

U.S. NAVAL AIR STATION, AIRCRAFT OVERHAUL & REPAIR
(U.S. Naval Air Station, Building No. 631)
East Avenue
Pensacola
Escambia County
Florida

HABS No. FL-500

HABS
FL-500

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Southeast Region
Department of the Interior
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

U.S. NAVAL AIR STATION, AIRCRAFT OVERHAUL & REPAIR (U.S. Naval Air Station, Building No. 631)

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Location: East Avenue, U.S. Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Escambia County, Florida.

Significance: Building No. 631 was constructed in 1940 and is one of eleven new hangars completed between 1937 and 1940 as part of a massive building campaign to support the expansion of Naval Air Station (NAS) Pensacola. Building No. 631's original function was the repair and overhaul of aircraft utilized at NAS Pensacola for all levels of aviation training. Consequently, the facility directly supported NAS Pensacola's primary mission as the nation's preeminent center of naval aviation training and also reflects the installation's continued significance within the context of U.S. Navy aviation history. With its red brick exterior walls, decorative quoins, and limestone detailing, the hangar is an excellent local example of an industrial building that incorporates architectural elements of the Georgian Revival style. Having sustained few alterations since its construction, the resource retains its historic character and integrity to a noteworthy degree. Building No. 631 is a contributing property within the National Register-eligible Chevalier Field Hangar Historic District and is one of many buildings at the station that sustained damage by Hurricane Ivan in September 2004.

Description: Located directly along the coastline in the southeastern portion of NAS Pensacola, Building No. 631 is an irregular-plan, steel-frame, load-bearing masonry hangar. The resource is oriented to the west and sits on top of a large paved concrete apron/parking lot. Building No. 631 consists of a central, one-story, gabled-roof hangar bay that is flanked by lower one-story, flat-roofed lean-tos. A large batten seam copper canopy was originally positioned above each set of hangar doors. The cladding is now extant only at the building's north facade. The building has a concrete continuous raised perimeter foundation with concrete footings supported by driven piles. Exterior walls are constructed of hollow clay tiles and concealed steel columns with red brick with limestone detailing. The building's north and south facades each display a bank of massive horizontal-sliding steel doors with multiple lights. Each of these doors is constructed of a steel frame that is covered with riveted steel panels. A small number of these doors have hinged steel pilot doors. Two-story, flat-roof pylons flank the north and south doorways. The building's primary entrance, located on the west facade, is a set of paired, multiple-light, aluminum-frame doors with aluminum-frame sidelights and transom. A concrete stoop with a six-step rise and metal handrails leads to this doorway. A flat-roof entry porch with stucco walls and the title "Ormsbee Hall" shelters this entrance. Secondary entrances, located on the building's east, west, and south facades are paired, flush-panel metal doors—some with vision panels—and paired metal doors with full-length louvered panels. Each of the west facade entrances has a concrete stoop with metal handrails. Four additional entrances on the west, south, and east facades have flat-roof, stuccoed entry porches. Windows are primarily fixed multiple-light aluminum frame units with either limestone or cast stone sills and lintels. The Georgian Revival style building displays a number of noteworthy decorative details, including articulated brick and limestone quoins and limestone door and window surrounds. Alterations to the building include the replacement of all original windows and east and west facade doors and the addition of stucco entry porches over east and west facade doorways. Additionally, a set of paired metal doors with a stucco porch was built at the resource's original south facade entrance. In 1941, an addition extended the hangar bay 100'-0" to the south, added two pylons to the east and west of the relocated hangar doors, and a one-story lean-to containing men's restrooms and storage to the east. In 1942, a one-story lean-to wing was added west of the 1941 extension to accommodate women's restrooms, a lounge, and additional shop space.

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History: NAS Pensacola experienced a major building campaign during the mid- to late 1930s in support of the expansion of the installation's aviation training program. Works Progress Administration funding and labor supplemented military appropriations, resulting in both modern buildings and an infrastructure capable of supporting the increased personnel and activities associated with the expanded training program. Some of the key facilities needed during this time period were modern industrial buildings that supported NAS Pensacola's primary mission, such as aircraft hangars and repair facilities. From 1937 to 1940, eleven new hangars were added at NAS Pensacola, including Building No. 631. The Navy's Bureau of Yards & Docks supplied the architectural plans, and A. K. Adams & Co. of Atlanta, Georgia, constructed Building No. 631. Work began in 1940 on the site of a demolished 1868 building and incorporated pieces, such as the granite cornerstone, salvaged from the former building. When completed, the hangar provided 95,820 square feet of open space for the storage and/or overhaul and repair of aircraft. In 1941, NAS Pensacola added additional hangar space, men's restrooms, and storage space to Building No. 631. A year later, NAS Pensacola constructed a lean-to addition along the west facade of the building to accommodate women's restrooms, additional shop space, and a lounge. Sometime after 1986, NAS Pensacola converted Building No. 631 to an academic instruction facility for the Marine Aviation Training Support Group.

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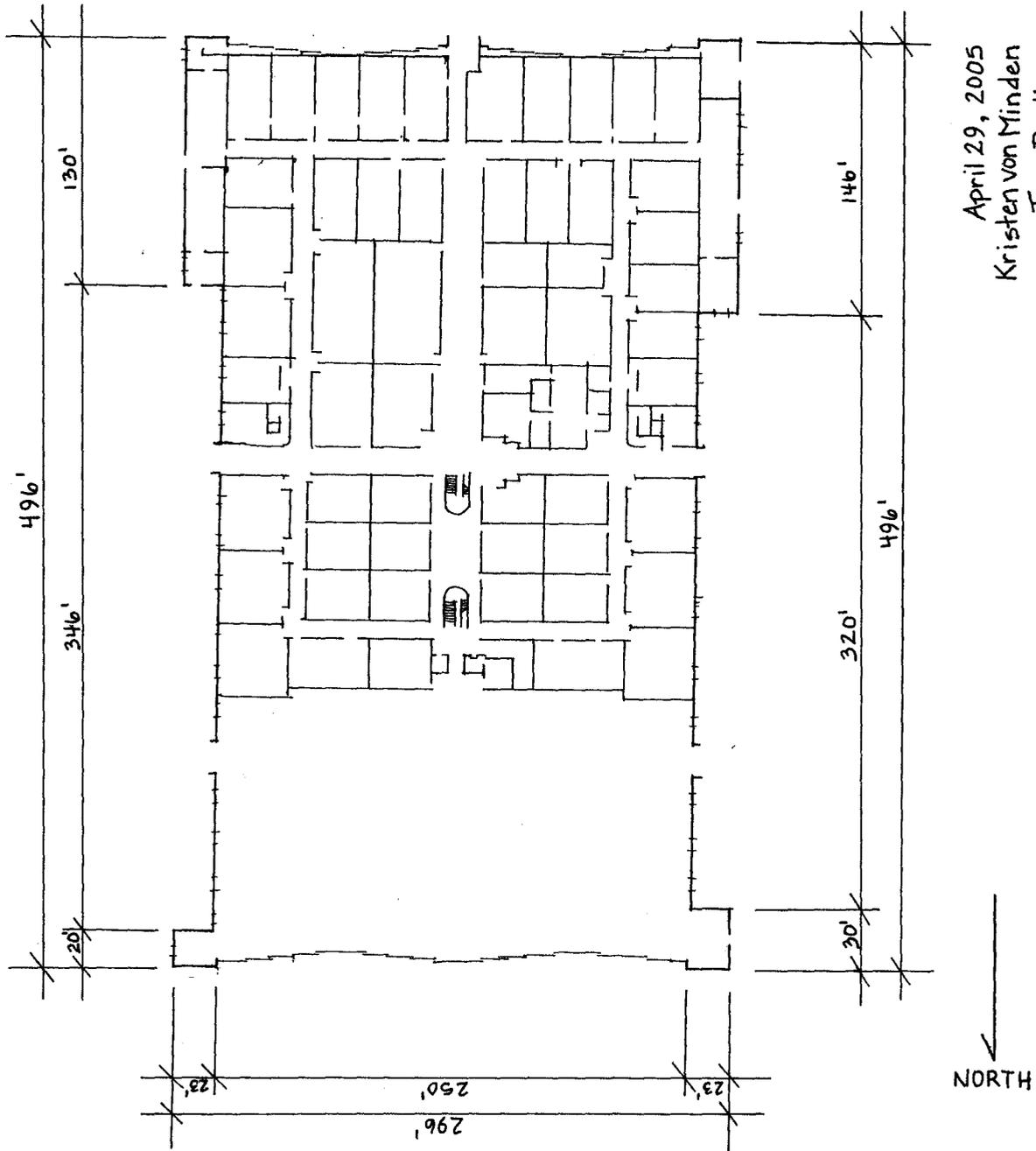
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Historian: Jennifer R. Ross, Architectural Historian, 2005.
Lisa E. Worley, Historian, 2005.

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Kristen von Minden
Tara Dudley