#### A) Identification

Historic Name: Naval Air Station Pasco - Control Tower and Hangar

Common Name: Building No 2., Pasco Aviation Museum

Address: 4022 N Stearman Avenue

City: Pasco, WA 99301 County Franklin

#### B) Site Access (describe site access, restrictions, etc.)

North on 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the Tri-Cities Airport, right onto West Argent Road, left onto North Stearman Avenue. Naval Air Station Pasco (NASP) Control Tower and Hangar #2 site access is through Bergstrom Aircraft, Inc., at 4102 North Stearman Avenue, Pasco, WA 99301

#### C) Property owner(s), Address and Zip

Name: Port of Pasco

Address: 1110 Osprey Pointe Blvd., Suite 201

(Mailing address: PO Box 769, Pasco, WA 99301)

City: Pasco, WA State: WA Zip 99301

#### D) Legal boundary description and boundary justification

Tax No./Parcel: Portion of Parcel Number: 113290029

Boundary Naval Air Station Pasco Control Tower and Hangar #2 is legally described as Building 72, located at 4022 N Stearman Avenue, is situated at the Tri-

Cities Airport property in Franklin County.

#### FORM PREPARED BY

Name: Jim Kelly for Malin Bergstrom, President Pasco Aviation Museum

Address: 4102 N Stearman Ave

City / State / Pasco, WA Phone: 509-547-6271

Zip: 99301

Email: thisoldjim@gmail.com Nomination January 2024

info@savetheoldtower.com Date:

E)	Category of Property (Choose One)
	building   structure (irrigation system, bridge, etc.)   object (statue, grave marker, vessel, etc.)   cemetery/burial site  historic site (site of an important event)   archaeological site  traditional cultural property (spiritual or creation site, etc.)   cultural landscape (habitation, agricultural, industrial, recreational, etc.)
F)	Area of Significance – Check as many as apply
	The property belongs to the early settlement, commercial development, or original native occupation of a community or region.
	The property is directly connected to a movement, organization, institution, religion, or club which serves as a focal point for a community or group.
$\boxtimes$	The property is directly connected to specific activities or events which had a lasting impact on the community or region.
	The property is associated with legends, spiritual or religious practices, or life ways which are uniquely related to a piece of land or to a natural feature.
	The property displays strong patterns of land use or alterations of the environment which occurred during the historic period (cultivation, landscaping, industry, mining, irrigation, recreation).
	The property is directly associated with an individual who made an important contribution to a community or to a group of people.
	The property has strong artistic, architectural or engineering qualities, or displays unusual materials or craftwork belonging to a historic era.
	The property was designed or built by an influential architect or reflects the work of an important artisan.
	Archaeological investigation of the property has or will increase our understanding of past cultures or lifeways.

#### **G)** Property Description

The Naval Air Station - Pasco Control Tower and Hangar (Building #2) complex is located in the City of Pasco, north of downtown and Interstate I-182 and is situated on Tri-Cities Airport property in Franklin County. The building is located on N Stearman Ave with access through Bergstrom Aircraft, 4102 Stearman Ave.

On the East side of Stearman Avenue, and north and south of the nominated building, are many original Naval Reserve Air Base buildings, including a fire station, parachute building, and a steam plant, as well as additional hangars and shop buildings. These additional buildings are not part of this application.

The nominated resource is a multi-purpose building containing a hangar and aviation control tower which were constructed in 1942 as part of the Department of Navy's Naval Reserve Aviation Base (NRAB). This was a system of training bases which were constructed following the December 7, 1941, attack on Pearl Harbor, HI. NRAB construction began in March 1942, and the completed station was commissioned on July 31, 1942.

In 2011, the Port of Pasco agreed to lease a portion of the nominated building, including all five floors of the tower portion of the building, to a group of volunteers whom created the Pasco Aviation Museum (PAM). The museum initially opened in 2015 on the ground and 2<sup>nd</sup> floors. The 3rd and 4th floors were completed in October of 2023 and are now open to the public. The 5th floor is still under consideration for future restoration.

The nominated building consists of two main components (attached) which include a hangar area and a control tower structure. The building is located on the East side of the airport adjacent to the flight line. Landscaping is limited to concrete and asphalt on all sides of the building.

The hangar is approximately 12,000 sq. ft. and the control tower is accessed by and attached to the west side of the hangar. Initially, the control tower consisted of three stories with 2,660 sq. ft. of space on the ground floor, 2,639 sq. ft. of space on the second floor, and 454 sq. ft. on the third floor. (Note: NASP was sold to the City of Pasco in 1946 for \$1.00 and the city later added a 380 sq. ft. fourth floor and a 142 sq. ft. fifth floor to the structure in the 1950s).

The hangar itself is 80 feet by 127 feet and is oriented to the north and south. The control tower is connected to and located on the West side of the hangar. The tower structure's 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floors are 39 feet by 127 feet, the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> floors are 20 feet by 20 feet, and the 5<sup>th</sup> floor is an octagon 13.5 feet by 13.5 feet.

The hangar building is constructed of wood columns and full span bowstring trusses forming a barrel shaped roof. The original wood telescoping hangar doors on the north and south elevations of the building open with wheels that roll on steel rails. These doors are protected by a shallow pent roof which spans the full distance of the bow string trusses. The hangar roof is clad with originally corrugated steel panels, while the visible sides of the hanger itself have been reclad with modern metal siding. The hanger is void of windows and has been divided into equally sized separate hangers. Attached to the east elevation is a one-story office/shop wing with a roof. Also clad in modern aluminum siding, it is unclear if this portion of the building is original or a later addition. The hangar floor is concrete, and the interior walls have mainly been covered in modern unfinished sheetrock.

Attached to the west side of the hangar, adjacent to the flight line, is the control tower and accompanying wing of work rooms. Spanning the length of the building, this portion is a two-story wing. Also of wood construction, the exterior is mainly clad with horizontal drop wood siding and vinyl. Windows, grouped in pairs, have been replaced with six-over-six vinyl units. This portion of the wing has a flat roof covered in a rubber membrane. At the north end is an exposed metal emergency fire escape stairwell.

Centered on the west façade is a control tower of five stories. Original to the building, the wood tower received an octagonal steel structured 5<sup>th</sup> floor in 1950. The steel cage once boasted windows on all eight sides, providing 360-degree views of the airport property. Several of these windows have been replaced with plywood. Tower floors 1 through four are square. Clad with contemporary aluminum siding, these floors have a variety of window types and sizes, most of which have been replaced over the years. The third and fourth floors are divided by a flat roof with projecting eaves on all four sides of the tower. The said roof originally served as a catwalk for the observation room and boasted simple wooden railings. Still present at the second-floor level is a projecting bay on the west face which allowed for close-up observation (near ground level) of the airfield and taxiways.

Inside of the control wing and tower were a variety of workrooms and operational spaces. Now converted to museum space, these spaces have a concrete floor on the first floor and wooden T&G floors at the second-floor level. The spaces have a variety of modern wall surfaces. The ceiling of the first floor is exposed showing the structural members, while the second-floor ceiling is finished plaster. Adapted to display needs, some interior walls have been deleted and added over the years. All electrical systems have been brought up to current codes and fire detection, and an alarm system has been added. While several new sources of lighting have been added to accommodate the museum functions, many original light fixtures have been retained.

The museum space houses a variety of military memorabilia, research publications, models, a theater, and period rooms showing what life was like on the base at the time of Naval operations.

#### H) Significance

The Naval Air Station – Pasco Control Tower and Hanger #2 are historically significant for their direct connection to WWII and the growth of the community of Pasco in the 1940s. Built in 1942, the nominated building served as the central building on Naval Air Station – Pasco, a flight training school. The nominated building monitored and controled all flights in and out of the airbase. Attached to the control tower was one of several hangers on the base. The building continued under Naval control until c.1946, afterwards it became home to the local municipal airport. The building then remained the hub of the local airport until 1966 when a new flight control tower and terminal was built.

While the community of Pasco began as a railroad town (created by the Northern Pacific Railway), it has played an important role in aviation history in Washington State. The community's connection to aviation history began in 1911, when Charles A. Zornes leased 40 acres of flat land facing the Columbia River in Pasco for an airport manufacturing plant and flight school. There he established Zornes Aviation School, the first flying school on the West Coast. After working for early aviation designers, he had moved from St. Louis to Walla Walla in 1909, where he started to design and built experimental airplanes. After moving to Pasco, Zornes flew and tested numerous variations of his experimental planes there.

Following World War I, aviation took off worldwide, especially in the United States where delivering mail by plane was becoming popular. In 1925 the United States Congress passed the Kelly Act, allowing the United States Post Office Department (USPOD) to contract with private airlines to carry mail over designated routes. Boise, Idaho, Postmaster L.W. Thrailkill saw the opportunity to bring Boise into the aerial age and contacted an aviation school and air taxi service in northern California owned by WWI veteran pilot and early American aviation pioneer Walter Varney. The pair set about getting the signatures of all the postmasters in the area and won the contract for one of the northwest's early aerial postal routes (Pasco to Elko, NV). The first civilian Post Office contracted flight took place on April 6, 1926, and was piloted by Varney Air Lines chief pilot, Leon D. Cuddeback. Between 4,000 and 6,000 people attended the inaugural flight, where Cuddeback took off from Pasco in the early morning in a Curtiss-powered Laird Swallow biplane loaded with 207 pounds of mail. Five private companies were contacted, but Varney was the first to begin operations.

By that time Varney had established a small airfield northeast of the Pasco townsite near the Northern Pacific rail yard. The airfield consisted of two small wooden buildings and packed sand runways. In 1929, the airfield moved across the train tracks to its current location and became known as the Franklin County Airport.

For the small farming communities of Pasco and Kennewick, which boasted a population of 18,360 in the 1920s, their lives changed when Pearl Harbor was attacked on December 7, 1941. In February 1942, within months of the Pearl Harbor attack, the United States Navy purchased 2,285 acres of land next to the small airport in Pasco for \$5,000. With a budget of over \$3 million dollars, work began on site just two days after the purchase of the property (on March 1, 1942). The goal was to build a large flight training base for at least 800 cadets (using 300 planes) and a wartime logistics center. Men worked 24 hours a day under the direction of Lieutenant J.M. Preacher to complete the station as quickly as possible. Upon completion the Navy planned to relocate some programs and personnel from Seattle's Sand Point Naval Air Station to Pasco, a site that was less vulnerable to Japanese attack and had more favorable weather for training. Soon, a vast network of runways, hangars, and barracks were constructed out of the bunchgrass and sagebrush and it became one of the busiest naval training bases in the country. The base, designed by the Austin Company, consisting of four paved runways, numerous taxiways, and hundreds of buildings, was a city unto itself. Some of the flightline consisted of small runways that were approximately the size of an aircraft carrier deck, which were used for practice runs and emergency landings.

Naval Air Station Pasco (NASP) operations were initially under the command of Lieutenant Commander B. B. Smith. The first 65 cadets, who had graduated from St. Mary's College pre-flight school, arrived at the base on December 12, 1942, less than a year after construction had begun. By June of 1943 the sleepy community of Pasco with a normal population of 3,900 grew by an additional 4,000+ people. Initially the NASP fleet consisted of older bi-planes, however by December of 1943 they received fighter-planes, mainly Grumman Hellcats. By February of 1944, the station also added a test bombing range to their operational activities.

Reportedly NASP was the third busiest flight training base for the Navy in the entire United States. Hundreds of flight hours were logged daily, and thousands of flight training hours were completed over four short years. A total of 1,878 naval cadets

received their wings at NASP. In addition, hundreds of personnel, including civilian employees, supported the training mission.

The NASP also played a key role in the nearby Manhattan Project by serving as a transportation hub which allowed scientists and officials to easily access the Hanford Engineer Works, and the surrounding local air defense sites. The Naval Air Station also had the duty to help protect the top-secret work being done at the Hanford Site from enemy attack.

Among those who came to the base was a brigade of women enlisted in the Women Accepted in Volunteer Emergency Services (WAVES) program. Reportedly they were the first WAVE unit in the country that was allowed to live on the Navy base. The first contingent of women arrived on December 24, 1942. By July 1943, there were 102 WAVES assigned to the Pasco Station. WAVES at the NASP performed many duties including serving as cooks in the galley, directing the weekly radio station program in the Welfare Department, and assembly and repair work in the Aviation Machinists and Metalsmiths Department which helped to free up military personnel for sea duty. They also worked in the line scheduling flights, logging flight time, and working in the radio shack and air traffic control tower. Some WAVES qualified as pilots and ferried airplanes from one base to another. Other WAVES were assigned to the administration building as yeomen, to the dispensary as hospital corpsman, and to the supply department as storekeepers.

Of the many buildings built in 1942, Hangar #2 with the attached Air Traffic Control Tower was essential to the flight training operations conducted by the Navy. The goal of the base was to quickly train new pilots for service during WWII. The control room was located on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of the tower with a 360-degree view of the airfield through large windows. Navy personnel would communicate with each pilot or student and instructor via two-way radios and light gun signals, giving permission for takeoffs and landings at the Naval Air Station. Controlling the airspace required coordination between the control tower and the pilots for safe and efficient training flights. The third floor, second floor, and ground floor housed general offices, the commanding officer's boardroom, the flight superintendent's office, pilot and student ready rooms, the lobby, classrooms, code room, radio room, restrooms, storage of logbooks, maps and parachutes, and exterior observation decks. All this was needed to support the control room operations. The hanger was used for the assembly and repair of aircraft.

After the war, the Navy sold the base to the City of Pasco for one dollar, with the provision that it could still be used for Navy training flights, and today the airport continues to be used by the Navy for training purposes. The Navy's P-3 Orion and P-8 Poseidon submarine warfare aircraft, generally based at Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, still use the airport for landing and take-off training.

Upon acquisition, the City of Pasco began operating the base as a public airport, converting the control tower and offices into the Pasco airline terminal for a variety of airlines including Air West/Hughes Airwest, Empire Airways, Cascade Airways, Western Airlines, Frontier Airlines, Pacific Southwest Airlines, and West Coast Airlines. The first scheduled public flight took off at the airport at 4:20 pm on March 6, 1949. The expanded use facilitated the need to expand the tower and upgrade its communications equipment. An additional level was added to the tower and the building was rededicated on May 28, 1950. The gradual increase in the number of flights eventually led to the need to expand and update the airport facilities further. As such, the Port of Pasco took over airport operations in 1963 and then opened doors to a new terminal building and control tower on the southwest side of the airport in 1966.

On June 9, 2011, the Port of Pasco Commissioners voted to preserve the old Navy-built control tower on the east side of the Tri-Cities Airport in Pasco. A non-profit group was formed to help with the preservation and upkeep of the tower. The old tower opened on August 24, 2018, as the Pasco Aviation Museum.

The former NASP Control tower now houses an expanded museum that showcases aviation history. Museum visitors can see WWII-era aircraft up close, learn about the role the state of Washington played in the development of military and civilian flight, and watch airplanes in action as they take off and land from the current Tri-Cities Airport.

#### I) Documentation

- Becky, B. (n.d.). *Naval Air Station Pasco (Pasco Aviation Museum) (U.S. National Park Service)*. National Parks Service. Retrieved October 25, 2021, from <a href="https://www.nps.gov/places/000/naval-air-station-pasco-pasco-aviation-museum.html">https://www.nps.gov/places/000/naval-air-station-pasco-pasco-aviation-museum.html</a>.
- Franklin County Historical Society (Ed.). (2021, October). *Naval Air Station Pasco. Pasco, WA*. Retrieved from <a href="https://www.pasco-wa.gov/gallery.aspx?PID=583">https://www.pasco-wa.gov/gallery.aspx?PID=583</a>.
- Gordon, J. (October 19, 1943). *Naval Air Station Pasco, WA*. Retrieved from http://www.jackgordon.org/Navy/Sky-Writer-Page1.htm.
- Oberst, W. & Smith, R. (2002). *Pasco: 100 years in pictures.* Bettendorf's Printing & Design. Pasco, WA. (p. 41 50).
- National Park Service (n.d.). *Naval Air Station Pasco (Pasco Aviation Museum)*. Retrieved from <a href="https://www.nps.gov/places/000/naval-air-station-pasco-pasco-aviation-museum.htm">https://www.nps.gov/places/000/naval-air-station-pasco-pasco-aviation-museum.htm</a>. Nov 1, 2022.
- Shettle, M. L. Jr. (1997). *United States Naval Air Stations of World War II*. Bowersville, GA. Schaertel Publishing Co. (p. 183 185).

#### Spokesman Review

- "Pasco Naval Air Base Work Rushed" May 1, 1942.
- "Naval Aviation Teacher Killed" May 22, 1943.
- "Filipinos Given U.S. Citizenship" February 9, 1943.
- "Contract soon for 100 Homes" February 15, 1943.
- "Sixteen WAVES Arrive in Pasco" February 10, 1943.
- "First Brigade Review at Pasco Naval Air Station" May 9, 1943.
- "Perfect Formation" March 15, 1943.
- "Stephen Decatur Never Dreamed of This" March 15, 1943.
- "Figher Ships Manned by Veterans at Pasco" December 5, 1943.
- "Navy Bombing Dangers Told" February 25, 1944.

"Start Pasco Air Service" - March 29, 1944.

#### **Spokane Chronicle**

- "Local Airplanes Dedicate airport" May 18, 1929.
- "65 Cadets to Train" December 12, 1942.
- "Comely WAVES Primp Up a Bit for Debut at Pasco Base" December 24, 1942.
- "Paso a Bit Crowded" June 16, 1943.

#### The Tri-Cities Herald

- "Former Air Base Awakens Under Private Operation" May 26, 1948
- "1st Scheduled Plane Leaves Pasco Airport Saturday Afternoon" March 6, 1949.
- "Communications Station Included in Budget for 1951 for Pasco Airport" August 11, 1949.
- "Pasco Airport Title Outlook Now Brighter" October 6, 1949.
- "Pasco Airport Offers Ideal Site for a Business Center" November 29, 1949.
- "Empire Airlines Move Into New Pasco Terminal" February 1, 1950.
- "Dedication Scheduled" May 26, 1950.
- "Airport Terminal Dedicated" May 29, 1950.
- "First Pasco Airport was Hurried Job" May 9, 1975.
- "Ex-Kennewick Mayor Dies" September 25, 1977.
- "Memories of the Pasco Naval Air Station" April 15, 1984.
- "First Flight Led to Mid-Columbia Milestone" July 7, 1991.

#### Oral History/Interviews:

#### Interviews

Altha Skogley

https://youtu.be/ufJf\_-TIrTI https://youtu.be/faMY6CkRyA0 https://youtu.be/EFP88NYrT1I

- Isabelle Ingalls

https://youtu.be/OvND0Unj-Mw

Pasco Aviation Museum - YouTube - https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7sf8MIJAkIFHwyGhL-0- Q

Bergstrom, M. (2018). *Experience Aviation History*. Community Lecture Series, Columbia Basin College, Richland Public Library, Richland, WA. Lecture.

The Pasco Aviation Museum website is <a href="https://pascoaviationmuseum.org">https://pascoaviationmuseum.org</a>

#### J) Map and Photographs



### Google Earth Map

Naval Air Station – Pasco 4022 Stearman Ave Pasco, WA 99301

Google	Earth - Edit Placemark	
Name:	NAS - Pasco - Control Tower	3
	Latitude: 46.263982°	]
	Longitude: -119.104543°	]



# **Google Earth Vicinity Map**Naval Air Station – Pasco

Naval Air Station – Pasco 4022 Stearman Ave Pasco, WA 99301

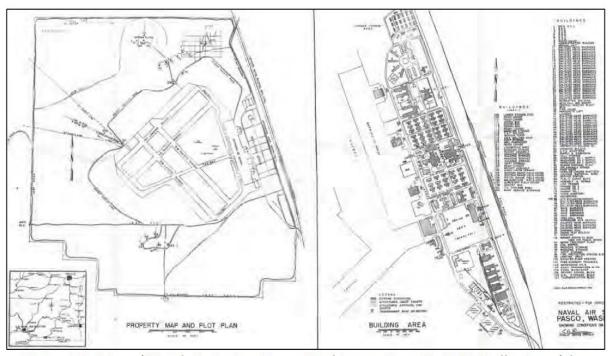
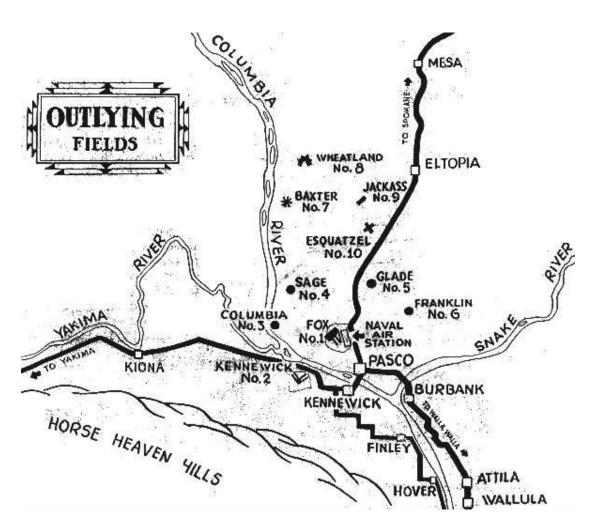
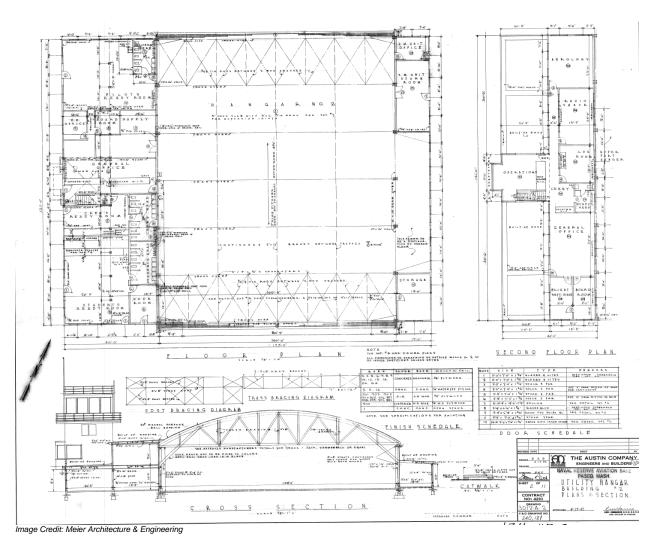


Figure 110. Map of Naval Air Station, Pasco, Washington (June 30, 1945) (Collection of the National Archives of Seattle, WA).

NAS - Pasco - Overall airbase plan and flight line.



Pasco Naval Air Station and outlying training fields.



Hanger floor plan, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floor plans, and cross section of bowstring truss. Original drawing by The Austin Company April 28, 1942.

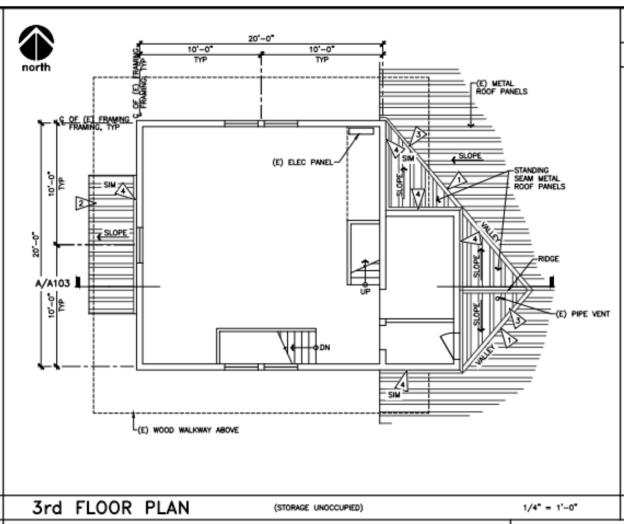


Image Credit: Meier Architecture & Engineering

Tower 3<sup>rd</sup> floor plan.

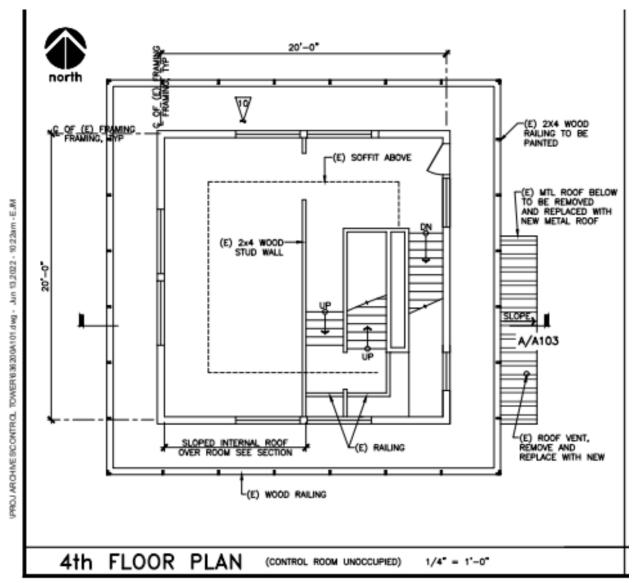


Image Credit: Meier Architecture & Engineering

Tower 4th floor plan.

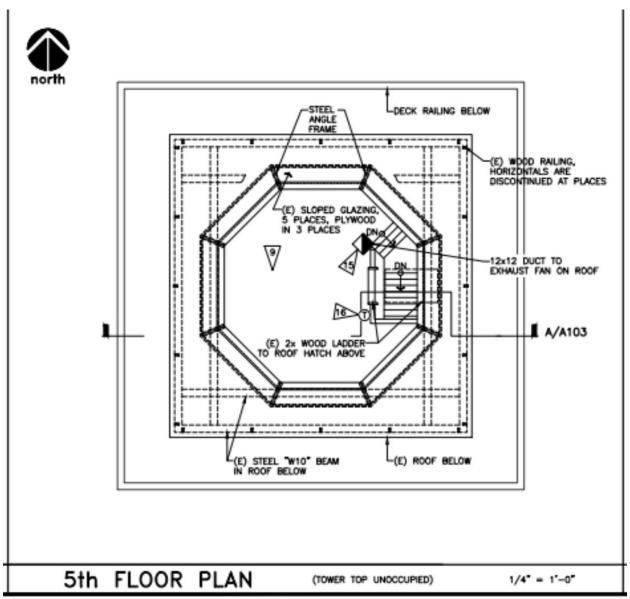


Image Credit: Meier Architecture & Engineering

Tower 5th floor plan.

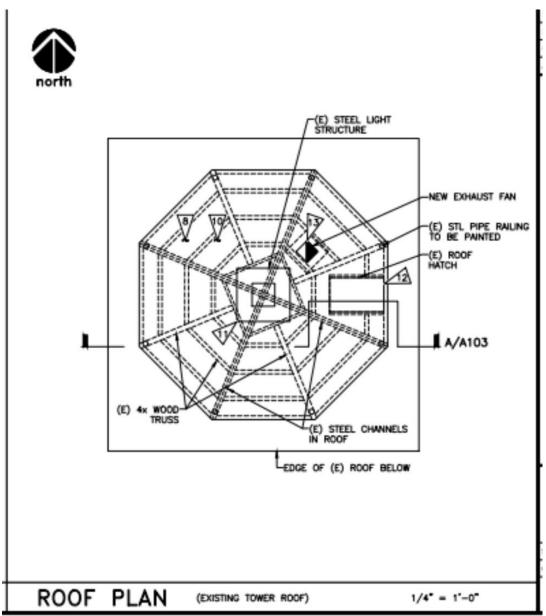
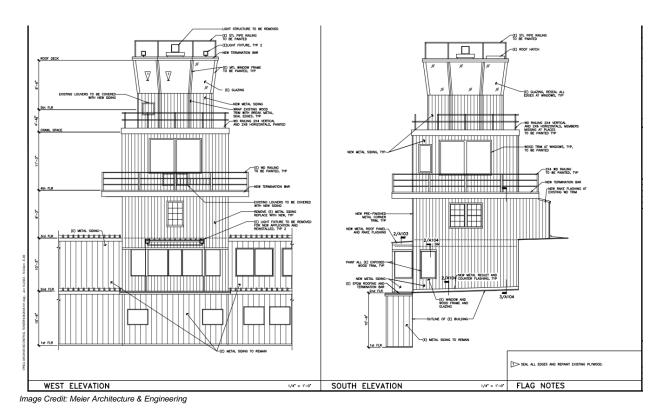


Image Credit: Meier Architecture & Engineering

Tower roof plan.



Tower west & east elevation.



Aerial view of Pasco Naval Air Station in 1944 at peak of base activity. Hanger and control tower in background (red arrow).



Troops gathered at control tower awaiting arrival of plane.



Photo Credit: Franklin County Historical Society, 1942

South side of the hangar and the tower. In the foreground, naval flight cadets, in training, drill on the parade grounds. In the foreground, the small plane is a Stearman primary trainer "Yellow Peril." The U.S. Navy built a naval air training station in the early 1940s at the site of the Pasco Airport for World War II.



South side of the hangar and control tower with Grumman Hellcat aircraft.



Photo Credit: Pasco Naval Air Museum

Grumman F6F-5 Hellcat VF-23 White 87, 88, 84 and 90 on the ground at NAS Pasco with Hanger in Background – January 1945



Naval Air Station – Pasco – Squadron Insignia



Photo Credit: Franklin County Historical Society

East side of the tower and hangar. Grumman Hellcat aircraft is in the foreground.



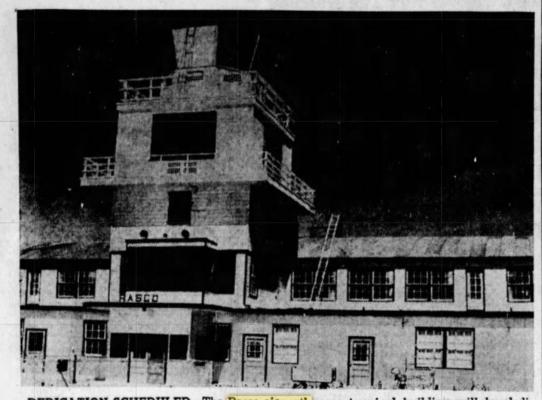
Aerial view of portion of base. Hanger and control tower in background (upper left).



Naval Air Station – Pasco Flight line with Grumman TBF Avengers. Hangers in background (right).



Maintenance activities inside shop.



DEDICATION SCHEDULED—The Pasco air port's new terminal building will be dedicated Sunday at 10 a, m. by Washington's adjutant-general, Gen. Lilburn H. Stevens. The ceremony will follow a "fly-in" breakfast which is expected to attract air minded residents from three states.

Tri City Herald - May 26, 1950

Rededication of airfield as the municipal airport with modified control tower.



West Coast Airlines at the original Pasco control tower building. They used the building as the airline passenger terminal. c.1963



North side of the tower and hangar. Photo taken November 26, 2021.



Pasco Aviation Museum north hangar. Photo taken Nov 29, 2022.



Photo Credit: Jim Kelly

Pasco Aviation Museum south hanger. Photo taken Jun 29, 2022.

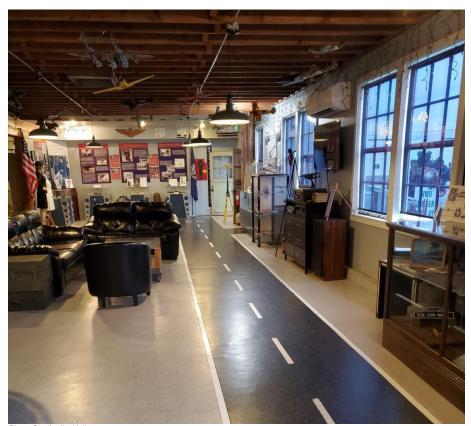


Photo Credit: Jim Kelly

Pasco Aviation Museum entrance. Photo taken Jan 2, 2022.



Pasco Aviation Museum first-floor foyer. Photo taken May 18, 2019.



Pasco Aviation Museum 1st floor interior. Photo taken Jan 2, 2022.



Pasco Aviation Museum 2<sup>nd</sup> floor interior shows original 1x4 inch tongue and groove fir flooring. Photo taken Jan 2, 2022.



Pasco Aviation Museum 2<sup>nd</sup> floor hallway display. Photo taken Dec 13, 2022.

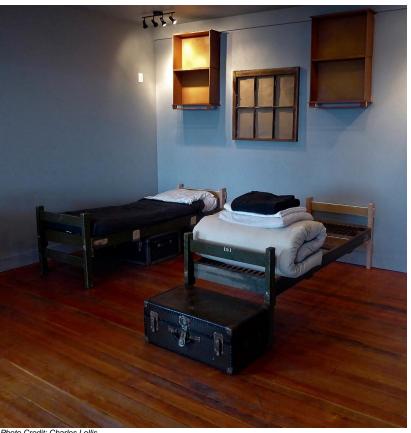


Photo Credit: Charles Lollis

Pasco Aviation Museum 2<sup>nd</sup> floor barracks bed display. Photo taken May 18, 2019.



Photo Credit: Charles Lollis

Pasco Aviation Museum western view from the second floor of the control tower. The light fixtures were from the original NASP tower. Photo taken February 22, 2019.



Photo Credit: Jim Kelly
Pasco Aviation Museum 2<sup>nd</sup> floor theater room for pilot briefing. Photo taken Nov 29, 2022.



Pasco Aviation Museum 3<sup>rd</sup> floor office area. Photo taken Jan 19, 2024.



Photo Credit: Jim Kelly
Pasco Aviation Museum 4<sup>th</sup> floor Navy Control Room. Photo taken Jan 19, 2024.



Pasco Aviation Museum southern view from the 5<sup>th</sup> floor of the control tower. Photo taken May 16, 2022.



Pasco Aviation Museum 5<sup>th</sup> floor roof structure of the Control Tower. Photo taken September 21, 2018.



Photo Credit: Jim Kelly
East side of the hangar and tower. Photo taken November 11, 2022