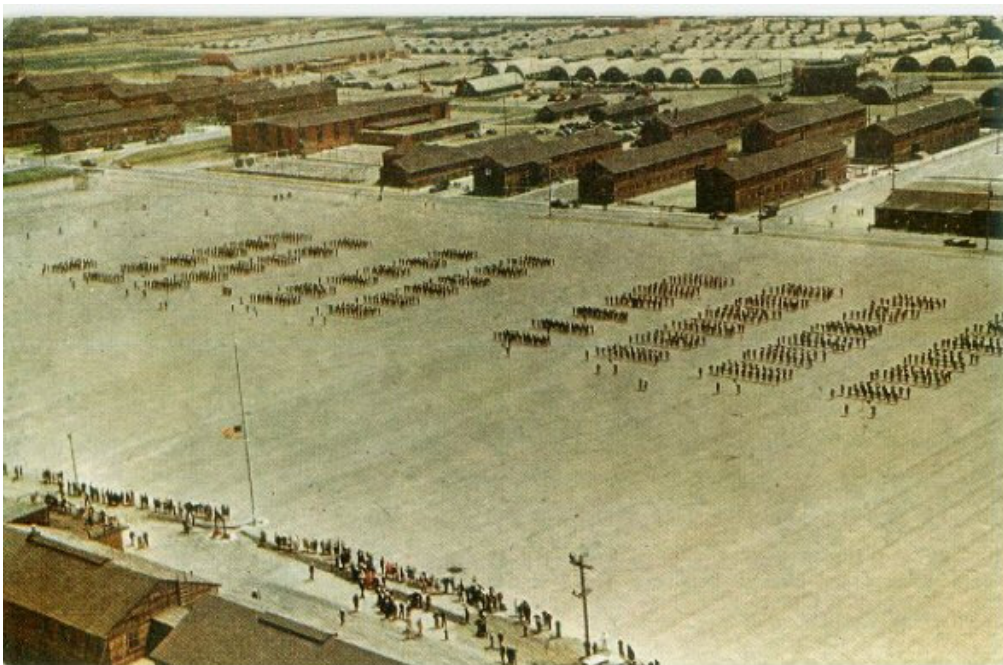


A History of Camp Parks

Camp Parks was built as a Navy Base during World War II, and was commissioned Jan. 19, 1943 -- home to the Navy Seabees. Adjacent Camp Parks to the east, laid Camp Shoemaker and the U.S. Naval Hospital Shoemaker, also built during the war. The three Navy bases lying side by side were called "Fleet City." In 1946, at the end of World War II, the Secretary of the Navy disestablished the three facilities, and from 1946 to 1951, the Navy leased the land to the County of Alameda for use as a rehabilitation center. In 1947 the Santa Rita County Jail became operational.

Images of Camp Parks, 1945

During World War II Camp Parks grew from a muddy expanse to a huge naval training and replacement center and took its place as a vital unit in the Navy Seabee program. In 1945 on its huge paved parade ground Camp Parks could muster more than



20,000 men and hundreds of officers. Few structures remain from Camp Parks Seabee days. Among them are the base commander's house, which overlooks the base

from the top of a hill, and the art deco-style sign at the main gate on Dougherty Road in Dublin. All else is gone. The World War II buildings were razed after the war. Even the street numbering sequence changed to suit the Air Force. Surviving buildings are Korean

War vintage, the streets are named after Air Force heroes and Congressional Medal of Honor awardees and hundreds of Army trucks fill a dozen motor pools.

Commissioned on January 19, 1943 as the Construction Battalion Replacement Depot, Camp Parks functioned as home for Seabees returning from the Pacific Theater of Operations. Battalions returned to the States after a year or more of arduous construction duty. They came to Camp Parks for medical treatment, military training and reorganization. The base housed up to 20 battalions at a time. Most battalions prepared for a second tour in the Pacific. Many Seabees were hospitalized, and those no longer fit for duty received their discharge. After leave, personnel were subjected to a rigorous training schedule. The battalions were brought back up to fighting strength.



East of the Seabee base, toward Livermore, Camp Shoemaker housed a Naval Hospital and Naval Training and Personnel Distribution Center. These facilities served the fleet in much the same manner as Camp Parks served the Seabees. Collectively the area was known as Fleet City.



After closing in 1946, Camp Parks sat unused until the Air Force established a basic training center in 1951. Known as Parks Air Force Base, the Air Force found it necessary to completely rebuild the base.

The sea of Quonset huts and two-story wooden barracks had been dismantled following World War II. Base personnel were initially housed in temporary facilities and ate from a field mess. Training began in March 1952. The first group of Airmen who arrived at Camp Parks in the summer of 1951 were transported to California on a troop train that felt like a cattle car. The base was in complete disarray when they arrived. The weeds were waist high, the remaining buildings were in poor shape and a few concrete pads were all that remained.

By 1973, the U.S. Army determined that Camp Parks was needed as a mobilization and training center for Reserve Components in the event of war or natural disaster. On December 11, 1980, the Army officially designated Camp Parks as a semi-active installation, renamed it Parks Reserve Forces Training Area, and declared it a sub-installation of the Presidio of San Francisco.

Today, the sprawling base's mission is similar to its World War II mission. Thousands of National Guard and Army Reserve Soldiers—and 94 Naval Reserve Seabees' train for war at Camp Parks.

Located in the Northern California Bay Area, Camp Parks RFTA is a vital part of the total Army in the Western United States.

The History Center of the Parks Reserve Forces Training Area preserves artifacts from Camp Park's three military eras. Since late 1942, Camp Parks has been home to the Navy, Air Force and Army.