

Navel Cadet Training

1942 – 1945

In February 1942, the U S Army Air Corps visited Murray to establish headquarters in the Health building on the Murray State College campus. The War Department announced that all requirements for college training would be abolished in the selection of aviation cadets for air crew training, which included pilots, navigators, and bombardiers. Instead, they were all given an educational test.

By July, Murray State had added curriculum for a glider pilot training program, and it came to be known as the United States Naval Flight Preparatory School. The college had contracted to feed, house, and teach cadets and to take care of their medical needs. Lieut. Charles L. Wiley was the commanding officer.

The January 7, 1943, issue of the Ledger and Times reported: Around 200 Naval Cadets began arriving by train in Murray, with many townsfolk and college people greeting them at the station. The men marched across the square and out Main to the college gymnasium, where they were issued equipment and then to the barracks (Wells Hall, girls' dormitory), with the code name, U.S.S. Lexington. The men were to be confined to the campus for at least two weeks and never allowed to go downtown without a pass. Today's Wilson Hall was known as the Naval Administration Building and was utilized for classrooms and for officers' headquarters.

More than two hundred more cadets arrived the following month. The course in pre-flight training lasted three months. The men were to be trained to become Navy officers and pilots. Nineteen other colleges and universities were also selected to give the same training. The instruction offered to the men included mathematics, physics, geopolitics, and navigation. Once the men completed the one-month instruction in Murray, they left for the Naval Pre-Flight School at Athens, Georgia.

In recognition of the training the men received, the Paducah Sun Democrat reported in October 1944: The Central Examining Board at Pensacola, Florida, showed that on the final examination in five subjects, the Murray unit had the highest average of any of the 17 schools in the nation. All flight preparatory schools nationwide were closed out by the end of 1945, combined into the four big pre-flight bases.

Several businesses in Murray catered to the servicemen, including the Blue Bird Café. (See advertisement)

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[The Ledger & Times February 19 1942.pdf](#)

[The Ledger & Times July 2 1942.pdf](#)

[The Ledger & Times February 4 1943.pdf](#) (pictures)

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/502550589/?terms=Naval%20Flight%20Preparatory%20at%20murray&match=1>