and electrical utility installation cost \$50,000. The Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad constructed the spur track to the Camp for \$20,000, and Pacific Telephone & Telegraph invested \$70,000 in the Camp (SDHS Camp Kearny file). Once the Camp was fully operational, it was expected that supplies would cost approximately \$1,000,000 per month and that payroll per day would cost approximately \$30,000. (*San Diego Union* 5/23/1917 1:5; SDHS Camp Kearny file).

On September 16, 1917, by General Order No. 7, Major General Frederick S. Strong organized the 40th Infantry Division (Sunshine Division) at Camp Kearny. The Division was made up of National Guard artillery, infantry and cavalry brigades from Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, and Utah. The Sunshine Division was coined the "bone and sinew of the Great West, full of boldness, replete with a spirit of initiative and practicality." They were said to have been some of the best prepared troops as many of the units had recently been released from active duty protecting the border between the U.S. and Mexico (n.a. 1920:25). The first troops to arrive at Camp Kearny were from California. Those from neighboring states followed, and it was estimated that 100 trains would be needed to transport the entire force (SDHS Camp Kearny file). With the arrival of additional recruits on October 31, the 40th increased to 20,000 and by mid-November the Division swelled to 30,000 soldiers (*San Diego Union* 11-1-1917 6:1; 11-18-1917 1:3). When the Division was at full strength, training commenced at a divisional scale. Troops trained day and night, under every condition they were likely to find on the battlefield.

The 40th Division remained at Camp Kearny until July 26, 1918, when they were moved to Camp Mills, Long Island, New York to prepare to sail for Europe. Leaving the U.S. on August 9, they reached England by August 20 and arrived in France on August 24, 1918. In France, the Division was divided to reinforce Divisions that had sustained

enormous casualties in a series of Allied strikes. The “Sunshiners” served with the 26th Division in the trenches in Toul and with the 77th National Army Division through the Argonne Forest. Men were also assigned with the 28th, 80th, 81st, 82^d and 89th Divisions. (n.a. 1920:26-26). Armistice was declared on November 11, 1918 and the demobilization effort brought the 40th Division back to Camp Kearny in March 1919.

Training at the Camp occurred during the “modernization era,” a time in which the U.S. military implemented use of motorized vehicles while continuing to rely on horses for mounted cavalry strikes and transportation of equipment and supplies (JPR 2001:7). Mounted exercise was a major component of training at the Camp as evidenced by the size of the remount station. Other drills included repelling bayonet charges after gas attacks as well as cutting barbed wire entanglements while under live fire (SDHS Camp Kearny file)! The Sunshiners also benefited from training with experienced French and British officers attached to the Camp (n.a. 1920:23).

Ranges were placed near the main cantonment to reduce transit time and were adapted for both infantry and artillery training. The known distance ranges were located north of the main camp and included 200 short-range, 34 mid-range and six long-range targets for infantry practice. Located east of these was a machine gun range with a 1000-inch gun as well as a combat firing range for small arms and machine gun practice. At least nine pistol ranges were located in the canyons surrounding the Camp. Artillery was practiced southeast of the main cantonment on a range that was suitable for all kinds of field artillery (Kinman 1920:2-3).

Construction on a system of trenches, like those the men would encounter in Europe, started in October 1917. Following the model in use at the San Francisco Presidio, communication trenches, a trench hospital, underground quarters and a subterranean kitchen were included (SDHS Camp Kearny file). The trenches were excavated at the edge of San Clemente Canyon, south of the main cantonment and east of the remount station. The Division received training in chemical warfare at Camp Kearny, as chemical weapons were used in a significant way for the first time. A gas house was constructed in which soldiers would be exposed to gases known to be used by the German armies. The men were to be prepared for a chemical attack at all times and were required to carry two gasmasks. A one-tenth concentration of gas was used in the trench exercises during live fire maneuvers to simulate battlefield conditions. Though the gas was diluted, it had an ill effect on those men who were exposed and it was thought to be both a learning experience and a punishment for lack of preparation (*San Diego Union* 2-18-1918 6:1):

[D]uring the evening’s operations six men were mildly gassed, due to the failure to observe the rules as to adjusting and inspecting their respirators. Not one of the men who received a few whiffs of the gas and was rendered sick suffered any serious effects from his experience (*San Diego Union* 2-18-1918 6:1)

The 40th Division had perhaps the first company of bakers, organized on September 20, 1917. The Division Bakery Company, No. 323, was attached to the quartermaster’s department and was sent to the war front with the first departure (SDHS Camp Kearny

file). The company was responsible for baking bread for the entire Division. As each soldier's daily bread ration was 18 ounces, the company was required to produce almost 34,000 pounds of bread per day (Deitrck, 1916). Only expert bakers were recruited for the job as the work of producing bread for thousands of men in the field required previous experience.

The Camp hospital began operation on September 1, 1917, and was temporarily housed in tents until work on the permanent building complex was finished. By November 26, the buildings were complete enough that patients could be transferred inside. The complex included a well-equipped laboratory for bacteriological and pathological studies (*San Diego Union* 8-18-1917 1:7) and a psychological clinic to study "dementia praecox, an ailment which takes the form of an incurable shiftlessness, and is brought out quickly when a man is placed under the rigid routine of the Army" (*San Diego Union* 3-5-1918 6:3). Later, psychological wards were established at each divisional camp to perform psychological exams on the recruits. The hospital complex had dental infirmaries with waiting rooms, operating rooms, and laboratories. Housing barracks for hospital staff were located in the complex (*San Diego Union* 3-1 5-1918 7:1). To encourage exercise and positive morale among the convalescents, the complex also had an athletic field, a cinder running track and a baseball diamond (*San Diego Union* 4-6-1918 6:6).

Morale building through entertainment and recreation was a major priority at the Camp. San Diego was about 14 miles south and travel between the Camp and the city was limited, especially when the Camp was first established. Several welfare agencies had facilities on the Camp grounds including the Young Men's Christian Association (Y.M.C.A.), the Jewish Welfare Board, the Red Cross, and the Knights of Columbus. The American Library Association organized and maintained a camp library and the army established service clubs, provided education and athletic programs, and operated the 2,500 seat Liberty Theater.

From Camp Kearny's earliest days, the Y.M.C.A. provided the soldiers with recreational opportunities. The Y.M.C.A. was initially housed in a large tent and was prepared to serve as the first troops arrived. As additional men arrived, services increased and the first building, Number Three, was opened September 26, 1917. Offices were established throughout the main cantonment as well as at the hospital and the remount station. A total of eight "huts" in camp were occupied by the Y.M.C.A., each serving an average of 5,000 servicemen per day. The huts were designed as a comfortable environment to provide the soldiers the feeling of home. The "Y" also provided three movies a week, vaudeville acts, lectures by prominent educators, athletic programs, and religious services on Sundays. Night classes offered 15 to 20 different subjects including English, French and Mathematics. About 600 men attended classes each night. The library included several thousand books and several major city newspapers. The Camp paper, *Trench and Camp*, was also provided free of charge (*Trench and Camp* 1918:153; n.a. 1920:157).

The Jewish Welfare Board, another important office in Camp dedicated to morale building of U.S. servicemen, served a function similar to the Y.M.C.A. They provided recreational, educational, social, and religious services to the men of Camp Kearny.

Entertainment and dances were put on weekly. In addition to these services, members of the Jewish Welfare Board visited the Camp hospital daily, delivering small comforts such as fruits and cigarettes (*Trench and Camp* 1918:157; n.a. 1920:161).

The Red Cross established a Bureau of Camp Service and Military Relief in the fall of 1917. Their work focused on supplying the men with comfort items and things they would need while overseas. They also provided infirmaries with materials for emergency use and advised and counseled the troops. Unfortunately, the Red Cross wasn't prepared to provide their full services until after the Sunshiners had departed for Europe. Instead, the Red Cross buildings provided temporary residence for the families of servicemen who were critically ill (*Trench and Camp* 1918: 156; n.a. 1920:160).

These organizations supplied the troops with sporting equipment of all kinds. Additionally, the Camp provided supplies and facilities for the men through the Commission on Training Camp Activities, which helped support athletics as the major pastime of the soldiers. Not only did athletics keep morale high, it also fostered physical development and supplemented military training. Almost any sport imaginable was offered, but the most popular were baseball and football. Other sports played at the Camp included basketball, boxing, track, tennis, skating, volleyball, polo and tug of war. Many of the units organized teams and the Camp was represented in the service leagues of San Diego. Camp Kearny teams also competed against civilian teams in the region.

Following the announcement of armistice, all construction on the Camp ceased. The Army designated the Camp as one of its demobilization points. Upon return to the states, men were shipped to the camps nearest their homes for recuperation and final examinations (*San Diego Union* 11-27-1918 6:6). Thousands of men returned to Camp Kearny, each needing a detailed physical examination before discharge. In February 1919, it was reported that the Camp would also serve as a convalescent center. Men requiring more thorough attention were kept at the convalescent facility until they regained their health (*San Diego Union* 12-15-1918 6:4). With the end of the war, the hospital complex was turned over to the United States Public Health Service (USPHS).

In addition to providing healthcare, the convalescent center encouraged recuperation through vocational training in such areas as automotive repair, stenotype and typewriting, light construction and tractor operation. A wide range of practical skills were offered including tailoring, hat restoration, shoe repair, and basket weaving (*San Diego Union* 3-10-1919). Convalescents too weak for regular duty were given restorative training with light recreational drills (*San Diego Union* 4-16-1918 6:4).

The Camp was closed on October 31, 1920 and in the years that followed, most of the buildings were either salvaged or demolished. The hospital complex was standing and appeared to have been maintained on the 1928 aerial photos for San Diego County. The buildings are shown on the 1930 U.S.G.S. La Jolla quadrangle map, but despite an intensive literature search, a reference for the closing of the USPHS hospital was not found. Mention of the hospital in various newspaper articles would suggest that it was out of use by 1930. The hospital compound continued to be shown on maps as late as

1936, however only five buildings remained standing. Surveyors for the La Jolla quadrangle in 1938, issued in 1943, show the compound streets vacant of any structures.

3.3.5. Camp Holcomb/Elliott (1934-1944)

Following World War I, San Diego's proximity to the newly opened Panama Canal greatly enhanced its importance as a strategic location for the U.S. military, particularly for the Navy and Marine Corps. Facilities at North Island were expanded and work was completed on the Marine Advanced Expeditionary Base on Dutch Flats, adjacent to San Diego Harbor. In August 1923, the West Coast Marine Recruit Training Station was relocated to San Diego and in March 1924, the Base was renamed Marine Corps Base, Naval Operating Base. The Base was expanded to accommodate the 4th Marine Regiment when they located to San Diego, and became headquarters for the Fleet Marine Force and home to the 2nd Brigade in 1935. This increase in troops, coupled with San Diego's population growth served to eventually limit the types of training that could be conducted at the Base (Denger 2003).

In 1934, in response to the need for additional training areas, the Marines rented the artillery ranges of former Camp Kearny to train in the use of machine guns, artillery, and anti-aircraft weaponry. The new Combat Range, named Camp Holcomb for Major General Thomas Holcomb, the ninth Commandant of the Marine Corps, was expected to temporarily alleviate pressure on the Marine Corps Base. Though the Camp was less than nine miles from Marine Corps Base San Diego, it was known among the men as the "boondocks" (Holzman 1995:3; Jones 1943:1). A few makeshift huts were built, but the tract did not resemble a military camp. The Marines expected to use the Camp only six to eight months a year, during the dry season (Jones 1943:5).



Artillery ranges (MCAS Miramar Photo Collection)

Although the U.S. had proclaimed neutrality in the war in Europe, recommendations were made that the Fleet Marine Force acquire property for combat training in September 1939. In the months that followed, a survey of possible sites was conducted within a 60 mile radius surrounding San Diego. The new training area would have to be large enough to provide facilities for all phases of technical and tactical training of the Fleet Marine Force. It was decided that Camp Holcomb was the most desirable location in terms of access and suitability. The presence of well-traveled roads, telephone and power lines, and the availability of city water strengthened the decision (Board of Inspection 08-25-1939). In December 1939, with approval from the Department of the Navy, the Marine Corps leased roughly 19,000 acres of mesa land, including the Combat Range Camp Holcomb. Two years later, on May 7, 1941, the U.S. government secured possession of the land by a declaration of taking (Blakely 6-20-1941). Through further acquisitions, the Camp was enlarged to nearly 32,000 acres. On June 14, 1940, by order of Commandant Holcomb, the base was redesignated Camp Elliott for Major-General Gorge F. Elliot, the tenth Commandant of the Marine Corps (Ashurst 6-20-1940).



West gate of Camp Elliott from Highway 395 (courtesy of MCRD Museum Historical Society).

The 6th Marines arrived at Camp Elliott and began construction of the first buildings in June 1940. Life at Camp Elliott was rough and primitive in the beginning. All of the facilities were temporary and consisted of galleys, mess halls and a 2,000 man tent camp (Holzman 1995:3; n.a. 1947:280). The Camp would not be the “boondocks” for long though. Construction began in July. Twelve two-story temporary wood frame barracks, officer’s quarters, and all necessary utilities were established to accommodate three

battalions (n.a. 1947:280). The Camp's water supply was connected in October (Holzman 1995:11). Construction was completed in late December and the Camp was ready for occupation when the 8th Marine Regiment arrived in January, 1941. In May 1941, construction began on an additional 12 barracks and necessary service buildings, mess halls, and storehouses to accommodate an additional regiment. Non-commissioned officer and bachelor quarters, recreation areas and seven additional magazines were finished in the summer of 1941 (n.a. 1947:281).

Camp Elliott had an incredibly busy year in 1941. The 8th Regiment dedicated their colors upon their arrival at Camp Elliott on January 1, 1941. The 1st and 2nd battalions of the "Hollywood Reserves" (10th Marines) arrived shortly after, and the 2nd Marines were activated at Camp Elliott the following month. Preparation for possible U.S. involvement in the war in Europe required a restructuring of the organization. On February 1, the 2nd Marine Brigade was redesignated as the 2nd Marine Division and on June 1, 1941, the Division established headquarters at Camp Elliott.

Five separate commands were quartered at Camp Elliott: 1) Headquarters for the Fleet Marine Force, San Diego Area, 2) the Fleet Marine Force Training Center, 3) the Troop Training Unit, Amphibious Training Command, Pacific Fleet, 4) the Marine Barracks, and 5) the Base Depot. Each command was separate and distinct with specific responsibilities. Four of the five commands located at Camp Elliott fell within the jurisdiction of the Fleet Marine Force, under the command of General Clayton B. Vogel. Of these four, the largest and most complex operation was the Fleet Marine Force Training Center (Jones 1943:3).

In February 1942, Camp Elliott was designated as a Fleet Marine Force Training Center and was activated under the command of Colonel Matthew H. Kingman on April 20, 1942. Previous to this, training at the Camp had focused on the tactical unit rather than the individual soldier. The priority was to provide specialized advanced warfare training of replacements for combat units overseas. Facilities for the Training Center were initially rudimentary, as described by Lieutenant Jones, who served at Camp Elliott:

The original Training Center, starting out with a total strength of only 66 officers and men, occupied a tent camp at Linda Vista, a mile or so north of the main Elliott encampment. Linda Vista didn't boast so much as the suggestion of a permanent building. Officers and men alike lived under canvas, ate chow out of mess gear, and did without hot water (1943:7).

The Training Center had approximately thirty schools that taught a wide range of subjects including individual combat and modern infantry. Following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the Corps was flooded with new recruits and the Training Center grew rapidly. At the height of operations Camp Elliott housed as many as 15,000 men. By 1943, over 50,000 men had been trained and were deployed to the Pacific Theater.

The Camp was comprised of a 2,500-acre main cantonment supported by several satellite camps. The remaining several thousand undeveloped acres were used for training. Main Camp was located east of Highway 395, at the intersection with Murphy Canyon Road. It was an oblong block, extending from the highway and was situated on either side of the Old Escondido Road (Highway 3). All barracks were located south of Highway 3, in a line paralleling the road. A similar line of storehouses was found south of the barracks, followed by mess halls. Two large above-ground reservoirs were located where Highways 3 and 395 joined, north of the barracks, as was the guard house, and the minimum security brig. Located adjoining the east end of the barracks, the Camp supply depot, a 193 acre tract housing nine large warehouses, was completed by the summer of 1943. The old Camp Kearny spur track was extended to connect the warehouse district at Camp Elliott to the railroad at Linda Vista, four miles west (n.a. 1947:289). Most of the Camp's recreation facilities were located north of the Old Escondido Road, including three auditoriums, baseball diamonds and handball, basketball and tennis courts. The Camp maintained a chapel, three large theaters, two post-exchanges, a uniform emporium, several clubs (including an officers' club) and soda fountains. A post office, bank, laundry, dentist, tailor and barbershops were also maintained within the cantonment (Jones 1943:3). At the height of operation, there were 25 ranges, five areas for individual combat training and tank maneuvers, two obstacle courses, a grenade court, debarkation course, a combat reaction course, four bayonet courses, and a bayonet assault course (Jones 1943:13). By the end of 1943, construction on nearly all training areas was complete or was well underway (n.a. 1947:289).

In May of 1942, six satellite camps were formally established in order to keep up with the increased training and organizational needs of the growing Camp. Buildings were limited to the Main Camp and the auxiliary camps: Linda Vista Tent Camp, Greens Farm and Jacques Farm Camp. At least three other smaller camps also existed within Camp Elliot: Valley Camp, River Camp and Oak Canyon Camp. These did not maintain permanent structures, rather they were used as bivouac sites while troops were on extended exercises.

Linda Vista Tent Camp was located in the northwestern portion of Camp Elliott, approximately one mile north of Main Camp along Highway 395, and was the original headquarters of the Fleet Marine Training Center. The already flat mesa lands had been previously cleared and further leveled to create an early airfield known as Linda Vista Field (Barksdale 1936). The Training Center exploited the site to create a tent bivouac area with similar conditions to those recruits would find overseas. In September 1942, General Kingman moved his staff to Main Camp, where they developed additional schools including the Motor Transport and Field Medical Schools; the Field Medical Schools were assigned to the Linda Vista Tent Camp (Holzman 1995:21). Later, when the Main Camp barracks became overcrowded, the tent city was used as an emergency camp for trained units waiting for transport overseas.



Camp Elliott 1950 Main Camp and Linda Vista Tent Camp
(courtesy of MCAS Miramar Public Works Department).

Activated October 5, 1943, the Field Medical Battalion was assigned to Camp Linda Vista following the transfer of the Training Center's Headquarters to the main cantonment. The Field Medical Battalion was unique to the Training Center as its ranks were made up of Navy personnel rather than Marines. Students were from the Hospital and Medical Corps assigned combat duty with the Marine Corps. The mission of the school was to train the sailors in combat duties as well as self-preservation in land and amphibious actions. Students were not taught medicine, except as it pertained to field techniques, and were required to have been fully trained in medicine and first aid as hospital apprentices (Jones 1943:61-64).

The Field Medical Battalion also housed the School of Chemical Warfare for officers and non-commissioned officers. Instruction in the history of chemical warfare was given as well as military chemistry and identification of chemical agents, first aid for gas victims, and training in the use of protective devices (Jones 1943:65-66).

Although the Linda Vista tent Camp lacked all but the most basic comforts, it served to house the complete range of Marine units. On October 28, 1942, the 2nd Airdrome Battalion was activated there. They were intended to be stationed in the China-Burma Theater, however following the loss of airfields in the region, focus was changed to that of a defense battalion. The group was a specialized organization charged with the defense of bases, airfields and beaches. They trained on Elliott's ranges as well as with the Army at Camp Callan and the Pacific Beach Training Center. In January 1943, the Airdrome was transferred to Camp Dunlap, Niland, California. Later, they served on the Ellice Islands, near Fiji, before being transferred to Hawaii where they were redesignated the 17th defense Battalion (Henry n.d.).

A Sniper and Scout School and Officer Candidate Detachment were located at Green's Farm along Highway 3, in the northeastern portion of the Camp, approximately five miles from the main cantonment. The Camp housed the Sniper and Scout school with the mission to teach the men scouting and sniping techniques as well as the development of self-reliance and knowledge of jungle living. The top five men of each class were sent to Camp Pendleton for additional training with the Marine Raiders. All graduates were assigned to a combat unit as either a scout or sniper (Jones 1943:56-57).

The Officer Candidate Detachment (School) was established to instruct qualified candidates in the subjects they would encounter while attending Candidates Class, and to select non-commissioned officers for transfer to Quantico for further training. In addition, students participated in refresher math courses and review of basic training, infantry and tactical instruction. Less than 50 percent of the students graduated and were sent to Quantico (Jones 1943:56-59).

Jacques Farm, located at the extreme southwest corner of the Camp, was originally used as a bivouac and training area for the 2nd Tank Battalion, and later by the 2nd Marine Raiders (Guillemette n.d.). In August 1942, the Marine Corps' only tank school was established at "the Farm." The Tank Battalion was formed six months later, headquartered in an old farmhouse alongside a dry, rocky creek bed. The Camp was

outfitted with a few temporary sheds and stockades and could house up to 1,200 trainees at a time. The Camp was almost completely self-sufficient and boasted mess and recreational facilities, a post exchange, classrooms, an outdoor theater, shops, medical services, and maintenance facilities. The Battalion's mission was to train officers and recruits in all aspects of tank operation and maintenance. By 1943, approximately 3,500 officers and men graduated from Jacques Farm (Jones 1942:22-30).



Barracks, possibly Jacques Farm (Library of Congress Print and Photographs Division).

In February 1942, the 2nd Marine Raider Battalion was activated at Camp Elliott, headquartered at Jacques Farm. Inspired by the British Commandos, the Raiders were an elite force formed to strike the enemy by surprise. The Battalion was highly successful in the early stages of the war in the Pacific. The 2nd Battalion was under the command of Colonel Evans Carlson assisted by Major James Roosevelt, eldest son of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Carlson was a major force in the creation of the Raiders. Prior to the U.S. entry into war, he was assigned to study Chinese guerilla operations and was greatly impressed. It was Carlson who introduced the Communist Chinese phrase “Gung-ho” (work together) into the Marine vocabulary. By May, the Raiders were headed for the South Pacific, ultimately serving in battles on Midway and the New Hebrides Islands, Guadalcanal, and the Makin Atoll (Conlee 1996:5, 15).

While at Camp Elliott, Major Roosevelt began recruiting units for another Raider group. The 4th Raider Battalion, under Roosevelt's command, was activated October 23, 1942, at Camp Pendleton. The 4th was the last Raider Battalion to be formed during the conflict. March 14, 1943, the 1st Marine Raider Regiment, composed of the four Marine Raider Battalions, was organized on Espiritu Santo Island, New Hebrides. The Raiders were reorganized into the 4th Marines in February 1944 (Conlee 1996:16).

One of the most successful classified projects of World War II was initiated at Camp Elliott: the Navajo Code. Following impressive trial demonstrations, hundreds of Navaho Indians were recruited to develop a code based on their language. They would also serve as specialists in the Signal Corps as "Code Talkers." Following their recruit training, the original 29 Navaho Code Talkers, 382nd Platoon, were ordered to Camp Elliot (McClain 2001:45).

The use of the Navajo language as a code for the Marine Corps was the idea of Philip Johnson. His parents, Presbyterian missionaries, moved the family to Arizona when Johnson was only four years old. He had little interaction with non-Navaho children and as a result he learned to speak a reasonably good form of "Trader" Navaho. Johnson attended college at the University of California, Los Angeles and was working as an engineer for the City of Los Angeles when Pearl Harbor was attacked. He immediately contacted the regional officer of the Marines Signal Office to explain his idea (McClain 2001:24-25; Bixler 1995:39). In his proposal Johnson stressed the complexity of the Navajo language, which was unwritten at the time. Furthermore, he explained that fluency required exposure from birth. He emphasized that he was one of few exceptions; very few outside the reservation could understand the language.

The U.S. Army in a few instances during World War 1, had used Native American languages to code secret messages with some success; Johnson's idea stemmed from these efforts. Johnson was notified that the Marines were interested and a presentation was requested. Native speakers were solicited to help with the presentation from a Los Angeles based job placement agency (McClain 2001:24-25). The demonstration was given February 28, 1942 and won the audience, including Major General Vogel, Commanding General of the Amphibious Force, Pacific Fleet. General Vogel sought and received approval from Commandant Holcomb to recruit 200 Navaho for duty, with the expectation that they would enlist as general duty Marines; none would have special status as interpreters. By April, the Marine Corps recruiter arrived at Fort Defiance Arizona to solicit the Navaho. All recruits were required to be fluent in English and Navajo. They were not informed of the reason for their recruitment, only that it was a "special" assignment (McClain 2001:37-38).

After conducting interviews for about two weeks, the recruiter had enlisted 29 men. They were notified to report to Fort Defiance on May 4, 1942 for transport to San Diego. The recruits fared well in boot camp, and during graduation, the Commanding Officer of the Recruit Depot praised their performance. Following graduation, the platoon was ordered to Camp Elliott, without the customary 10 days of leave. They marched from San Diego to the Camp, arriving June 28, 1942. The following day, still unaware of the status of

their duty, the group was escorted to a classroom where they learned that they would play an important role in history. It was explained that the Marine Corps believed a code based on the Navajo language could be created and utilized during battle. The group had the responsibility of constructing an alphabet and finding accurate equivalents for military terms not found in the Navajo language. The original 29 recruits invented the code with just limited direction from command. Although Johnson conceived of the idea for using the Navajo language, he had no part in the development of the alphabet or the code. Johnson never taught a class or developed a single word of code; instead he served as an administrator for the school, acting as a liaison between the Navajo instructors and the commanders (McClain 2001:37-46; Bixler 1995:42).

The first field test of the code was conducted in late July and it caused quite a stir, up and down the California coast. The Coast Guard intercepted the transmission, reporting they heard a strange, possibly hostile language. The entire California coast was put on Red Alert. The incident was cleared up and a new policy was established requiring that North Island be informed before the Code was used during field exercises (McClain 2001:57-59).

In early 1943, the Navajo School was moved from Elliot to Camp Pendleton as part of the transition to Fleet Marine Force training (Guillemette 2003). The school remained at Pendleton for the rest of the war and many more Navajo were trained in the Code. It is estimated that by the end of the war, somewhere between 375 and 420 Navajo had participated in the Code Talker program (U.S.N.A.R.A. 2003).

Following their training at Camp Elliott, the original 29 Code Talkers were assigned throughout the 1st and 2nd Marine Divisions, including the Raider Battalions. They saw action on many of the Pacific islands including Guadalcanal, Bougainville, Saipan, Guam and Iwo Jima, often serving on the front lines. The Code proved indispensable, allowing sensitive messages to be sent and translated in a matter of minutes as compared to the hours required by the codex machines. The Navajo Code saved unknown thousands of Marines, and to the creators' credit, it was never broken (Bixler 1995).

As with the Code Talker School, many facilities at Elliott were moved to Camp Pendleton in the early months of 1943. Camp Elliott was never intended to be permanent and prior to its establishment, concerns was raised regarding its small size. It was feared there wasn't room for full divisional exercises. Overriding the concern about inadequate area, the Camp's relative close location to San Diego and the rifle range at Camp Matthews (now University of California San Diego) was the deciding factor. Troops could hike to the various facilities instead of requiring transport by truck. However, the search for additional space began almost immediately after establishment of the Camp, and was intensified following the attack on Pearl Harbor. In April 1942, the Navy announced they had acquired the enormous Rancho Santa Margarita y Las Flores, in the northeastern corner of San Diego County.

Work on the new Base began immediately. The first Marine units arrived in early September 1942, following a 40 mile hike up the coast from Camp Elliott. On September 25, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt officially dedicated Camp Pendleton in honor of Major General Joseph H. Pendleton, the long time proponent of a West Coast training installation. Consolidation of Camp Elliott with Pendleton began shortly after.

As the Navy Training Center and Marine Corps Base at Dutch Flats continued to grow, they eventually pushed against each other hindering further development. The Navy became increasingly interested in the Marine Base, and with the establishment of Camp Pendleton they pressured the Corps to relinquish control of the San Diego Base. Instead, the Marine Corps offered Camp Elliot. The proposal was half-heartedly accepted and the announcement was made April 1, 1944. Preparations for the move began immediately. The final schools and Marine units were transferred to Camp Pendleton by June 30. At the time, the Camp Elliott property was worth an estimated nine million dollars. (Holzman 1996:27).

In late June, the Navy took charge of the Camp, which was operated primarily as a training and distribution center. The Marines, however, continued to maintain two areas: Jacques Farm (the primary tank school of the Corps), and Green Farm (the officer candidate training school). Following the end of conflict, the Camp served as a separation center for troops returning from battle and was deactivated in 1946.

Following WWII, the property served a variety of temporary uses including use as the headquarters for the National Guard 251st Group as well as an illegal immigrant detention camp operated by the Immigration and Naturalization Service. With the onset of the Korean conflict, the Navy reactivated Camp Elliot as Naval Training Center Elliott Annex (Hinds 1986: 78-80; Holzman 1996:27). It served as an auxiliary training center from 1951 to 1953 for additional recruits from NTC San Diego. In 1960, the Camp was decommissioned and was divided between NAS Miramar and the Air Force for the creation of the Atlas Missile test facility. Sycamore Annex was developed by General Dynamics under direction of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) as a high security testing area used in the development of the Atlas and Centaur missiles. In 1966, the facility was transferred to NASA and by 1969, the site was classified as surplus property and title was transferred to the General Services Administration. In December 1972, the parcel was transferred to the Navy, to be included in the NAS Miramar property.

3.3.6. Naval Auxiliary Air Station Camp Kearny (1943-1946)

The Army never established a permanent air field at Camp Kearny, though planes had landed on the parade grounds since 1918. In the years following the war, the parade grounds were occasionally used as an emergency landing strip for planes out of North Island. The most notable use of the parade grounds occurred in 1927 when Charles Lindbergh load tested his monoplane, “the Spirit of St. Louis,” before leaving for New York (Pourade 1968: 95; Shepard 1994:3).

After World War I, the U.S. Navy became increasingly interested in lighter-than-air vehicles. Naval Air Station (NAS) Lakehurst, New Jersey, was established as the center for the lighter-than-air program. NAS Lakehurst served as home port for the U.S.S. Shenandoah, the Navy's first rigid dirigible, commissioned in 1923. The use of lighter-than-air vehicles became prevalent in the years between the wars. Believing in the future of the airships, Rear Admiral Moffett, Chief of the Bureau of Aeronautics, urged congress to fund a second base, explaining that the largest portion of the naval fleet was stationed in the Pacific. California's temperate weather, said to be perfect for aeronautical training, was also a major factor in Moffett's desire to locate a base on the West Coast (*San Diego Union* 6-13-1930 1:2). Several California cities competed for the Base and by the summer of 1930, the choice had been narrowed to two sites: Sunnyvale, near San Francisco and San Diego, the former site of Camp Kearny. San Diego newspapers thoroughly chronicled the drama as it unfolded (*San Diego Union* 6-8-1930 1:1). To San Diego's dismay, in December 1930, 18 of the 20 members of the House Naval Committee approved the bill approving the Sunnyvale location (*San Diego Union* 12-12-1930 1:5). President Herbert Hoover signed the bill authorizing Sunnyvale as the Pacific home of the U.S. Navy's dirigible fleet on February 13, 1931 (*San Diego Union* 2-14-1931: 2:3).

Following the approval of Sunnyvale, another bill was introduced authorizing the purchase of Camp Kearny to be used as an auxiliary dirigible base (*San Diego Union* 12-12-1930 1:5). The Department of the Navy gave their approval for the establishment of an auxiliary base at Camp Kearny in February 1931. The bill was approved, and by November the Navy was seeking bids for the construction of the part time air station. In June, the Eleventh Naval District leased the former parade ground – 430 acres (Davis 1994:4). The Station was to include a mooring mast, two 5,000 gallon underground water tanks, a 5,000 gallon underground gasoline tank, and a timber framed metal-sided machinery house (*San Diego Union* 11-29-1931).

The U.S.S. Akron began its first transcontinental flight on May 8, 1932, scheduling a stop at Camp Kearny before proceeding to Naval Air Station Sunnyvale. The mooring was ready and San Diego anticipated the arrival – an arrival that made history as one of the most spectacular accidents in the town's history. On the morning of May 11, the U.S.S. Akron neared its dock but was unable to land because of dense fog. As the airship waited above the fog for two and a half hours, the sun caused the helium to overheat. The ship had expended most of its 16 tons of fuel in the flight from New Jersey and the heating of the helium resulted in a dangerous decrease in weight. Maneuverability was drastically reduced. To further compound the difficulty of this mooring, none of the North Island ground crew was experienced in mooring a rigid airship. Lieutenant Peck, navigator of the Akron was flown to Camp Kearny to serve as supervisor to the inexperienced crew. After two unsuccessful attempts, the crew was able to seize the tow lines and begin to secure the Akron to the mast. Tragedy struck when a gust of wind caused the tail end of the ship to rise. While the pilot tried to keep her down, five tons of ballast water was discharged. The order was given to let go of the ropes, but some of the recruits were unable to react quickly enough. Three men were taken up with the Akron as it rose into the sky. Of these, two men fell to their deaths, while the third was able to hang on until

he was pulled aboard the airship. Several hours later, the ship was moored without further incident (*Kearny Mesa Sentinel* 8-4-1982:A3; *San Diego Evening Tribune* 5-10-1982; Sudsbury 1967: 163-164). The following day, the Akron left San Diego for Sunnyvale and one year later, on April 3, 1933, the airship crashed off the coast of New Jersey while en route to New England. Seventy-three men died in the crash, including Rear Admiral Moffett (Grossnick n.d.: 31-32).

San Diego wouldn't see another airship until 1934. Following the completion of the Akron, the Goodyear-Zeppelin Corporation began construction on the U.S.S. Macon, the last of the great rigid airships. The new dirigible was christened on March 11, 1933, approximately a month and a half before the Akron's crash. The Macon's designers incorporated many modifications from what they had learned from the Akron, shaving almost four tons from its weight. As with its predecessor, the Macon was built in Ohio and was to be transferred to Sunnyvale. After several successful test flights in the east, the airship made her first transcontinental flight on October 12 – 15, 1933. Over the course of the following year, the Macon participated in several exercises in the Pacific, visiting San Diego several times (Grossnick n.d.:33). The Macon moored at Camp Kearny for the first time on February 9, 1934, and spent the better part of the fall stationed out of San Diego (Sudsbury 1967:171). On February 12 1935, while returning from a minor fleet exercise off of the Channel Islands, the Macon suffered damage to a fin and was forced to land in the Pacific. The airship sank within 30 minutes of hitting the water (Grossnick n.d.:33).

Following the tragic losses of the Akron and the Macon, the Navy's dirigible program was scrapped. The Navy continued to occupy the parade grounds, using the Base as a secondary airfield in support of North Island, throughout the 1930's and early 40's. The airstrip of Outlying Field Camp Kearny was first paved in 1936 with a light coating of asphalt. The airstrip was small, intended to serve as an auxiliary or emergency field, so other facilities were not constructed with the exception of a dive bombing target west of the airstrip (Hinds 1986:84). In 1939, the Navy secured ownership of the property.

As U.S. involvement in WWII became imminent, training increased in the San Diego region. The airfield was expanded in late 1940 and early 1941, though facilities had yet to be constructed. Aviation training programs intensified during the summer of 1941, requiring substantial additions to the field, including a new landing mat known as "West Kearny." In 1942, a major construction effort began on the necessary facilities to house 250 officers and 2,000 enlisted men and the runways were extended (Hinds 1986:84).

Facilities were located in two sections. One was located north of a large parking area, and the other was northeast of the northern terminus of the "East Kearny" runway. Both areas included the same essential facilities. The larger of the two, in addition to housing troops, included field operations and administration, hangers, dispensary, public works, and the brig. Barracks were arranged in rows of five and seven, with a latrine and shower building for each group. The smaller facility complex included barracks as well as several storehouses and hangers. Five gasoline storage tanks (three had 50,000 gallon

capacities, and two had 25,000 gallon capacities) were located along old La Jolla Road (now Miramar Road). Ammunition magazines were located west of the runway.

With increased use and development of facilities at Camp Kearny, it had become more than an outlying field. On February 20, 1943, it was redesignated Naval Auxiliary Air Station Camp Kearny. Increased operations had resulted in the degradation of the runway, so in July 1944, work was completed on two new concrete runways, taxiways, and parking aprons (Hinds 1986:86).

In addition to NAAS Camp Kearny, the Navy maintained another emergency airfield approximately one mile to the north, outside the current boundary of the Station. This airstrip was known as Outlying Landing Field Miramar, and later, as Hourglass Field. The field served much the same purpose as the early landing fields at Camp Kearny; first as an emergency landing strip and later a practice range including a bombing target (Blakely 12-29-1939; Hinds 1986:86). The target, known as Miramar Bomb Target No. 31 or Bombing Target No. 31, was a series of concentric circles, and was used throughout the war (n.a. 8-24-1944). The range was still in use in November 1950, when the rocket fired from an aircraft caused a large brush fire (Green and Jacobson 11-7-1950).



Aerial photo of Outlying Landing Field Miramar, or Hourglass Field, 1945. Note the bombing target at the top center of photo (courtesy of MCAS Miramar Public Works Department)

By late 1939, the Marine Corps became interested in acquiring land on Kearny Mesa (earlier known as Linda Vista Mesa). They were looking for land to develop a new Combat Training Center, which was later to become Camp Elliot. The Corps had settled on the site of Camp Holcomb, east of NAAS Camp Kearny; however the final decision was stalled following the realization that the land fell within the Battle Force Aircraft

Training Area. Anti-aircraft artillery practice at Camp Elliott would interfere with the dive bombing ranges and the approach to the airfields at both Camp Kearny and Miramar. At the time, the training area was the most actively used in the region. The targets at Camp Kearny and Miramar were favored over all others both for accessibility and the mild and stable weather conditions (Blakely 12-29-1939). Negotiations between the Commanding Generals of the Fleet Marine Force and the Aviation Battle Force were able to successfully arrange conditions for use by both parties. Study of the practices in place at San Clemente Island proved to serve as a model of successful firing restrictions (Richardson 2-15-1940).

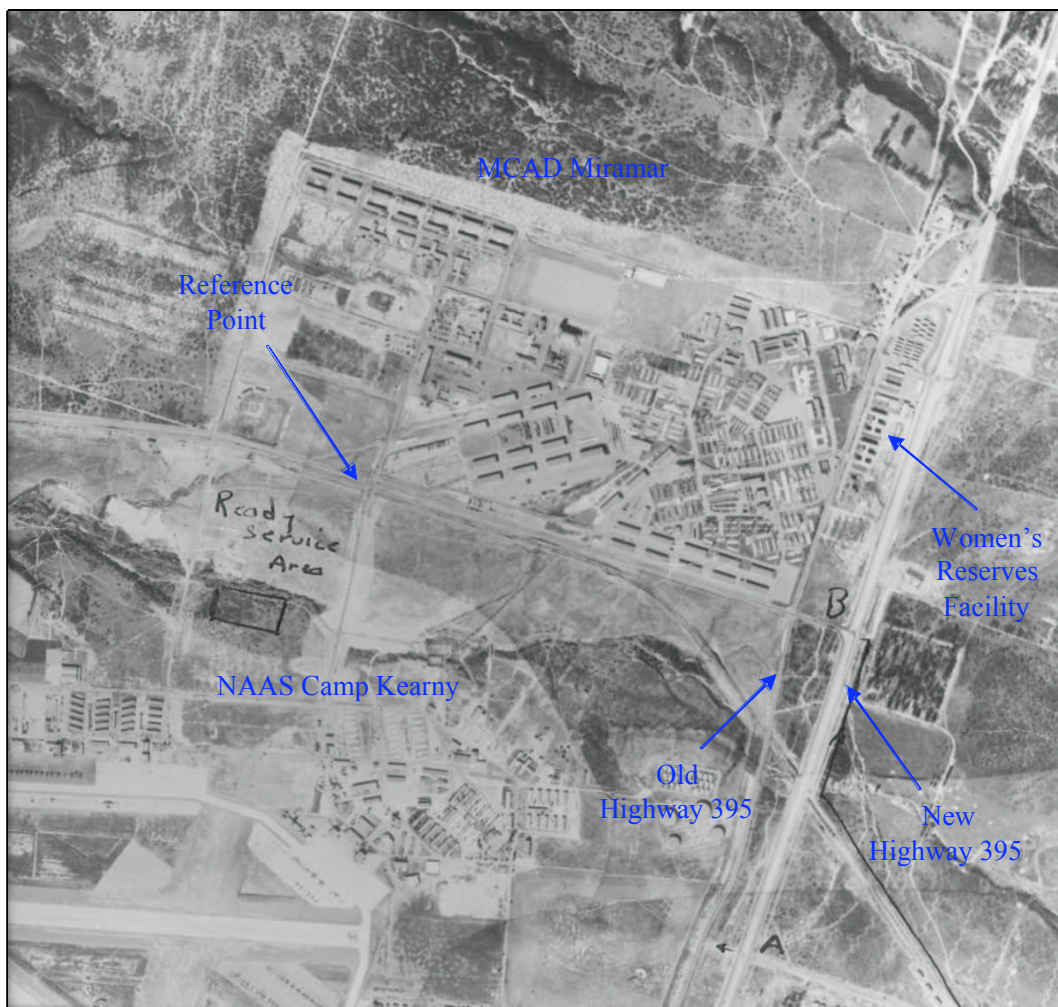
3.3.7. Marine Corps Air Depot (1943-1947)

In September 1942, Marine Colonel Merritt surveyed the region surrounding San Diego to find a solution to the problem of lack of space for housing and training troops. He wanted ample room for the present, as well as the potential to expand in the future. Ultimately, he decided on a parcel on Kearny Mesa, East of Camp Elliot and North of NAAS Camp Kearny. A lease was obtained for the site and appropriations were made to construct barracks and warehouses to support 5,000 men (U.S. Government 1944:15; Rockefeller 1946:7; Hinds 1983:86).

Originally called Camp Miramar, it was located immediately north of NAAS Camp Kearny. Its northern boundary was the old La Jolla Road. Most of the Camp was west of what was then Highway 395 (now Kearny Villa Road) and its western border ran roughly north/south, in the vicinity of the eastern portion of what is now the Station golf course. The main area of the camp covered approximately 324 acres. Highway 395 separated the main Camp area from two small areas of use, including the Marine Corps Women's Reserve barracks. These small areas were just 12.9 and 7.8 acres (Rockefeller 1946:7).

The first men arrived at the Camp in November 1942. Two Marine units from Naval Air Station San Diego were ordered to Camp Miramar to provide security and maintenance, and to make the Camp habitable (Rockefeller 1946:7). Construction began immediately. The facility was commissioned as Marine Corps Aviation Base, Kearny Mesa on March 1, 1943 (Rockefeller 1946:1; Hinds 1986:86).

The WW1 spur track that had been extended from Camp Kearny to Camp Elliot was modified in April and June 1943 with additional spurs built to serve the newly erected warehouses at the Base (JRP 2001:21). Construction of the Base facilities continued throughout the year and well into 1944. By June 1944, the Depot maintained over 135 barracks and 20 storehouses as well as the necessary support facilities including administrative offices, mess halls, latrines, and shower buildings. On September 2, 1943, the Base was redesignated Marine Corps Air Depot Miramar, to more accurately reflect its function (Rockefeller 1946:1).



Aerial photograph taken in 1950, showing the relative locations of what were MCAD Miramar and NAAS Camp Kearny. The reference point shown here is the location of the guardhouses. The town of Miramar is located at the northeast corner of MCAD Miramar, along Highway 395 (courtesy of MCAS Miramar Public Works Department).

In February 1943, four Air Regulating Squadrons were transferred to Miramar. They were responsible for sending and receiving trained aviation personnel to and from combat (Rockefeller 1946:8). Miramar was considered the gateway to the South Pacific for Marine Corps aviation as all personnel and equipment passed through the Depot on its way to the Pacific Theater. The mission was to supply and organize Marine aviation forces prior to their dispatch overseas. They were to house, mess, and provide transportation and recreation to men waiting for debarkation. The four regional Air Stations prepared men for combat and transferred them to the South Pacific Combat Air Transport, via the Air Depot. Additionally, Miramar was home to the Air Training Squadron, which was responsible for receiving new recruits and assigning them to various training schools in preparation for overseas assignments as replacements. The Depot also served as a distribution point for personnel assigned to outlying airfields in the

San Diego region. Marine Corps Air Depot Miramar was the only such facility on the West Coast (U.S. Government 1944:16; Rockefeller 1946:2, 9; Hinds 1986:86).

In May 1945, the Headquarters of the Marine Fleet Air, West Coast, was granted authorization to move from North Island to Miramar. On June 1, 1945, administrative officers arrived on board and operations were immediately established (Rockefeller 1946:10; Hinds 1986:86-88). Miramar had become one of the most active bases in the San Diego region.

Hoping to relieve the mounting pressure to replenish the ranks and “free a man to fight,” the U.S. Naval Reserve Act was passed authorizing the Navy to recruit women for reserve duty. Originally, Commandant Holcomb was against the inclusion of women in the Corps, however with the large number of casualties suffered at Guadalcanal and the possibility of further losses in future operations, he relented. On November 7, 1942, General Holcomb approved the recruitment of women to serve in non-combatant roles and with the help of Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt, the Marine Corps Women’s Reserve was founded (Stremlow 1994:1; Gruhzit-Hoyt 1995:125-127).

Far more women served in the armed services during World War II than had ever before, and Marine Corps Air Station Miramar was host to a number of them. Women Marines were full-fledged Marines; they were required to complete the same basic training as their male counterparts and were heir to the same Marine traditions. Significantly, women were not only serving in greater numbers, but they were serving in a greater number of fields. They were not limited to traditional jobs as secretaries, office managers, cooks and bakers, they also performed in roles historically limited to men such as truck drivers, aerial gunnery instructors, control tower operators and aviation mechanics.

Throughout the war, aviation units tended to be the most liberal of the Armed Services. From the outset, aviation units willingly requested women reservists. They served at Marine Corps Air Stations throughout the country as well as at Marine Corps Air Depot Miramar. The first female reservist, Lieutenant Ruth Fecitt, arrived at Miramar on, October 9, 1943, to prepare for the arrival of a full squadron later in the year (Rockefeller 1946:11-12; Stremlow 1994:24).

The Women’s Reserve Housing Facility was separated from the rest of the Depot by Highway 395, in an area leased from Camp Elliot. Highway 395 was later realigned east of the facility and can be seen under construction in Plate XX. The small, 13-acre district included two barracks, two women officer’s quarters, a Quartermaster, mess hall and an exchange. A large recreation room and tennis courts were also built. In September 1944, at the height of operations, there were 780 women stationed at the Depot.

On board the Air Depot, the Women Reserves became an integral part of the daily routine. They served in various departments of the Depot as well as the Marine Air Fleet, later headquartered at Miramar. They also reported for duty to the Fleet Marine Force Training Center at Camp Elliott. They served in every department of the Training

Center, working as secretaries and file clerks as well as truck drivers. Additionally, they were responsible for operation and maintenance of the Women's Reserve Area (Jones 1943:10-11; Rockefeller 1946:12).

Although most assumed that with war's end the women Marines would be quickly demobilized; this was not the case. With the separation orders of thousands of Marines, came vast amounts of paperwork. Women Marines continued to serve in offices performing duties that included, among other things, processing separation orders, issuing paychecks and distributing medals. Reserve numbers dwindled as time passed and by May 1945, there were only 145 women left at Miramar. By September 1, 1946, the Women's Reserve was demobilized, however some women were kept on, and those at Miramar were transferred to Marine Corps Air Station El Toro (Rockefeller 1946:12; Stremlow 1994:24).

With the end of hostilities, the Depot served as a demobilization facility for men and equipment. More than 25,000 men were discharged from Miramar. Its warehouses and hard surface storage areas were filled with returning materials and surplus. Work to inspect, repair, recondition and re-crate equipment required a tremendous effort.

Reflecting the changing postwar needs of the Marine Corps, MCAD Miramar was decommissioned on May 1, 1946, and subsequently merged with NAAS Camp Kearny. The newly configured installation was named Marine Corps Air Station Miramar (MCAS Miramar). The new Station included the areas of both earlier facilities. The Air Station had three functions: headquartering the Marine Air, West Coast (previously Marine Fleet Air, West Coast), providing support for the Fleet Marine Aviation Units and the Navy multi-engine fleet aircraft, and serving as the Pacific Coast vehicle pool for the Bureau of Aeronautics. The Station didn't last long though, and in June 1947, the Marine Air, West Coast transferred its headquarters and all remaining Marine air units to MCAS El Toro, in Orange County.



The gates for both NAAS Camp Kearny and MCAD Miramar can be seen flanking the railroad tracks and the road connecting the bases to Highway 395. This image is looking South, at NAAS Camp Kearny, with the Marine guardhouse in the foreground and the Navy sentry in the background (courtesy of MCAS Miramar Public Works Department).

3.3.8. Naval Auxiliary Air Station Miramar/Naval Air Station Miramar (1947-1997)

Following the relocation of Marine air units north to El Toro in June 1947, the Station was reclaimed by the Navy to be used as an auxiliary air station. On August 15, 1947, the property was officially transferred to the Navy and the airbase became known as Naval Auxiliary Air Station Miramar (*San Diego Union* 1-17-1954:15:3-7). Activity slowed under Navy oversight in the post-war years. The mission was to provide regular support for the Medium Land Patrol Squadron and periodic temporary support for other activities, including use as a vehicle pool for the Bureau of Aeronautics. As operations diminished, less than half of the existing buildings were required to support the Station's functions. Sustaining surplus buildings became increasingly difficult, particularly with a reduction in maintenance funds. Furthermore, many of the buildings had been constructed to temporary standards and extensive retrofitting would have been necessary to meet building codes. Rather than maintain the excess structures, they were sold for scrap.

As operations slowed, the Navy entered into a fifty year lease with the City of San Diego to share the use of the airfield as a reserve emergency airstrip for commercial airliners that could not land at Lindbergh Field. The deal allowed the City use of up to 50 percent of the airfield and parking aprons, and sole use of acreage south of the runways. San Diego and the Navy would share in the maintenance of the runways, while fire and rescue services, which were already in service at the Station, would be the responsibility of the Navy. The City planned to divert all cargo planes to Miramar and to continue to use Lindbergh Field to support passenger services. A \$3.00 fee was to be imposed on the airlines that used Miramar. If the airport was to replace Lindbergh Field however, the runways would need to be extended. Construction was stalled until 1949, as the proposed project was not included in the 1948 budget of the Civil Aeronautics Bureau (*San Diego Union* 4-16-47:2:1; 8-17-47:1:5; 12-19-1950:2:2-5).

Unfortunately for the City of San Diego, Miramar was not to be the new municipal airport as hoped. In an effort to enhance military preparedness, Congress approved the Woods Plan in 1949. Under the plan, funds were appropriated for the development of a Master Jet Air Station at Miramar. Spending was deferred to the 1951 fiscal year, so on April 1, 1951, Miramar was converted from auxiliary status to a full air station. The mission of the Station was to train air groups for combat, outfit naval air units assigned to duties abroad, and provide varied logistical functions (*San Diego Union*: 5-31-1953:1:2-8). Though the Navy had retaken the airfield, it wasn't until December 9, 1952, that the San Diego City Council decided to finally cancel the lease with the Navy for the joint use of Miramar (*San Diego Union* 12-10-1952:8:4).

In late June 1950, the Democratic People's Republic Army of North Korea, attacked South Korean forces south of the 38th Parallel (the border between the two nations). Shortly after, the United Nations Security Council passed a resolution calling for the immediate cessation of conflict and ordered North Korea to retreat north of the 38th Parallel. Hostilities continued and the United Nations further authorized member nations

to commit troops to aid South Korea. The United States took the lead in this effort. By the end of the month, the U.S. was fully committed to the conflict. As a result, air operations dramatically increased as Miramar became one of the Navy's most important Air Stations.

Since the Miramar and North Island air stations were located near one another, they cooperated very closely together. North Island was the principle seaport berthing for aircraft carriers on the Pacific Coast. The facility included shops to repair aircraft and supplied equipment necessary for fleet support. Miramar, on the other hand, trained air groups for combat, outfitted naval air units assigned to overseas duty, and fulfilled other logistic requirements (*San Diego Union* 5-31-1953:1:2-8). The population on Station totaled 5,000 personnel; 4,500 military and 500 civilians.

During 1951, two runways were extended to 8,000 feet and work was begun on a modern aircraft maintenance hangar that combined aviation storage space with offices and shops. Construction costs for the hangar exceeded three million dollars (*San Diego Union* 9-7-1951:6:1-2). Additionally, new barracks and mess halls were constructed of pre-cast concrete. By May 1953, a total of 14 million dollars had been spent on developing Miramar, and another 15 million was planned for the following years (*San Diego Union* 5-31-1953:1:2-8).

In 1953, Brown Field, located on Otay Mesa, north of the U.S. – Mexico border, was assigned as a carrier practice field for NAS Miramar. It had a long history of aviation and had been used by both the Army and Navy. The field had been decommissioned in 1946, and was then used as a public airfield. With the increased jet activity in the area it was reopened as an auxiliary landing field in support of the Air Station at Miramar. On July 1, 1954 the field was commissioned as a Naval Auxiliary Air Station Brown Field as part of the master jet complex. The airfield continued in this capacity until 1962, when it was again decommissioned. Since then, it has been used as a general aviation airport operated by the City of San Diego (Sudsbury 1967:282-283).

As a Master Jet Facility, many of the latest and fastest planes were stationed at Miramar. The Station received the Navy's first squadron, with F7U-3 Cutlass jet fighters, in late 1954. The radically designed twin jet swept-wing, all purpose fighters were produced by Chance Vought and were capable of exceeding 650 mile per hour, breaking the sound barrier in test flights (*San Diego Union* 10-15-1954:14:4-5). Production on the Cutlass ended in 1954 though they continued to be used at Miramar, along with the FJ-3 Furies. In fall 1957, Miramar received the F8U-1 Crusader, which was the Navy's fastest jet at that time. It was a fighter that had set the world speed record at 1,015 miles an hour and could operate from aircraft carriers.

In May 1955, the airfield at Miramar was named Mitscher Field in honor of Admiral Marc A. Mitscher. Admiral Mitscher was the World War II commander of Task Force 58, a carrier division that fought the Battles of the Philippine Sea. He had a full career, graduating from the Naval Academy in 1910 and seeing action in the first World War. He completed some of the earliest trans-ocean aerial crossings. He was known as a pilots'

admiral and was considered to be instrumental in establishing the carrier as a principle ship in modern naval warfare (*San Diego Union* 4-29-1955:15:4).

As the United States moved into the jet age and the nation became interested in space travel, public curiosity in space and the possibility of extraterrestrial life grew. The Roswell Incident in 1947 added fuel to the fire. In 1953, the Station sponsored a celebration of the 50th anniversary of powered flight. Virtually all types of aircraft were included both for display and demonstration. In a humorous article appearing on the front page of the *San Diego Union*, the “Citizens Committee for the Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of Powered Flight,” one of the event sponsors, invited the pilot or commander of any space vehicle to land at Naval Air Station Miramar during the air show. It was assured that “a suitable area will be available on the ground and adequate security facilities will be provided for protection of the visiting aircraft and crew” (*San Diego Union* 11-21-1953:1:4-5). The invitation was delivered at the suggestion of several San Diego residents who believed in the existence of interplanetary vehicles. The Committee believed that the occasion would have been fitting for the first public appearance of a spaceship. Although extraterrestrials did not materialize, the air show was a success.

By 1955, the Station housed nearly 400 jets, and was the principal fleet support Air Station for the Navy. In accordance with a new Navy concept, in 1961 Naval Air Station Miramar became “Fightertown;” a support base specifically for fighter squadrons.

Since its inception as a Naval Air Station, the Navy worried about future development on Kearny Mesa, particularly the acreage south of the runways, where the flight pattern extended outside the boundaries of the Station. Residential post-war development in the area could threaten the operations as well as civilian safety. The Navy began efforts to acquire land south of the Station and sought zoning restrictions within 12,000 feet of the airport (*San Diego Union* 1-17-1954:15:3-7). The zoning issues and property acquisition were tied up for years. On August 22, 1957, Congress approved the Navy’s request for \$5,700,000 to purchase land sought as a safety zone below the flight pattern for simulated carrier landings (*San Diego Union* 8-23-1957:19:2). Expansion of the Station began in August 1958, with the purchase of approximately 450 of the 4,500 acres needed to form the necessary buffer. By 1965, the Station had been increased to about 7,500 acres, west of Highway 395. On March 3, 1965, the Station doubled in size when approximately 7,500 acres of former Camp Elliott was transferred to Naval Air Station Miramar (*San Diego Union* 3-3-1965:5:1-2; *Miramar Jet Journal* 3-12-1965:1:1). The newly acquired area was called East Miramar, noting its location east of Highway 395. In December 1972, NASA transferred Sycamore Annex to the Navy, increasing the size of the Station to nearly what it is today.

The drastic increase in size was necessary to continued operations. It provided a wide band of uninhabited property and gave a clear approach pattern for aircraft (*San Diego Union* 3-3-1965:5:1-2). In October 1968, Miramar had become the busiest military airfield in the nation and was fourth among all U.S. airports behind the likes of New York’s John F. Kennedy, O’Hare in Chicago and Los Angeles International Airport.

Early in the Vietnam War, the Naval Air Systems Command became concerned with relatively low air-to-air kill ratios. To teach “dog-fighting,” the Naval Fighters Weapons School, more popularly known as “Top Gun,” was founded in 1969 at Miramar to produce fighter crews highly trained in Air Combat Maneuvering. It was later reported that the U.S. won the air war in Vietnam based on the skill of the American pilots, as the enemy possessed superior technology (*San Diego Union* 7-24-1971 B2:5-7).

On October 14, 1972, the first two Pacific Fleet F-14 Tomcat squadrons were established at NAS Miramar. The ceremony was attended by the Secretary of the navy, John W. Warner (*San Diego Union* 10-15-1972 B1:6). The Grumman Aerospace Corporation designed and built the fighter in response to the inadequacy of contemporary U.S. planes against the Russian-built MIG-23 Foxbats. The two-seat, swept-wing, carrier-based fighter held a mix of missiles and could fly at speeds in excess of Mach2, with a combat ceiling of 50,000 feet. The design gave the U.S. air superiority throughout the 1980s (*San Diego Union* 7-24-1971 B2:5-7). With the introduction of the F-14, several squadron and duty changes took place on Station in order to accommodate the new Tomcat squadrons (*San Diego Union* 6-4-1972 B16:3).

With the addition of the Airborne Early Warning Squadrons on July 1, 1973, the Station was re-designated Commander Fighter-Airborne Early Warning Wing, U.S. Pacific Fleet. Another significant addition to the Station during the 1970s included Radar Air Traffic Control Center, still in operation today. Opened on July 17, 1970, the traffic control center is a jointly controlled project between the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the Navy. The Center controls all civilian and military aircraft in the San Diego area (*San Diego Union* 7-17-1970 B4:3). During the 1980s, additional subsidiary units were added including the Carrier Air Wing, two Readiness Squadrons, an Instrument Training Adversary Squadron and the Naval Air Facility at El Centro (Cooley 1996:2-29).

As a result of the Base Realignment and Closure Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-510), the specific base realignment recommendation was approved the President and the U.S. Congress in September, 1993. The decision was made to close both Marine Corps Air Stations Tustin and El Toro, and relocate all assets primarily to Miramar.

3.3.9. MCAS Miramar (1997-present)

Rather than close the Station, the 1993 and 1995 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission made the decision to realign NAS Miramar as a Marine Corps Air Station. The changeover officially occurred on October 1, 1998. All Marine personnel, aircraft and equipment from MCAS Tustin and MCAS El Toro were relocated to MCAS Miramar. The Station has approximately 24,000 acres and is one of the largest installations in the area. The mission is to maintain and operate facilities and provide services and material to the support operations of a Marine Aircraft Wing. Currently MCAS Miramar supports the Third Marine Air Wing, whose mission is to “provide a combat-ready, expeditionary aviation force capable of short-notice, world-wide deployment to Marine Air Ground Task Force, fleet and unified commanders.”

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