



COUNTY of KLEBERG
KINGSVILLE, TEXAS

April 29, 2022

Via Email

Mr. Charles F. "Chuck" Sams III
National Park Service Director

RE: Nueces County/ Kleberg County Application for "American World War II Heritage City"

Dear Mr. Sams:

As County Judges for Nueces and Kleberg County we enthusiastically submit this application to designate our Coastal Bend Region, inclusive of Nueces and Kleberg Counties, as an "American World War II Heritage City." Located in Texas on the Gulf of Mexico, Nueces County's most populous municipality is the City of Corpus Christi. Just south of Nueces, is Kleberg County. Nueces County and its surrounding area played a significant role in supporting our nation's response to World War II. This was a call that our community answered. It is a rich history that our community identified with and proudly preserves.

It was here that many World War II pilots were trained. Our region has two Naval Air Stations that were built in response to World War II, Naval Air Station – Corpus Christi (NAS-CC) located in Nueces County and Naval Air Station – Kingsville (NAS-Kingsville) located in Kleberg County. Both bases remain active and operate today. NAS-CC opened in March of 1941. Thousands of aviators were trained and earned their wings here during World War II. At NAS-Kingsville, opened in July of 1942, pilots received advanced training in carrier dive bombing tactics, anti-submarine warfare, and cockpit gunnery and artillery. This was just but one way the Coastal Bend contributed. Many more contributions are set out in our enclosed application. Today our communities continue to preserve our World War II legacy through museums, landmarks, parks, statues, and annual ceremonies.

The National Park Service's designation distinguishing our area as an "American World War II Heritage City" would clearly recognize what our community's constituents already embrace. Your consideration is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Barbara Canales".

Barbara Canales
Nueces County Judge

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rudy Madrid".

Rudy Madrid
Kleberg County Judge



City of Corpus Christi

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

1201 Leopard St., 78401
PO Box 9277
Corpus Christi
Texas 78469-9277
Phone 361-826-3100
Fax 361-826-3103

www.cctexas.com

Mr. Charles F. Sams III
Director, National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Re: Letter of support for the City of Corpus Christi, Nueces County and Kleberg County Texas to be an American WWII Heritage Region

Dear Director Sams:

I am writing to encourage you to select the collective submission of the City of Corpus Christi, Nueces County and Kleberg County as Texas' American WWII Heritage Region. This region is uniquely situated to be selected for this designation due to the region's substantial contribution to the nation's war effort and its on-going preservation of this heritage and legacy.

There are numerous contributions that were made by this region to WWII. Significantly, Naval Air Station Corpus Christi (NAS-CC) played a central role. Construction of NAS-CC began in 1940 and was completed in record time on March 12, 1941, a construction feat incomprehensible today. It was here that more than half of WWII Naval Aviators were trained, 30,000 in total. That tradition continues today as NAS-CC continues to be the Navy, Marine Corps and U.S. Coast Guard's primary training in the *T6B Texan II* and advanced training in the twin engine *T-44C Pegasus*.

We also take great pride in recognizing that some of our nation's most famous aviators who went on to make significant contributions to this country were trained at NAS-CC. This includes President George H. W. Bush, who was the youngest pilot to receive his wings in 1943, astronaut John Glenn, astronaut Neil Armstrong and Senator John McCain.

Naval Air Station Kingsville was hastened to be built following the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Naval Auxiliary Air Station Kingsville, as it was originally named, was commissioned to train naval aviators and gunnery crews on July 4, 1942. In September of 1942, it was selected as a basic training center.

The region also supported other missions that contributed to the war effort. Padre Island was used by the Navy as a bombing site. The Port of Corpus Christi was a vital link between the oil and agricultural fields of South Texas and the allied war effort. The Port shipped over 100 million tons of cargo during this time. Mustang Island was used to protect the harbor at Aransas Pass with 105 mm Howitzers.

The region continues to preserve this worthy legacy. Today, NAS-CC trains approximately 400 pilots a year and its tenant, the Corpus Christi Army Depot, is the world's largest rotary wing aircraft repair facility. NAS-Kingsville provides advance training for strike fighter pilots. Combined, the military facilities of South Texas employs over 6,000 people and has an economic impact of \$5.3 billion.

South Texas was integral to the American war effort during WWII and continues to preserve its military history and community pride in our contribution.

Sincerely,

Paulette Guajardo
Mayor

MICHAEL CLOUD
27TH DISTRICT, TEXAS

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT
AND REFORM

RANKING MEMBER,
ECONOMIC AND CONSUMER POLICY
SUBCOMMITTEE

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

April 27, 2022

555 N. CARANCAHUA ST.
TOWER II, SUITE 980
CORPUS CHRISTI, TX 78401
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111 N. GLASS ST., SUITE 102
VICTORIA, TX 77901
(361) 894-6446

512 CANNON HOB
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-7742

CLOUD.HOUSE.GOV

Charles F. Sams III
Director, National Parks Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Director Sams:

As the Congressman for the 27th Congressional District of Texas, I am writing to encourage you to select the submission of the City of Corpus Christi, Nueces County as Texas' American World War II Heritage Region. This region is uniquely situated to be selected for this designation due to the region's substantial contribution to the nation's war effort and its on-going preservation of this heritage and legacy.

There are numerous contributions that were made by this region to World War II. Significantly, Naval Air Station Corpus Christi (NAS-CC) played a central role. Construction of NAS-CC began in 1940 and was completed in record time on March 12, 1941, a construction feat incomprehensible today. It was here that more than half of WW II Naval Aviators were trained, 30,000 in total. That tradition continues today as NAS-CC continues to be the Navy, Marine Corps and U.S. Coast Guard's primary training in the *T6B Texan II* and advanced training in the twin engine *T-44C Pegasus*.

Corpus Christi and Nueces County also take great pride in recognizing that some of our nation's most famous aviators who went on to make significant contributions to this country were trained at NAS-CC. This includes President George H. W. Bush, who was the youngest pilot to receive his wings in 1943, astronaut John Glenn, astronaut Neil Armstrong and Senator John McCain.

Regionally speaking, the Naval Air Station, located in Kingsville, was hastened to be built following the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Naval Auxiliary Air Station Kingsville, as it was originally named, was commissioned to train naval aviators and gunnery crews on July 4, 1942. In September of 1942 it was selected as a basic training center.

This region also supported other missions that contributed to the war effort. Padre Island was used by the Navy as a bombing site. The Port of Corpus Christi was a vital link between the oil and agricultural fields of South Texas and the allied war effort. The Port shipped over 100 million tons of cargo during this time. Mustang Island was used to protect the harbor at Aransas Pass with 105 mm Howitzers.

The region continues to preserve this worthy legacy. Today, NAS-CC trains approximately 400 pilots a year and its tenant the Corpus Christi Army Depot is the world's largest rotary wing aircraft repair facility. NAS-Kingsville provides advance training for strike fighter pilots. Combined, the military facilities of South Texas employs over 6000 people and has an economic impact of \$5.3 billion. Corpus Christi is also the home of the retired USS Lexington, where during World War II, the carrier participated in nearly every major operation in the Pacific Theater and spent a total of 21 month in combat.

South Texas was integral to the American war effort during World War II and continues to preserve its military history and community pride in our contribution.

Sincerely,



Michael Cloud
Member of Congress
27th Congressional District of Texas



COMMITTEES

FINANCE, VICE CHAIR
REDISTRICTING, VICE CHAIR
NATURAL RESOURCES &
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
BORDER SECURITY

THE SENATE OF TEXAS JUAN "CHUY" HINOJOSA DISTRICT 20

COMMITTEES

JURISPRUDENCE, VICE CHAIR
CRIMINAL JUSTICE
TRANSPORTATION
PORTS

April 27, 2022

Mr. Charles F. Sams III
Director
National Parks Service
U.S. Department of Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Re: Letter of Support for the Coalition of City and Counties of the Texas Coastal Bend
Selection as an American WWII Region

Dear Director Sams:

I encourage you to select the City of Corpus Christi, Nueces County, and Kleberg County as Texas' American World War II Heritage Region. The Texas Coastal Bend region is uniquely situated to be selected for this designation due to the region's many contributions to the nation's war efforts since the 1940s.

The region is home to the Naval Air Station ("NASCC") Corpus Christi and the Naval Air Station Kingsville ("NASK"). Located on the Corpus Christi Bay, the NASCC was established as the nation's second air training base and commissioned its first flight training in 1941. The NASK, founded in 1942, served the nearby NASCC as an auxiliary field, aiding in training many of the U.S. Navy's pilots for World War II. By the end of World War II, more than 35,000 naval aviators had earned their wings there including former President George H. W. Bush. Other notable people who received their training here include astronaut Neil Armstrong, Senator John McCain, and Senator and astronaut John Glenn.

The tradition continues today as NASCC trains approximately 400 pilots each year. One of the current tenants of NASCC is the Corpus Christi Army Depot, the world's largest rotary wing aircraft repair facility. NASCC continues to be the training grounds for the U.S. Navy, U.S. Marine Corps, and the U.S. Coast Guard for the T6B Texan II and the T-44C Pegasus. NASK

Mr. Charles F. Sams III

April 27, 2022

Page 2

provides advanced training for strike fighter pilots. Combined, the military facilities employ over 6,000 people creating an economic impact of \$3.5 billion.

Thank you for considering the City of Corpus Christi, Nueces County, and Kleberg County region as an American World War II Heritage Region. Please do not hesitate to contact my office if additional information is needed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Juan 'Chuy' Hinojosa". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa
State Senator, District 20



TODD HUNTER
TEXAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
DISTRICT 32
NUECES (PART)

April 18, 2022

Charles F. Sams III
Director, National Parks Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Director Sams:

I am writing to encourage you to select the City of Corpus Christi, Nueces County and Kleberg County as Texas' American WWII Heritage Region. The region is uniquely situated to be selected for this designation due to the region's grand contribution to the nation's war effort.

Construction of Naval Air Station Corpus Christi began in 1940 and was dedicated on March 12, 1941, a construction feat incomprehensible today. Over 50 percent of all Naval Aviators who participated in the war were trained at NASCC (30,000 in total). That tradition continues today as NASCC continues to be the Navy, Marine Corps and U.S. Coast Guard's primary training in the T6B Texan II and advanced training in the twin engine T-44C Pegasus.

NASCC has given wings to some of our nation's most famous aviators including President George H. W. Bush, who was the youngest pilot to receive his wings in 1943. Other notables include Senator and former astronaut John Glenn, astronaut Neil Armstrong and Senator John McCain. Moreover, Padre Island was used by the Navy as a bombing site. The Port of Corpus Christi was a vital link between the oil and agricultural fields of South Texas and the allied war effort. The Port shipped over 100 million tons of cargo during this time. Mustang Island was used to protect the harbor at Aransas Pass with 105 mm Howitzers.

South Texas was integral to the American war effort during WWII and continues to preserve its military history and pride in our contribution. It is for these reasons that I respectfully request your consideration regarding this designation. Should you have any questions regarding my support for this project, please do not hesitate to contact my office at (512) 463-0672.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Todd Hunter", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Todd Hunter
State Representative, District 32

ABEL HERRERO



CAPITOL OFFICE:
P.O. Box 2910
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78768-2910
(512) 463-0462
(512) 463-1705 FAX

DISTRICT OFFICE:
101 EAST MAIN AVENUE
ROBSTOWN, TEXAS 78380
(361) 387-0457

STATE REPRESENTATIVE
DISTRICT 34

April 27, 2022

Charles F. Sams III
Director, National Parks Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

RE: Letter of support for the City of Corpus Christi, Nueces County and Kleberg County Texas to be an American WWII Heritage Region

Dear Director Sams:

I am writing in support of the joint submission of the City of Corpus Christi, Nueces County and Kleberg County for designation as Texas' American WWII Heritage Region. The Coastal Bend region is the perfect location for this designation due to the region's substantial contributions to the nation's WW II war efforts and its on-going preservation of this heritage and legacy.

The Coastal Bend region played a major role in the World War II home-front war efforts, hosting two major Naval Air stations. Naval Air Station Corpus Christi (NAS-CC) played a central role in the WWII effort as it was here that more than half of WW II Naval Aviators were trained, 30,000 in total. That tradition continues today as NAS-CC continues to be the Navy, Marine Corps and U.S. Coast Guard's primary training in the *T6B Texan II* and advanced training in the twin engine *T-44C Pegasus*.

Furthermore, the region also supports Naval Air Station Kingsville (NASK) which was built following the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Naval Auxiliary Air Station Kingsville, as it was originally named, was commissioned to train naval aviators and gunnery crews on July 4, 1942. In September of 1942 it was selected as a basic training center. The region also supported other missions that were vital to the war effort. Padre Island was used by the Navy as a bombing site. The Port of Corpus Christi was a vital link between the oil and agricultural fields of South Texas



ABEL HERRERO



CAPITOL OFFICE:
P.O. Box 2910
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78768-2910
(512) 463-0462
(512) 463-1705 FAX

DISTRICT OFFICE:
101 EAST MAIN AVENUE
ROBSTOWN, TEXAS 78380
(361) 387-0457

STATE REPRESENTATIVE
DISTRICT 34

and the allied war effort, shipping over 100 million tons of cargo during this time. Mustang Island was used to protect the harbor at Aransas Pass with 105 mm Howitzers.

We also take great pride in recognizing that some of our nation's most famous aviators who went on to make significant contributions to this country were trained at NAS-CC, including President George H. W. Bush, who was the youngest pilot to receive his wings in 1943, astronaut John Glenn, astronaut Neil Armstrong and Senator John McCain.

It's clear that the Coastal Bend region has worked tirelessly to preserve the legacy of our local military installations and the home-front war efforts by our military personnel and the community. Today, NAS-CC trains approximately 400 pilots a year and its tenant the Corpus Christi Army Depot is the world's largest rotary wing aircraft repair facility. NAS-Kingsville continues to provide advance training for strike fighter pilots. Combined, the military facilities in South Texas employ over 6000 people and have an economic impact of \$5.3 billion. In addition, our communities host a variety of events and resources related to WW II efforts, including the U.S.S. Lexington Museum by the Bay.

I am proud that our communities played such a vital role in supporting WW II efforts here at home. Our communities have always been great stewards of our nation's military history, and I strongly support the joint submission of the City of Corpus Christi, Nueces County and Kleberg County for designation as Texas' American WWII Heritage Region. I hope you can help us continue to recognize South Texas' historic wartime contributions and enduring legacy by designating our communities as Texas' American WWII Heritage Region.

Thank you for your consideration. Please feel free to contact me if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Abel Herrero".

Abel Herrero
State Representative, District 34





April 26, 2022

Charles F. Sams III
Director, National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Re: Letter of support for the City of Corpus Christi, Nueces County and Kleberg County Texas to be an American WWII Heritage Region

Dear Director Sams:

I am writing to encourage you to select the collective submission of the City of Corpus Christi, Nueces County and Kleberg County as Texas' American WWII Heritage Region. This region is uniquely situated to be selected for this designation due to the region's substantial contribution to the nation's war effort and its on-going preservation of this heritage and legacy.

There are numerous contributions that were made by this region to WW II. Significantly, Naval Air Station Corpus Christi (NAS-CC) played a central role. Construction of NAS-CC began in 1940 and was completed in record time on March 12, 1941, a construction feat incomprehensible today. It was here that more than half of WW II Naval Aviators were trained, 30,000 in total. That tradition continues today as NAS-CC continues to be the Navy, Marine Corps and U.S. Coast Guard's primary training in the T6B Texan II and advanced training in the twin engine T-44C Pegasus.

We also take great pride in recognizing that some of our nation's most famous aviators who went on to make significant contributions to this country were trained at NAS-CC. This includes President George H. W. Bush, who was the youngest pilot to receive his wings in 1943, astronaut John Glenn, astronaut Neil Armstrong and Senator John McCain.

Naval Air Station Kingsville was hastened to be built following the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Naval Auxiliary Air Station Kingsville, as it was originally named, was commissioned to train naval aviators and gunnery crews on July 4, 1942. In September of 1942 it was selected as a basic training center.

The region also supported other missions that contributed to the war effort. Padre Island was used by the Navy as a bombing site. The Port of Corpus Christi was a vital link between the oil and agricultural fields of South Texas and the allied war effort. The Port shipped over 100 million tons of cargo during this time. Mustang Island was used to protect the harbor at Aransas Pass with 105 mm Howitzers.

The region continues to preserve this worthy legacy. Today, NAS-CC trains approximately 400 pilots a year and its tenant the Corpus Christi Army Depot is the world's largest rotary wing aircraft repair facility. NAS-Kingsville provides advance training for strike fighter pilots. Combined, the military facilities of South Texas employs over 6000 people and has an economic impact of \$5.3 billion.

South Texas was integral to the American war effort during WWII and continues to preserve its military history and community pride in our contribution.

Sincerely,



John P. LaRue
President & CEO



April 26, 2022

Charles F. Sams III
Director, National Parks Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Re: Letter of support for the Cities and Counties of the Texas Coastal Bend to be a designated American WWII Heritage Region

Dear Director Sams:

I am writing to encourage you to select the City of Corpus Christi, Nueces County and Kleberg County as Texas' American WWII Heritage Region. The region is uniquely situated to be selected for this designation due to the region's grand contribution to the nation's war effort.

Construction of Naval Air Station Corpus Christi was begun in 1940 and was dedicated on March 12, 1941, and became the largest aviation training facility in the world. Over 50 percent of all Naval Aviators who participated in the war were trained at NASCC (30,000 in total). That tradition continues today as NASCC continues to provide primary training to multiple services including Navy, Marine Corps and U.S. Coast Guard.

NASCC was the primary training facility to some of our nation's most famous aviators including President George H. W. Bush, the Navy's youngest pilot 1943. Other notables include Senator and former astronaut John Glenn, astronaut Neil Armstrong and Senator John McCain.

Additionally, the region supported additional missions supporting the war effort. Padre Island was used by the Navy as a bombing site. The Port of Corpus Christi was a vital link between the oil and agricultural fields of South Texas and the allied war effort. The Port shipped over 100 million tons of cargo during this time. Mustang Island was used to protect the harbor at Aransas Pass with 105 mm Howitzers.

Today, NASCC trains approximately 400 pilots a year. One of the current tenants on base is the Corpus Christi Army Depot, the world's largest rotary wing aircraft repair facility. Nearby NAS Kingsville provides advance training for strike fighter pilots. Combined, the military facilities of South Texas employ over 6000 people and provide an annual economic impact of \$5.3 billion.

South Texas, was integral to the American war effort during WWII, continues to preserve its military history, and is certainly deserving of recognition as an American WWII Heritage Region. Thank you for your service and consideration of this request.

Very Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kresten Cook". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kresten Cook
Executive Director, South Texas Military Task Force
kresten@unitedccchamber.com



Charles F. Sams III
Director, National Parks Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Director Sams,

I am writing in support of the collective submission of the City of Corpus Christi, Nueces County, and Kleberg County as Texas' American WWII Heritage Region. This region is uniquely situated to be selected for this designation due to the region's substantial contribution to the nation's war effort, its on-going preservation of this heritage and legacy, and the presence of the USS Lexington Museum.

Situated aboard one of the longest serving and most decorated aircraft carriers in the world, the USS Lexington Museum offers a unique experience to over 300,000 visitors annually who tour this historic WWII aircraft carrier while visiting the Coastal Bend Region.

Commissioned in 1943, USS Lexington (CV-16) and her crew fought in WWII and survived direct hits from both a torpedo and a kamikaze. USS Lexington fought in many battles, including the Battle of the Philippine Sea and the Battle of Leyte Gulf. USS Lexington was also the first foreign large fleet aircraft carrier to enter Tokyo Bay. This ship survived its wartime prowess to become a training carrier for thousands of sailors and naval aviators. This extraordinary history is being preserved in Corpus Christi where we are always sharing the awe inspiring stories from WWII to all who come aboard—from across Texas and around the world.

It was due to local support for the military, veteran engagement, and the eagerness to preserve WWII history that the City of Corpus Christi "landed the LEX" in 1992. Since that time, the USS Lexington Museum hosts an annual Pearl Harbor Remembrance Ceremony, Veterans Day Ceremony, and Memorial Day Ceremony, and supports the annual Battle of Midway Ceremony. Our annual "Stage Door Canteen" is a WWII-themed dance with big band music from the 1940s era that celebrates the ship's commissioning and has great support every year.

While the ship itself is living history, the USS Lexington Museum manages many exhibits and displays that honor the legacy and sacrifices made onboard during WWII. These exhibits include but are not limited to: historic WWII-era aircraft, the President George H.W. Bush Display, Lexington's Victory Board or "Score Card," the Battle of the Coral Sea Exhibit, the Pearl Harbor Exhibit, the Pea Coat Memorial, the Lexington Chapel Exhibit, and the Medal of Honor Exhibit.

In 2003, the USS Lexington was designated a National Historic Landmark by the National Park Service and the U.S. Department of the Interior. Additionally, we are working in cooperation with the Nueces County Historical Commission and the Texas Historical Commission to install an official historical marker in our Lexington Plaza. We are also working with the City of Corpus Christi on a history plaza that will include a highlight of USS Lexington's contributions to WWII and naval aviation.

We also strive to preserve WWII history with our "Oral History Project" led by our volunteer organization. The USS Lexington Museum operates with the help of more than 100 active volunteers, including many veterans, and some WWII veterans, who are still active and tell their stories to guests and school groups on a regular basis. Captain Bob Batterson, our 100-year-old volunteer, served in WWII and is a Pearl Harbor survivor. One of our other veteran volunteers, Ken Kohlstedt, offers an annual WWII and USS Lexington History presentation that is free to the public. We also have been involved in many author's book signing events and have been featured in many WWII books that can be found in our Ship's Store.

We stand in full support of the effort to declare the City of Corpus Christi and Nueces and Kleberg Counties as Texas' American WWII Heritage Region. Please don't hesitate to contact me directly at steveb@usslexington.com or (361) 888-4873 x310 if there is any additional information I can provide.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Banta", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

CAPT Steve Banta, USN (Ret.)
Executive Director

Charles F. Sams III
Director, National Parks Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Re: Letter of support for the City of Corpus Christi, Nueces County and Kleberg County Texas to be an American WWII Heritage Region

Dear Director Sams:

I am writing to encourage you to select the collective submission of the City of Corpus Christi, Nueces County and Kleberg County as Texas' American WWII Heritage Region. This region is uniquely situated to be selected for this designation due to the region's substantial contribution to the nation's war effort and its on-going preservation of this heritage and legacy.

There are numerous contributions that were made by this region to WW II. Significantly, Naval Air Station Corpus Christi (NAS-CC) played a central role. Construction of NAS-CC began in 1940 and was completed in record time on March 12, 1941, a construction feat incomprehensible today. It was here that more than half of WW II Naval Aviators were trained, 30,000 in total. That tradition continues today as NAS-CC continues to be the Navy, Marine Corps and U.S. Coast Guard's primary training in the *T6B Texan II* and advanced training in the twin engine *T-44C Pegasus*.

We also take great pride in recognizing that some of our nation's most famous aviators who went on to make significant contributions to this country were trained at NAS-CC. This includes President George H. W. Bush, who was the youngest pilot to receive his wings in 1943, astronaut John Glenn, astronaut Neil Armstrong and Senator John McCain.

Naval Air Station Kingsville was hastened to be built following the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Naval Auxiliary Air Station Kingsville, as it was originally named, was commissioned to train naval aviators and gunnery crews on July 4, 1942. In September of 1942 it was selected as a basic training center.

The region also supported other missions that contributed to the war effort. Padre Island was used by the Navy as a bombing site. The Port of Corpus Christi was a vital link between the oil and agricultural fields of South Texas and the allied war effort. The Port shipped over 100 million tons of cargo during this time. Mustang Island was used to protect the harbor at Aransas Pass with 105 mm Howitzers.

The region continues to preserve this worthy legacy. Today, NAS-CC trains approximately 400

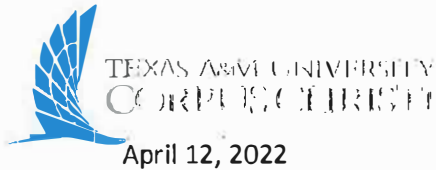
pilots a year and its tenant the Corpus Christi Army Depot is the world's largest rotary wing aircraft repair facility. NAS-Kingsville provides advance training for strike fighter pilots. Combined, the military facilities of South Texas employs over 6000 people and has an economic impact of \$5.3 billion.

South Texas was integral to the American war effort during WWII and continues to preserve its military history and community pride in our contribution.

Sincerely,
PORT OF CORPUS CHRISTI AUTHORITY

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sean C. Strawbridge". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sean C. Strawbridge
Chief Executive Officer



OFFICE OF THE DEAN OF LIBRARIES

MARY AND JEFF BELL LIBRARY

6300 OCEAN DRIVE, UNIT 5702
CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS 78412-5702
O 361.825.2643 • F 361.825.5973

Charles F. Sams III
Director, National Parks Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C. Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Mr. Charles F. Sams III

Let me take this opportunity to express my enthusiastic support for Corpus Christi to be designated as an American World War II Heritage City. This city has a rich history involving military centers. The Naval Air Station of Corpus Christi, the Lexington Museum on the Bay, and the Corpus Christi Army Depot, a United States Department of Defense Center of Industrial and Technical Excellence for rotary wing aircraft are located here. The Naval Air Station provided intermediate flight training in WWII, training naval pilots to fly a range of aircraft during the war. By the end of 1944 it was the largest naval aviation training facility in the world. Women worked along side the men to help build and maintain the planes.

Here at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, Special Collections and Archives we house many collections that pertain to World War II. The Dr. Norman Delaney Collection of Corpus Christi Naval Air Station Interviews and Memorabilia of World War II Veterans were captured on tape and preserved. The digital files, transcripts and photographs are available for research. The Dr. Hector P. Garcia papers highlight a Mexican American's service in WWII as a physician and soldier. Correspondence and photographs illustrate his military activities in the European Theatre of WWII. Later in 1948 he founded the American GI Forum to improve Mexican American veteran benefits and enhance medical attention.

The Shelby Davis WWII papers and PFC Elwood Sidney Whitehouse WWII Letters contain a wealth of first-hand information of the war from the front lines. Other collections include Ester Bonilla Read WWII Oral History Collection, and photos of men and women enlisting are included in Murphy Givens South Texas Historical Research papers. Mr. Givens wrote a history column for the Corpus Christi Caller Times for thirty years. Aalbert Heine papers recount his time as a Prisoner of War in a German camp. These are a few of the collections related to WWII held at the archives.

Corpus Christi contributed to the American war effort during WWII and continues to preserve its military history. If I can be of any further support in supporting this worthy project, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lori K. Atkins".

Lori K. Atkins
Director, Special Collections and Archives
Mary and Jeff Bell Library
6300 Ocean Drive, Unit 5702
Corpus Christi, Texas 78412-5702
O 361-825-2301 F 361-825-5973
lori.atkins@tamucc.edu