

South Texas Coastal Bend Area and Corpus Christi, Texas, WWII Heritage City

A series of lessons from the [World War II Heritage Cities Lesson Collection](#)



Figure 1: Mary Josephine Farley, twenty-years-old, crew leader mechanic at Naval air base Corpus Christi, TX. She ranked highest of all competitors on her civil service examination and had a private pilot's license. August 1942. Photo by Howard R. Hollem, Office of War Information (Credit: Library of Congress)

Introduction

The three lessons, and culminating fourth lesson, support the development of understanding the significance of [South Texas Coastal Bend Area and Corpus Christi, Texas, World War II Heritage City](#). The first lesson examines Naval Air Station Corpus Christi and the contributions and training of service members and civilians there. The second lesson teaches about the contributions of women in service, industry, and volunteer

efforts. The third lesson describes ways in which youth and young adults trained for wartime work in schools and the National Youth Administration (NYA), along with volunteerism. All lessons highlight specific contributions but connect to larger themes and understandings of the U.S. home front during wartime. A mix of primary and secondary sources are used, along with photos and media.

Lessons (with World War II home front topics):

The first three lessons listed can be taught individually or collectively, in any order. The final lesson is to support students in combining learning across the three lessons, and/or comparison to other World War II home front cities in a culminating activity.

1. [Training and Service at Naval Air Station Corpus Christi in South Texas Coastal Bend Area and Corpus Christi, Texas, World War II Heritage City \(p. 6\)](#)

- Armed Forces
- Navy pilot training
- Naval Air Stations
- Women service members
- WAVES
- Economic development
- Allied Forces training

2. [Women's Contributions in South Texas Coastal Bend Area and Corpus Christi, Texas, World War II Heritage City \(p. 23\)](#)

- Women in the workforce
- Manufacturing and industry
- Civil Air Patrol
- Naval Air Station Corpus Christi
- Agriculture

3. [Home Front Contributions by Youth in South Texas Coastal Bend Area and Corpus Christi, Texas, World War II Heritage City \(p. 39\)](#)

- National Youth Administration (NYA)
- Material drives, Red Cross
- Youth organizations

- Latin-American youth
- African American youth

[4. South Texas Coastal Bend Area and Corpus Christi, Texas: Comparing and Connecting WWII Home Front Cities \(p. 52\)](#)

Positioning these Lessons in the Curriculum:

The standards listed beneath the lesson links are a collection of standards covered in the lesson collection. The lessons have been aligned to national standards and topics, as well as to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for English Language Arts and Reading (2017) and Social Studies (2022). Objectives for each lesson, materials, and resources are listed within the lesson.

Time period: World War II

Topics: World War II, women’s history, African American history, workforce migration, science and technology

United States History Standards for Grades 5-12

This lesson relates to the following [National Standards for History](#) from the UCLA National Center for History in the Schools:

Era 8: The Great Depression and World War II (1929-1945)

Standard 3: The causes and course of World War II, the character of the war at home and abroad, and its reshaping of the U.S. role in world affairs

Curriculum Standards for Social Studies

This lesson relates to the following [Curriculum Standards themes for Social Studies](#) from the National Council for the Social Studies:

- Theme 2: Time, Continuity, and Change
- Theme 5: Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
- Theme 8: Science, Technology, and Society
- Theme 9: Global Connections

Relevant Common Core Standards

These lessons relate to the following [Common Core English and Language Arts Standards for History and Social Studies](#) for middle and high school students:

Key Ideas and Details

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH. 6-12.1
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH. 6-12.2

Craft and Structure

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH. 6-12.4

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-12.7
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-12.9

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH. 6-12.10

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)

English Language Arts and Reading

The lessons align to the following strands for grades 6-12, defined by the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for English Language Arts and Reading standards (2017):

Developing and sustaining foundational language skills; Comprehension; response; multiple genres; author's purpose and craft; composition; and inquiry and research.

Social Studies

The lessons align to the following, defined by the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Social Studies standards (2022).

Middle School (Grade 7)

(113.19) History

The student understands traditional historical points of reference in Texas history. The student is expected to: identify the major eras in Texas history, describe their defining characteristics, and explain the purpose of dividing the past into eras, including ... Texas in the Great Depression and World War II...

High School

(113.41) United States History Studies Since 1877

History. The student understands traditional historical points of reference in U.S. history from 1877 to the present. The student is expected to: (A) identify the major eras in U.S. history from 1877 to the present and describe their defining characteristics; and (B) explain the significance of the following years as turning points: . . . 1939-1945 (World War II)...

The lesson series was written by Sarah Nestor Lane, an educator and consultant with the Cultural Resources Office of Interpretation and Education, funded by the National Council on Public History's cooperative agreement with the National Park Service.

Lesson 1: Training and Service at Naval Air Station Corpus Christi in South Texas Coastal Bend Area and Corpus Christi, Texas, World War II Heritage City

About this Lesson

This lesson is part of a series about the World War II home front in [South Texas Coastal Bend Area and Corpus Christi, Texas, World War II Heritage City](#). This lesson explores the purpose and significance of training at Naval Air Station Corpus Christi in supporting the war effort. The readings offer insights into the training of aviation cadets, the role of WAVES in supporting this training, and the experiences of cadets during their exercises. It includes a mix of primary and secondary sources, such as newspaper articles, an oral history, and photos. Women's local contributions can also be examined in [Lesson 2](#).

Objectives:

1. Explain the purpose and significance of Naval Air Station Corpus Christi in supporting home front training efforts during World War II.
2. Describe the significance and varied roles of WAVES at Naval Air Station Corpus Christi.
3. Compare local, historical perspectives on service to synthesize and connect to larger wartime perspectives and themes.

Materials for Students:

1. Photos: Figures 2-9 (*can be displayed digitally*)
2. Readings 1, 2, 3
3. Optional: extension reading and oral histories
4. *Recommended: Map of Texas, with Corpus Christi and surrounding Coastal Bend Cities (examples include Aransas Pass, Port Aransas, Kingsville, and Beeville within Nueces & Kleberg counties)*

Photos



Figure 2: Ensign Noressey and Cadet Thenics at the Naval Air base, Corpus Christi, Texas. August 1942. (Credit: Howard Hollem, Library of Congress)



Figure 3: Working with a sea-plane at the Naval Air Base, Corpus Christi, Texas. August 1942. (Credit: Howard Hollem, Library of Congress)

WWII Heritage Cities Lesson Collection
South Texas Coastal Bend Area and Corpus Christi, Texas



Figure 4: Workman at the naval air base. He is wearing an ID badge to enter base. Picture taken on a Sunday in December 1940. African American workers supported the construction of NAS Corpus Christi. By Russell Lee. (Credit: Russell Lee, Library of Congress)



Figure 5: The photo shows a roofer and his daughter with their tent home. The roofer had hurt his back while working on construction at NAS Corpus Christi. Roofers made one dollar per hour but were laid off during bad weather. Due to this, this roofer had made only three dollars the week of the photograph. December 1940. (Credit: Russell Lee, Library of Congress)



Getting Started: Essential Question

How did the service and training at Naval Air Station Corpus Christi contribute to the war effort on the home front?



By the numbers:

Naval Air Station Corpus Christi was the largest naval training facility in the world, with:

- Around 20,000 acres in three counties
- A main station and six auxiliary stations in the Coastal Bend, with an additional twenty-five outlying practice fields
- 997 hangars and other buildings, with a cost of more than \$100 million, by 1945 (today worth more than \$1.7 billion)
- 35,000 student pilots as graduates during the war. One of these pilots was Former President [George H.W. Bush](#). He was the youngest pilot to graduate in June 1943, three days before his 19th birthday.



Quotation to consider:

“Results of 14 months of construction, evidence of what the U.S. Navy can do when it combines the efforts of its engineers and combat forces, will be reviewed today by thousands of South Texans who attend the first open house of the U.S. Naval Air Station, the ‘University of the Air’ at Corpus Christi.

Since the beginning of construction in July 1940, work has pushed forward vigorously, roads have been built in a network covering the 2,050-acre reservation of the main station utility lines have been installed, communication systems established, and hundreds of buildings have sprung up from the sands of the jutting peninsula.”

- “Navy’s Progress at Air Station to Be Viewed by Thousands Who Will Visit Defense Project Today,” *The Corpus Christi Caller-Times*, September 28, 1941



Read to Connect

Teacher Note: For more information about South Texas Coastal Bend Area & Corpus Christi, Texas during World War II, including Naval Air Station Corpus Christi, you may provide [this reading](#) as a background text.

The reading refers to Pensacola, known as the “Annapolis of the Air,” comparing it to the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, because of its high production of naval pilots. [Pensacola and Escambia County, Florida](#) is another Heritage City that can be used as a comparison.

Reading 1: Newspaper Article

‘University of the Air’ to Send Out Naval Pilots in Nov. 1 Ceremony at Corpus Christi

About 50 Cadets to Get Wings, Commissions and Diplomas at Ceremony

The Corpus Christi Caller-Times, September 28, 1941

The ‘University of the Air’ will hold its first commencement November 1.

Only partially completed, with nine months of construction work yet to be done before the current construction program is finished, the U.S. Navy’s largest air station will yield up its initial class of finished pilots. Approximately 50 young men will receive their commissions as ensigns, their gold wings as naval aviators, and their diplomas in one ceremony.

This first class of fliers, designated as 3A-41C began training only one week after the station was commissioned, nine months after construction work was started. Now, only six months later, they are nearly ready to become officers of the U.S. Naval Reserve and naval aviators.

Set Precedents

As the first class of the station theirs has been memorable experience. They are the first to receive their full training at one station, since Pensacola ‘Annapolis of the Air,’ sends its advanced pilots to Jacksonville and Miami.

Although training facilities are far from complete, they have succeeded in shortening the usual year required for training to seven months and their group has passed through the series of courses with a minimum loss from failures.

They have practiced infantry drill around construction crews and bull-dozers; they have spent hours in link trainers housed in make-shift quarters without the much needed air-

conditioning; they have lived in barracks blanketed with fine sand before top-soil could be placed.

Last March they began their two weeks indoctrination course which familiarized them with the courses soon to be studied, with military procedure, and operation of the station.

College Boys Then

They were college boys then with scant knowledge of Naval regulations, and their flying experience was limited mostly to a brief preliminary training course at one of the elimination bases. Some had taken CAA courses. All had soloed planes, but their early training was as thorough and as elementary as though they had never turned a propeller.

Then came ground school, with every day spent 'cramming,' as the old days they prepared for examination. The things they were learning, however, must be remembered long after examination, for soon they were putting them into actual practice.

Solos Increase Interest

First solo flights brought a quickened interest, as one by one the cadets received the 'thumbs up' signal, Weeks were spent in 'Perils,' the light primary trainers that swarmed like hornets overhead.

After they had mastered these light planes to the full satisfaction of their instructors came basic training and they tackled the larger, faster monoplanes. This was different from any of their practice in the little 'Yellow' preliminary training. They began to feel more like aviators.

Along with it all came the study of other subjects, navigation, aerology and gunnery.

Finally they advanced to the big flying boats, the carriers and the cruisers, and now in the final stages of their instruction they are polishing up for the last tests.

Impressive Ceremony

After months of arduous training, they are almost ready to become the first graduates of the 'University of the Air.'

An impressive ceremony is being arranged, but has not yet been completed.

Included in the commencement exercises will be a Cadet Regimental parade, with approximately 2,500 cadets participating. There will be an address by the commanding officer, Capt. Alva D. Bernhard, followed by the presentation of the diplomas.

After the exercises the Cadet Regiment will honor the graduates with a dance.

It is expected that a large number of guests will be invited to these first commencement ceremonies.

Questions for Reading 1, By the Numbers, and Quotation to Consider

1. What nickname was given to Naval Air Station (NAS) Corpus Christi, and why do you think it earned that name?
2. What were the main stages of training that the cadets went through?
3. What does the article suggest about the urgency and efficiency of pilot training during the war?
4. How did the training at NAS Corpus Christi contribute to the war effort on the home front?
5. How was NAS Corpus Christi developed, and what financial investments were made in its construction? (*Consider By the Numbers, Quotation to Consider*)
6. Examine [Photos](#) 4 and 5. Who were some of the people that supported base construction? What challenges did they, or might they have, faced?

Photos



Figure 6: WAVES were assigned to the US Naval Hospital on base. Pictured is LT. E.L. Schmidt and WAVES reviewing bed procedures. (*Corpus Christi Caller-Times*, July 25, 1943)



Figure 7: WAVES qualified for flying and stationed at Cabaniss Field, an auxiliary field for Naval Air Base Corpus Christi. (Corpus Christi Caller-Times, July 29, 1945)

Reading 2: Oral History

Teacher Tip: The video [Talking with the Past #2: Oral History](#) can be used as a resource for students to learn about carefully considering information in oral histories as a primary source.

Background: The WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service) first arrived at Naval Air Station Corpus Christi in November 1942, with the arrival of the first WAVE officer. Enlisted women arrived in February 1943. They served at the main station and auxiliary stations and fields. They did duties in over 40 departments, including roles in radio and communications, storekeeping, pharmacist and hospital technicians, parachute packing, and leading instruction in gunnery and instrument flying.

Doris Ilene Brand

Background: Doris Ilene Brand enlisted in the U.S. Navy WAVES. At Naval Air Station Corpus Christi, she was a link trainer instructor and taught ship and plane recognition in the Naval flight program. The [interview](#), recorded on May 30, 2008, is from the Library of Congress Veterans History Project. The following interview excerpts have been edited only for readability, and subheadings added for student support.

Doris Ilene Brand: When the war broke out, I was teaching, and we did our part in the school rooms to collect whatever could be used. I remember that we saved tin foil, and we tried to be saving on what we used ourselves, and we took part in patriotic activity. I felt that little yearning to be a part of it. And of course, the posters in the post office and everywhere you looked were enticing. So, in the spring of the year of my ninth year of teaching, I thought seriously about it, and then looked at the qualifications of the WAVES and the WACs and the Coast Guard and the... Marines. It looked interesting and challenging, and I comforted myself with the fact that my mother would not be left alone because there was somebody else on the farm then. So, I thought, I'm going to try it.

Bootcamp and Training

I wavered between the WAC and the WAVES and chose the WAVES because the requirements were just a little higher than they were for the WAC. And I thought, I'll try for the WAVES first, and I was accepted, and I left for Hunter College in New York City, leaving in June 1943. Hunter College in New York City was where we had boot camp. Boot camp was fun and challenging and sometimes difficult. We learned Navy lingo. We soon learned that what we had always called a kitchen was a galley and what we had always called a floor was a deck, and what was always called a stairway was a ladder. We learned to recognize rate and rank. We learned who and when and how to salute. We learned to do close order drill and became acclimated to a controlled life. I learned in just a few weeks that the girls from Middle West had a different point of view from the girls from either coast. Those girls that became my best friend were all Midwesterners.

One great privilege we were allowed was the privilege of studying the various kinds of work for which we might qualify. We knew we would take tests to see if we qualified for those. When I read about being a link training instructor, I thought that's a whole new world for me. It deals with aviation, and that is something I don't know anything about, but it sounds challenging to me. So, I read all the material that was offered about becoming a link trainer operator and then of course we were tested to see if we qualified. To my delight, I was. By September I knew that I'd be going to link trainer school in Atlanta, Georgia.

Just before we went – left boot camp, we had a leave. So, I went home to my family for just three or four days before I went to Atlanta. It was to start getting ready to become a link trainer operator. That was immensely interesting and challenging. We had to learn the flying language. We had to learn Morse Code, and I remember how difficult it was to stay awake doing Morse Code in the heat of Atlanta, because nothing was air conditioned there. We learned to “fly” and the word is in quotes because we didn't really fly, but we learned to handle and be in, and operate a link trainer, which was the original flight simulator. Very, very simple compared to the very intricate machine that a simulator is now, but we had to

learn to fly them and then how to teach the cadets to fly them. When we were qualified, and supposedly we were, but I can't remember exactly the length of time, we were sent to a naval air station. And I was sent together with many other girls to Corpus Christi, Texas.

Naval Air Station (NAS) Corpus Christi

Corpus Christi had a big naval air station with auxiliary stations surrounding it. Thus, if you were going to fly bombers, you went to this station, if you're going to fly single engine planes you went to a different substation and so on. So, we went to work teaching the cadets to fly by instrument. When they came to us, the link trainer department, they already knew how to fly by visual reference to the ground. But they had no experience with flying by instruments. The link trainer was a little machine mounted on a series of bellows that allowed it to pitch and turn. It did not leave the base to which it was attached. It was electrically operated. Outside of it, perhaps 15 feet away, was a control desk, where we, the instructors, sat and communicated with the cadet who was in the link trainer with the hood down, so he couldn't see out at all. The cadets were uncomfortable with that and even resented link trainers – that part of their training -- because they couldn't see out. But our job was to teach them to trust their instruments.

By radio we communicated with the cadet in the link trainer and gave him problems to do, such as there is an oil slick at such and such a location – go and investigate it. Or find your way – find your location - and report it to the station. In those days, directions were given via a tower that whose signals were either a letter in code, or a letter in code, and you found your position with the increasing or decreasing volume, and that indicated how far they were from the station and what direction they were going, and things like that.

Recreation and life at NAS Corpus Christi

It was interesting and challenging and even fun, after we grew comfortable with it. Our workdays were either a long morning or a long afternoon, and so we had a whole day off. We had from one noon to the next noon with that alternating work time. In our free time we were free to do anything that we chose to do. We read, we sewed, we wrote letters – lots of letters. We could leave the base if we chose to and we could go into town and have lunch or shop. We were girls, so we still loved to shop, even if we were in uniform. And we made good friends with each other and lived comfortably in barracks. I feel that we were quite protected. There was never a man in our barracks unless he was what they call “piped in” ...

We could not appear out of the barracks out of uniform. If we even went to the laundry building, which was probably 100 feet away, we had to be in uniform. If we were out of the barracks, we had to be in uniform. Within the barracks we could lounge in house coats and things like that, and of course we did. About once a week we had close order drill which had us march in formation and of course we had to be in uniform for that. We had to be in

uniform always. We were allowed to wear shoes other than the clumsy Navy black Oxfords, if they were reasonable and sensible and within uniform restrictions.

I just don't have words for telling you how fulfilling it was. We felt – we knew we were doing something useful. It was challenging because most of us hadn't had anything to do with aviation before this experience. Because we were link trainer instructors, we had lots of chances to fly with the instructor of a training flight. Never with the students, but with the instructor. Those instructors, of course, had gone through link training themselves and they didn't ever like the link training section of their flight education. So, if they learned that their passenger had been a link trainer operator, they would try to do what they call "wringing us out" which meant making us air sick. Tried to make us airsick, and so... Now these were Navy officers by this time, but former link students, maybe. I mean, we may have had them as a link student. So, they would try to do what they called "wringing us out," which meant making us air sick. So, they would do barrel rolls. . . and loop the loops. But it was such fun. They never succeeded in making me sick.

One thing that we all enjoyed was the franking privilege, which meant free personal postage. So, we wrote lots of letters and how we did wait for the mail to see if there was a letter from home. My family was faithful in writing, and I was faithful in writing, too. I have all my letters and because my family saved them, I have all the letters I wrote, and it is fun to get them out and reread the story of my late Navy experience and to cherish those memories. . .

I greatly enjoyed the experience of being in the service, and I'm still proud to have been. I just appreciated what it did for me. It broadened my horizons.

Questions for Reading 2

1. Why did Brand join the WAVES?
2. What did Brand learn during boot camp and training, and what challenges did she face?
3. What was a link trainer, and how was it used to support pilot training at NAS Corpus Christi?
4. What activities did Brand participate in during her free time as a WAVE?
5. How did WAVES contribute to sustaining the home front war effort? Why was it important for women to be trained for diverse roles?

Reading 3: Newspaper Article

Cadet Tells of Thrilling Flight in One of Station's Big Flying Boats

The Corpus Christi Caller-Times, September 28, 1941

(Note: Aviation cadets in Class 3A-41C, U. S. Naval Reserve, have commenced their final training in the big patrol boats at the Naval Air Station. The following account of a routine training flight in a PBY (patrol bomber), was written by Bob Graham, who finished college last year and this year began active duty in the enlisted Naval Reserve.)

'All secure, sir.'

'Fine, let 'er roll!'

With a lunge that nearly threw us off balance the giant PBY flying boat shot forward over the choppy water of Corpus Christi Bay. Bouncing and trembling with its motors at full throttle, the twin-engined bomber, one of many on duty at the Naval Air Station, struggled to clear itself of the water. After what seemed an interminable length of time the waves suddenly stopped smashing against the hull and we were in the air.

Ten Men Aboard

There were 10 of us aboard the plane; the first pilot, a navigation officer; four aviation cadets, two mechanics, a radio man and the writer. Purpose of the hop was to teach the cadets the intricacies of navigation and flying one of these gigantic Consolidated patrol bombers, of a similar type to the Royal Air Force 'Catalinas,' one of which spotted and reported the position of the ill-fated German battleship, 'Bismark.'

Immediately following the takeoff, each man took his assigned position. The radioman clamped his ear phones on his head and sat down before an intricate maze of electrical equipment. It was his job to keep constantly in touch with the Naval Air Station.

Three cadets gathered around the navigation officer to plot the course of the flying boat on its four-hour flight. Another cadet took his place beside the flight captain for instructions in piloting the two-engined monster. One of the mechanics mounted into the compartment between the wing and fuselage where he took charge of the mechanical details of the keeping the engines running at the desired temperature and efficiency. By glancing at a mass of lights, switches and dials in front of him, he recorded the performance the two engines every half hour. The other mechanic, inexperienced as yet, was taking instructions from him.

Plenty of Space Inside

Communication with all parts of the ship was possible through use of several telephones attached to the bulkheads.

In a plane as large as the Navy's PBY's, it is possible to wander about without too great an effort. The inside of the plane is divided into five compartments which can be sealed by waterproof doors in case of an emergency. Three bunks, a small stove, and a food closet make living more comfortable during extended trips.

Heading straight out into the Gulf of Mexico, we soon gained an altitude of about 1,200 feet. One of the cadets walked to the rear compartment and opened a large rectangular hatch in the bottom of the ship. In war this hatch would be used by a machine gunner to fend off attack from the rear and below.

Small Bomb Dropped

Strapping himself firmly in place, the cadet took wind drift calculations through use of a smoke bomb and a calibrated 'spyglass.' After dropping the small bomb overboard, he waited until it released smoke upon hitting the water and then followed the smoke through his glass. Charts and instruments were spread out on the table in the navigation compartment and soon cadets were busy at their work.

On such a flight as this, cadets spell each other on the jobs of piloting, wind drift and celestial navigation and plotting the course.

The water had been unusually rough on the take-off and salt spray flew past the small windows in the side of the ship. Once in the air, the pitch of the propellers was changed from maneuvering to cruising to decrease gasoline consumption and produce better performance. After awhile the engine's roar became so familiar that when a single spark plug missed fire but once, backs stiffened and ears became alert. But a fraction of second in passing, this disturbance of the routine sound was as noticeable as the boom of a bass drum.

Landing is Fast

The trip out and back over the Gulf on two different angles, with two or three rain squalls obscuring the water at times, filled the four hours.

Coming in for a landing, the shoreline of Corpus Christi produced a beautiful sight. A flick of the mechanic's wrist dropped the floats on the wing tips into landing position, the propeller were brought back into maneuvering pitch, and suddenly the water of the bay was again spraying past the windows as the giant boat came to a stop, bobbing peacefully.

Young sailors swam out, attached the beaching gear and the plane was hauled out of the water.

No great stretch of the imagination was necessary to change this flight over the peaceful Gulf into one over the war-torn English Channel. It was made in the same type of plane used by the RAF. Markings on the inside of the fuselage gave directions for attaching 30 and 50 caliber machine guns. Bomb racks were evident but empty. The men went about their duties in a serious manner and the steady roar of the engines told us that we were going someplace in a hurry.

It was not a war mission, but it was a mission of defense and preparedness.

Questions for Reading 3

1. What were the roles of the service members on the plane? What were their responsibilities?
2. How did the geography of Corpus Christi contribute to the effectiveness of the training?
3. How might experiences like this have prepared the cadets for future wartime missions?
4. In what ways does the text help you to picture the mission and some of the training activities at the Naval Air Station?

Lesson Closing

Answer the essential question: How did the service and training at Naval Air Station Corpus Christi contribute to the war effort on the home front?

Extensions

1. Additional Reading

Note: The following excerpts are from a newspaper article describing a Mexican pilot who participated in training at Naval Air Station Corpus Christi. Trainees at the station not only came from the United States. Some came from Canada, England, Mexico, Peru, Chile, Argentina, and Bolivia.

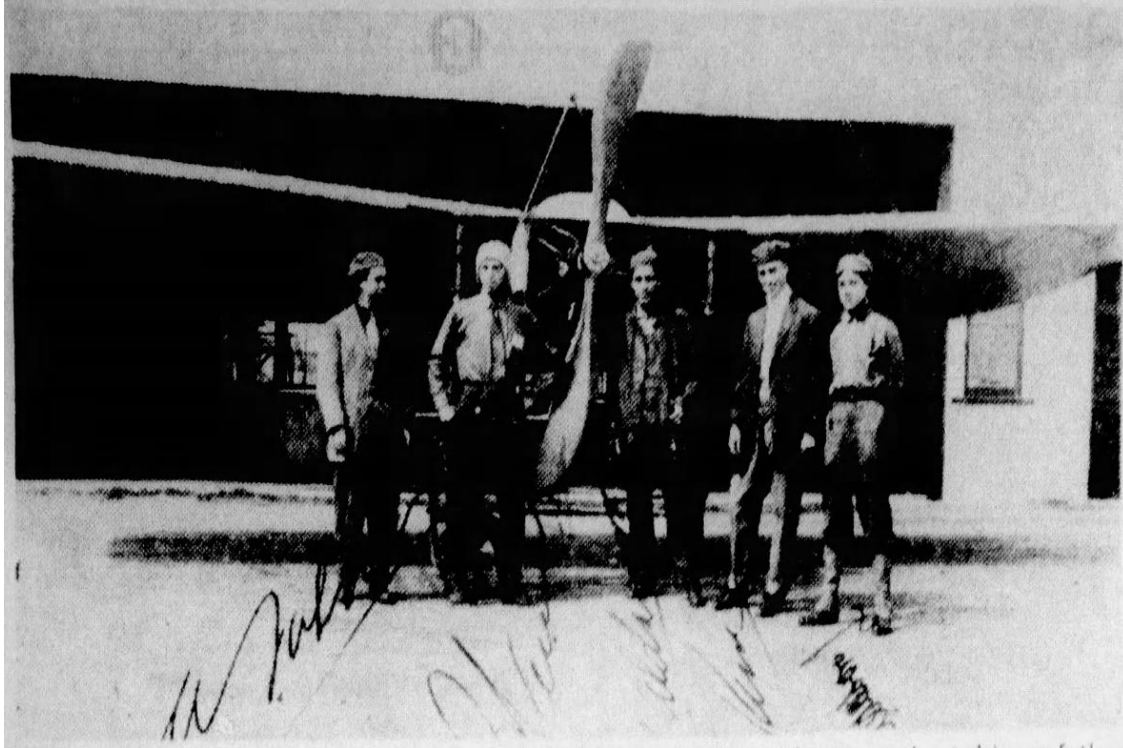


Figure 8: The five Mexican aviation cadets in 1912 receiving training in school on Long Island. (Credit: The Corpus Christi Caller, May 5, 1943)



Figure 9: The five pilots, 30 years later in 1942. From left to right, Gen. Alberto Salinas, Gen. Gustavo Sailnas, First Capt. Juan Aldasoro, Second Capt. Horacio Ruiz, and First Capt. Eduardo Aldasoro. Eduardo Aldasoro was stationed in Corpus Christi. (Credit: The Corpus Christi Caller, May 5, 1943)

Holder of World's 12th Flying License Trains Here

Mexican Captain, Now Only 46 and Veteran of 30 Years' Flying, Muses Rough-and-Ready Revolutionary Days

By Juliet Knight

The Corpus Christi Caller, May 5, 1943

Capt. Eduardo Aldasoro, the 12th man in the world to receive a pilot's license, and one of the five pilots to organize military aviation in Mexico, is now in Corpus Christi taking training in precision flying at the Naval Air Training Center.

The 46-year-old Mexican who was making gliders with his brother in 1908 when the Wright Brothers were pinning wings on the United States, has lived through a career of fighter piloting in revolutions, instructing, and test piloting. Truly feathers in the cap of aviation, he and the four men who took training with him in 1912 are all still alive and flying for the Mexican Army.

The genial captain speaks excellent English with a strong accent and enlightening gestures typical of his nationality. However, when telling tales of his favorite revolutions, he becomes so interested in the test that he lapses into Spanish without realizing it.

Today, Captain Aldasoro has 2,000 hours of military flying, more than any other Mexican Army pilot. That would have seemed a fabulous total to the 11-year-old boy who with his brother, Juan Pablo, built the first glider in Mexico in 1918. . . .

Becomes Test Pilot

Three years ago, he became test pilot for the government plane factory in Mexico City, Talleres of Aeronautica, along with his duties as instructor. He tested all repaired and new planes.

When war came on a larger scale than even Mexican revolutionists would dream up, the Mexican Army still has as officers the five pioneers. Gustavo Salinas was made a full general, chief of military aviation. His cousin, Alberto, is a general, chief of civil aviation. Juan Aldasoro became assistant to Gustavo. Ruiz is a second captain stationed in Mexico City. Eduardo, as much at home in the air as on the earth since he received his license as a 16-year-old boy, came with a contingent of 20 aviators to Corpus Christi to learn how the American Navy sets them down on an aircraft carrier. He is a first captain, having climbed four ranks since he re-entered the Army.

Questions

1. What are accomplishments of Capt. Aldasoro?

2. How does Capt. Aldasoro's career reflect the rapid development of aviation in Mexico and around the world?
3. How is Capt. Aldasoro's story an example of international collaboration on the home front during war?

2. Additional Oral Histories

Teacher Tip: The following are four additional oral histories from the [Veterans History Project](#) by the Library of Congress of service members who trained and served at Naval Air Station Corpus Christi. They may be used as additional interviews for students to listen to and report back on key findings, such as the role and experiences they had in the area.

[Agnes Elvera Hatfield](#)

Hatfield was a WAVE who served as a link trainer and was a friend to Doris Ilene Brand, of Reading 2 in this lesson. From approximately six to nineteen minutes contains most of her service recollections.

[Alan Curtis King](#)

King trained at Naval Air Station Corpus Christi as a Navy Aviation Cadet. He discusses some of his training experiences in the first part of the interview.

[Shirley Louise Mitchen](#)

Mitchen, a WAVE, worked at the assembly and repair and later as a secretary, at Naval Air Station Corpus Christi.

[Edgar George Schoelz](#)

Schoelz served in the Navy at Naval Air Station Corpus Christi as an Aviation Machinist's Mate First Class. He worked in assembly and repair and also attended gunnery school in Kingsville. One of his experiences was attending a school in [Wichita, Kansas](#) at the Beechcraft factory.

3. Extra Resources

[Corpus Christi's 'University of the Air'](#) by U.S. Naval Institute

[Naval Air Station, Corpus Christi](#) by the Texas State Historical Association

[WWII Heritage Trail](#) (map and description of sites) by United Corpus Christi Chamber of Commerce

Lesson 2: Women's Contributions in South Texas Coastal Bend Area and Corpus Christi, Texas, World War II Heritage City

About this Lesson

This lesson is part of a series about the World War II home front in [South Texas Coastal Bend Area and Corpus Christi, Texas, World War II Heritage City](#). The lesson contains readings and photos to contribute to learners' understandings about the role of women in industry, service, and volunteer efforts on the home front. The readings provide background on women in the Woman's Motor Corps, Civil Air Patrol, and work at a chemical plant. An extension reading shares about women in the Canteen Corps.

The following lesson readings connect to women in mostly civilian and volunteer service. However, the Civil Air Patrol was transferred to the War Department from the Office of Civilian Defense in 1943. To learn about women in the WAVES at Naval Air Station Corpus Christi use [Reading 2 in Lesson 1](#).

Objectives:

1. Describe the contributions of women in civilian and military service, industry, and volunteer efforts.
2. Explain why women entered the area's workforce, and the importance of this to home front efforts.
3. Compare local, historical perspectives on service to synthesize and connect to larger wartime perspectives and themes.

Materials for Students:

1. Photos: Figures 10-17 (*can be displayed digitally*)
2. Readings 1, 2, 3 (and optional extension reading)
3. *Recommended: Map of Texas, with Corpus Christi and surrounding Coastal Bend Cities (examples include Aransas Pass, Port Aransas, Kingsville, and Beeville within Nueces & Kleberg counties)*

Photos



Figure 10: "Seargent Pat Pate, who formerly worked in a law office in Corpus Christi, now a member of the Civil Air Patrol."
By John Vachon, June 1943. (Credit: Library of Congress)



Figure 11 :Mrs. Doris Duke, 26 years old and mother to one, worked as a civil service worker in Assembly and Repair at Naval Air Station Corpus Christi. She is pictured reconditioning spark plugs. By Howard Hollem, August 1942. (Credit: Library of Congress)



Figure 12: "Surrounded by the soft white cotton blossoms whose harvesting is essential to America's war effort, this Mexican girl takes a moment's rest from her strenuous picking job. She's one of hundreds of Good Neighbors who gave a helping hand to the farmers near Corpus Christi, Texas, by harvesting the summer cotton crop." By Howard Hollem, November 1942. (Credit: Library of Congress)



Getting Started: Essential Question

How did women in South Texas Coastal Bend and Corpus Christi contribute to home front efforts through service, industry, and volunteerism?



By the numbers: Women Supporting Agriculture

Note: These numbers were as of the publication of the article on January 23, 1944. Although not all originally had specificities, most were in reference to one year's worth of production (1943).

- Across women in the Home Demonstration Clubs and girls in 4-H, 4,000 Victory gardens were cared for. 339 were club gardens. The girls' 4-H gardens alone produced 11,725 pounds of fresh vegetables.

- Women in the clubs sold 1,302 pounds of butter, 43 gallons of milk, 466 pounds of processed cheeses, and 34, 784 dozen eggs to ease shortages.
- Approximately 92% of the women in rural areas of the county took on additional farm jobs once done by men.
- Only 168 women were enrolled in the 10 clubs active in 1943. However, they assisted more than 1,000 rural homemakers, including Latin American and African American workers on their farms in canning more than 250,000 containers of food.
- Community canning centers in the county assisted 667 families in canning food, and the county home demonstrations supported around 3,000 families with learning how to can.

From “Nueces County Farm Women Contribute to Victory Programs,” *The Corpus Christi Caller-Times*, January 23, 1944



Quotation to consider:

“In aircraft factories, in shipyards and munitions plants, in sawmills, behind the wheels of trucks, in all the skilled and sweaty jobs which men once claimed, thousands of Texas women went to war in 1942.

Their battle lines were the home production lines.

As new war plants began to roar; as more and more of their menfolk left to fight, the demand for women workers grew until at year’s end in the war plant cities it was a frantic thing. Many Texas women went to work in 1942. Many more will go to work in 1943.

Shop girls, housewives, grandmas, mothers, wives and sweethearts of fighting men, waitresses, beauty operators, stenographers, found they could do the things at work that men had done.

There was good money in those jobs and they satisfied the urge of women to do something in the world fight. Texas women at work could have their cake and eat it too.”

- Potts Boswell in “Texas Women Go to War in Skilled, Sweaty Jobs,” *Corpus Christi Times*, December 21, 1942



Read to Connect

Reading 1: Newspaper Article

Teacher Note: The following reading describes civilian women serving in the Woman's Motor Corps of the American Red Cross. Another example of a civilian corps comprised of women was the Red Cross Canteen Corps, which can be read about in the lesson extension's additional reading.

Motor Corps No Place for Weak And Weepy; Members Held to Rigid Rules, Regulations

By Kathryn Pate

The Corpus Christi Caller-Times, March 15, 1942

Perhaps there was a time when 'Men Must Work and Women Must Weep' was more than an adage, which definitely it is today. If any women in Corpus Christi are now weeping, the tears fall not in public but in the confines of boudoirs. Because, as the public sees and knows them, local women are working shoulder to shoulder with men in an all-out war effort of great proportions.

In no branch of the defense program is this better exemplified than the Woman's Motor Corps of the American Red Cross. This organization is not one for the weak or the weepy. Even after passing its rigid requirements members of the Motor Corps are subject to semi-military rules and regulations.

Learning the intricacies of an automobile engine, no small task in itself, is only one phase of this course, which includes in addition to motor mechanics the standard and advanced classes in First Aid, a safety driving test, radio operation, map reading, blackout driving, intelligence, firefighting, and ambulance driving, not to mention military drill. Those who enroll in the course with visions of themselves in tricky uniforms behind the wheels of long, slinky ambulances are due for sharp awakenings.

Four Companies

The Corpus Christi Woman's Motor Corps is now composed of four companies, with a total membership of about 75. As a practical working unit for a community of this size, officials hope to enlist 200 active and 100 reserve members. Each company, composed of two sections, is headed by a captain and two lieutenants. All officers comprise the governing board.

At the head of the entire Motor Corps is Maj. Martha Kirkman, who received her rank and title along with eight other officers in ceremonies conducted at the USO Club last week. Mrs. Donald MacMillan, chairman of the Nueces County Chapter of American Red Cross, awarded the ranks.

Capt. Adj. Patricia Perry serves as an aide to Major Kirkman, and other officers are Capt. Barbara Holman, Capt. Helen Greenmeyer, Capt. Isabel Weil, Lt. Clara Davy, Lt. Betty van Every, Lt. Betty Cooper and Lt. Mary Pearl Cable. Other officers will be appointed as companies are formed and training is completed.

Uniforms, to be worn by members of the Motor Corps on duty, will consist of a blue-grey double breasted coat-dress, with a dickey of white, black four-in-hand tie, black Oxfords and black or grey gloves. Overseas caps with Motor Corps emblems will complete the uniform. Until the uniforms arrive, members of the Motor Corps may be identified by the white coveralls worn for classes and military drill.

Peacetime Duties

During peacetime, members of the organization will act as messengers for the local Red Cross chapter, will give First Aid service when necessary and will otherwise be available to the Red Cross whenever and wherever needed. As ambulance drivers and First Aid workers they will operate in squads of four members, with an officer commanding and giving orders.

‘Even after the companies are organized and trained, the military drill continues,’ says Major Kirkman. ‘Military drill is the most important factor in co-ordination, since it offers an opportunity for the units to meet and work together when the course is completed,’ she pointed out. Weekly meetings are held at which time distinct duties are assigned to each member.

James Crabb, coordinator of OCD and Red Cross activities, has organized and trained the Motor Corps since its inception. Each group comes under his personal supervision until the course is completed, at which time they start working as units with orders coming then from headquarters. ‘We have secured the services of 55 trucks with drivers for immediate call during times of emergency and this spring the Woman’s Motor Corps will conduct a campaign to buy an ambulance,’ according to Major Kirkman.

Questions for Reading 1, By the Numbers, Quotation to Consider, and Photos

1. What skills and training were required for women to join the Motor Corps, and why were they important?
2. What was the purpose of the Motor Corps, and how did the Red Cross plan to utilize it during both wartime and peacetime?

3. In what ways does the article portray the role of women in the Motor Corps as a challenge to traditional roles of the 1940s?
4. How did the contributions of women in agriculture help support the home front? Considering the estimate that 92% of rural women in the area took on farm jobs once done by men, what does this show about the needs and changing roles of women during the war? (*By the Numbers*)
5. Why did Boswell use the phrase, “Texas women at work could have their cake and eat it too”? Do you agree or disagree with this statement? (*Quotation to Consider*)

Photos



Figure 13: Mrs. Eloise J. Ellis, appointed in the civil service to be senior supervisor in the Assembly and Repairs Department at the Naval Air Base in Corpus Christi. She also supported housing arrangements for out-of-state employees and helped with personal problems. By Howard R. Hollem, August 1942. (Credit: Library of Congress)



Figure 14: Mrs. Cora Ann Bowen, wife of a disabled World War II veteran (left) works as a cowler at the Naval Air Base; Mrs. Eloise J. Ellis (right) is a senior supervisor in the Assembly and Repairs Department. By Howard R. Hollem, August 1942. (Credit: Library of Congress)



Figure 15: Bowen, a riveter, and Olsen, her supervisor, in the Assembly and Repair Dept. at the Naval Air Base, Corpus Christi, Texas. By Howard Hollem, August 1942. (Credit: Library of Congress)

Reading 2: Newspaper Article

Note: The Civil Air Patrol was transferred to the War Department from the Office of Civilian Defense in 1943. At the time of two of the photographs included in this lesson (figures 13 and 14) this transfer had not yet occurred. By figure 10, the transfer had occurred.

The Civil Air Patrol (CAP) was a group of pilots, both men and women, who helped with patrols, search-and-rescue, and spotting enemy submarines. The Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) were female pilots who served in non-combat roles by transporting and testing aircraft and training pilots.

Eager, Bright-Eyed Young Women Wear CAP Wings

By Kathryn Pate, Society Editor

Corpus Christi Caller-Times, October 17, 1943

Members of Group 6, Texas Wing, Civil Air Patrol, were convening in Alice one Sunday afternoon not long ago. From Corpus Christi, Robstown and Sinton they came, in bright little silver, yellow, red and blue planes.

A few minutes later, in flights of three, the planes swooped off again. The Glasscock Four G Ranch near Premont was their destination. Each flight was routed over different South Texas terrain, yet all were timed to reach the Four G together.

'We'll all get there at the same time,' grinned an enthusiastic and optimistic pilot, 'so let's be careful where we land.' All had visions of a perfectly-timed rendezvous at the Four G, with dozens of planes skimming through the air and landing simultaneously.

Only two planes, each piloted by a woman, reached the Glasscock Ranch at the appointed hour. Others drifted in, one by one, for the next 30 or 40 minutes. Puzzled-faced men removed their khaki caps, scratched their heads in wonder. The women-folks had beat them at their own game.

In the Corpus Christi unit of Group 6, Texas Wing, several women are privileged to wear the khaki trousers, overseas caps and silver wings of the Civil Air Patrol. They are eager, bright-eyed young women who, in most instances, doff cooking aprons and house dresses to don the monkey jackets in which they fly. Rocking chair move too slowly for them. Their interests center on landings and take-offs, meteorology and navigation, wind velocity and speed.

These women who fly are as serious about their CAP activity as the women who ferry great big bombers across the country. Their log books are their Bibles and their talk is about licenses and hours in the air.

Civil Air Patrol was organized in January 1942 under the Office of Civilian Defense. It was formed for the purpose of grouping together fliers, potential fliers and equipment which could be used in times of emergency for civilian defense.

The Civil Air Patrol was a tremendous success. It was an even bigger help than officials had thought it would be and, as a reward, the CAP was made an Auxiliary of the United States Army Air Forces. As such it is the only civilian organization which confers the same rank and commission as the United States Army.

Coastal patrol and courier services have been the principal projects of the Corpus Christi CAP. The women and men pilots are subject to call at any time, but as volunteers they are not forced to do duty as they would be if on active service.

They fly either on student permit or licenses. Persons with student permits fly solo; those with licenses may take other along for the ride. Women in the local unit include Florence Albrecht, Mrs. Sam Dunnam, Mrs. Clyde Bates, Carolyn Coulthard, Sybil Salley, Mrs. David Sessums and Agnes McHaney.

To be eligible for the CAP, a woman must be a citizen of the United States, of course, and must have an active interest in flying. The minimum age for admission to the corps is 16, although an applicant under 18 is enlisted as a cadet. Women with special training in radio, photography, navigation and meteorology are especially needed.

After entering the Civil Air Patrol they study military courtesy and discipline, they are given military drill, they study the local Civilian Defense set-up. They must study meteorology, navigation and instruments. After completing this 80-hour basic course, they continue with advanced instruction. Army and Navy officers, and other qualified men, have conducted the advanced study courses.

Members of the Civil Air Patrol jointly own four planes. With their own personal funds they pay for the upkeep of the planes. There are 10 or 12 other planes, privately owned, which fly in the Civil Air Patrol.

Not long ago the State Wing met in Kerrville for maneuvers and bivouac. Flight 6 was the only one whose members had enough planes for all to fly to Kerrville. Members of other flights came by train and car as well as plane.

Twenty-five young girls of high school age, many of them future members of the Civil Air Patrol, recently were organized into a CAP cadet class. They will be given basic pre-flight training, but will not be taught to fly. The purpose of the class is to prepare youngsters to become future members of CAP. Mrs. Bates is officer in charge.

Among other women active in Flight 6 are Mrs. James Storm, Mrs. Gus Glasscock, Mrs. R.A. Warren, Mrs. Marguerite Cannan and Mrs. Grace Barker, all of Alice.

Questions for Reading 2

1. How did the women in the Civil Air Patrol (CAP) contribute to civilian defense efforts?
2. What specific qualifications and training was required for women in the CAP?
3. How might the women in the CAP have influenced the perception of women's roles in aviation and defense?

Reading 3: Newspaper Article

Note: Excerpts from the original, a longer, more technical article, have been revised for better readability for students.

Industrial War Effort is Aided by Women Employed at Chemical Plant

By Chauncey Cox

Corpus Christi Times, February 4, 1945

Working amid mighty structures that even dwarf men are Corpus Christi women who have jobs essential to industrial war effort. These women, employees in the plant at Southern Alkali Corporation prove that women's place is wherever they are needed.

Reviewing their work, Charles Ogden, Southern Alkali's head of personnel, declares: 'We have found the girls as loyal, eager, and as able to do their jobs as men.' About 25 of the 70 who work there have assignments in the chemical plant itself: some work days only, but others change shifts and are on duty around the clock.

Having women in these jobs is an innovation, and until about a year ago, the departments where they work were men's domain.

Southern Alkali is a grouping of structures near the end of the port: when originally built, the company received recognition as the first major chemical industry to invade the South. Now the plant is flanked by petroleum refineries and loading terminals, but the equipment for producing caustic, lye, lime, soda ash, and chlorine is distinctive for its building-story

construction, white storage silos, and the conveyor that loaded ships with soda ash before the war.

Men at the plant do everything necessary to combine the raw materials, control the processes, make the products and containers to ship them, and maintain the plant and its equipment. Tinsmiths, painters, machinists, welders, chemical operators, riggers, car loaders and handlers all take part. Women work in three of the major plant departments. Of course the women are new to the jobs; in fact, they didn't know what to expect, generally.

'I had no idea what kind of work I'd do,' exclaimed Mrs. Vera Freeman. 'If I had, I might not have applied, but I like it now and wouldn't change. Besides I wanted to feel like I was doing something in the war.' Mrs. Freeman has worked 10 months as a chlorine valve repairman, teamed with Mrs. C.F. Diebel.

. . . Chlorine's other lassie is Miss Helen Drabek, a liquid chlorine operator-trainee who claims she wouldn't trade her job for any she knows of in our out of Southern Alkali. Before she 'answered the ad in the paper' last March, Miss Drabek was a salesgirl in a department store. Swanky showrooms are vastly different from the compressor room where she now makes the hourly rounds of a 'liquid operator.'

'I do some of the operator's work, but some of it isn't my line yet,' Miss. Drabek relates, outlining her tasks. In this part of chlorine manufacture, gas is cooled under pressure until it becomes liquid. Many ton compressors with motors that pound heavily and joints thickly frosted with ice, loom up in the compressor room. . .

In about 10 days a girl can learn the analytical procedure; after a few weeks, she even gets used to a new set of working hours every seven days. Mrs. Eugene Fenner, whose husband is a Seabee, explained that about half the process lab crew are married, and that their husbands are members of all the armed services. Most of the women have families and manage to keep house in spite of shift change.

Miss Emily Williams, like most of the lab crew, has been on her job for 10 months; she shares a house on Ocean Drive with five other girls and also shares rides to work in a rotating-ride pool which is customary with Southern Alkali workers.

. . . All women in the plant wear slacks; they may change clothing in the plant women's locker room-lounge if they choose. Also they have the facilities of the plant dispensary which is staffed by a full-time nurse and a physician with regular office hours. A women's counselor, Mrs. Elizabeth Bennick, is ready to help too, if she is needed.

When Southern Alkali called for women workers a year ago, it stipulated high school training and set a 25-year age minimum. Applicants, on the whole, had worked elsewhere

before - in offices, shops, cafes (one helped her husband with an insurance and real estate business). However, learning jobs in industry was brand new for them.

‘Some women we hired didn’t like it or weren’t suited for the jobs,’ concluded Ogden, the personnel chief, ‘but they were much the minority and left of their own accord.’ All women hired for plant departments are permanent Corpus Christi residents, though some of them grew up in other parts of South Texas.

Questions for Reading 3

1. What products were produced at the Southern Alkali Corporation? How may these have been important during wartime?
2. Why was hiring women for these jobs considered an “innovation?”
3. What support systems assisted the workers?
4. What do experiences at this plant reveal about some women’s motivations, challenges, and sense of contributions to the war effort?

Lesson Closing

Answer the essential question: How did women in South Texas Coastal Bend and Corpus Christi contribute to home front efforts through service, industry, and volunteerism?

Additionally, consider: How might the many roles of women and shifts in employment during wartime have impacted post-war society?

Extensions

Additional Reading and Photos



Figure 16: Members of the Canteen Corps class, part of a photo collage, in *The Corpus Christi Caller-Times*, July 19, 1942.



Figure 17: The Red Cross Canteen Cottage near the Southern Pacific Railroad station provided refreshments and rest for traveling service members. Pictured is Mrs. Ona Harrington pouring lemonade for C.E. Nelson. (*Corpus Christi Caller-Times*, July 25, 1943)

First Canteen Corps Unit Armed With Pots and Pans

Cooking for 50 Instead of Five is New Job for First Class of Graduates

The Corpus Christi Caller-Times, July 19, 1942

Members of Corpus Christi's first Canteen Corps unit literally could feed Coxey's Army.

Most of the mothers of small families, they have learned to cook for 50 instead of five. They know how to make an Irish stew that will yield 230 servings, how to brew 50 cups of tea, how to make a gallon of white sauce.

They have been trained to make out grocery lists which might call for 20 pounds of smoked ham, 25 heads of lettuce, 50 pounds of potatoes, 100 ears of corn, many other quantity items.

Food calms people in times of emergencies: Given three fairly square meals at 8, 12 and 6, or hours thereabouts, refugees find a long monotonous day not completely unbearable. The enjoyment of satisfying food occupies time and thought, both of which hang heavily over those temporarily ejected from their homes.

If Corpus Christi is ever the victim of a bombing, flood, or epidemic, members of the Red Cross Canteen Corps will be on hand to see that refugees eat as usual when breakfast, lunch, and dinner times roll around. Feeding refugees is their business.

First Unit

Corpus Christi's first trained unit of Canteen Corps workers, numbering 26, is ready to graduate. These women have successfully completed a course in nutrition and have finished the Canteen Corps class. They now stand ready for call, at any hour of day or night, to staff the 18 stationary canteen centers where food and beverage will be dispensed to the homeless.

The Red Cross Canteen Corps is headed by Mrs. C. M. Winther, chairman, and Mrs. William Renick, assistant chairman. Mrs. J. B. Watson was teacher of the first class.

Officials estimate that the Canteen Corps will need approximately 300 members for efficient operation. Other classes will be organized as rapidly as possible.

Three objectives are listed for the Canteen Corps: to provide well-organized and well-trained units; to promote a standard of efficiency in the operation of a canteen to insure proper food supplies in emergency feeding.

Four committees comprise the Canteen Corps staff, the menu planning committee, the food preparation, the food service and the housekeeping.

Menu planners determine the needs of groups to be fed, estimate the available food and order additional supplies. Food preparers list menus, assign food and supplies, list needed supplies, prepare food, control waste, practice cleanliness in handling food. Food servers plan the service of food, keep food hot, select containers for transportation and serve the food. Housekeepers prepare dishes and utensils, wash, rinse and sterilize, clean equipment and work tables, dispose of garbage, leaving the canteen clean and orderly. Canteen work is not easy.

Uniforms Colorful

Members of the corps must report promptly when assigned to duty, unless suffering from cold or infection, wearing their Belgium blue dress uniforms and coifs. The coif is the white cap with Red Cross emblem in center. It is worn with a blue veil for dress occasions.

In class the students learn that they might sometime be called upon to plan feeding in emergencies when neither gas nor electricity is available for cooking. When gas and electricity are available two or more meals daily are to be provided from a school lunchroom. In large scale epidemics, hot nourishing food is to be transported from the

central kitchens to homes. Mobile canteens are called upon to provide food for homeless in bombed areas.

Food, they are taught, should be satisfying, filling and palatable. It should be adequate in nourishment and low in cost. Emergency rations and pattern menus for the time following an emergency period are set up as standard by the Red Cross.

The emergency menu for one meal might include potato soup, ham and pickle sandwiches, beverages. Or it might consist of baked beans, cabbage and apple salad and beverages.

Foods which are readily available, requiring little or no cooking, and not too bulky for easy transportation are recommended for the three-meal emergency menus. These might include: breakfast, canned fruit juice, cereal, bread, butter, beverage; dinner, canned beef or salmon, canned peas, canned spaghetti, dried prunes, bread, butter and beverage; supper, canned navy beans, canned tomatoes, cheese, bread, butter and beverage.

With limited equipment, labor and food supplies, only two meals may be provided. Where a two-meal plan is used, a noon-day lunch is served to children.

In addition to the prescribed class work, members of the first Canteen Corps unit have made three field trips. One to the CP&L auditorium for a demonstration, showing how to concentrate on speed in food preparation; another to South Bluff Park, where outdoor cookery was demonstrated by a group of Camp Fire Girls, and another to the NYA cafeteria, where from 800 to 1,000 meals are served each day from 5 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Questions for Additional Reading

1. How did the training of the Canteen Corps prepare them for emergency situations?
2. Why was it important for food to be filling and low-cost in emergencies and wartime?
3. Why was disaster and emergency preparedness on the home front important?
4. What work did the Corps do with the Camp Fire Girls and NYA?
5. How did efforts by civilians, like those in the Canteen Corps, support community resilience?

Lesson 3: Home Front Contributions by Youth in South Texas Coastal Bend Area and Corpus Christi, Texas, World War II Heritage City

About this Lesson

This lesson is part of a series about the World War II home front in [South Texas Coastal Bend Area and Corpus Christi, Texas, World War II Heritage City](#). The lesson contains readings and photos to contribute to learners' understandings about the role of youth contributions on the home front. The readings offer background on the National Youth Administration (NYA) and its role in providing war industry training and community-building projects. The lesson also highlights student participation in salvage drives and the role of a Red Cross training course at an African American high school. Optional extension readings share contributions of local Camp Fire Girls and Boy Scouts.

Objectives:

1. Describe the purpose of youth training and contributions to war efforts.
2. Explain how youth volunteerism and work helped meet home front needs.
3. Compare local, historical perspectives on service to synthesize and connect to larger wartime perspectives and themes.

Materials for Students:

1. Photos: Figures 18-24 (*can be displayed digitally*)
2. Readings 1, 2, 3, and optional extension readings
3. *Recommended: Map of Texas, with Corpus Christi and surrounding Coastal Bend Cities (examples include Aransas Pass, Port Aransas, Kingsville, and Beeville within Nueces & Kleberg counties)*

Photos



Figure 18: Mrs. Virginia Davis, a riveter in the assembly and repair department of the Naval Air Base, supervises Chas. Potter, a NYA trainee from Michigan; Corpus Christi, Texas. August 1942. Photo by Howard R. Hollem. (Credit: Library of Congress)



Figure 19: Two sisters who left the farm to keep our airmen flying. NYA trainees Evelyn and Lillian Buxkeurple are shown working on a practice bomb shell. After about eight weeks of apprenticeship they will be eligible for civil service work in the assembly and repair department at the base. Naval air base Corpus Christi, Texas. (Credit: Howard Hollem, Library of Congress)



Figure 20: Oyida Peaks riveting as part of her NYA training to become a mechanic at the Naval Air Base, in the Assembly and Repair Department, Corpus Christi. Note her NYA patch on sleeve with the outline of Texas. August 1942. Photo by Howard R. Hollem. (Credit: Library of Congress)



Figure 21: : Learning to work a cutting machine, these two NYA employees receive training to fit them for important work, Corpus Christi, Texas. After eight weeks they will be eligible for civil service jobs at the Naval Air Base. The Texas NYA patch can be seen on the shoulder. (Credit: Howard Hollem, Library of Congress)



Getting Started: Essential Question

How did youth in South Texas Coastal Bend Area and Corpus Christi contribute to the war efforts on the home front?



By the numbers: NYA

- The National Youth Administration center in Corpus Christi covered more than eight acres, with an estimate of up to \$500,000 invested. (*Corpus Christi Caller-Times*, July 8, 1943)
- After an initial expansion, the youth resident center cared for 180 mechanics and 35 cooks in training. The center later expanded to caring for 300 boys and 125 girls in total.
- The NYA resident training center produced 150 war industry workers a month. (*Corpus Christi Caller-Times*, June 3, 1942)
- Youths living at the center received \$30 monthly for their work. \$19.20 was used for laundry, medical care, room and board, uniforms, linens, and emergencies. \$10.80 was left for their personal use. (*The Corpus Christi Caller-Times*, January 4, 1942)



Quotations to consider:

“The use of NYA boys, well under the combat age, to replace older men eligible for the draft, has proven so successful here, in fact, that the Corpus Christi project has become a model and is being copied by other naval shore establishments and private industrial plants. In the words of Comdr., H.E., Hailand, the man who is training boys and young women in his ships to open a new labor supply, the NYA is doing a bang-up job and the young fellows still in their teens are putting plenty into the job of ‘keeping them flying.’”

- NYA Training at Air Station May Serve as Model to Nation, *Corpus Christi Caller-Times*, May 3, 1942

“We learned sewing. We made clothes and different things. . . A man taught us, and he worked for the Bureau of Mines, and he taught us how to do artificial respiration and lifesaving work. And I also studied Morse Code, which was very hard to understand. . .

I was there (Gladewater, TX) for a year and then I went to Marshall, Texas, and there we started learned something about doing war work. So, I was there for several months when we were transferred to Corpus Christi, Texas. I was still in the NYA at that time.

And our mission was really to learn to prepare airplanes in the beginning, and I was not too well suited for that, so I was promoted to secretarial work. . . I did that, and they called it a timekeeper and secretarial . . . We had a small salary. Probably \$10 a week or something like that. We had our duties. We had about ten or twelve girls in this one large home, which was lovely. We had our duties. We had kitchen duty, or cleaning, keeping rooms . . . We replaced men. . . A lot of the women did.

- Claudia B. Wheeler, interviewed July 21, 2003. After her training in the NYA, she continued war work as a civilian at the NAS in Corpus Christi. (The [complete interview](#) can be accessed within the Library of Congress' Veterans History Project)



Read to Connect

Background: The National Youth Administration (N.Y.A.) was a New Deal agency sponsored by Franklin D. Roosevelt. It provided work and education for youths aged between 16 and 25. It started in 1935 and was discontinued in 1943. In Corpus Christi and surrounding NYA centers, different training courses required different levels of education (such as elementary education for cook, or high school for mechanics), and age minimums also varied within the programs. The main purpose of the local centers was to support war industry efforts in Texas. The Kingsville Center, as described in the reading, addressed the specific language and cultural needs of local Latin-American youth, but it also reflected the broader context of both formal and informal social and institutional segregation during that time.

Reading 1: Newspaper Article

Latin-American Youths Get Training at Kingsville Center

They Learn to Do By Doing Under NYA Project

Corpus Christi Times, October 1, 1942

Kingsville – Forty-six youths in the Latin-American NYA Resident Center, located on the campus of the Texas College of Arts and Industries in Kingsville, are receiving valuable work experience and related training in various types of trade which are closely connected with the national defense program, according to Howard R. Weir, area director.

These youth are housed in a dormitory constructed by the youths themselves. The buildings are typically Spanish, and the caliche blocks which form the chief construction material were made by the NYA boys from native caliche clay.

Youths at the resident center are receiving work experience by constructing a 40 by 160 foot hollow tile shop building. When completed, the building will be used in the national defense program for various classes and as a natural gas laboratory.

The boys have already completed a large hollow tile shop building the same size as the present project, besides building the caliche block dormitory in which they live, remodeling Javelina Hall, athletic dormitory, and building a garage adjoining the home economics cottage.

They have designed and constructed an all metal sign at the entrance to the college farm, constructed the entrance to the Javelina football field, built the large A & I College Music Hall, and have made various types of braces, shelves for the college library, many tables for class rooms and shops, light fixtures, and other metal work for the dormitories, and a seaplane refueling float to be used in the national defense program at Aransas Pass.

NYA youths enter the center from as far south as Brownsville and as far north as Austin. Cullen Campbell is area director.

Questions for Reading 1, By the Numbers, Quotations to Consider, and Photos

1. What was the purpose of the National Youth Administration (NYA)?
2. What projects were completed by youth at the Kingsville NYA center?
3. How might offering these opportunities have been empowering for Latin-American youth? How might its existence as a center for Latin-American youth also reflect informal practices of segregation in education and training at the time?
4. What types of NYA training were done at other locations, such as the Naval Air Station in Corpus Christi? Use the photos and quotations to consider.
5. Considering evidence across the sources, what conclusions can you draw about the impact of the NYA on the local community and the war effort?

Photos



Figure 22: High school girls in the Horizon Club, a program of the Camp Fire Girls, learning how to prepare food in a Canteen Aide course. They also did activities such as serving meals at the USO. (The Corpus Christi Caller-Times, March 15, 1942)



Figure 23: Junior Camp Fire organization girls knit and put together Afghan blankets for air raid shelters. Others collect scrap materials for the war such as aluminum, tinfoil, stamps, and coat hangers. (The Corpus Christi Caller-Times, March 15, 1942)

Reading 2: Newspaper Article

Teacher Tip: You may choose to support developing background knowledge on material drives during the war with the article "[Material Drives on the World War II Home Front.](#)"

Principals Perfect Plans for Schools' Part in Scrap Drive

Salvage Pledge Cards to Be Issued to 11,000 Students Who Will Scour Their Homes and Neighborhoods for Junk

Corpus Christi Times, October 1, 1942

Principals of 18 city schools perfected plans this morning for their schools' participation in the gigantic local scrap drive which starts Monday, designed to help keep the nation's steel mills rolling when their present 30-day supply of scrap is exhausted.

Corpus Christi's 11,000 school children will receive salvage pledge cards next Monday, and will start scouring their homes and neighborhoods for scrap, which they will pile in their schoolyards. The school turning in the greatest weight of scrap per student will receive a \$100 prize offered by the Caller-Times. The money will be given to the school's Parent-Teacher Association or some responsible individual.

Edmund P. Williams, chairman of the drive, emphasized the seriousness of the situation to the school principals as they met in the board of education room with Supt. M. P. Barker this morning.

Have 30-Day Supply

'The steel mills have only 30 days' supply of scrap,' he said, 'and one pound of scrap is required to make two pounds of new steel. If those mills are forced to shut down, it is only a matter of time until you and I will have to learn the Nazi salute.'

This is one of the few drives connected with the war effort in which people have to give nothing of particular value. They are not being asked to deprive themselves, but to get rid of things they can't use, which is really a benefit to them.'

The War Production Board has asked the nation's newspapers to sponsor the drive, and the papers have asked schools to lead the effort. The school collection week will head the three-week campaign.

Bottlers to Remove Scrap

Corpus Christi bottlers have volunteered use of their trucks to collect scrap from the school yards and other collection depots each Thursday.

In judging the school contest, a qualified junk dealer will estimate the weight of each school's collection. Junk will remain in the schoolyards throughout the first week for the judging Saturday morning.

Each of the principals this morning received an official salvage depot sign to post in his schoolyard. Mimeographed salvage pledges to be given to each student will be delivered to the schools tomorrow.

Pledge Careful Hunt

The pledge reads: 'I promise to recanvass our premises thoroughly for such waste materials as metals, rubber, burlap bags and rags, excepting materials we cannot do without.

I further promise to co-operate in getting this material into war production by giving it to a charity, selling it to a junk dealer or seeing it is taken to a salvage depot.'

Proceeds from sale of the junk taken to school yards will go to charity.

'The junk dealers aren't getting rich in this drive,' Williams said. 'They are doing more work than ever before, and both their buying and selling prices are rigidly controlled. They are trained men performing a vital function under strict government regulation.'

Questions for Reading 2

1. What did school children receive to encourage them to participate in the salvage drive? What directions did it provide?
2. What was the purpose of the scrap drive, and why was it critical for the war effort?
3. How did the collaboration between schools, the newspaper, and local bottlers demonstrate the community's collective effort during wartime?

Photo



Figure 24: Senior students from the Solomon Coles Red Cross class: Melba Adams gives the patient, Rose Marie Irving, a bed-bath. Daisy Tucker takes temperature and pulse. Augustine Ray pours medicine. *The Corpus Christi Times*, March 5, 1943

Reading 3: Newspaper Article

Background: Solomon Coles High School, established in 1878, was the first school for African American children in Corpus Christi. When it was established, and at the time of this article [1943], African American students faced systemic segregation and discrimination in education. The language used in the article to describe the school reflects the discrimination of that era and is inappropriate for use today. Students at Solomon Coles High School contributed to war efforts such as by participating in material drives and participating in Red Cross classes. Today, the school is named Coles High School and Education Center.

Thirty-Three Solomon Coles High School Girls to Get Red Cross Home Nursing Certificates for Work

The Corpus Christi Times, March 5, 1943

Thirty-three junior and senior girls in Solomon Coles High School will receive Red Cross Home Nursing certificates for training completed this week at a unit in the homemaking department.

This is the first such course to be offered in the negro school and those enrolling were 100 percent successful in passing it. "It was one of the most enthusiastic classes with which I have worked," commented Mrs. Ima Lee Glasson, RN, supervisor of nurses in the public schools, who directed the course taught by Mrs. Olivia Hall, head of the homemaking department at Solomon Coles School.

The nursing unit consumes six weeks of the regular homemaking course, and gives approximately 34 hours training in sickroom procedure. The students receive the usual high school credit, and since these courses in Corpus Christi schools are supervised by Red Cross nurses, they are eligible for the Home Nursing certificate.

Upon completion of the training the girls are able to give bed baths, take temperatures, and pulse and respiration, prepare an accurate dose of medicine, bathe, feed and care for a sick or well baby, prepare diets for the sick, carry out the physician's orders and keep records of the patient's progress.

In addition, home nursing classes learn to improvise sickroom and nurse equipment, especially useful in wartimes, Mrs. Glasson pointed out.

Each of the Solomon Coles students undertook an individual project. With such materials as wood from apple-boxes, bottles, small jars, paint and sandpaper, they have completed medicine cabinets, nursery trays, nursery chairs, hot water bottles and sterilizers.

All together the class has made an entire layette and equipped first aid and medicine kits...

Questions for Reading 3

1. What evidence demonstrates the students' enthusiasm and dedication to completing the Red Cross Home Nursing course?
2. How did the course prepare students for wartime needs?
3. What kinds of projects did the students create? How do these projects show the need to carefully use and reuse materials during wartime?

Lesson Closing

Answer the essential question: How did youth in South Texas Coastal Bend Area and Corpus Christi contribute to the war efforts on the home front?

Extensions

Additional Reading

The following readings provide additional examples of youth contributions on the home front, focusing on two organizations that served young children at the time: the Camp Fire Girls and the Boy Scouts. These readings can be used to supplement or replace other materials in the lesson, offering further insights into how youth participated in home front activities.

1. Camp Fire Girls

Victory Emblems To Be Given 95 Camp Fire Girls Saturday

Awards Made for Contributions to War Effort

‘Service stripes’ in the form of Victory Emblems for their contribution to the war effort since last winter, will be awarded to 95 Camp Fire Girls at a public ceremony... Specific reports on what Camp Fire Girls have accomplished through their Service for Victory program on five fronts will be made to officials representing civic groups, war relief groups, and the Office of Civilian Defense. Groups of girls in red, white, and blue service costume will report on Camp Fire service as home volunteers, community aides, experts in recreation, preparedness and practicers of democracy in action.

Following the Camp Fire service reports, Mayor McCaughan will speak on what teenage girls can best do at the present moment to help win the war. He will then present the service emblems to all Camp Fire Girls who have given service.

Launched Last Winter

The Camp Fire Service for Victory program was launched early last winter in direct response to a demand by the girls for some concrete part in the war effort. Anxious to seek out only those tasks which young girls can perform suitably and with efficiency, the National organization turned to the regular Camp Fire program as basis for war services. Every activity included in the plan had been tested in some locality, and was selected for its educational value as well as its contribution to victory.

John N. Barnes, in commenting on the effectiveness of the Service for Victory program has said, ‘Even if we could be enjoying peace now, I should be proud to have my girl take active part in every one of the five phases of this victory program. It has in it all the elements of sound training for citizenship which should be tressed not just in the fight for Victory, but in the necessarily constant effort to maintain peace.’

2. Boy Scouts

Troop 4 Scouts to Begin Scrap Hunt Saturday Morning

The Corpus Christi Times, October 2, 1942

Boy Scouts of Troop 4, ardent collectors in every scrap drive held in Corpus Christi, will jump the gun in the intensive campaign next week for scrap iron and other commodities by starting out tomorrow.

About 30 Scouts in the troop have gathered already a half ton of iron and will work the bluff area north of Leopard Street and east of Sam Rankin Street all day tomorrow for iron and other metals, rubber and other scarce goods. Their pile will be concentrated at the home of I.C. Kerridge, 919 Winnebago Street. Kerridge is scoutmaster of the troop.

The scoutmaster urged residents of the area to bring their scrap metals to his home. However, Scouts will canvass the area.

Proceeds from the sale of metal will be converted into war bonds and stamps. The bonds will not be cashed until their maturity date and will be made payable to the members of Troop 4 in 1952, Kerridge said. The troop collected 18 tons of waste paper in that campaign and a ton of rubber recently.

Lesson 4: South Texas Coastal Bend Area and Corpus Christi, Texas: Comparing and Connecting WWII Home Front Cities

About this Lesson

This lesson is part of a series teaching about the World War II home front, with [South Texas Coastal Bend Area and Corpus Christi, Texas](#), designated as a [World War II Heritage City](#). The lesson contains photographs, readings and a culminating project. Optional media extensions include a documentary and exploring sources. The first reading is an opinion piece that highlights local contributions to the construction of Naval Air Station Corpus Christi. The second reading explores the region's designation as a Heritage City. The accompanying photos showcase civilians and service members, emphasizing their roles in both work and volunteer efforts on the home front.

The culminating project contributes to learners' understandings of the city as a WWII Heritage City, with the opportunity to combine lesson themes from the three other lessons in the South Texas Coastal Bend Area and Corpus Christi, Texas [collection](#). This is to summarize the city's contributions and encourage connections to the overall U.S. home front efforts.

Objectives:

In a culminating product:

- a. Identify important World War II home front locations in the South Texas Coastal Bend Area and Corpus Christi, Texas region and describe their historical significance.
- b. Explain the service contributions and volunteerism of women in South Texas Coastal Bend Area and Corpus Christi, Texas.
- c. Summarize the contributions and volunteerism of diverse South Texas Coastal Bend Area and Corpus Christi, Texas civilians to home front wartime efforts, including that of youth.
- d. *Optional:* Describe similarities and differences of South Texas Coastal Bend Area and Corpus Christi, Texas and other Heritage city(s) / World War II home front(s).

Materials for Students:

1. Photos: Figures 25-31 (*can be displayed digitally*)
2. Readings 1, 2, & media activity link
3. Maps, project materials (as needed)
4. Student graphic organizers (See Figure 31 at end of lesson, for reference)
 - Create Comparison Matrices for your students to use. To compare two cities, create a one-page sheet with three columns and four rows. Label the left column Theme/Topic and the other columns City 1 and City 2. For a Comparison Matrix for three cities simply add an additional column.
 - Create two Single-Point Rubrics to assist students' self-assessment. One is for assessing proficiency in meeting teacher-selected standards. One is for assessing proficiency in meeting objectives.
 - For the rubric on standards, create a one-page sheet with three columns and four rows of content. Label the first column "Areas for Improvement," the second column, "Proficient (Meeting Standard)," and the third column, "Areas of Exceeding Standard." Leave the first and third columns blank. In each row of the second column identify a Standard and indicate a space for noting the evidence for meeting the standard. Include a space at the bottom of the page for assigning points for each column.
 - For the rubric on objectives, create a one-page sheet with three columns and four rows of content. Label the first column "Areas for Improving toward Objective," the second column, "Proficient (Meeting Objective)," and the third column, "Areas of Exceeding Objective." Leave the first and third columns blank. In the four rows of the second column identify these four objectives:
 - a. Identify important World War II home front locations in the South Texas Coastal Bend Area and Corpus Christi, Texas region and describe their historical significance.
 - b. Explain the service contributions and volunteerism of women in South Texas Coastal Bend Area and Corpus Christi, Texas.
 - c. Summarize the contributions and volunteerism of South Texas Coastal Bend Area and Corpus Christi, Texas civilians to home front wartime efforts, including that of youth.
 - d. *Optional:* Describe similarities and differences of South Texas Coastal Bend Area and Corpus Christi, Texas and other Heritage city(s) / World War II home front(s).

Include a space at the bottom of the page for assigning points for each column. See the last photo of this lesson for reference.

Getting Started: Essential Question

Why was South Texas Coastal Bend Area and Corpus Christi chosen as an American World War II Heritage City, and what are its similarities and differences to other home front cities?

Photos



Figure 25: Naval air base, Corpus Christi, Texas. A Mexican neighbor, who crossed the border, now works under U.S. Civil Service in the assembly and repair department of the naval air base at Corpus Christi, Texas. Formerly he was a laborer in a warehouse. By Howard Hollem, November 1942. (Credit: Library of Congress)



Figure 26 :A Mexican worker supports the summer cotton harvest season. “This Good Neighbor and hundreds like him, gave a hand to farmers near Corpus Christi, Texas, whose crops were threatened with ruin, because of the agricultural manpower shortage.” By Howard Hollem, August 1942. (Credit: Library of Congress)



Figure 27: Naval air base. Corpus Christi, Texas. Now an expert mechanic, Mary Josephine Farley shows a National Youth Administration (NYA) trainee the tricks of a Wright Whirlwind motor. He will act as her helper for about eight weeks, then he'll be qualified to work on motors for the naval air base at Corpus Christi, Texas. By Howard Hollem, August 1942. (Credit: Library of Congress)



Figure 28: Hod carrier who is employed on U.S.H.A. project constructing two hundred forty-nine units for married enlisted men and civilian employees at naval air training base. Corpus Christi, Texas. By Russell Lee, December 1940. (Credit: Library of Congress)



Figure 29: Mexican and African American farm labor, supporting with the agricultural man power shortage in the area. By John Vachon in May 1943. (Credit: Library of Congress)



Figure 30: A cadet, at the Naval Air Base, Corpus Christi, Texas. By Howard Hollem, August 1942. (Credit: Library of Congress)



Quotations to consider:

“...More than 2,000 Navy officers and enlisted men today are inadequately housed, and three fourths of this number have families. Ninety percent of these are men just returned from sea duty, and a large number of them will be here for only a few months before returning to the Fleet. . . The situation is no brighter for the 2,000 civilian families who are in similar circumstances. They are here usually because of jobs, and most of those jobs are necessary to the war effort.”

- “More Than 4,000 Residents Here Inadequately Housed; No Relief Seen, Bell Says,”
Corpus Christi Times, June 10, 1945

“Keep ‘Em Flying’ means more than training pilots. With every plan needed for use during every hour of favorable flying weather, skill of the mechanics and machinists in charge of the continuous upkeep, repair and overhaul of the Naval Air Station’s training equipment assumes a new significance. Speed becomes their motto, speed which must be achieved without sacrifice of any small detail of inspection, without robbing the overhaul of any part of its thoroughness.”

- “There’s More to ‘Keep ‘Em Flying Than Training Pilots – Look Behind the Scenes,”
Corpus Christi Caller-Times, December 14, 1941



By the numbers: Development and growth of the area

- The Corpus Christi, Texas 1940 US census showed a population of 57, 301. In 1950, this had grown to 108, 287.
- Naval Air Station (NAS) Corpus Christi was designed to graduate 300 naval aviators per month. About 35,000 total pilots were trained through the war at the NAS.
- An expansion of NAS was approved in 1941, at a value of over \$8.5 million at the time, or about \$155.9 million today. This included three additional seaplane hangars (for a total of seven), additional quarters, and extensions of structures and resources like sewer systems. By the end of the war there was more than \$100 million spent on developing the NAS (today, worth more than \$1.7 billion).

Reading 1: Newspaper Article

Teacher Tip: The following text highlights the local contributions and collaboration involved in establishing and developing Naval Air Station Corpus Christi. While it does not cover all aspects of the area's home front history, it connects to broader themes and the primary reasons for the region's wartime development. To gain a deeper understanding, students are encouraged to explore the additional lessons on the station's history, the contributions of women and youth, and local volunteer efforts.

Be sure to clarify that this is an opinion piece—a letter to the editor—written by a representative from that time.

Kleberg Congratulates Those Responsible for Air Station

Representative Says Many Had Hand in Location Here

Corpus Christi Times, March 12, 1941

Editor's Note: Richard M. Kleberg, native Corpus Christian and representative of 14th Congressional District in Washington, was one of those responsible for the location of the Naval Air Station at Corpus Christi. His letter follows:

Editor, *The Caller-Times*:

On Wednesday, March 12, 1941, there will occur the United States Naval Air Station at Corpus Christi.

I take this occasion to congratulate the City of Corpus Christi on having been selected by the Hepburn Board for the place where this great adjunct to our national defense is to be located. Permit me, likewise, to express my deep gratitude and appreciation for the fine understanding and cooperation given me by The Caller and the Times as representative of the Fourteenth Congressional District of Texas in the Congress of the United States during the long period of consideration and development of this major project in our plan of national defense.

The official ceremony dedicating this air station to the service of God and country is significant, however, mainly as the beginning of operation of the Station and of patriotic determination and accomplishment on the part of those in charge of the great development and the fine cooperation of the local citizenship of our hometown, Corpus Christi.

Let it never be forgotten, and by the same token, always remember that this great project may in nowise be accredited to the effort of anyone man or group of men whoever they may be on earth. He who shapes our destiny and the destiny of all else is responsible for the location of Corpus Christi, for its geography, its strategic defensibility, its topography, its climate, and all other matters which entered into its selection for the place which it now occupies in the service of our country.

We must, likewise, recognize the outstanding ability, patriotism, genius, and fine cooperation and understanding of the President of the United States; of the Honorable Carl Vinson, Chairman of the Naval Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives; and all of the members of this great and outstanding committee; and the Secretary of the Navy; officials of the Navy Department; Admiral Hepburn, the fine gentlemen and officers who compose his board; the Appropriations Committee of the Senate of the United States; and in short, the membership of the Congress of the United States.

The official ceremony of commissioning on March 12, would not be taking place so soon were it not for the magnificent cooperation and achievement of our mayor; the city commission; the county judge and the commissioners Court; the chamber of commerce;

the city's and county's legislative representative, my long time, dear, and loyal friend, Roy Miller; and many individual citizens, who have so ably responded to the emergency and so competently overcome obstacles in the discharge of the responsibility coincident with the establishment of this great project in our home town.

I congratulate the Housing Authority for its very fine accomplishment in meeting the housing problem. The results of hard and tedious work by municipal and county authorities is evidenced by the establishment of utility services – water, gas, sewerage, and the like – not to say anything of the highway problems and the acquisitions of rights-of-way, etc., at the expenditure of time and of local money in abundance.

By no means last or least to be congratulated is Comdr. L.N. Moeller who has been in charge of construction, and the fine group of men who have so ably, under his direction, completed the project in the amazing length of time which is truly amazing because of its brevity. Just think of it, possession of land taken on July 6, 1940, twenty-eight million dollars expended for material, labor and service and official dedication and commissioning for service on March 12, 1941. A work of amazing transformation from sand dune and scrub oak and shoal waters to the present state of useful completion for service.

The citizens of Corpus Christi, of course, realize that our obligations and responsibilities have not come to an end, but, as a matter of fact, are just beginning; and, so, as one who has high regard for the teachings of history and the light of achievement to guard man's forward steps into the future, I express full confidence in my fellow citizens of Corpus Christi and Nueces County, and surrounding counties in their capacity and ability to meet all forthcoming obstacles and responsibilities in their usually competent and effective ways.

To that fine and able officer and gentleman, Commandant of the Naval Air Station, Captain Alva D. Bernhard, we, of Corpus Christi, extend the hand of fellow – Americans, in aid and cooperation, in the meeting of all problems and obstacles to come.

You have the warmest congratulations from one who is justly proud of being a native born son of Corpus Christi, Texas, and particularly so as the Representative of the Fourteenth Congressional District in the Congress of the United States.

I remain, as always, your friend,

Richard M. Kleberg.

Questions for Reading 1 and Quotations to Consider

1. How did the geography and location of the area contribute to its ability to support home front training?
2. What was notable about the length of time and effort required for construction? What challenges had to be addressed to provide housing?
3. How does the acknowledgment of various leaders reflect the challenges involved in securing the military installation?
4. How did home front training and contributions of the area support the US and the Allies? Consider both information from the reading and from past lessons.

Questions for Photos

1. Describe the connection of the meaning of each photo to South Texas Coastal Bend Area and Corpus Christi's designation as a Heritage City.
2. Consider the people in the photos and the stories they tell. Why are their home front contributions significant?

Reading 2: Heritage City Designation

Excerpt from: "[House Report 115-998](#), "To Direct the Secretary of the Interior to Annually Designate at Least One City in The United States as An 'American World War II Heritage City,' and for other purposes" (October 30, 2018)

“. . .PURPOSE OF THE BILL

The purpose of H.R. 6118 is to direct the Secretary of the Interior to annually designate at least one city in the United States as an "American World War II Heritage City".

BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR LEGISLATION

On December 7, 1941, military forces of the Empire of Japan attacked the U.S. Naval Fleet and ground bases at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. On December 8, 1941, one day after what President Roosevelt referred to as, "a date which will live in infamy," the United States declared war against the Empire of Japan. Three days later, on December 11, 1941, Japan's ally, Germany, declared war on the United States. Sixteen million Americans, mostly young working-age men, served in the military during World War II, out of an overall United States population of 113 million.

While an unprecedented number of Americans served in World War II, the country drastically increased its war production on the home front, serving not only the needs of the armed forces of the United States but her allies as well--in what President Franklin Roosevelt called "The Arsenal of Democracy." The combination of millions serving in the

military, during a period of necessary and drastic increases in production, led to significant social changes on the American home front.

The World War II period resulted in the largest number of people migrating within the United States in the history of the country. Individuals and families relocated to industrial centers for good paying jobs out of a sense of patriotic duty. Many industrial centers became “boomtowns,” growing at phenomenal rates. One example, the City of Richmond, California, grew from a population of under 24,000 to over 100,000 during the war. . .”

Questions for Reading 1 and 2, Photos

1. What was the purpose of the bill (H.R. 6118) according to the report?
2. What contributed to the wartime development of the South Bend and Corpus Christi area?
3. Why do you think South Bend and Corpus Christi was designated as a World War II Heritage City? Connect details from the bill and evidence from the first reading, and/or other readings from the lessons.
4. Are there other cities you think of when considering home front contributions during wartime? Which, and why?

Media Activity

World War II Heritage Trail

Explore the digital [World War II Heritage Trail resources](#) by the United Corpus Christi Chamber of Commerce to learn about the South Texas Coastal Bend region's contributions to the war effort. Examine the map, photos, texts, and video to deepen understanding, make connections to previous lessons, and discover new locations and information.

Culminating Activity/Mastery Product

To demonstrate student understanding, support students in creating a final product that meets the following objectives:

- a. Identify important World War II home front locations in the South Texas Coastal Bend Area and Corpus Christi, Texas region and describe their historical significance.
- b. Explain the service contributions and volunteerism of women in South Texas Coastal Bend Area and Corpus Christi, Texas.

- c. Summarize the contributions and volunteerism of South Texas Coastal Bend Area and Corpus Christi, Texas civilians to home front wartime efforts, including that of youth.
- d. *Optional:* Describe similarities and differences of South Texas Coastal Bend Area and Corpus Christi, Texas and other Heritage city(s) / World War II home front(s).

Mastery products should be:

- . . . **student-led;** Students work as individuals or in collaborative groups.
- . . . **student-directed:** Students are offered a variety of choices for product type.
- . . . **student-organized;** Teacher facilitates by providing students with the comparison matrices and/or resource links from throughout the series of lessons.
- . . . **student-assessed;** Teacher supports student self-assessment and reflection by providing students single-point rubrics to assess for meeting standards and/or lesson objectives.

Note: Depending on time and scope, the comparison of South Texas Coastal Bend Area and Corpus Christi, Texas to another WWII Heritage or home front city(s) within the mastery product (objectives) may be omitted. However, comparing cities is recommended, as it connects students to a deeper understanding of the WWII home front.

Examples of mastery product choices include, but are not limited to:

- **Written:** Letter (opinion or informative), essay, poem, narratives, biography, articles, class book or children's book, speech or debate (then presented orally), blog / website, plaque or historical displays, pamphlets or rack cards
- **Graphic Organizers:** timeline, flowcharts, mind or concept content maps, Venn diagrams, comparison matrices, posters
- **Artistic Expression:** song, dance, theater (ex. skits), 3-D models, dioramas, photo journal, stamp and coin designs, visual art, architecture/building or monument, museum design
- **Media design and creation:** podcast, historical markers, social media content, interactive virtual maps or tours, infographics, video, comic strips or graphics, game design, slideshows, digital scrapbook

Please view the [NPS Heritage cities lesson collection](#) for information and resources on other cities.

Single-Point Rubric

Areas for Improvement	Proficient (Meeting Standard)	Areas of Exceeding Standard
	Standard: _____ Evidence of meeting standard: •	
	Standard: _____ Evidence of meeting standard: •	
	Standard: _____ Evidence of meeting standard: •	
	Standard: _____ Evidence of meeting standard: •	
Points		

Figure 31: Single-Point Rubric (Standards; Blank) [Teacher selects priority standards for assessment.] Courtesy of Sarah Nestor Lane

Acknowledgment

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