



# United States Navy

## Jacksonville Naval Air Station

### Military Corner

During World War I, the area now occupied by NAS Jacksonville, often referred to colloquially as "NAS Jax", was named Camp Joseph E. Johnston, and was commissioned on October 15, 1917, but the camp was decommissioned on May 16, 1919. The Florida National Guard began using the site in 1928 and it was renamed Camp J. Clifford R. Foster. On October 15, 1940, Naval Air Station Jacksonville was officially commissioned, and became the first part of the Jacksonville Navy complex that would eventually include NAS Cecil Field and Naval Station Mayport, as well as numerous naval auxiliary air stations and outlying fields in northeast Florida. On the same date, Captain Charles P. Mason, USN, raised his command pennant as the station's first commanding officer.

Prior to the commissioning, on September 7, Commander Jimmy Grant became the first pilot to land on the still unfinished runway in his N3N-3 biplane. More than 10,000 pilots and 11,000 air crewmen followed their lead to earn their "wings of gold" at the air station during World War II.

Increased training and construction characterized NAS Jacksonville's response to America's entry into World War II. Three runways over 6,000 feet long were operating, as were seaplane runways in the St. Johns River and seaplane ramps leading from the water. Overhaul and Repair facilities were built to rework the station's planes, a facility that in ensuing years would be renamed Naval Air Rework Facility Jacksonville, Naval Aviation Depot Jacksonville and its current name of Fleet Readiness Center Southeast.



In 1970, a major reorganization of the Naval Reserve resulted in three separate Naval Air Reserve flying squadrons, identical to their active duty Regular Navy counterparts, being activated at NAS Jacksonville: Attack Squadron TWO ZERO THREE (VA-203), Patrol Squadron SIXTY-TWO (VP-62) and Fleet Logistics Support Squadron FIFTY-EIGHT (VR-58), joined, in 1985, by Helicopter Antisubmarine Squadron SEVENTY-FIVE (HS-75).

Today, the installation is one of the hubs for naval activity in the U.S. South, and some 23,000 civilian and active-duty personnel are employed on the base. [<https://en.wikipedia/>]

*Boeing P-8 taking off from NAS Jacksonville*

