

Cherry Point Marine Corps Air Station ^[1]

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by John L. Bell, 2006

Cherry Point Marine Corps Air Station ^[2] was established on 6 Aug. 1941 on 8,000 acres south of New Bern. On 20 May



2nd Marine Aircraft Wing Change of Command at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, N.C., May 24, 2012. Image courtesy of Flickr user CherryPoint.

^[3]1942 the field was named Cunningham Field to honor Lt. Col. Alfred A. Cunningham ^[4], the first marine aviator. It was later renamed Marine Corps Air Station, Cherry Point, in reference to a local post office situated among cherry trees. During World War II ^[5] Cherry Point trained units and individual marines for service in the Pacific theater. The air station also served as a base for antisubmarine operations, with an Army Air Corps and Navy unit each sinking a German U-boat ^[6] just off the North Carolina coast in 1943. The Ninth Marine Aircraft Wing was based at Cherry Point during the war but replaced with the Second Marine Aircraft Wing ^[7] in 1946.

Throughout the Korean War ^[8] (1950-53), the base provided a steady stream of trained aviators and air crewmen, as well as maintenance and support personnel as replacements to forward deployed aviation units. During the Vietnam War ^[9] (1957-75), Cherry Point deployed three A-6 Intruder squadrons to the Far East and again provided a constant source of replacements for aircrews and enlisted aviation personnel. In Operation Desert Storm ^[10] (1991), Cherry Point deployed three AV-8B Harrier squadrons, two A-6E Intruder squadrons, one KC-130 Hercules squadron, one EA-6B Prowler



Blue Angels at the 2012 Cherry Point Air Show, May 6, at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, N.C. Image courtesy of Flickr user CherryPoint.

^[11]squadron, and headquarters detachments from Marine Air Group 14, Marine Air Group 32, and the Second Marine Aircraft Wing. Following the terrorist attacks of 11 Sept. 2001 in New York City, Cherry Point marines and sailors participated in strike missions and operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

By the early 2000s, the largest command at Cherry Point was the Second Marine Aircraft Wing. Other units housed there were Marine Aircraft Group 14 ^[12], Marine Wing Support Group 27, and Marine Air Control Group 28 ^[13]. Marine Aircraft Group 14's flying squadrons included three AV-8B Harrier squadrons, four EA-6B Prowler squadrons, and one KC-130 Hercules refueling squadron. The Marine Corps's only Harrier training squadron and only Hercules training squadron were also located at the air station. The air station proper consisted of 13,164 acres, with an additional 15,975 auxiliary acres, including Marine Corps Auxiliary Landing Field Bogue, situated along Bogue Sound in Carteret County ^[14]. Approximately

7,486 marines and sailors were stationed at Cherry Point.

Reference:

William R. Evinger, ed., *Directory of U.S. Military Bases Worldwide* (1995).

Additional Resources:

Cherry Point Marine Corps Air Station: <http://www.cherrypoint.marines.mil/> [2]

Image Credit:

2nd Marine Aircraft Wing Change of Command at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, N.C., May 24, 2012. Image courtesy of Flickr user CherryPoint. Available from https://www.flickr.com/photos/mcas_cherry_point/7263663638/ [3] (accessed August 30, 2012).

Blue Angels at the 2012 Cherry Point Air Show, May 6, at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, N.C. Image courtesy of Flickr user CherryPoint. Available from https://www.flickr.com/photos/mcas_cherry_point/7150159103/ [11] (accessed August 30, 2012)

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