

# WILMINGTON AT WAR

Southeastern North Carolina was a mighty contributor to the U.S. war effort in World War II. Wilmington was called "The Defense Capital of the State" and became the country's unique wartime boomtown. The once-quiet city, geographically isolated for decades, suddenly found itself an exploding center of military life and defense production.

Each branch of the armed forces stationed thousands in the area — the Army Air Forces at the airport, the Army at Camp Davis and Fort Fisher, the Navy at Fort Caswell, the Coast Guard at Wrightsville Beach, the Marine Corps at Camp Lejeune. German prisoners of war were held here, working in industries and on farms. The shipyard produced 243 cargo vessels; the port shipped and received war materials; and defense industries produced at capacity. The area dispatched thousands of its sons and daughters to fight the enemy. One hundred and ninety-one boys from New Hanover County did not return.

The area endured constant civilian defense restrictions and air raid drills, including black-

outs and dim-outs. German U-boats marauding offshore spilled debris from sunken Allied ships on favorite bathing beaches. Until 1944, the threat remained of German attack by sea and air. The community coped with a dire housing shortage, and strains on schools, transportation, medical and social services, law enforcement, food supply, security and entertainment. Families rented rooms to soldiers and war workers, and historic houses were cut up into apartments.

The population more than doubled with the influx of military personnel, war workers and their families. Government ration allocations of scarce commodities were based, erroneously, on pre-war population. Untold numbers of transients and a weekend onslaught of servicemen from nearby bases flooded downtown establishments and the beaches. Wilmingtonians had to mix with and tolerate diverse newcomers who expanded their horizons, at least temporarily.

The community struggled with frequently changing edicts from Washington and Raleigh, and pressures to serve the war effort, manage huge construction projects, handle civic stress and the racial chasm, combat the black market

and a crime wave, and apply equal justice.

Citizens became volunteer airplane spotters, Inland Waterway boat patrollers, air raid wardens and auxiliary police and firemen. Women excelled in the Aircraft Warning Service, war bond and scrap drives, and as Red Cross nurse's aides. All of this was undertaken into 1944 through continuing low-light dim-outs and beach blackouts.

Racially segregated entertainment and social life proceeded, despite rationing of gasoline, tires, sugar, coffee, and whiskey. Front Street, beaches, and USO clubs teemed with uniforms. Prostitution flourished. Romance boomed. Everyone of an age fell in love, if only for a moment, and multitudes of local girls became engaged to or married the visitors. For many teenage girls and young women, the war was the most exciting time of their life.

At war's end, the area returned, for a time, to its small-town seclusiveness. But wartime changes planted the seeds for Southeastern North Carolina's spectacular growth in the late 20th and early 21st Centuries.

# CITY OF WILMINGTON NORTH CAROLINA

## World War II Heritage Guide Map of Wilmington and Southeastern North Carolina

### Produced in 2008 by the:

World War II Wilmington Home Front Heritage Coalition  
PO Box 425, Wilmington, NC 28402 910-793-6393  
JonesWD@aol.com

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community arts center accord

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### KEY:

HA = handicapped accessible.  
R = restroom available (under admission conditions.)  
EXT = view exterior only.  
M = historical marker only.  
Resource = a facility with more information than just the site.  
\* = indicates sites described elsewhere in the brochure.  
If the current site name differs from the historic name, the latter is in parentheses.  
Days and hours of operation shown are subject to change. Admission is free unless otherwise noted.  
Area codes are 910 unless otherwise noted.

### PRINCIPAL SOURCES:

Wilbur D. Jones, Jr., *A Sentimental Journey: Memoirs of a Wartime Boomtown*, 2003 and *The Journey Continues: The World War II Home Front*, 2005.

### MAPS:

John Meyer, © 2005-08, Cape Fear Images, Inc. Used by permission.

# WORLD WAR II HERITAGE GUIDE MAP

of Wilmington and Southeastern North Carolina



## THE HOME FRONT:

- ★ SHIPBUILDING
- ★ ANTI-AIRCRAFT TRAINING
- ★ SUBMARINE HUNTING
- ★ FIGHTER PILOT TRAINING
- ★ USO ENTERTAINMENT
- ★ POW CAMPS

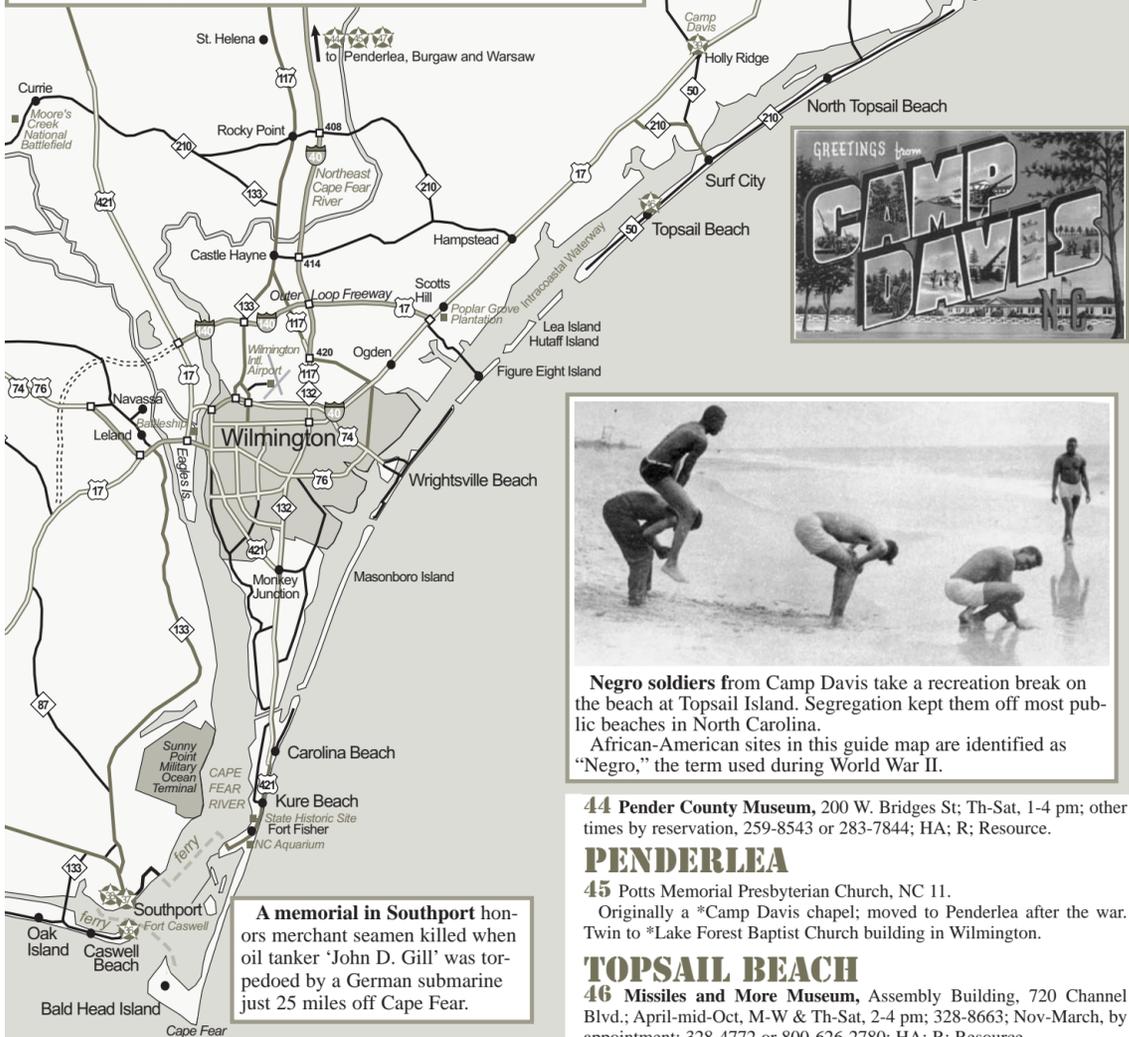
World War II Wilmington Home Front Heritage Coalition



## COASTAL REGION



**Amphibious landings** were the Marine Corps' specialty. At Camp Lejeune, the Marines' chief East Coast amphibious training base, infantrymen stormed ashore on Onslow Beach in dress rehearsals for the real thing in the Pacific.



**41 Montford Point**, first training camp for Negro Marines, renamed in 1974 in honor of Sgt. Major Gilbert H. "Hashmark" Johnson. The only military installation named after an African-American Marine.  
**Montford Point Marine Museum**, Bldg M101, SE Wing, Camp Johnson; 450-1340; T & Th 10 am-2 pm & 4-7 pm; Sat 11 am-4 pm; HA; R; Resource.  
Depicts stories of first Negro Marines in WWII.  
**42 Jacksonville USO**, 9 Tallman Street; 455-3411; M-W, 9 am-9 pm; Th, 9 am-5 pm; F-Sun, 10 am-10 pm; HA, R.  
[library.uncwil.edu/special/uso/home.html](http://library.uncwil.edu/special/uso/home.html)  
A twin to Wilmington's \*Second & Orange streets USO. Although interior has been modified, many original features remain. Served continuously as USO club since opening in 1942. Only center in US still housed in original WWII building and the only functioning USO in N.C. A Negro USO on Newberry Street served 3,000 patrons a month.

## RICHLANDS

**43 Onslow County Museum**, 301 S. Wilmington St; 324-5008; T-F 10 am-4:30 pm; Sat.-Sun 1-4 pm; fee; free for youth under 12; HA; R; Resource.  
Exhibit, "The Water and the Wood: The History of Onslow County," discusses impact of WWII through establishment of \*Camp Davis, \*Camp Lejeune, and other military facilities. Featured are women in military and their experiences as WASPs and as first female Marine Corps Women Reservists (MCWR).

## PENDER COUNTY BURGAW



**Negro soldiers** from Camp Davis take a recreation break on the beach at Topsail Island. Segregation kept them off most public beaches in North Carolina.  
African-American sites in this guide map are identified as "Negro," the term used during World War II.

**44 Pender County Museum**, 200 W. Bridges St; Th-Sat, 1-4 pm; other times by reservation, 259-8543 or 283-7844; HA; R; Resource.

## PENDERLEA

**45 Potts Memorial Presbyterian Church**, NC 11.  
Originally a \*Camp Davis chapel; moved to Penderlea after the war. Twin to \*Lake Forest Baptist Church building in Wilmington.

## TOPSAIL BEACH

**46 Missiles and More Museum**, Assembly Building, 720 Channel Blvd.; April-mid-Oct, M-W & Th-Sat, 2-4 pm; 328-8663; Nov-March, by appointment; 328-4772 or 800-626-2780; HA; R; Resource.  
[topsailmissilesmuseum.org](http://topsailmissilesmuseum.org)

Displays large collection of artifacts and photos, related to postwar use of \*Camp Davis as jet engine and missile research facility. Includes exhibit on the WASPs.

## DUPLIN COUNTY WARSAW

**47 Duplin County Veterans Memorial Museum**, L.P. Best House, 119 East Hill St; Th-F, 1-4 pm; Sat, 2-4 pm; 293-2190; HA; R; Resource.  
Housed in restored 1894 Queen Anne house, museum is dedicated to Duplin County servicemen and women; displays military artifacts and memorabilia, including items from WWII. Warsaw is home of oldest continuous Veterans Day Celebration in nation, inaugurated on Armistice Day 1918, the end of World War I.



Avenue of cranes and Liberty Ship hulls at shipyard.

## BRUNSWICK COUNTY SOUTHPORT AND OAK ISLAND

**36 Fort Caswell**, 100 Caswell Beach Rd, Caswell Beach; not accessible in summer months; call 278-9501 for admission; EXT  
[www.fortcaswell.com/history.htm](http://www.fortcaswell.com/history.htm)

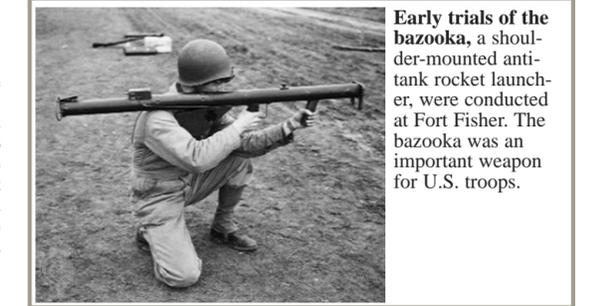
Parts of original brick fortification constructed between 1826 and 1836 overlook mouth of Cape Fear River. Extensive late 19th-century concrete fortifications, residences, barracks, and mess halls also remain. Fort Caswell was manned in Mexican, Civil, Spanish-American and First World wars. Navy established Submarine Tracking Station and Naval Inshore Patrol base in January 1942. NC Baptist Assembly owns property as a religious retreat and conference center.

**37 SS John D. Gill Memorial**, a stone monument, Riverfront Park.  
On March 12, 1942, the tanker *John D. Gill* was traveling from Texas to Philadelphia loaded with crude oil. A German submarine torpedoed her 25 miles off Cape Fear. The explosion and fire were visible along the coast. The Coast Guard brought some survivors and bodies of many of the dead to Southport. Doshier Hospital treated burned crewmembers. Sixteen bodies were laid out on the waterfront and 15 were sent home for burial. One victim, a Filipino mess boy named Catalino Tingzon, could not be sent home because the Japanese occupied the Philippines. He was buried in Northwood Cemetery in Southport.

**38 North Carolina Maritime Museum**, 116 North Howe Street; 457-0003; T-Sat: 9 am-5 pm; fee; children 15 & under free; HA; R; Resource.  
[www.ah.dcr.state.nc.us/sections/maritime/branches/southport\\_default.htm](http://www.ah.dcr.state.nc.us/sections/maritime/branches/southport_default.htm)  
Memorabilia pertaining to nautical history of Lower Cape Fear area and southeastern NC; a WWII exhibit and research files.

## ONSLow COUNTY HOLLY RIDGE

**39 Camp Davis**, 30 miles north of Wilmington. US 17 at NC 50; EXT.  
In 1941, Wilmington Antiaircraft Artillery Training Center, later renamed Camp Davis, opened at Holly Ridge. It became a boomtown, the population growing from 28 in 1940 to 110,000 at the peak of military operations

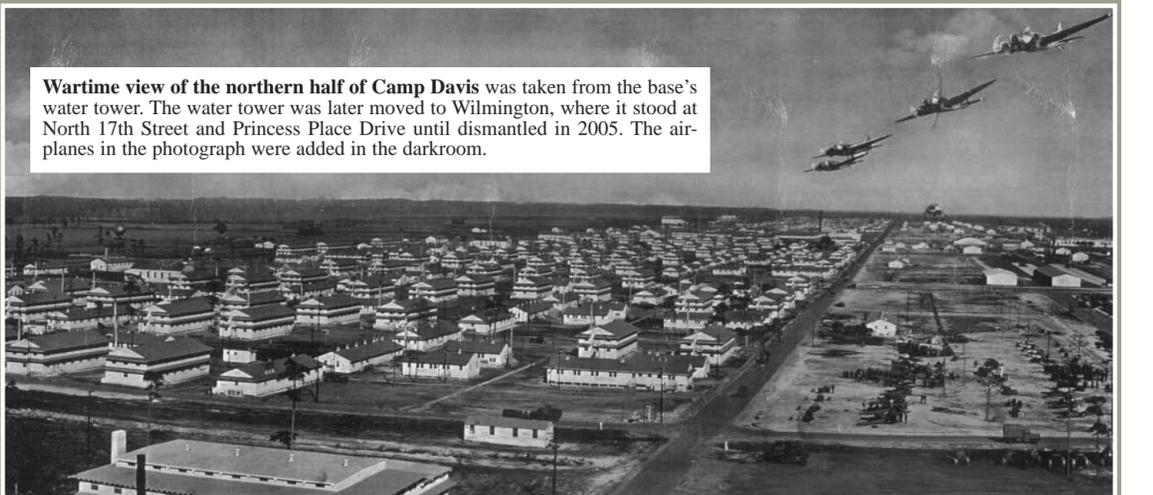


**Early trials of the bazooka**, a shoulder-mounted anti-tank rocket launcher, were conducted at Fort Fisher. The bazooka was an important weapon for U.S. troops.

in 1943. The War Department bought and leased over 46,000 acres, including then-uninhabited Topsail Island, now a popular Pender County beach resort. Negro troops occupied Camp Gibbins. \*Prisoner of war camp was here. Camp Davis was a center for barrage balloon training and provided antiaircraft gunnery training and seacoast defense. Female WASP pilots towed targets over ocean. The Navy used Camp Davis briefly after the war as a missile research site. Some evidence of camp remains, including former Camp Davis Restaurant. Marine Corps has incorporated a portion of the Camp Davis site into nearby \*Camp Lejeune.

## JACKSONVILLE

**40 Camp Lejeune & Montford Point**, visitor's day pass and self-guided tour brochure available from Visitors' Center, main gate, NC 24; 451-2148; HA; R.  
[www.lejeune.usmc.mil/mcb/tour.asp](http://www.lejeune.usmc.mil/mcb/tour.asp)  
Navy Department bought the initial 11,000-acre tract for its East Coast amphibious training facility in 1941. A logistical gem because of proximity to ports at Wilmington and Morehead City. New River Marine Barracks renamed Camp Lejeune in 1942. Remote pine forests and miles of beach made it world's most comprehensive amphibious training base.



**Wartime view of the northern half of Camp Davis** was taken from the base's water tower. The water tower was later moved to Wilmington, where it stood at North 17th Street and Princess Place Drive until dismantled in 2005. The airplanes in the photograph were added in the darkroom.

## NEW HANOVER COUNTY WILMINGTON

**1 Burgwin-Wright House**, 224 Market St; 762-0570.  
T-Sat 10 am-4 pm; last tour at 3 pm. Fee; R.

[www.geocities.com/picketfence/garden/4354](http://www.geocities.com/picketfence/garden/4354)

Historic house museum interpreted as 18th century gentleman's town-house. During WWII, city operated officers' club here.

**2 George Davis statue**, 3rd & Market streets.

Residents gave soldiers directions to the liquor store by telling them to go to the Davis statue and follow where his raised hand pointed.

### RAILROADS

Atlantic Coast Line Railroad (ACL) was principal land transportation for military and civilian personnel, cargo, and war materials. Gasoline rationing made rail transportation the only viable alternative. ACL served South Atlantic states on 5,100 miles of track. Three lines from Wilmington tied into main line from Virginia to Florida. A fourth line ran to New Bern, NC.

**3 Coast Line Convention Center**, 501 Nutt Street; 763-6739.

EXT, interior accessible during functions; HA; R.

One of only three railroad buildings remaining. A warehouse from its construction in 1882 until its conversion to a convention center in 1989. Plans call for building to be incorporated into a new hotel in 2008-09.

**4 Wilmington Railroad Museum**, 505 Nutt Street; 763-2634.

March 15-Oct 14, M-S 10 am-5 pm; Sun 1 pm-5 pm; Oct 15-March 14, M-S 10am-4 pm; fee; HA; R; Resource. [www.wilmingtonrailroadmuseum.org](http://www.wilmingtonrailroadmuseum.org)  
Warehouse holds museum containing exhibit on wartime railroading.

**5 Cape Fear Museum (Armory)**, 814 Market St; 341-4350.

T-S 9 am-5 pm; Sun 1-5 pm; fee; 1st Sunday of month free to New Hanover County residents; HA; R; Resource. [www.nhcgov.com/cfm](http://www.nhcgov.com/cfm)

1936 WPA armory hosted drills and dances of Company A, 252nd Coast Artillery, part of National Guard that mobilized into active duty in 1940. Converted to museum in 1969; enlarged and renovated in 1991 to exhibit Lower Cape Fear history, including WWII.

**6 Thalian Hall**, 310 Chestnut St. 343-3660.

Self-guided tours M-F 12-6 pm; Sat-Sun 2-6 pm, suggested donation; group tours for a fee by phoning ahead; HA; R. [www.thalianhall.com](http://www.thalianhall.com)

Area's premier venue staged professional boxing and wrestling matches, military shows, jamborees, war bond drives, demonstrations, plays, musicals and concerts including Minnie Pearl and her Grand Ole Opry Gang.

### USO CLUBS

United Service Organizations, Inc., (USO) was joint project of the YMCA, National Catholic Community Service, Salvation Army, YWCA, National Jewish Welfare Board, and National Travelers Aid Association. Centers provided welfare and recreation for military personnel, defense workers, and their families. Activities included dances, theater, counseling, and child care. Nine full-time clubs and five smaller facilities in the county, including clubs at \*Wrightsville and \*Carolina beaches. Thousands of area residents volunteered their support.

**7 Hannah Block Historic USO Building** (formerly Community Arts Center.) 120 S. Second St; 341-7860. Self-guided tour available: M-Th & Sat 9 am-10 pm; F 9 am-5 pm; HA; R. Building erected by federal government in 1941; largest club in Wilmington. Hosted more than 2.3 million servicemen through 1946, when city acquired building. Still used for civic purposes. A major renovation project, including and restoration of the lobby to its wartime appearance, to be completed by summer 2008.

Interior retains many original features and allows visitors to experience spirit of wartime era. Identical club at 9th and Nixon streets (no longer standing) entertained Negro soldiers, 1941-1946. The modern building of the Community Boys and Girls Club displays photos of the Negro USO.

**8 H.B. Eilers House**, (Fifth and Orange USO) 124 S. Fifth Ave. EXT.

National Catholic Community Service, USO member organization, rented building for women's center, offering kitchen facilities, temporary accommodations, and welfare and support services to war workers and servicemen's families. Carriage house was used for sports, handicrafts and theater.

**9 U.S. Post Office** (Filter Center.) 152 N Front St.

M-F 9 am-5 pm; Sat 9 am-12 pm; HA; R

During WWII, the 1936 WPA-built main post office was hub of activity--war bond drives, patriotic rallies, and displays of military equipment, including captured enemy materiel. Basement housed Filter Center, staffed 24 hours a day by women volunteers who charted aircraft movements from information phoned in by volunteers. Armed Forces recruiters occupied second floor. Most interior features are virtually unchanged.

**10 New Hanover High School**, 1307 Market St; 251-6100.

[www.nhcs.k12.nc.us/nhcs](http://www.nhcs.k12.nc.us/nhcs)

Opened in 1922. Plaque honors Charles P. Murray, Jr. (Class of 1938) and William David Halyburton, Jr. (Class of 1943), both of whom received the Medal of Honor. New Hanover is believed to be only school in the US to have graduated two WWII Medal of Honor recipients.

**11 Lake Forest Baptist Church**, 1626 Lake Branch Dr.

EXT; Chapel from \*Camp Davis, was moved to Wilmington after the war to serve the \*Lake Forest neighborhood.

**12 Legion Stadium**, 2131A Carolina Beach Rd; 341-7855

EXT; interior accessible with payment of fee for events; HA; R

Built in 1938 as WPA project; seated 3500 people for military and civilian events, including college and high school football and baseball and boxing. Games were played in daylight because of wartime dim-out restrictions.

### SHIPYARD

**13 North Carolina State Port**, 2202 Burnett Blvd., 763-1621.

Port of Wilmington, former North Carolina Shipbuilding Company shipyard, Shipyard & Burnett blvds. Security requirements restrict public access to one day annually, Maritime Day, the third Sunday in May. Group tours for 15 or more can be arranged, with 2 weeks notice, through the Public Affairs Office. 343-6491. [www.nports.com](http://www.nports.com)

Between 1941 and 1946, the N.C. Shipbuilding Co. built 243 cargo ships here. "Liberty" ships (C-1s & C-2s) for the Merchant Marine, Navy, and private shipping lines. Owned by Newport News Shipbuilding and Drydock Company, shipyard was largest war industry in NC, employing over 23,000 in 1943. Launched approximately 11 ships every month. In 1946, NC State Port Authority acquired site for shipping terminal. Remaining shipyard buildings include infirmary, foremen's building, outfitting shops, fabricating shop/mold loft, compressor building, warehouse, and records storage building. Marine Corps Reserve Center (Apprentice Dormitory), 2150 Burnett Blvd; 343-0098; EXT housed apprentices who learned shipbuilding trades.

M, NE corner Shipyard Blvd & Carolina Beach Rd.

**14 New Hanover County War Memorial**, Hugh MacRae Park, Lake Avenue entrance from South College Road; 8 am-midnight.

Erected in 1988 by American Legion Post 10 to honor New Hanover County men who died in service between WWI and Vietnam.

**PRISONER OF WAR (POW) CAMPS** February 1944 to April 1946.

**15 Robert Strange Park**, 410 S. Eighth St.

M, Main camp was between Eighth, Tenth, Ann and Castle Streets. POWs mostly were members of Gen. Erwin Rommel's Afrika Corps, which surrendered in Tunisia in 1943. They helped relieve labor shortage at pulpwood mills, fertilizer plants, farms and dairies. Some prisoners maintained friendships with farmers for whom they worked long after they were repatriated.

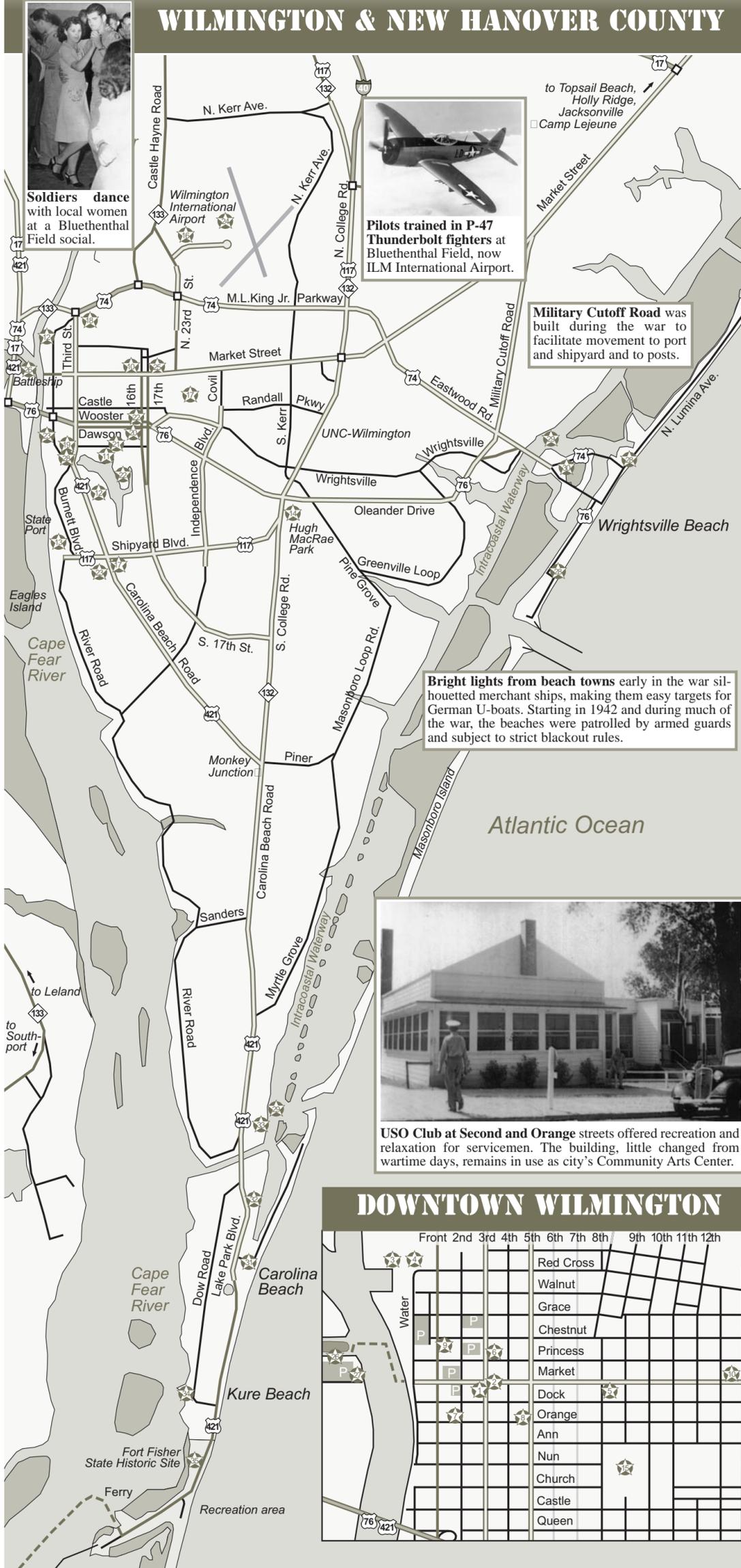
POW camps also were located at:

**16 Wilmington International Airport**, Gardner at Hewlett drives.

W; EXT. Two pale storage buildings along fence to left of driveway entrance housed small number of German POWs who worked at \*Bluethenthal Field.

**17 Carolina Beach Road & Shipyard Boulevard**, M, SE corner.

## WILMINGTON & NEW HANOVER COUNTY



### WARTIME HOUSING

Wilmington Housing Authority (WHA), state's first, built and/or managed seven large, primarily federally funded housing projects for Armed Forces personnel and war workers and their families. WHA-owned projects, Taylor Homes and Nesbitt Court, opened in 1940. At the time of Pearl Harbor, Wilmington had nearly 1,800 "war housing" units, including four new defense housing projects: Greenfield Terrace (war workers), Lake Forest (noncommissioned officers and war workers), Hillcrest (Negro noncommissioned officers), and Hillcrest Extension (Negro war workers). Maffitt Village (shipyard workers), area's largest, opened late in 1942. By end of 1943, 3,800 more units were added. WHA built 5,495 units at average cost of \$2,893. Hillcrest still occupied as public housing.

**18 Taylor Homes**, N 4th & Nixon streets.

State's first low-cost housing project opened in 1940 to house 246 Negro

families. Originally named New Brooklyn Homes, complex was renamed in 1943 for Dr. Robert R. Taylor, a native Wilmingtonian, architect, educator, and vice-president of Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. Demolished in 2005; new housing units under construction in 2008 with museum unit planned.

**19 Charles T. Nesbitt Courts**, S. Third & Greenfield sts.

Opened in 1940 to house 216 white families and named for first health officer of the Wilmington-New Hanover Board of Health. Demolished 2008.

**20 Hillcrest Homes and Extension**, S. 13th & Dawson sts; EXT Masonry block houses initially reserved for Negro Camp Davis non-commissioned officers. Later extension housed Negro shipyard workers.

**21 The Village at Greenfield** (Greenfield Terrace), S. 14th & Greenfield streets; EXT

Prefabricated wooden houses built in Mississippi and brought to Wilmington by barge, intended to be temporary. Majority of units are still providing low-income housing.

**22 Lake Forest**, S. 13th St. & E. Lake Shore Drive.; EXT

Concrete block houses, converted to private ownership after the war.

**23 Maffitt Village**, Vance Street south of Shipyard Blvd. EXT.

Shipyard housing, still in use.

**24 Wilmington International Airport** (Bluethenthal Field Army Air Base), 1740 Airport Blvd; 341-4333; parking fee; HA; R; EXT from terminal. [www.flyilm.com](http://www.flyilm.com)

Wartime construction transformed grass flying field into modern airport with concrete runways and dozens of military buildings. Chief of Staff Gen. George C. Marshall inspected base during construction. Air Force and Civil Air Patrol pilots conducted antisubmarine patrols. P-47 Thunderbolt fighter pilots trained here. Large quonset-style metal hangar in commercial aviation area and \*storage buildings used as part of prison camp are only period structures remaining. Security precautions limit airport access and visitors should obey all restrictions. Call for air show and access information.

**25 Wilmington National Cemetery**, 2011 Market St; 815-4877; daily, dawn to dusk. Opened in 1867, cemetery contains graves of World War II soldiers, some killed in action, and veterans, both Negro and white, from all branches of the Armed Forces. No special WWII burial section.

**26 Battleship North Carolina** (USS North Carolina), a National Historic Landmark. Across the Cape Fear River from Wilmington; 251-5797; Sept 16-May 15, 8 am-5 pm; May 16-Sept 15, 8 am to 8 pm; fee; HA on main deck and visitor center; R. [www.battleshipnc.com](http://www.battleshipnc.com)

Commissioned in 1941. USS North Carolina, known as "The Showboat," earned 15 battle stars and participated in every major naval offensive in the Pacific. Brought to Wilmington in 1961 as state's memorial for WWII and as museum interpreting history of all ships named North Carolina.

**27 Pearl Harbor Memorial**. Stone monument in Battleship Park, next to the river, erected by local Pearl Harbor (December 7, 1941) survivors.

### WRIGHTSVILLE BEACH

WWII transformed Wrightsville Beach from a secluded summer retreat to a town of year-round residents, catering primarily to officers. Year-round population rose from 252 in 1940 to more than 1,500 by 1945. Improvements included modern water supply, electrical, gas and telephone service, improved streets, modern sewerage system, and motorized police and fire departments.

**28 Beach housing**: Large influx of military personnel into Wilmington and nearby \*Camp Davis encouraged beach cottage owners to convert them into apartments. Among conversions was **Carolina Temple Apartments** (550 Waynick Blvd., 256-2773, EXT; [www.carolinatemplelandinn.com](http://www.carolinatemplelandinn.com)), still accepting guests. **The Glenn**, 16 Nathan Street; 762-6032, EXT, built in 1940 housed military officers and other visitors; still accepts overnight guests during the summer. Wartime personnel also found shelter at **Patteson Cottage** (Tar Heelia Inn), 500 N. Lumina Ave., EXT. By 1942, war workers and their families occupied 113 apartment units at Wrightsville Beach.

**29 Intracoastal Waterway**, between Harbor Island and the mainland; EXT [www.saw.usace.army.mil/nav](http://www.saw.usace.army.mil/nav)

The Waterway affords light-draft vessels sheltered passage along the coast. Uses rivers, bays, coastal sounds, and canals to provide a navigable channel. N.C. portion completed in 1934. Known as Inland Waterway and as "The Ditch," it allowed water traffic to avoid the submarine-infested ocean and was vital to the transport of military and industrial materiel.

**30 Wrightsville Beach Museum**, 303 West Salisbury St., Wrightsville Beach; 256-2569; T-F 10 am-4 pm; Sat 12-5 pm; Sun 1-5 pm; fee; HA; R; Resource. [www.wbmuseum.com](http://www.wbmuseum.com)

WWII artifacts, photos, and research files are available.

### CAROLINA BEACH

Carolina Beach supported honky-tonks, boardwalks and an amusement park that catered primarily to enlisted service personnel. Crowds looking for a good time jammed the boardwalks. Oceanfront boardwalk was identified as the "Pavilion"; inner boardwalk runs between Harper Avenue on the north and Cape Fear Boulevard on the south. Businesses such as Tropical Arcade catered to military trade. Fort Fisher soldiers happily paid a quarter apiece to throw baseballs at hinged boards painted with the heads of Hitler and Hirohito. Concrete Boardwalk and many structures remain but are threatened by commercial growth.

**31 Wartime commercial buildings**:

**Laney Real Estate office** (Carolina Beach Drug Store) 140 Harper Ave; EXT. In 1941, "Doc" Hall opened extension of his popular drug store at 5th and Castle sts in Wilmington. **Personally Yours** (A & P Grocery), 105 Carolina Beach Ave, N. Constructed in 1941. Wartime shoppers used their ration coupons here.

**Surfside Bar & Grill** (Boardwalk Canteen), 9 Cape Fear Blvd, (The Cornerstone) 2 Cape Fear Blvd and **Mermaid Gift Shop** (The Red Apple), 9 Boardwalk, served meals and snacks. **Ocean Plaza** (Ocean Plaza Ballroom), north end of Boardwalk & Harper Ave and (Carolina Beach Theater), inner Boardwalk, entertained civilian and military audiences.

**32 Federal Point History Center**, 1121-A N Lake Park Blvd; 458-0502; F-Sat 10 am-4 pm; HA; R.

Exhibits on \*Fort Fisher Firing Point and antiaircraft artillery training.

**33 Seabreeze Community**, US 421, Seabreeze Rd, 0.5 m N of Snow's Cut Negro resort with cottages, hotels, pavilions, dance halls, small amusement parks and bingo and dice parlors. Restaurants famous for clam fritters. USO built bathhouse. Negroes were allowed only on north end of \*Carolina Beach and crossed the sound in boats to reach the beach.

### KURE BEACH

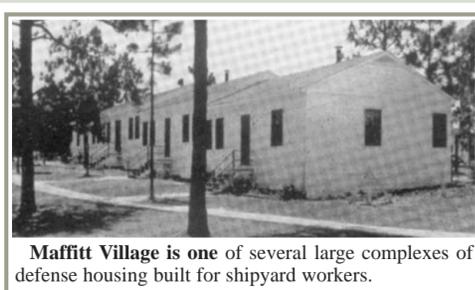
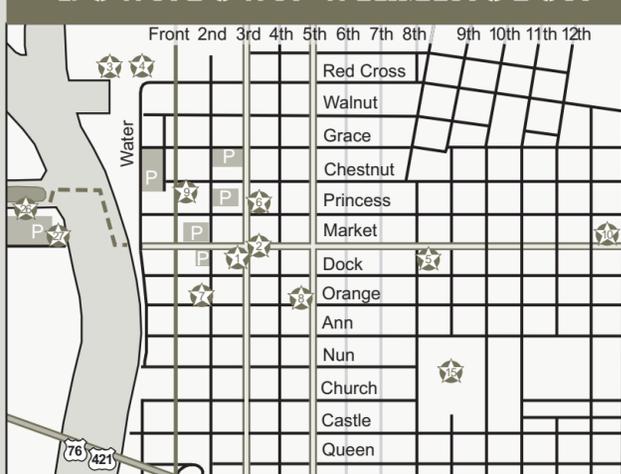
**34 Ethyl-Dow Chemical Plant**, Dow Road, 1.3 m S of intersection with Ocean Blvd or .02 m N of intersection with K Ave; park on the shoulder and walk into site marked by sandy path and wooden posts.

From 1934 to 1946, Dow Chemical Co. produced bromine from sea water here. During WW II, plant was the major supplier of ethylene dibromide anti-knock compound for high-octane aviation gasoline. On the night of July 24-25, 1943, a German U-boat fired three shells at the plant, all of which missed. This may be the lone German attack on East Coast. Ruins survive. M, US 421 at Spotters Circle identifies site of seawater intake.

**35 Fort Fisher Historic Site** (Fort Fisher Firing Point), National Historic Landmark. US 421, just south of Kure Beach; 458-5538; April 1-Oct 31, M-Sat 9 am-5 pm; Sun 1-5 pm; Nov 1-March 31, T-S 10 am-4 pm; Sun, 1-4 pm; visitor center; R, H. [www.ah.dcr.state.nc.us/sections/hs/fisher/fisher.htm](http://www.ah.dcr.state.nc.us/sections/hs/fisher/fisher.htm)

\*Camp Davis's primary firing range, built on the site of a huge earthen Civil War Confederate fort. Forty-three units trained here before the installation closed in 1944. Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASPs) flew planes that towed targets for antiaircraft artillery, freeing male pilots to be sent to Europe. Airfield, concrete bunker, and buildings now used by NC Underwater Archaeology Unit, original post commissary and exchange, remain (EXT). Visitor center contains exhibit depicting WWII presence.

### DOWNTOWN WILMINGTON



**Maffitt Village is one of several large complexes of defense housing built for shipyard workers.**