

As the birthplace of scheduled commercial air service and a historical supporter of U.S. military aviation, Florida has a rich aviation heritage. Florida has paved the way for many aspects of aviation that modern society has come to expect with air travel and national defense. The profiles below highlight a few examples of Florida's historical contributions to the aviation industry.

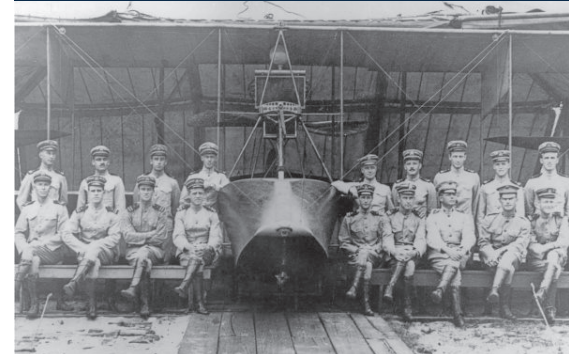
First U.S. Naval Air Station

Aviation's early years were largely dominated by civilian flight activity, which helped establish the viability of and trust in air travel. However, the United States Navy Department (U.S. Navy) quickly recognized the benefit of integrating aviation into its arsenal of tactics in order to gain military air superiority. In 1914, the U.S. Navy established the Naval Air Station Pensacola (NAS Pensacola). Having the training station in Florida allowed the U.S. Navy to take advantage of the ideal climate for year-round flying. By 1917, NAS Pensacola had 38 aviators, 163 enlisted men, and 54 aircraft (mainly seaplanes) which supported the nation's entry into World War I. By the end of the war, NAS Pensacola enlisted 5,538 men and trained over 1,000 naval aviators. In 1941, the U.S. entered World War II and relied on NAS Pensacola once again to train the new class of naval aviators. By the end of the war, NAS Pensacola was training up to 1,100 cadets a month.

NAS Pensacola today provides employment to over 23,000 military and civilian personnel and graduates 60,000 students annually, making it an important installation of the U.S. Navy.



Source: www.floridamemory.com/items/show/146119



Source: www.floridamemory.com/items/show/29491

First Regularly Scheduled Air Service

St. Petersburg-Tampa

AIRBOAT LINE

Fast Passenger and Express Service

SCHEDULE:

St. P. to Tampa 10:00 A. M.
Tampa to St. P. 11:00 A. M.
St. P. to Tampa 1:00 P. M.
Tampa to St. P. 2:00 P. M.
St. P. to Tampa 3:00 P. M.
Tampa to St. P. 4:00 P. M.

Special Flight Trips

Can be arranged through any of our agents or by telephoning directly with Mr. W. H. Hensley, Manager. Trip covering one day from one Florida point and back to same within 24 hours. Round trip \$15.00. Express \$20.00. A minimum charge of \$15.00 per round trip.

Rates: \$5.00 Per Trip. Round Trip \$10. Booking for Passage in Advance.

NOTE:—Passenger are allowed a weight of 200 pounds. GROSS including hand baggage, excess baggage at \$1.00 per 100 pounds. Minimum charge 75 cents. EXPRESS \$6.75. For packages, suit cases, and trunks, etc. \$1.00 per hundred pounds, minimum charge 25 cents. Express carried from Tampa to Tampa only, delivery and receipt by shipper.

Tickets on Sale at Wholesalers or
CITY NEWS STAND
P. C. WEST, Phone
271 CENTRAL AVENUE ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA

Regularly scheduled commercial air service is now a routine part of modern day life. A little over one hundred years ago, this reality began with a single flight in Florida. In 1914, a passenger purchased a \$400 ticket (over \$11,800 in 2022 dollars) at auction to fly from Tampa to St. Petersburg. This historic flight marked the start of the first regularly scheduled airline service in the world. The route was operated by a Benoist Model 14s seaplane traveling up to 60 mph for a 22-minute flight across Tampa Bay, replacing a five-hour train ride. Following this inaugural flight, scheduled flights charged \$5 each way (\$148.16 in 2022 dollars) and operated twice daily. Although the route is no longer operational, the inaugural flight demonstrated the viability of commercial air travel for generations to come. Florida was also home to the world's first international airline. Chalk's Flying Service, founded in 1919, flew between Miami and the Bahamas.

Source: www.airandspace.si.edu/stories/editorial/early-airlines-you-might-not-have-heard

A History of Military Training

In response to the rising tensions against Germany in the early 1910s and to prepare for an impending war, the U.S. initiated pilot training and established several new military installations in Florida, including what is now known as Naval Air Station Pensacola (NAS Pensacola), the first ever Naval Air Station. In 1941, the U.S. entry into World War II resulted in a rapid escalation of pilot training across Florida, including supporting one of the war's most unique aerial missions. In 1942, Eglin Army Air Field supported the training of the Doolittle Raiders, who completed a daring bombing raid directly on Tokyo, Japan. This mission, along with the considerable training activity occurring at 40 airfields across the state, earned Florida the reputation as the "flying fortress" and "the biggest...aircraft carrier in the world."

After the war, several Army Air Fields were converted to civilian airports that make up the modern-day Florida airport system including what is now St. Petersburg-Clearwater International Airport (PIE), Tallahassee International Airport (TLH), and Tampa International Airport (TPA).



Source: Air Force Magazine, April 2015



Source:
www.floridamemory.com/items/show/57722

First Aerial Torpedo

The United States' military aviation system expanded greatly in the 1910s to further assist in World War I efforts. Part of this burgeoning military aviation system was the development of unmanned missiles. Carlstrom Field, established in 1917 and located in Arcadia, Florida, was instrumental in this development. In October 1919, the U.S. Army successfully launched the Kettering Aerial Torpedo, the first unmanned aerial torpedo, from Carlstrom Field. Nicknamed the "Bug," the torpedo had a range of 75 miles, a top speed of 120 miles per hour, and could carry 180 pounds of explosives. Although the Bug was never used in combat, it did prove the concept of sending explosives through the air. The Bug served as the precursor to the modern-day cruise missiles that are equipped to aircraft, warships, and submarines and widely used by military forces globally. Carlstrom Field continued to be instrumental in the development of military aviation, hosting several aviation activities such as training pilots for aerial photography, flight training for the military during World War II, and the test site for a significant military development.



Source: www.nationalmuseum.af.mil/Visit/Museum-Exhibits/Fact-Sheets/Display/Article/198095/kettering-aerial-torpedo-bug/

Overview

These four profiles demonstrate Florida's historical contribution to aviation, including its support of commercial air service and U.S. military aviation. The state continues to pioneer many aviation advancements and serves as a site for testing emerging aviation developments.