

AZ Flyer News

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PHOENIX GOODYEAR AIRPORT PART 1 THE NAVY YEARS

The U.S. Navy operated Naval Air Facility Litchfield Park, Arizona from the WW II era into the late 1960s. During WW II, the U.S. Navy used the base to build major aircraft sections. At its peak in January 1945, the base comprised 64 buildings and employed 7,668 workers.

After World War II, its primary role was that of storage and preservation of obsolete or excess U.S. Navy, Marine Corp and Coast Guard aircraft. The number of aircraft stored at the facility quickly grew. By the end of 1946 over 300 aircraft were stored there and by the end of 1947, 1,000 aircraft were stored on the 800 acre site. When the Korean conflict began in 1950, approximately 2,000 planes were preserved and stored at the facility, comprising 18 different types. The methods used to preserve the planes proved very successful because within ten months 1,400 planes were put back into service for the Korean War.



NAF Litchfield Park 1945, photo courtesy brazilbrazil.com



WWII Corsairs in storage at NAF Litchfield Park, photo by Bob Baas

In 1958, there were approximately 2,500 inactive aircraft stored at the facility. In December 1963, aircraft at NAF Litchfield began the task of moving to Davis-Monthan Air Force Base for storage, reclamation or disposal.

Seven-hundred-plus aircraft either flew or were trucked the 150 miles to Davis-Monthan AFB. If an aircraft would not start after being given oil, fuel and a new battery it was declared scrap and was sent to public auction or to the on-site smelter to be turned into aluminum ingots. The Navy ceased operations in 1968 and sold the facility to the city of Phoenix.

NAF Litchfield Park Arizona, from Field of Dreams by David Trojan.

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

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