

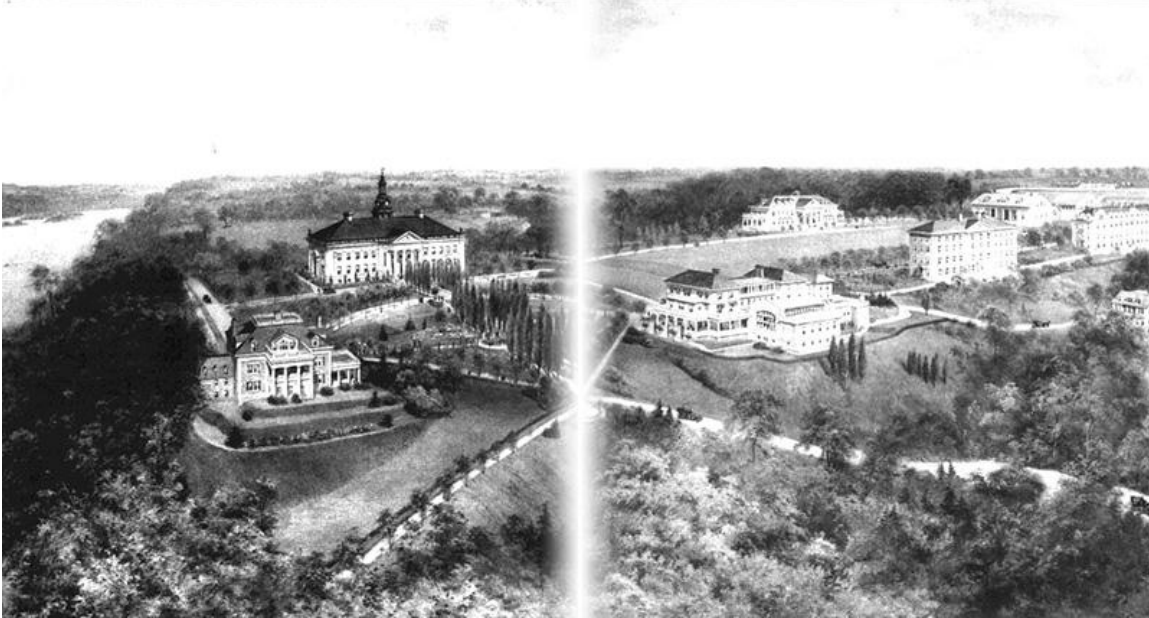
Bainbridge Naval Training Center Naval Academy Preparatory School or NAPS

Pre-Navy History

To understand how a Naval Academy Preparatory School and indeed Bainbridge Naval Training Center came to be located on a bluff with the town of Port Deposit 300-feet below separating the base from the Susquehanna River, one must understand the pre-history of the area. In brief, the town of Port Deposit was visited by Captain John Smith in 1608, a ferry boat operated here by Thomas Cresap as early as 1729 and by 1812 Philip Thomas had surveyor Hugh Beard lay out a proposed town to be known as "Creswell's Ferry" into lots. The Maryland General Assembly reviewed the survey and approved with Governor Levin Winder signing on and changing the town's name to "Port Deposit" on 5 December 1813. The town had become a "port of deposit" for goods being shipped from Pennsylvania's interior down the rain and thaw swollen Susquehanna during the spring months for trans-shipment on larger vessels up and down the east coast and indeed to Europe.

One of these early trading trips brought a young man named Jacob Tome to Port Deposit in 1833. He had an incomplete education and little money, but he soon made a fortune in lumber, land speculation, canals, railroads, steamships, and, banking. By 1889 he sought and obtained a charter from the State of Maryland for private school to be known as The Jacob Tome Institute or JTI. The school would be built and funded purely from Tome's money and be free to the children of Port Deposit and other environs as space allowed. By 1894 the school was built and opened, expecting 200 pupils, 450 arrived on the first day and trains were diverted to Port Deposit from Baltimore for the auspicious event. JTI put the public school out of business in Port Deposit and to this day there is no public school in Port's town limits.

When Jacob Tome, known as the founder and benefactor, died in 1898 prior to



witnessing the graduation of the schools first four-year student body, he left the school board an equivalent of \$3 million to continue. The board realized the free school would continually drain the endowment, so they immediately sought a method to develop a prep school on the lines of Eton and Lawrenceville in New Jersey, for the sons of the elite to attend. To that end they hired Frederick Law Olmsted, the designer of Central Park in New York, to oversee site selection and the layout concepts for the two farms they purchased on the hill above Port Deposit, the Gottlieb Gehrung and Lewis Abrahams farms. An architectural competition brought William Alciphron Boring and Edward Lippincott Tilton, the firm of Boring and Tilton from New York, to Port Deposit to design the structures of Port Deposit granite and Indiana limestone, immediately after the duo of Boring and Tilton had won international awards for their recently completed project in New York, known as the Ellis Island Immigrant Station. Charles Willson Leavitt was hired by Olmsted to design and layout the Italian gardens, later golf links, and all other flora beautification of the school grounds.

The school educated the elite of America and several other countries for years attracting such dignitaries for guest speakers as a young Under Secretary of the US Navy Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Graduates of the school including Lloyd Andrews Hamilton, a WWI fighter ace who was shot down over Germany and for whom Hamilton Field is named; Baynard Kendrick, author and founder of the Mystery Writers of America; Oscar winner Jack Eaton; actor and director Abner Biberman; author Stanley Kimmell; James Rouse of Columbia fame; Milward Simpson, the last of the wild-west Governors in

Montana; Gen. James Devereux¹; and John Shively Knight, of Knight Ridder News Service and founder of the Knight Foundation.

By 1938 the school's endowment funds were growing smaller, investments had taken a severe hit and enrollment was down as parents could not afford to send their sons to boarding schools following the crash of 1929 and the Great Depression. A \$48,000 gift of GM stock from Donaldson Brown, of double-entry bookkeeping fame, could not save the school² and finally the campus was put on the market as being for sale.

Army-Navy Rivalry

The sale of the school lagged with many interested parties visiting the school but none making offers. After 7 December 1941, the "day that shall live in infamy" new interest in the property sprang forth – for military training of new recruits. The U.S. Army from Aberdeen Proving Ground, APG, in Harford County, sent inspectors, as did the United States Navy, and U.S. Marine Corps. However, FDR recalled the beautiful school campus from his days as a guest speaker, and being a Navy man himself, he responded to the Navy's flash appraisal (made when the Navy learned the Army was back for a second look). The US Navy sent officials to look over the campus on 25 January 1942 originally for a proposed aviation ground school. The Army inspectors were removed from the property at 11:35 a.m. after FDR signed an order to purchase Tome School "for less than a million, and forget about Tahoe." The purchase was made in February of 1942 and immediately acquisition of more land was called for resulting in 71 adjacent farms, houses confiscated or condemned by 69 families and two failed former villages, Hawkinsville and Heckart-Town³, being swept up as condemned by the Federal government, taking the 330-acre campus and adding onto it over for an over 1,200 acre Naval Training Center. The total price of the campus and additional land came to \$1,330,000.



A City on the Hill

Construction began in 19 May 1942⁴ with the Thompkins Company of Washington D.C., earning the \$42 million contract on 10 April 1942. Astoundingly enough, especially when one considers the property has been held by the State of Maryland for re-development for 11-years (to date) with no evident physical progress,

¹ James P.S. "Pee Wee" Devereux, USMC, was a Brigadier General and Commanding Officer of the 1st Defense Battalion during the heroic but futile Defense of Wake Island 7 December 1941. He and his men were eventually captured and held as POWs for the duration of the war. Released, Devereux returned to Maryland to serve in the Maryland General Assembly with distinction.

² The final commencement exercises for Tome School for Boys were held 9 June 1941. The school, in Tome name, lives on as The Tome School, removed to North East, Cecil County, MD.

³ A total of 1,132 additional acres was acquired through condemnation and confiscation, the

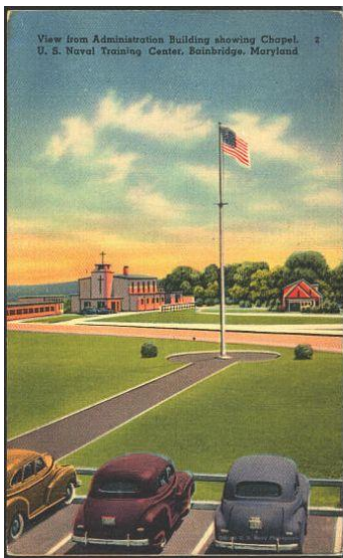
⁴ Construction actually began on 10 April 1942 of outhouses and other prep areas, with ground ceremonially broken on 19 May 1942.

by 14 August 1942, only six months, 506 buildings were erected along with seven miles of roads and sidewalks, and infrastructure installed including telephone lines, electricity, water and sewer.

USNTC Bainbridge was actually commissioned before it was completed, on 1 October 1942. By 10 October 1942 the first recruit, 19-year old Damon Sutton of Pittsburgh, Pa., was welcomed aboard USNTC Bainbridge⁵. At the peak of WWII activities Bainbridge had 543 buildings in use with 44.8 miles of paved streets and parking areas, and 7.9 miles of railroad track. There was also a nine-hole golf course, 16 tennis courts, six swimming pools, 9 outdoor athletic fields and four movie halls each seating 1,400 people, not to mention the 5,000 seat outdoor amphitheatre.



The Bainbridge construction contract was not completed until 7 July 1943 with the hospital⁶ group in the Fourth Regiment area. By war's end the hospital had facilities for 2,377 bed patients and 500 convalescents, manned by 62 doctors and 97 nurses. The primary mission of the hospital was to care for the center's own personnel but as the war progressed the hospital cared for large numbers of battle casualties, most well-advanced toward recovery. The completion a year after the purchase of the former Tome school for Boys campus and 1,000 acres surrounding it to make this Navy City at Bainbridge complete with 600 buildings cost \$45 million.



The base contained four training camps all named for Maryland centered sailors – Camps Barney, Perry, Rodgers and Semmes⁷. Each camp contained a drill hall complete with indoor swimming pool, basketball courts, locker rooms, offices, etc.; chow halls that could feed up to 1,000 at a time; and bleachers. The base itself contained a hospital, chapel, ship's store, dry cleaners, processing center, and administrative offices. Also on Bainbridge were movie theaters, officer's and enlisted men's clubs, bowling alleys, rifle ranges, riding stables, picnic grounds, and of course, the USS Commodore, referred to by the men as the "USS Never Sail." Land was acquired in Port Deposit along the waterfront to build boathouses for whale boats where abandoned ship drills could be held on the swift moving Susquehanna River. Each day the street in Port Deposit shut down as sailors marched down the 300-foot cliff on

⁵ President Franklin Delano Roosevelt chose to name the base in honor of Commodore William Bainbridge of War of 1812 fame.

⁶ The hospital was commissioned in February 1943

⁷ A fifth camp was planned but never went into action in Camp James

steps built 50 years earlier to carry students to Tome School, cross the street and practice on the Susquehanna.



In fiscal year 1944 the Ship's Service Store at Bainbridge, employing local civilians, grossed sales in the amount of \$7,690,341.25 while the peak of activities in clothing and small stores division was reached in March 1944 when the workers issued clothing valued at \$1.8 million to Navy personnel. The brisk business prompted 20 storehouses to be built each at 200'x60'. In 1944 alone Bainbridge NTC personnel bought by the pay deduction method bonds with maturity value of \$16.8 million. The base was training so many men, and women, and attracting so much business and civilian workers, thusly impacting the local economy on a massive scale, that the base was re-designated a US Naval Training Center in April 1944 with four subordinate commands – Service School⁸, Recruit Training, Naval Hospital and Administrative Command.⁹

Throughout World War II Bainbridge cooks and bakers prepared three meals a day for 30,000 men and during an average month the authorities spent \$470,000 for general mess, taking great care to spend a large portion of that with local farmers and purveyors.

By the end of WWII USNTC Bainbridge Recruit Training Command had trained and mustered out 244,000 recruits. Bainbridge's Administrative Command operated a bus line that ran on a 20-minute schedule supervising 129 passenger vehicles and 278 trucks. The average daily consumption of water on the base was four-million gallons from the Susquehanna River via a 16-inch pipeline to the base's filtration plant. The base consumed 45,500 tons of coal each year and there were six mobile pumps and 44,000 feet of hose to fight fires. In addition there were 10 trunk lines and three switchboard centrals through C&P Telephone and a 600 line PBX dial system for intra-reservation calls.



On 30 June 1947 USNTC Bainbridge was de-activated. The residents of Port Deposit were saddened but grateful the base had been operational with sailors "aboard" on 31 May 1947, when the worst airliner crash in the history of the United States, up to that time, occurred on the hillside at Port Deposit claiming 53 lives. A drill hall was used to lay out and identify the dead and sailors helped in the transport of wreckage and bodies from the hillside to the base.

The Campus

⁸ Activated in May 1943 the service schools at Bainbridge graduated 24,484 men by August 1945

⁹ The wartime commanding officer at USNTC Bainbridge was Commodore C.F. Russell from 16 June 1942 to 17 September 1945.



Though the focus of USNTC Bainbridge was recruit training, the Tome School for Boys campus was the center of the decision to purchase the land and create Bainbridge. Hence the Navy sought a use for the school and in the earliest days officers used the school proper. But as World War II waged on, a new purpose was developed in 1943 and 800 men were signed on for the first US Naval Academy Preparatory

School program in the history of the US Navy. Memorial Hall served, as it did years prior, as the classroom facility, while the dormitory buildings of Harrison, Jackson, Madison and Van Buren housed the officer students. The rear of Van Buren served as the chow hall with the massive kitchens modified to serve more humble fare than the gourmet meals Tome boys had ravenously consumed. The Power Plant of the school became a maintenance facility but new mechanical systems were added to the individual



buildings. The Navy even spruced up the football field¹⁰, batting cages, and added an outdoor

¹⁰ The US Navy brought in Heavyweight Boxing Champion Gene Tunney as Athletic Director to bring in even more recruits, especially to NAPS and the fledgling military football teams, and other sports teams. Tunney was able to recruit such men as Stan Musial, Baseball hall of famer, and Charlie “Choo Choo” Justice, former Washington Redskin, to wear the Commodore uniform.

pool to Monroe House which contained a 75'x25' indoor swimming pool, basketball court, movie theatre, batting cages, handball and racquet ball court and tennis courts. An officer's club was also added to Monroe House.



In 1943 the Naval Academy Preparatory School enrollment at Bainbridge in the former Tome School for Boys area, which was known as "Officer's Only Off Limits Personnel" to most sailors, was 443. Those numbers would go up over time until the first set of final examinations were taken. In 1944 the enrollment in NAPS was 900. In 1945 the NAPS enrollment at Bainbridge was 1,073.

On 29 April 1944 final examinations of this first class of 800 men were held at Memorial Hall marking, said The Cecil Democrat newspaper of that date, "completion of the first course at the US Navy's first formal pre school for the Academy of Annapolis."

Reactivation of Bainbridge

Closed in June 1947 Bainbridge was re-activated from "moth ball" status to welcome the first recruits for Korean War era service on 5 April 1951. Recruits arrived at between 500 to 1,000 per week. It was during the Korean War that Bainbridge, and thus the town of Port Deposit, reached their peak population of 55,000. Reactivation



ceremonies were held on 1 February 1951 under Commander Robert H. Smith who spearheaded a multi-month clean-up and repair of the once abandoned property. A recruit training unit for women was established at Bainbridge in November 1947 immediately after the Naval Academy Preparatory School or NAPS was reopened in October.

By 1959 a mechanized Personnel Accounting Machine Installation, or PAMI, came to Bainbridge as a new command. The recruit training center for women of 1951 was also re-designated as a Command and in August 1959 became the Recruit Training Command for Women. In January 1960 a distribution office responsible for 60,000 stateside billets came to Bainbridge known as EPDO CONUS – Enlisted Personnel Distribution Office Continental United States. In 1962 the Nuclear Power School was moved from New London, Conn., to Bainbridge, as a Command. In 1963 Naval Reserve Manpower Center came to Bainbridge. All of these various organizations beefed up the number of civilian workers required to keep Bainbridge working.

In 1967 the Naval hospital command at Bainbridge was deactivated and replaced by a base dispensary, while earlier in the year on 24 February 1967 Hunter Hall was dedicated and occupied as the WAVEs Recruit Barracks at Bainbridge, the last new structure to be built at Bainbridge before it was shut down. The Service School Command was the next to succumb in 1968, followed by the Recruit Training Command

for Women, which moved to Orlando, Fla., in 1971; and EPDO CONUS and PAMI CONUS were removed to Washington D.C. from Bainbridge 1 July 1972.

USNTC Bainbridge closed for the final time on 31 March 1976, though local Maryland officials hoped against hoped it was only being “moth balled” yet again. When the gates closed over 350,000 sailors had received recruit training and thousands more had received specialty training and NAPS education there including: Bill Cosby, Willard Scott, Stan Musial, Tony Curtis, and others. Within months of the base closing the US Department of Labor’s Chesapeake Job Corps program opened at Bainbridge in the former Tome School for Boys campus, or NAPS, and would remain a thorn in the side of local residents, until 1990, during which time nearly 100 arson fires devastated the property.

What Now for Bainbridge

Port Deposit and Bainbridge only made Baltimore news in the 1970s through 1990s when Bainbridge closed, or there was another arson fire or riot at the Job Corps Center. In 1989 the NAPs buildings were part of a holiday tour, but 1991 two were condemned, by 1997 all were condemned, yet all are on the National Register of Historic Places and part of an Historic American Buildings Survey.



Numerous attempts to re-develop Bainbridge, so crucial to the development of western Cecil County and to bring back jobs to the area that has become a bedroom community for Pennsylvania and Delaware, have been made with various commissions formed and disbanded. Development proposals and plans have ranged from: a NASCAR track and facility; Hollywood East; retreat for the wealthy from the west coast; Disneyworld theme park; etc. The most prevalent plans have been for a rubble landfill and under a published announcement that shocked the sleepy town of Port Deposit, “Good Jobs Coming to Port: Bainbridge to be Federal Max Prison and Nuclear Station.” This woke the

town up out of lethargy.

All plans fell by the wayside but in 1997 when the Navy returned for yet another multi-million clean-up of the property as required by the EPA, a new push was made to turn over the property and create a local development authority under House Bill 135 and the leadership of Delegate David Rudolph, and see Bainbridge back on the tax rolls and jobs and development return to Cecil. The 1,200 acre property is visible from I-95, exorbitant tolls that bring little to no investment to the county which they cut off from the state, notwithstanding. The Bainbridge Development Corporation was thus created.

The town of Port Deposit annexed the property in 1999 so it could have some representation locally and in the development process. In 2010 the town signed agreements with Cecil County to provide sewer service to the property and with Artesian Water for potable water to Bainbridge. The town has provided continued police

protection and investigative services at Bainbridge for four-years, during which time the only compensation for serving this unpopulated land in town-limits owned by the State of Maryland, was a \$500 donation from development partners MTPM, LLC, to offset costs of damaged police vehicles due to road conditions on the deteriorating property.

In 1997 the Tome School Clean-Up Volunteers was founded under the leadership of Del. David Rudolph, with coordinators Erika Quesenbery, Glen Longacre and Judy Leonard conducting clean-ups of the NAPS property every Saturday May through October from 1997 to 1999. In 1999 with the arrival of the BDC the chairperson of said organization suggested professionals rather than amateur volunteers were required at Bainbridge so volunteer clean-ups have been cancelled.

The town of Port Deposit eagerly awaits what next for Bainbridge. We continue to do our part providing police protection, finding innovative public-private partnerships to provide infrastructure, conducting tours, offering our facilities for meetings, lending our voice and preserving the history of veterans with the only Memorial Markers for Bainbridge that exist in our town. Our future depends on what happens on the hill above us, we have no room to grow elsewhere and we have been holding on and struggling through since 1976 and the closing of our greatest employer and since 1982 when Wiley Manufacturing, our second largest employer left town following completion of the I-95 Baltimore tunnel.



Port Deposit a Part of Bainbridge Once Again

On 25 January 1992 the town of Port Deposit grew by 125-acres by annexing the former Tome School for Boys campus at Bainbridge. The town grew from 89-acres to 214-acres – or 140% growth. In 1999 Port Deposit grew by some 1,200 additional acres by annexing the former USNTC Bainbridge into town limits.