

Blurring the Line between Civilian and Military: The Changing Nature of the Town-Base
Relationship in Jacksonville, North Carolina

By
Crystal M. Johnson

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Approved:

Primary Advisor:	_____	_____
	Print	Signature
Second Reader:	_____	_____
	Print	Signature
Third Reader:	_____	_____
	Print	Signature

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	3
Introduction.....	5
Chapter One: Overview of USMC and Jacksonville, North Carolina.....	16
Chapter Two: Dislocation in Jacksonville.....	28
Chapter Three: Camp Lejeune Water Contamination.....	51
Chapter Four: Economic Dependency and the Gulf War.....	73
Conclusion.....	95
Bibliography.....	99

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Introduction

As a military dependent who has only lived in communities with a large military presence, I was unprepared for the problems I would have adjusting to life in a predominately civilian town like Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Coming to Chapel Hill and seeing people jogging on sidewalks, not designated running paths, and wearing headphones seemed completely alien to me but I soon came to realize that these things were normal in the civilian world. Life on military bases is guided by a strict set of rules that govern all aspect of life from your haircut to your wardrobe to how you act in public. These rules must be followed because living on base is a privilege, not a right, and a wrong move can see you and your family kicked out of base housing. I also came to realize that there is something about a military town that is also fundamentally different from a civilian town because of the large military presence in the community.

This thesis reflects the personal and intellectual interests that I bring to investigating how and why military towns form as they do. This thesis examines the extent to which America's aggressive military preparedness affected local communities in which military installations were established and the nature of the relationships that developed between civilians and the military. How did locals accommodate the changes brought by the base? Did the locals resent the base and the service members or did they embrace the economic prosperity they brought to the area? Did a prolonged military presence improve social conditions such as race relations in these communities or did it hurt them? These are questions that I have explored by broadly researching military base construction and the development of military communities in the United States during the twentieth century.

Many of the military communities that I began to research, such as Jacksonville, were first brought into contact with the military during the late 1930s and early 1940s when large scale military construction occurred throughout the United States in the interest of self-defense. In the aftermath of the First World War, the United States government put forth a policy of isolationism and non-interventionism in regards to international conflicts. When World War II eventually broke out, President Franklin D. Roosevelt cited “formal neutrality” as the official stance of the United States in his 1937 Quarantine Speech.¹ However, “formal neutrality” did not stop the United States from either supplying the Allies with war materials or providing for the “common defense” within the boundaries of the United States.² Specifically, these decades saw the buildup of what President Franklin D. Roosevelt termed the “arsenal of democracy.”³ The mobilization of the “arsenal” began slowly but picked up steam following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December of 1941.⁴

With the attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States government decided to establish a larger permanent military, than had previously been had, for both times of war and times of peace.⁵ This new strategy forced the government to build military installations by the hundreds, as mobilization efforts severely strained the existing military structure. In determining where such new bases should be built, government officials increasingly favored the American South on account of its location, landscape,

¹ Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Quarantine Speech" (UVA Miller Center; October 5, 1937), <http://millercenter.org/president/speeches/speech-3310>.

² Ibid.

³ "Franklin Delano Roosevelt – ‘The Arsenal of Democracy’" American Rhetoric, <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/fdrarsenalofdemocracy.html>.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Peter L. Hay, Genevieve Anton, and Jeff Thomas, "The Politics of Base Closure", *American Defense Policy*. 7th ed. (Baltimore: John's Hopkins University Press, 1997).

climate, and more. New construction included barracks, air fields, armories, training centers, bases, and various other types of military installations. More specifically, and more pertinently, the number of domestic military bases skyrocketed dramatically during this period. The landscape of military bases went from being scattered and “few and far between” to “peppering the country” as each military branch built dozens of bases around the country.⁶ The boom in military construction brought many communities into direct and prolonged contact with the military for the first time in their history.

North Carolina, and particularly Eastern North Carolina, was one state that was greatly impacted by the base building that occurred during this period. In *North Carolina's Wartime Miracle: Defending the Nation*, John S. Duvall commented on how North Carolina became a leading contributor to the nation's growing military efforts. North Carolina went from being the home of one permanent military installation in Fayetteville before World War I to the site of four massive permanent bases by the start of America's involvement in World War II. This construction had a huge impact on the state as “military base construction became a major industry in the state during 1940 through 1943” and people and money flowed into the state to support the new defense industry.⁷

While all branches of the United States Armed Forces engaged in base building at this time, the United States Marine Corps (USMC) had several distinct reasons to build new bases which made North Carolina the ideal site for a new, permanent base. These

⁶ David S. Sorenson, *Military Base Closure a Reference Handbook* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger Security International, 2007), p. xv.

⁷ John S. Duvall, "North Carolina's Wartime Miracle: Defending the Nation." (*Tar Heel Junior Historian*, 2008), <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/nchist-worldwar/5907>, p. 1.

motivations included a sharp increase in recruitment and a transition in mission that occurred during the 1930s. This adjusted mission, which emphasized amphibious warfare, required new advanced warfare bases in coastal cities to allow for training in amphibious landings. Eastern North Carolina, at that time, boasted relatively cheap and undeveloped land that the USMC could acquire and develop. Onslow County, a small county in southeastern North Carolina, was one location picked to fulfill this base building objective.

Camp Lejeune's construction transformed Onslow County: every township in the county was touched by the large military presence as wealth and people flowed into the area. However, Jacksonville, the county seat of Onslow, experienced the most immediate and lasting change on account of its proximity with the base. Everything from the makeup of the population to land ownership to the economy changed in Jacksonville because of the establishment of the Camp Lejeune. These changes, in conjunction with the reactions of the townspeople to them, are essential to understanding how Jacksonville transformed into a military town and the relationship that developed between town and base. Thus, while this thesis will acknowledge the larger county, its primary focus will be the interactions between Jacksonville and Camp Lejeune.

This thesis seeks to fill a gap in the existing historiography of military bases by examining the relationship between Camp Lejeune and Jacksonville. Existing narratives that examine the relationship between military installations and their surrounding communities tend to engage a narrow lens. In limiting their scope by focusing on

specific aspects of the relationship, they downplay the complexity of such interactions.⁸

For instance, one study by Brandon Booth looked at how the presence of a military

installation reshaped the role of women in the labor market of nearby communities.⁹

Todd Bendor's study, on the other hand, examined how a large military presence created problems for the Eastern North Carolina, an area with a high quantity of military bases, in

terms of local governments attempting to deal with the military-induced growth.¹⁰ Both

of these studies and others like them focus on specific aspects of the town-base

relationship and fail to take a more holistic approach to these interactions.¹¹

This lack of a broader comprehensive approach downplays the complexity of the relationship between town and base by highlighting specific aspects rather than taking

into account all of the parts of the interaction. Downplaying this intricacy and ignoring

the effect of military installations on broader American life tends to conceal some of the

most important domestic effects of the military. Since the discontinuance of the draft, the

implementation of an all-volunteer military, and a series of base realignments in the late

twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, military communities have become

increasingly isolated within the United States. Not only do service members enter these

⁸ Various studies examine distinct aspects of a domestic base's influence; for more on the studies relevant to Camp Lejeune see Todd Bendor, "Assessing Local Government Capacity to Manage and Model Military-Induced Growth in Eastern North Carolina." (*Planning Practice & Research* 26.5, 2011) and Booth "The Impact of Military Presence In Local Labor Markets on the Employment of Women." *Gender & Society* 14.2 (2000).

⁹ B. Booth, W. W. Falk, D. R. Segal, and M. W. Segal, "The Impact of Military Presence in Local Labor Markets On the Employment of Women." (*Gender & Society* 14.2, 2000), p.318-32.

¹⁰ Todd Bendor, "Assessing Local Government Capacity to Manage and Model Military-Induced Growth in Eastern North Carolina." (*Planning Practice & Research* 26.5, 2011), p. 531-53.

¹¹ See Todd Bendor, "Assessing Local Government Capacity to Manage and Model Military-Induced Growth in Eastern North Carolina." (*Planning Practice & Research* 26.5, 2011) and Booth "The Impact of Military Presence In Local Labor Markets on the Employment of Women." *Gender & Society* 14.2 (2000) in addition to Telesco, David J. Telesco, "Do Black Bears Respond to Military Weapons Training?" (Ed. Martin, *Journal of Wildlife Management* 70.1, 2006) for examples of narrow lenses adopted by studies of domestic bases.

communities because of nearby military installations but also many choose to retire in these communities with their families. That means that the effects of the military on daily life in American society has become increasingly isolated to the communities that are in close proximity with military installations. One cannot begin to understand America's military's effect on the broader public unless one first understands its pervasive influence on domestic bases and their surrounding communities.

One of the only narratives that does holistically address this relationship, *Homefront: A Military City and the American Twentieth Century* by Catherine Lutz, has an overtly negative tone when discussing the military.¹² Lutz raises important points about the blurring of lines between civilian and military and the unique problems that military communities face, which she argues can be applied to military towns across the country. However, the complexity of the relationship between Fort Bragg and Fayetteville, North Carolina, the two entities discussed in the book, is compromised by its wholly negative perspective on the military. Using Fayetteville and Fort Bragg as a microcosm of the American military system, Lutz fails to acknowledge any positive impact on or attitude towards the military in the area.¹³ Her study thus cannot explain why some areas developed positive relationships with the military while Fayetteville did not. Rather than attempt to confront or correct that oversight in Fort Bragg's history, this thesis will shed new light on the literature on military bases by shifting its lens to Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune and its neighboring community of Jacksonville, North Carolina – a town with similar history to Fayetteville that has seen a marked decrease in

¹² Catherine Lutz, *Homefront: A Military City and the American Twentieth Century* (Boston: Beacon, 2001).

¹³ Ibid.

tension and an increase in interdependence over the course of its relationship with the base.¹⁴

There are other compelling reasons to examine the relationship between Jacksonville and Camp Lejeune. First, Camp Lejeune is one of the largest military installations not only in the state of North Carolina but on the East Coast. The camp's size made it increasingly difficult for neighboring towns to steer clear of its influence, as more and more wealth and people were drawn to the area. Second, the intricate relationship between town and base has generated significant records since the base was established in the early 1940s. Thus, I had a great deal of evidence to draw on while tracing the ebbs and flows of the town-base relationship. Third, this relationship is extremely nuanced and has changed from one of dramatic tension to reluctant apathy to general acceptance and trust through years of interdependence and close proximity. Thus, Jacksonville provides a nuanced and well-documented example of how town-base relations develop and how towns accommodate a large military presence.

Drawing from the *Jacksonville Daily News* and the *Camp Lejeune Globe*, census data, oral histories, and government reports, this thesis analyzes the history of the interaction between Camp Lejeune and Jacksonville through the use of three case studies. Through these case studies, I examine specific events that have largely shaped the relationship and which exemplify the changing attitudes and mentalities documented in the area.

This thesis is divided into four chapters – three of which correspond to the three case studies that will be investigated. Chapter One establishes crucial background by

¹⁴ Lutz.

providing a thumbnail sketch of Jacksonville prior to the establishment of the base. This chapter not only provides context by outlining the nature of the town that the military would enter into but also provides a basis by which the changes caused by the base can be examined.

Chapter Two introduces the base and its large military community into the area described and outlined in Chapter One. This chapter explores the role of the base as an instrument of change in Jacksonville in addition to examining the first cause of animosity between town and base: the human displacement caused by the base's construction. The ensuing contest for space and resources brought the town and base into direct conflict and generated tensions that did not begin to lessen until well after the end of World War II. The use of the displacement case study allows this chapter to analyze the changes and tensions resulting from military preparedness in small communities that were chosen to host large military installations.

Chapter Three builds upon the analysis of the town-base relationship in Chapter Two by examining the progression of attitudes towards the base. In order to do this, this chapter investigates the water contamination scandal that occurred at Camp Lejeune and how it created a dichotomy in the public perception of the base and the Marine Corps in the area. On one hand, the water contamination negatively affected the health of military personnel, dependents, and civilians who lived and worked on the base during the contamination period. Those directly impacted by the contamination, and their descendants, became disillusioned with the base and military officials due to what they perceived as a mishandling of the scandal. On the other hand, the general civilian attitude towards the toxic water was apathy. Residents of Jacksonville who were not

directly connected to it considered the water contamination to be a military problem and none of their concern despite sharing similar water systems with the base. While this dichotomy highlights the divide that existed between the military and civilian communities in the area, it also shows how overt resentment and tension had deescalated in the decades following World War II.

Chapter Four continues the examination of the civilian-military divide and transforming attitudes by analyzing two events from the latter half of the twentieth century: the development of a town legend and the Gulf War. The town legend, as told to me by residents of Jacksonville, is a story about the base using its economic power to leverage the town to capitulate to its will. Specifically, the story depicts the base as putting the town off-limits to military personnel and their dependents in order to force the town to revise its behavior towards the Marines. While there is no hard evidence that this story is based on fact, it conveys deep fear of Jacksonville's economic dependence on the base which will be realized during the Gulf War. Before the Gulf War, however, the town and base were bonded together in shared mourning due to the 1983 Beirut Bombing. The majority of the Marines killed in the bombing had been stationed at Camp Lejeune and resided in the Jacksonville community.¹⁵ The loss of 273 lives from the small community caused a realization that the Marines were more than the 'other' that had invaded the town during the 1940s; they were friends and neighbors who mattered to the people of Jacksonville.¹⁶

¹⁵ The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, "1983 Beirut Barracks Bombings." (Encyclopedia Britannica Online), <http://www.britannica.com/event/1983-Beirut-barracks-bombings>.

¹⁶ Ibid.

The economic recession caused by the Gulf War furthered this realization by showing the economic importance of the military service members and their families. During the Gulf War the economy of the town began to slide into recession, as the deployment of thousands of service members and the exodus of their families from the community for the duration of the deployment, stemmed the flow of money into the area. In the aftermath of both the Beirut Bombing and the Gulf War, Jacksonville officials worked harder to show their appreciation for the presence of the military and build support services such as free child care or tax benefits that would cause military families to stay in the area through deployments. This dynamic, where the town-base relationship is slowly improving but is complicated by the town's fear of the base's economic dominance, will be explored during this case study.

This thesis argues that while tension and mutual uneasiness characterize the town-base relationship, economic factors and more than fifty years of close proximity ultimately overpowered these attitudes to create mutual interdependence and a sense of unity. I hope to open up a broader discussion about how the isolation of military installations and military communities has amplified the effects of the military on these areas. This topic has increased significance in today's society as the general public has less connection with the military and thus are farther removed from the consequences of both war and cuts to the defense budget. That is not to say that there are not times when war or budget cuts are not necessary, but it is a relatively small network of towns that will bear the brunt of these burdens. Only a handful of American towns must worry about how military drawbacks or sequestration will degrade their economy, how the presence of a large military installation may make the area a target for terrorist activities against

the United States, and whether and when their neighbors, friends, and family will deploy to war. By shedding new light on the town-base relationship, I hope to encourage others to research the domestic implications of isolating the military to small pockets of society so that they may understand the areas that depend on the military for survival and seek to support them in the future.

Chapter One

Introduction

The United States Marine Corps (USMC) began to influence the city of Jacksonville, North Carolina in 1940. Identifying Onslow County as an ideal location for a military base, the Department of the Navy began to buy land in the area that would host what would later become Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune. Analyzing both the mindset of the USMC before its presence in Jacksonville and the nature of the town before the base is essential to examining the tension and division that grew between the military and civilian populations as a result of the establishment of the base. Further, investigating the history and nature of the area before Camp Lejeune is imperative to explain the immensity of the changes the civilian population was forced to contend with over a relatively small time period.

This initial chapter presents the histories of the USMC and Jacksonville prior to their first contact. Analyzing them separately grounds the case studies that follow, revealing how Camp Lejeune fundamentally altered Jacksonville and Onslow County. This disruption generated tensions and even overt resentment that shaped the relationship between these communities in its early years.

Overview of USMC History

The institutional roots of the United States Marine Corps dates back to November 10, 1775. On that day, the Second Continental Congress passed a resolution that ordered the raising of two battalions of Continental marines. The Continental marines were disbanded in April of 1783 and remained that way for fifteen years until Congress created

the United States Marine Corps (USMC) in preparation for the Quasi War with France.¹⁷

After this point the USMC was never again formally disbanded, though it was continuously threatened was dismantlement. This threat was a result of the fact that the USMC's mission and structure going into World War I made them virtually indistinguishable from the Army.¹⁸ As J. Robert Moskin said in his book *The U.S. Marine Corps Story*, "if the Corps existed only to do what the Army could do (even though better perhaps), very soon the powers-that-be might be convinced that the Marine Corps was an unnecessary carbon copy." The looming threat of dismantlement created an institutional crisis in the Marine Corps leading to Commandant John A. Lejeune's reorganization of the Corps and the formulation of a new mission that allowed them to remain an independent military branch.¹⁹

The expanded mission that the Marine Corps adopted was amphibious warfare which required coastal bases where the landings could be practiced. Amphibious warfare, a type of offensive military operation that utilizes naval ships to project ground and air power onto a hostile shore at a designated landing beach, had been dismissed by others as a "tactical nightmare, if not impossible" due to the failed landing at Gallipoli in 1915.²⁰ The USMC, however, remained "enthusiastic about the possibility of amphibious warfare" and began to scout for locations suitable for a new base.²¹ It found a prime

¹⁷ Millet, p. 34

¹⁸ Elton E. Mackin, *Suddenly We Didn't Want to Die: Memoirs of a World War I Marine* (Novato, CA: Presidio, 1993).

¹⁹ Williamson Murray, *Military Innovation in the Interwar Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) p. 71-72.

²⁰ Allan Reed Millett, *Semper Fidelis: The History of the United States Marine Corps* (New York, New York: Free Press, 1991), p. 321.

²¹ "The Vision of John A. Lejeune" (Marine Corps Association and Foundation; 1 April 1962), <https://www.mca-marines.org/gazette/vision-john-lejeune#sthash.j3BUeo9B.dpuf>.

location on the coast of North Carolina between two deep water ports in Onslow County, specifically the town of Jacksonville.

The USMC decided to build Marine Corps Barracks New River in Jacksonville for several reasons. One major influence was a report entitled *The Undefended Coast* prepared by George Gillette was released by the Army Corps of Engineers in late 1939.²² This report surveyed and mapped the coast of Virginia and the Carolinas and was at least partially responsible for the decision to look for a site in North Carolina to the geographic, topographic, climate, and isolation information included in the report.²³ Gillette was an Onslow County native who had a two-fold purpose for preparing the survey of the coast: first to point out “its vulnerability to attack by an enemy in wartime” and secondly “to provide the basis for developing the economy of the coastal area.”²⁴ There is irony in Gillette’s involvement in calling the attention of the USMC to the area because he intended to retire on his family’s property in Onslow County but that property was confiscated to build the base.²⁵ Secondly, in 1940 Major General Thomas Holcomb, then the Marine Corps Commandant, ordered two marines to conduct an aerial survey to find a new training center. The two men surveyed the Atlantic and Gulf coasts from “Norfolk, Virginia to Corpus Christi, Texas” but it was when they flew over the coastline of Onslow County that they saw an area ideal for “training, maneuvering large formations, artillery firing, and the construction of a major facility.”²⁶

²² "Interview with Billy Arthur; Editor of Onslow County News and Views." Interview by Base Public Affairs Officer (Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune Oral History Project, August 2000), www.lejeune.marines.mil.

²³ Alan D. Watson, *Onslow County: A Brief History* (Raleigh, NC: Division of Archives and History – North Carolina Dept. of Cultural Resources, 1995), p. 134.

²⁴ Arthur Interview.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ "History of Camp Lejeune." Marines: The Official Website of the United States Marine Corps. Accessed December 8, 2015.

A reconnaissance team was sent to the area following both the aerial survey and the publication of the *Undefended Coast* and confirmed that Jacksonville was an appropriate location for the establishment of the base.²⁷ Jacksonville was appropriate because it met most of the “technical site selection criteria established by the Corps” such as access to deep water ports, available landing beaches, cheap and relatively unpopulated land, and at least 10 square miles free from aircraft, industry, and roads.²⁸ The only exception was that the nearby area did not have recreational areas and power sources.²⁹ Both the report and the aerial survey led Congress to appropriate funds to purchase approximately 100,000 acres in Jacksonville, North Carolina on which the Marine Corps would build Marine Barracks New River – later named Camp Lejeune in honor of Lt. General John A. Lejeune and his contribution towards the mission of amphibious warfare.³⁰

Overview of Jacksonville and Onslow County

Jacksonville wasn’t too much of nothing.
*Clifton Tallman when asked about Jacksonville before the building of Camp Lejeune*³¹

Camp Lejeune would be built in Onslow County, a corner of North Carolina that entered the twentieth century as a poor and fundamentally agrarian county. The area

<http://www.lejeune.marines.mil/OfficesStaff/EnvironmentalMgmt/CulturalResources/HistoryLive/HistoryofCampLejeune.aspx>.

²⁷ Arthur Interview

²⁸ Louis Berger Group, Inc., com., *Semper Fidelis: A Brief History of Onslow County, North Carolina, and Marine Corps Base, Camp Lejeune* (United States: United States Marine Corps, 2002), p. 28.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Watson, p.134.

³¹ Interview with Clifton and Bernice Tallman by Karen Kruse Thomas, 18 May 1995 (K-0050), in the Southern Oral History Program Collection #4007, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

acknowledged their lack of notoriety outside of the immediate area with a tagline for the county newspaper that read: “The Only Newspaper in the World that Gives A Whoop about Onslow County.”³² It was not until the onset of World War II that the prominence of the area started to rise due to the immediate and profound changes brought by the building of a Marine Corps Base.³³ However, prior to the 1940s and the building of Camp Lejeune, both Jacksonville and Onslow County sat as relatively unimportant points on the national landscape.

The history of Jacksonville arguably began when the town of Wantland’s Ferry was settled following the Tuscarora Wars in the eighteenth century.³⁴ In 1752 Johnston, then the county seat of Onslow, was destroyed in a hurricane and Wantland’s Ferry was selected as the new county seat.³⁵ Then, in 1842, Wantland’s Ferry was incorporated and renamed Jacksonville in honor of former President Andrew Jackson.³⁶ Throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century, citizens of Jacksonville remained burdened by the “agricultural toil and poverty” which had marked the area since it was settled.³⁷

As the twentieth century dawned, the local government had a low tax base to draw on when it looked to build infrastructure. The low tax base of the area was a result of both the small population and its impoverished nature. In 1900, the population of Jacksonville was 309 – a that number grew to only 873 by 1940.³⁸ That is an increase of 564 people over a forty year period meaning that the area grew by approximately 14.1

³² *The Onslow County News and Views* (Jacksonville, NC), January 12, 1945.

³³ Watson, p. 105.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 1-5

³⁵ Joseph Parsons Brown, *The Commonwealth of Onslow; a History* (New Bern, NC: O.G. Dunn, 1960), p. 17.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Watson, p. 103.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

people every year.³⁹ The 1940 population was almost evenly split in terms of gender with about 50.76% being male and about 49.24% being female.⁴⁰ The majority of this population, about 50.33%, was age twenty-one or older.⁴¹ The agricultural nature of the economy contributed to 36.4% of the population being below the age of fourteen as couples needed to have larger families in order to work the land.⁴² The majority of the population was white with blacks making up only about 27.1% of the population due to an exodus that occurred following the end of the Civil War.⁴³

Throughout the period, the majority of the people in the population “were farmers struggling to cover their own expenses.”⁴⁴ These farmers had little to no taxable assets that the local government could capitalize on to build infrastructure. This resulted in county residents using natural waterways as “major arteries of transportation” due to both the poor quality of the road networks in the area and the small number of automobiles in the area due to overwhelming poverty.⁴⁵ Dr. Lafayette Parker, an African-American man born and raised in Onslow County who grew to become a prominent educator in the area, recalled that after “the PTA raised money for a bus” the students spent “more time pushing it than...riding it” because of the poor conditions of the dirt roads.⁴⁶

³⁹ This number is calculated as if population growth was equal over the years. However census reports show that Jacksonville’s population spiked in 1910 by about 63% before lowering to below 20% growth for the three decades to follow. Therefore this number is an estimation of the total growth in the period.

⁴⁰ All of this information was taken from the Onslow County census record. This was done because the Jacksonville Township included areas of the county that were not actually part of the town but were closest to this geographic entity making the data less reflective on the town’s composition than could have been true. For more information see: United States. Bureau of the Census.]. *16th Census of the United States, 1940. Population. Second Series, Characteristics of the Population. North Carolina*. Washington, D.C.: For sale by the Supt. of Docs., U.S. G.P.O., 1941.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ “Census of Population and Housing.” US Census. Accessed December 3, 2015. <http://www.census.gov/prod/www/decennial.html>.

⁴⁵ Watson, p. 109.

⁴⁶ Interview with Lafayette Parker by Karen Kruse Thomas, 18 May 1995 (K-0043), in the Southern

While the local government was financially unable to build quality infrastructure, the state government was simply uninterested in developing this region. The state committed only a small quantity of resources to infrastructure in the area as is evident by how the roads throughout the county were all dirt and had only minor alterations since the Civil War.⁴⁷ The only exception to that were two hard surfaced roads: U.S. Route 17, which was constructed in 1924, and State Route 24 which was constructed in 1934. The disinterest in developing the region was also a result of the poverty pervasive in the area as the state did not want to spend money on a poor county when they could focus on wealthier areas such as New Bern or Wilmington.⁴⁸ The condition of the roads in the area would not improve until the 1940s when the Marine Corps began to build infrastructure in order to facilitate the construction of the base. This included paving roads in the area as well as building a railroad to link into the one that connected Jacksonville with Wilmington and New Bern.⁴⁹

The low tax base and poverty in the area also complicated the fiscal difficulties the county and country struggled with in the aftermath of World War I and the Great Depression. Several residents of long-time residents of the area, such as Dr. Parker, felt that the collapse of farm prices after World War I hurt the local economy more than the Great Depression. Dr. Parker particularly felt that the impact of the Great Depression was not felt in the area because poverty was already so pervasive and people were

Oral History Program Collection #4007, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

⁴⁷ *Semper Fidelis: A Brief History*, p. 28.

⁴⁸ Interview with Percy Brown by Karen Kruse Thomas, 18 May 1995 (K-0032), in the Southern Oral History Program Collection #4007, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

⁴⁹ *Semper Fidelis: A Brief History*, p. 22.

already struggling to survive.⁵⁰ Others residents felt that World War II and the establishment of the base was harder on the community. One such resident was Percy Brown, a man born and raised Richlands, a township located northeast of Jacksonville. Brown felt that World War II was more difficult for the people of the area because it forced them to deal with outsiders who they viewed as invaders, but he also acknowledged that the area was poorer and less developed than places such as New Bern, North Carolina at the beginning of the twentieth century.⁵¹ Regardless of which was actually harder, it is clear that the citizens of Jacksonville were living hand to mouth and were struggling to make a living off of their farms due to the financial situation of the area prior to 1941.

Agriculture, a way of life for the people of Onslow County, suffered due to “the trying years of the twenties and the depression of the thirties,” causing the people in the area to struggle to survive.⁵² Dr. Watson points out in *Onslow County: A Brief History*, the number of farms in the area held steady between the end of World War I and the start of World War II but the “average size dropped to seventy-one acres and mortgages hung over a quarter of the properties.”⁵³ By 1940, 41% of the farms in Onslow County were operated through tenancy and only lumber companies held large tracts of land in the community.⁵⁴ Further, bartering became common due to the fact that homegrown food could earn a person more than a dollar would at that time.⁵⁵ This was a common story

⁵⁰ Parker Interview.

⁵¹ Brown Interview.

⁵² Watson, p. 113.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ *Semper Fidelis: A Brief History*, p. 23.

⁵⁵ Parker Interview.

across the United States following World War I as farm prices collapsed after the recovery of the European market.

In addition to farming, the people of Jacksonville relied on seafood, naval stores, and lumbering as an integral facet of the economy. Onslow ranked “ninth among the coastal counties in the value of fish caught between 1936 and 1940.”⁵⁶ Fishermen utilized the resources of both the nearby Atlantic Ocean and the New River to make their living. Fishing would not become commercial until the mid-twentieth century, which meant that prior to that point it was only used for subsistence in the area. Naval stores, on the other hand, which are goods such as lumber used in the building and maintenance of ships, was both a prominent commercial industry and a prominent source of income for the area and had been since Onslow County was settled by the British.⁵⁷ However, the era of naval stores ended by World War I because the longleaf pine forests that once dominated the area were depleted due to over-logging.⁵⁸ Lumbering operations cushioned the decline of naval stores by targeting second-growth loblolly pines.⁵⁹ Lumber comprised “approximately one-third of the manufactories in Onslow, though most were relatively small operations” and was considered an important facet, if not the most important facet, of manufacturing in the county.⁶⁰ Despite the success of lumbering operations, the Jacksonville and Onslow County economies – which were closely tied together so much as to be the same entity – suffered in the beginning of the twentieth century.

⁵⁶ Watson, p. 115.

⁵⁷ *Semper Fidelis: A Brief History*, p. 23.

⁵⁸ Watson, p. 116.

⁵⁹ *Semper Fidelis: A Brief History*, p. 22.

⁶⁰ Watson, p. 116

While lacking wealth, the population in Jacksonville seems to have been relatively content. Elsie Fonville, a woman born and raised in Onslow County whose family was personally affected by the construction of the base, believed that “[the citizens of Jacksonville] may have not been as well off before the base, but they were happier.”⁶¹ What Fonville meant by this was that families worked land that had been in their families for generations and had a certain way of doing things, certain traditions that they abided by and, while they may not have had a lot, they had enough to survive. After the building of the base many families in Jacksonville, specifically in the New River area, lost their homes, their land, and their livelihoods. The dislocation of these people and what happened to them after they were forced off of their land will be discussed in the next chapter.

The perception of the area’s contentment is completely subjective, however, and it is important to note that all of the people commenting on this subject were residents looking back on how life was prior to the base after the fact. This skews the perception of how the town was and how people viewed their lives in the early twentieth century. Indeed, many of the people looking back on how life was in Jacksonville prior to the base fail to take into account the quality of life of the marginalized people in the area: namely African Americans in an era of segregation and Jim Crow Laws.

Race relations in Jacksonville were dependent on where in the county a resident lived. For instance, Dr. Parker described Jacksonville as just “okay” for a segregated community and felt that African Americans living in rural areas, such as himself, were

⁶¹ Interview with Elsie Fonville by Karen Kruse Thomas, 8 June 1995 (K-0067), in the Southern Oral s History Program Collection #4007, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

treated better than their urban counterparts. Rural African Americans were treated better because farmers needed to cooperate with one another regardless of skin color during harvesting and planting season. Elsie Fonville, a white woman, acknowledged that race relations were worse in towns than rural areas as she described race relations in Swansboro, a township in Onslow County. Fonville said, “According to local tradition, blacks weren’t supposed to be on the streets after dark.” She also described a sign on the edge of the town which read: “N****r, don’t let the sun go down on you.” However, Fonville also emphasized how not all whites in Onslow County had this type of racial attitude when she told a story about how she encouraged her son to have black playmates.⁶² Regardless of the differences in racial attitudes in the county, racial friction existed simply by nature of living in a segregated society because African Americans lacked the full rights of citizenship that their white counterparts enjoyed and would not gain those rights until the 1960s. This isn’t to say that the satisfaction level of African Americans in Jacksonville was heightened by the building of Camp Lejeune or that African Americans were better off because of the base – in fact many African Americans lost their homes because of the base’s construction – but is simply intended to point out that contentedness of the area prior to the base is open to debate and is purely subjective.

Regardless of how satisfied with life Jacksonville residents were in the early decades of the twentieth century, it is clear that the area was small, poor, and unimportant to those not living in Onslow County. That would change when the looming threat of war in Europe sparked an interest in defense spending and building in the United States during the late 1930s and early 1940s. The Jacksonville area would be greatly changed

⁶² Fonville Interview.

by this when the United States Marine Corps chose it as the site of a new amphibious training base in 1940. That decision fundamentally transformed the area and, as long-time Jacksonville resident K.B. Hurst stated, changed Jacksonville “from a sleepy, rural, eastern North Carolina town to a hurry-up, thriving, and bustling, military town.”⁶³

⁶³ Interview with K.B. Hurst by Karen Kruse Thomas, 17 May 1995 (K-0072), in the Southern Oral History Program Collection #4007, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Chapter Two

Introduction

In 1940 the Department of the Navy purchased an 110,000 acre tract of land in Onslow County. The following year Congress authorized over fourteen million dollars for the construction of a military base in Jacksonville, North Carolina.⁶⁴ The decision to build a large installation in this small community put the citizens of the area and the United States Marine Corps in direct and sustained contact for the first time in the history of the town. Tensions quickly rose between civilians and Marines due to both the dramatic changes caused by the base and the manner in which each side viewed and treated one another. That conflict and tension will be the focus of this chapter with particular emphasis placed on the dislocation of families caused by the building of Camp Lejeune.

In this chapter, I explore the relationship between Jacksonville and Camp Lejeune in terms of both the changes brought to the area and how the two communities reacted to one another. Not only did the building of Camp Lejeune fundamentally change Jacksonville but also that the way the situation was handled caused immense tensions and an ‘us vs. them’ mentality to develop in the area. This defined the relationship between town and base for the first several decades of contact and created a division between the military and civilian communities that would not be overcome for more than fifty years.

⁶⁴ "History of Camp Lejeune".

Displacement

The displacement of a large portion of the county populace came as a surprise to many in the area due to the reporting of misinformation in the local newspaper. The *Onslow County Record* published one of the first articles about a rumored military installation that was to be built along the New River on December 12, 1940.⁶⁵ This article, drawing on information from the *Washington News Reports*, contained inaccurate information as it told Onslow County residents that the Department of the Navy was considering an 11,000 acre tract of land.⁶⁶ Later residents found that instead of purchasing 11,000 acres, which amounts to about 1.89% of the land area of the county, the Department of the Navy actually intended to buy 110,000 acres of land. The 110,000 acre tract of land amounted to about 18.96 (or almost one-fifth) of the land area of the county.

Though the report did not contain accurate information in terms of how much land would be acquired by the government, it did accurately report the intentions of the United States Marine Corps to find “an area where development of a full-fledged Marine base can be launched.”⁶⁷ At the time of this newspaper article there was no confirmation on when the decision would be made, what would happen to the residents living on the tract of land the Navy intended to buy, or how many people would be stationed at the proposed base.

With the lack of confirmed details, rumors about the base ran rampant throughout the community. One man who was born and raised in Onslow County and later displaced

⁶⁵ "Onslow May Get Another Military Camp Says Washington News Reports." *The Onslow County Record* (Jacksonville, NC; December 12, 1940).

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

by the base, K.B Hurst, recalled that “people speculated on the details” after the base was publically announced.⁶⁸ Another permanent resident, Elsie Fonville who was also displaced along with her family, recalled that she did not learn about the base until she heard it through word of mouth.⁶⁹ The uncertainty regarding the details of the land acquisition made it difficult for Onslow County and Jacksonville residents to make contingency plans because no one knew what exact tract of land the Navy intended to buy.

Further, due to the fact that residents believed that the government was going to buy a smaller tract of land than they actually intended to buy, many residents did not realize that their land was in danger of being acquired by the Navy. Fonville noted that the rumors of the base were not confirmed by any town officials until surveyors were spotted in the New River area.⁷⁰ Melanie Hart Sheldon, a member of the Former Land Owners of Camp Lejeune organization, stated that her grandparents did not know that they would be displaced until they received a letter in the mail.⁷¹

The letters sent to families living in the New River area, such as the one Hart’s grandparents received, informed them that the Department of the Navy was prepared to either condemn or use imminent domain in order to acquire their land.⁷² The letters explained that the government “found it necessary...to acquire immediate title and possession of these lands” through eminent domain and gave a deadline by which the residents were expected to be off of their property.⁷³ The use of eminent domain and the

⁶⁸ Hurst Interview.

⁶⁹ Fonville Interview.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Sheldon Interview.

⁷² "Records." Former Landowners of Camp Lejeune. Accessed December 4, 2015.
<http://marinebasehomes.smugmug.com/>.

⁷³ Sheldon Interview.

short time span given to residents complicated an already difficult issue as individuals struggled with finding a new home in the time span allotted to them.

The over 2,400 people displaced in 1941 to make room for Camp Lejeune were conflicted by the removal though emotions varied amongst the residents. The majority of those people lived on land that had been in their families for generations and many felt a deep emotional attachment to the land. Being forced to vacate that land and knowing that buildings and furniture left behind, many built by ancestors, would be either destroyed or used as target practice by the Marines.⁷⁴ The immense emotional upheaval that the county residents were put through created turmoil in the area. Some people resented the government and the military for uprooting their lives, taking their families legacies from them, and the general heavy-handedness utilized in order to get the land in the first place.⁷⁵ Others understood that the base was necessary for training and accepted that there it was going to be built no matter what the townspeople personally thought.⁷⁶ Then there were others who felt both of these emotions and struggled to find middle ground in the immediate aftermath of the displacement.⁷⁷

This emotional turmoil was exacerbated when, in addition uprooting families when “they thought that they had put down [roots] for life,” family cemeteries were moved off of the land.⁷⁸ It was very difficult for older residents to have their dead relatives disturbed and moved off of their land – breaking yet another connection with their family’s legacy.⁷⁹ The government laid aside land for a white cemetery and a

⁷⁴ *Semper Fidelis: A Brief History*, p. 32.

⁷⁵ Fonville Interview.

⁷⁶ Hart Interview.

⁷⁷ Cole Smith. "Interview with Cole Smith." (E-mail interview by author; February 15, 2016).

⁷⁸ Fonville Interview.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

“colored cemetery” so that any burials on base property could be relocated.⁸⁰ Many displaced persons were bitter because of what they were forced to go through and felt intense anger towards the base. Base officials tried to make the process as smooth as possible but it was still very traumatic for the residents. Later on, after the United States officially entered World War II, it would be hard for residents to maintain that anger when they learned about atrocities being committed in Europe.

Margaret Stroud, the widow of a man whose family lost their farm to the USMC, recalled that her husband and his family talked about how it was hard to be mad at the Marines when you knew that they were helping to stop the Holocaust.⁸¹ United States troops had stumbled onto concentration camps by accident during the war and it was not until after the war that the American public began to realize the extent of the genocide that had occurred in Europe. Yet, once Jacksonville residents did learn about the Holocaust, many began to feel that they lost the right to be angry with the USMC because the military held the “moral high ground” which worsened resentment towards the military in the area. However, it also worked to decrease the amount of direct anger pointed at individual Marines. Residents like Margaret Stroud’s husband came to recognize that the individual Marines had been drafted and had not asked for the base to be built in the area and for it to disrupt the lives of Onslow County residents. Despite this shift in perception, resentment towards the base and military structure as a whole remained due to the fact that displaced individuals and their families were given a small window of time in which they needed to vacate their properties.

⁸⁰ *Semper Fidelis: A Brief Overview*, p. 32.

⁸¹ Margaret Stroud, "Interview with Margaret Stroud" (Interview by author; December 15, 2015).

It is unclear exactly how long on average people had to get themselves and all of their things off of their land. The uncertainty stems from lack of records existing to present day. From surviving records of the letters land owners received from the federal government, it appears that land owners needed to leave their land as soon as they received notice that the government was taking it – even before they officially signed the deal that the government was offering them. Most residents accepted the deals offered to them because those that tried to resist were forcibly removed from their land. K.B. Hurst recalled that one rebellious man was carried off his property while he was still sitting in his chair.⁸² Other residents tried to negotiate with the government to get a more acceptable price for their land by getting it reappraised. The results of reappraisal are varied with some families receiving the adjusted price for the land and others receiving the amount offered the first time.⁸³ It is unclear what caused some families' reappraisal to be taken into account and others not but it is likely dependent on whether the family had the means and determination to fight the government over land prices.⁸⁴

The records from the Pitt family, taken from the Former Landowners of Camp Lejeune website, depict a basic timeline for displacement. The Pitts received notice that their land was granted to the government on June 20, 1941 and they were expected to vacate their property no later than June 30. The family did not sign a document agreeing to the figure offered for the land until July 1941, nor did they receive the payment for their property in its entirety until May of the following year.⁸⁵ While the Pitt family

⁸² Hurst Interview.

⁸³ "Records", *Former Landowners of Camp Lejeune*, <https://marinebasehomes.smugmug.com/Records>.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

allows one to see generally how short the displacement timeframe was, it ultimately depended on what section a person's land was located in.

The government developed the land it acquired in sections (known as Area A-N) with Area A, Area B, and Area C being the first sections to be planned and worked on before proceeding down the line. Individuals and families living in a section that was not scheduled for immediate construction may have been able to stay on their land slightly longer than persons living in a section such as Area A or Area B. However, the extra time was not beneficial unless the residents possessed knowledge that their land was in danger of being confiscated by the government. If the person knew their land would be taken, then they had at least an extra week and at most a month or two to react before receiving the official notice letter. If they did not know then they were in the same situation as other residents who had at most five to seven days after receiving the notice to vacate their notice. The short timeframe caused problems for the displaced residents that were further exacerbated by a severe housing shortage in the area.

The influx of individuals into the community to build the base caused a housing shortage that affected the residents of Onslow County.⁸⁶ The housing shortage caused displaced residents to stay in any building that they could find such as “tobacco barns, stores, and outbuildings.”⁸⁷ The combination of the housing shortage and the short timeframe also led to “some people storing their belongings in the woods” because either they did not have the time to find another place to put their possessions or there was no

⁸⁶ Interview with Dick Tallman by Karen Kruse Thomas, 19 May 1995 (K-0051), in the Southern Oral History Program Collection #4007, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

place available in the community.⁸⁸ On average it took between 2-5 years for the displaced persons to relocate and many individuals chose to leave the area as a result of these compensation issues.⁸⁹ It took people so long to relocate because the influx of people into the area pushed the market value of land and homes up at the same time that the displacement occurred. Even if individuals got fair value for their land, which many felt that they did not, most people did not have enough money to afford houses that were similar to what they lost.⁹⁰ It is estimated that between ten and twenty percent of the dispossessed persons “were lost to the county permanently” due to hardships posed by both the timeframe and housing shortage.⁹¹

Marines were also affected by the housing shortage. Most of the 6,000 Marines that populated Camp Lejeune by the end of 1941 lived in a “10,000 man tent camp” while permanent buildings and housing units were being constructed.⁹² The base also built two trailer parks to house soldiers that were filled with “small, windowless trailers.”⁹³ There were no rental properties in the Jacksonville area prior to the construction of the base because it was not a pressing need in the community. The first federally financed military housing was not constructed until 1941 but Midway Park (as the housing area would later be named) “was made available to military personnel and civilians hired to work at the new base. By the end of the war, 1,164 units were available at Midway Park and the town also worked on developing housing. The number of dwellings in Jacksonville had increased by 264 percent by 1946.”⁹⁴ Despite the

⁸⁸ Dick Tallman Interview.

⁸⁹ Watson, p. 135.

⁹⁰ Arthur Interview.

⁹¹ Brown, p. 189.

⁹² *Semper Fidelis: A Brief History*, p. 31.

⁹³ Ronald Johnson, "Interview with Ronald Johnson" (Telephone interview by author; December 28, 2015).

⁹⁴ *Semper Fidelis: A Brief History*, p. 64.

construction of additional housing overcrowding continued to be an issue. The *Jacksonville Record* reported in 1944 that planned developments such as Bayshore Estate, which was planned for 225 units, “will not solve the housing problem confronting those who come here to make their home.”⁹⁵

In addition to the timeframe and housing shortage causing problems for residents in the area, compensation issues complicated life for all dispossessed persons but especially the disposed persons who did not own land. Surveyors looked at all the properties located within the boundaries of the tract that the government bought and assigned a monetary value to the land. Based on surviving records provided to the Former Land Owners of Camp Lejeune by Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, the average price per acre was \$12.00.⁹⁶ Many landowners such as Elsie Fonville’s sister felt that the price offered for their land was unfair. According to Fonville, her sister tried to protest the price offered for her land and, in response, “the government forced [her] to take the price offered and forbade them to take anything off of their land.”⁹⁷ Other residents were dissatisfied with the appraisal of their land and appealed the price to the Federal Court but only an average increase of about 12% was allowed and not every resident won their appeal.⁹⁸ Rather, many residents who attempted to appeal the government’s offer ended up losing money.⁹⁹ There was also an average time gap of “two years...between the time they were evicted and the receipt of compensation for their

⁹⁵ "Contractor At Work On New Housing Project." (*The Jacksonville Record*, January 14, 1944). Note how the area newspaper changed names from *The Onslow County Record* to *The Jacksonville Record* within four years of the establishment of Camp Lejeune. This relatively minor change speaks to how Jacksonville was the township primarily impacted by the base due to its proximity with it.

⁹⁶ Brown, p. 189.

⁹⁷ Fonville Interview.

⁹⁸ Brown, p. 188.

⁹⁹ Melanie Hart Sheldon. "Interview with Melanie Sheldon" (E-mail interview by author, February 15, 2016).

property.”¹⁰⁰ However, compensation was only offered to the disposed persons who owned the land that the government was interested in buying. This meant that tenant farmers and sharecroppers were left destitute as well as homeless due to the fact that they did not personally own the land that they lived and worked on.

One group of residents able to solve their homelessness crisis were the African Americans sharecroppers. The approximately one hundred African American families who lost their land purchased land along the northern boundary of the base from Mr. William Kellum.¹⁰¹ On that land the African Americans built a shanty town on that swampland known as Kellumtown. The families selected William Chadwick as their spokesman and Chadwick worked with the office of the Negro Farm Agent in New Bern to drain the swamp at a cost of about \$840.00.¹⁰² Once the land was drained, it was “divided into plots from one to seventeen acres according to the needs of each” in addition to land being set aside for a school and a church.¹⁰³ Kellumtown sat as an example of perseverance in an area where many dispossessed people, especially African Americans, faced extremely unfavorable odds in terms of relocation.

The establishment of Camp Lejeune caused misery in Onslow County as some residents were forced to yield their property to the government in order to make room for the base. Lack of communication, housing shortages, and compensation issues plagued the entire community, as the area was fundamentally reshaped by the base. This

¹⁰⁰ Watson, p. 135.

¹⁰¹ Brown, p. 189.

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 190.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

transformation as well as the displacement contributed to the “bitter memories of some” and the “ongoing friction” between the military and civilian communities.¹⁰⁴

Changes and Tensions

The construction of Camp Lejeune caused immense changes over a relatively short period. Everything from the economy to the population changed and very few things remained as they were before the base. Understanding the changes that Camp Lejeune caused is necessary so that one can visualize the situation the residents of Jacksonville faced, contextualize their reactions to the base, and see how it shaped the dynamics between the civilians and the Marines.

One of the largest changes brought on by the base was the fact that the nature of the economy of Jacksonville shifted to accommodate the base. Prior to 1941, the economy was largely agriculturally based and the majority of citizens in Jacksonville and the larger county either farmed, tenant farmed, or sharecropped in order to survive. After 1941 the economy shifted to be more service-oriented towards the base. Restaurants, strip clubs, bars, tattoo parlors, pawn shops and other types of industry that did not exist in Jacksonville prior to the base began to line the streets. By 1954 retail was a 35 million dollar industry in Jacksonville while agriculture was a 10 million dollar industry.¹⁰⁵ The economy shifted towards service due to the amount of money flooding the area and the military became the top employer in both Jacksonville and Onslow County.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ Watson, p. 135.

¹⁰⁵ Watson, p. 136.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

In addition to bringing Onslow County out of an economic slump, the construction of the base caused the population in the area to increase dramatically. Jacksonville experienced a 353.6% increase in population between 1940 and 1950 and a 240.7% increase between 1950 and 1960 as the population rose from 873 to 3,960 to 13,491.¹⁰⁷ The population spike in the area also encompassed the county which saw a population of 15,289 rise to 42,157 in 1950 and then rise to a staggering 82,706 by 1960.¹⁰⁸ This was a 134.4% increase and 96.7% increase respectively for the county. The population boom changed the composition of the town as a whole. For instance, whereas the county had had an almost even sex ratio in 1930, women made up only about 40% of the population by 1960.¹⁰⁹ This is due to the large amount of single men brought into the area because of the military base. Further, the black population in the county dropped from 27.1% in 1930 to approximately 12.7% in 1960.¹¹⁰ This shift may be caused by the displacement as many displaced persons eventually left the area after the base was complete to find work in other counties – though a small portion of African Americans did stay to create Kellumtown – and other economic factors relating to the population boom such as the economic shift that occurred and rising tensions in the area.¹¹¹ Regardless of why more than 10% of African Americans left the area by 1960, it is clear that the establishment of the base and the subsequent population boom changed the nature of the both the town and the county which create tension in the area.

¹⁰⁷ "Census of Population and Housing."

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Brunsman, Howard G. *U.S. Census of Population, 1960. Detailed Characteristics. North Carolina*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1962.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

The tension and conflict created by the population boom occurred mainly between long-time residents of the area and the newcomers – especially between civilians and Marines. As Elsie Fonville said in her interview, Jacksonville "started to grow [because of the base] and it never stopped growing, really."¹¹² The county as a whole may have been better equipped to handle this population influx than Jacksonville itself which struggled to accommodate the number of people residing in the area.

Despite the challenge Jacksonville faced, the quality of life did get better because of the base. The base not only helped to create infrastructure in the area but also spread basic services across Jacksonville. For instance, 13.3% of homes had electricity prior to 1940.¹¹³ However, once the base was built, industry and wealth flooded into the area and by 1958 approximately 97% of homes in the area had electricity.¹¹⁴ Similarly only 173 homes had phones by 1934 but that number rose to 5123 by 1958.¹¹⁵ Though economic growth occurred after the establishment of the base, the presence of the Marine Corps helped to improve the quality of life in Jacksonville.

Yet, not all of the individuals who lived in the area saw the oncoming of the base as an economic blessing. Some people, such as Herman Alberti, resented the idea that the base became the lifeblood of the county.¹¹⁶ Others such as Dr. Parker thought that there would be no Jacksonville without Camp Lejeune.¹¹⁷ The difference of opinion not only depended on how the residents viewed the town prior to Camp Lejeune but also on

¹¹² Fonville Interview.

¹¹³ Watson, p. 123.

¹¹⁴ Brown, p. 203-205.

¹¹⁵ Brown, p. 203-205.

¹¹⁶ Interview with Herman Alberti by Karen Kruse Thomas, 8 June 8 1995 (K-26), in the Southern Oral History Program Collection #4007, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

¹¹⁷ Parker Interview.

whether the building of the base changed the quality of their life in a positive or negative manner. Many residents, especially those displaced by the base, were resentful of the changes in Jacksonville, resentful of the ongoing military presence in the area – as many thought that the base would be temporary – resentful of the economic dependency, and resentful that Jacksonville “appeared to be catering to the soldiers more than farmers” which created tension in the town.¹¹⁸ Other residents, especially those who benefitted economically from the base, lauded the base and the changes that it brought to the area.

Sidney Popkin is one man who benefitted from the presence of the military. Popkin was not born and raised in Onslow County but came to the area with his family shortly before the start of World War II.¹¹⁹ From Popkin’s recollection, the relationship between civilians and service members was not as bad as others made it seem. He said that people got along “wonderfully, better even than now [1994]. People would invite service people into their homes for meals.”¹²⁰ Popkin and his friend Luther Midgett, who was born in the county, felt that people sympathized with the soldiers because “they knew they had been drafted.”¹²¹ Yet Popkin’s opinion was informed by the benefits he received economically from the base in addition to his lack of connection to the area prior to the establishment of the base.¹²² Residents who were born and raised in the county were not as quick to capitalize on the economic benefit the base could provide which caused resentment towards the non-native civilians amongst the locals.

¹¹⁸ Taylor Interview.

¹¹⁹ Interview with Sidney Popkin by Karen Kruse Thomas, June 8, 1995 (K-45), in the Southern Oral History Program Collection #4007, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

¹²⁰ Popkin Interview.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.

These changes in the civilian community created negative feelings for the ‘outsiders’ who came into the community and gained the power and wealth that had once been a handful of families in the area.¹²³ Percy Brown, a lifelong resident of Onslow County who was drafted into the army during the war, remembered that “locals resented that most public officials are transplants, who have moved to the area after the base was built.¹²⁴ The locals felt threatened by the newcomers as many “came in as qualified voters, property owners that they could just out vote” the local residents.¹²⁵ The flood of people that accompanied the construction of the base “made a killing” business wise whereas some of the locals “were too conservation...too afraid to take a chance.”¹²⁶ Thus the flood of people into the community contributed to the tension in the area as they took money and power away from the locals.

The newcomers also had a different perspective on the transformations that took place in Jacksonville than the locals. For example one local, K.B. Hurst, disliked how the morals of the town degraded to accommodate the base.¹²⁷ He recalled that “a whole lot of activity of the raw type” occurred and that “recreation for the soldiers were beer joints and topless waitresses...they drank more beer than they did water.”¹²⁸ These social changes were especially resented in a town that had been doing things the same way with the same set of morals for generations.¹²⁹ Newcomers like Sidney Popkin thought that none of the shifts in the local area were as horrible as the locals liked to exaggerate. Popkin said that Court Street, considered the hub for unsavory activities, wasn’t as bad as

¹²³ Stroud Interview.

¹²⁴ Brown Interview.

¹²⁵ Arthur Interview.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Hurst Interview

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Clifton and Bernice Tallman Interview.

it was credited for and that it was mostly drinking establishments.¹³⁰ It makes sense that new residents, people who were not as immersed in town traditions or the way of life in the area, would not think the alterations to the community were that bad. It also makes sense that longtime residents of the area would view any change as an attack on their way of life. The reality of the situation probably rested somewhere between the views of the locals and the views of the newer residents. These differences helped to contribute to an “us vs. them” mentality that emerged in the community. In the end the new civilians were able to integrate into the community sooner and better than the service members as the military personnel were seen as invaders and the cause of all of the local’s troubles until the Gulf War.¹³¹

Actions on the side of the military helped to further the idea that they were invaders and contributed to the ongoing friction between the two communities. Heavy bombing on base threatened homes “where walls were cracking and plaster was falling” in addition to placing “a terrible strain on the nerves.”¹³² The Marine Corps’ decision to close lucrative fishing waters “for extended periods of time for rifle and artillery practice” was unpopular throughout the community.¹³³ Residents also complained about service members trespassing on their land and disturbing their routines. For instance, Percy Brown, a native of Onslow County, “was often disturbed at night by troops on maneuvers” and “found soldiers’ fox holes around his farm”.¹³⁴ Elizabeth Taylor, another native who was displaced by the base, remembered that the troops would take

¹³⁰ Popkin Interview.

¹³¹ *Semper Fidelis: A Brief History*, p. 23-94.

¹³² Watson p. 135

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Brown Interview.

food out of people's gardens, an act which hurt area families who relied on their own meager crops for survival.¹³⁵ The residents "could have put in claims for food soldiers took [but] people didn't know that and didn't put in claims."¹³⁶ This lack of adequate communication between civilians and the military contributed to the problems between the two communities.

Although Jacksonville and Onslow County residents were unhappy with the military, and some for very good reasons, displacement generated negative sentiments among military personnel as well. For example, Hurtis Coleman, a former Army soldier brought to the area by Fort Bragg and who decided to move to Onslow County for work after he left the military, described Jacksonville "as just a railroad stop, nothing else."¹³⁷ Billy Arthur, a prominent Onslow County businessman and newspaper editor, said that Jacksonville was not "a liberty town. It was a place to pass through."¹³⁸ Due to Camp Lejeune's distance from major cities and because there was no public transportation from the base into Jacksonville, the base was "declared an isolated area, which gave commanders the authority...to grant 96-hour liberty."¹³⁹ Extended passes were also often issued so that the Marines could travel to more distant cities such as Washington, D.C. rather than spend time in closer cities.¹⁴⁰ Clearly, there were young Marines and Sailors stationed at the base who didn't think highly of the town and that obvious disregard

¹³⁵ Taylor Interview.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Interview with Hurtis Coleman by William James, 24 June 1996 (K-0082), in the Southern Oral History Program Collection #4007, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

¹³⁸ Arthur Interview.

¹³⁹ *Semper Fidelis: A Brief History*, p. 77.

¹⁴⁰ *Semper Fidelis: A Brief History*, p. 77.

earned them the ire of the civilians. Yet, despite bad feelings on both sides, there was a positive social change that occurred because of the association of the two communities.

The association between Camp Lejeune and Jacksonville altered the manner in which African American's were treated in the area. During the war, the United States Armed Forces were segregated which caused the USMC to build a training site for African Americans at Montfort Point in Jacksonville. According to Bruce Teachey, a man who moved to Jacksonville in 1941 to find work at a car dealership and eventually became mayor, "most of the Marines at Montfort Point were from the Deep South and did not resist segregation" but some black Marines from outside of the South went to Teachey's church to, in his opinion, test the waters.¹⁴¹ Teachey contended that local churchgoers "made an extreme effort to make [the Marines] feel welcome because they were fighting for our country" though that same effort was not extended to black civilians.¹⁴² Other residents, such as Sidney Popkin, agreed that white citizens were more welcoming of black Marines than they were of black civilians at this time.¹⁴³

Not all African Americans thought that locals treated black Marines satisfactorily. Hurtis Coleman, an Army soldier who ended up in Jacksonville, disagreed with both Popkin and Teachey. While he acknowledged that black civilians were treated poorly as "a housing project [was built] for the black civilians who worked on the base...there weren't other places for black people to live" in the town, Coleman thought that black soldiers were also treated poorly by the civilians. According to Coleman, Jacksonville

¹⁴¹ Interview with W. Bruce Teachey by Karen Kruse Thomas, 19 May 1995 (K-0053), in the Southern Oral History Program Collection #4007, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

¹⁴² Teachey Interview.

¹⁴³ Popkin Interview.

did not let black soldiers cross the railroad tracks into town – though they did so anyway. The black personnel who crossed the railroad tracks often had difficulties getting back to base because the private bus system, which serviced the town, often refused their business.¹⁴⁴ This forced the general to send a convoy into town and provide free transport for the black soldiers because “too many blacks were being late for work on the base.”¹⁴⁵ Coleman noted that “the private company changed their tune” after that because Marines, black and white, took advantage of the free transport which hurt the private company economically.¹⁴⁶ Other citizens concurred with Coleman’s assessment that black soldiers were treated as poorly as black citizens. For instance, Dr. Parker described how black soldiers were turned away from local business just like black civilians.¹⁴⁷ Regardless of whether or not black soldiers were treated better than black civilians, the conditions in the town for African Americans soon changed due to the desegregation of the Armed Forces after World War II.

The desegregation of the United States military may have increased the speed of integration and desegregation in the Jacksonville community. After President Truman ended segregation in the armed forces, the black Marines stationed at Montfort Point were dispersed across Camp Lejeune. The desegregation in the Marine Corps spread to the town because black and white Marines insisted that local business “serve both or none would be served.”¹⁴⁸ Businesses that refused to serve black Marines were informally boycotted by white and black Marines and the businesses took a financial hit that forced

¹⁴⁴ Coleman Interview.

¹⁴⁵ Coleman Interview.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Parker Interview.

¹⁴⁸ Parker Interview.

them to concede to the demands of the Marines. Base officials also worked “closely with the Jacksonville and Onslow County governments to alleviate segregation” and as early as 1963 they were able to “report that Jacksonville’s movie theaters, restaurants, and taverns had been desegregated.”¹⁴⁹ A 1997 edition of *Jet* magazine ranked Jacksonville as the least segregated city in America due to the presence of the desegregated USMC.¹⁵⁰ In this way, it is clear that the base may have utilized economic leverage to increase the pace of integration in Jacksonville and helped to end segregation in the town.

Yet, it would be inaccurate to say that all Marines were supportive of desegregation and integration. In 1969 the tensions between black and white Marines broke into open hostilities at the NCO Club near Camp Lejeune.¹⁵¹ The fight between white and black Marines left a total of 15 Marines injured and one dead. This incident was investigated by the Marine Corps and led to changes in military race relation policies throughout the United States Armed Forces.¹⁵² It is also inaccurate to say that the Marine Corps helped to speed up desegregation in all areas of life in Jacksonville. K.B. Hurst claimed that his wife, a teacher in Jacksonville, “was assigned her first two black pupils shortly after World War II.”¹⁵³ However, segregated high schools existed in the county from 1908 until 1966 when Georgetown High School, the African American high school, was burned.¹⁵⁴ Until its destruction, it was “the only option black students in Onslow County had for a public education.”¹⁵⁵ Further, base officials reported that segregation in

¹⁴⁹ *Semper Fidelis: A Brief History*, p. 82.

¹⁵⁰ “Northeast and Midwest Cities Ranked among Most Segregated.” (*Jet*: February 17, 1997).

¹⁵¹ Richard Stillman II. “Racial Unrest in the Military: The Challenge and the Response.” *Public Administration Review* Vol. 34, No. 3 (May-Jun., 1974), p. 221-229.

¹⁵² Stillman, p. 221-229.

¹⁵³ Hurst Interview.

¹⁵⁴ Christopher Thomas, “Remembering Georgetown High School” (*Jacksonville Daily News*: February 09, 2015), <http://www.jdnews.com/article/20150209/News/302099895>.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid*.

the local community remained a problem after the military desegregated – so much so that African American officers were routinely sent to “Camp Pendleton in order to avoid off base housing discrimination.”¹⁵⁶ Therefore, while the base helped speed up desegregation in some aspects of Jacksonville, the military and town both still had deep-seated issues with racial equality that the communities would need to contend with in the coming years.

While Camp Lejeune did not have the most positive effect on Jacksonville when it was built, base officials put forth large efforts to improve the working relationship between the town and base in the aftermath of World War II. First of all, the Marine Corps participated in community events such as town parades to celebrate the end of World War II, gave an award to the community for service provided during the war, and helped to clean up damage from Hurricane Hazel which hit the area in 1955.¹⁵⁷ Secondly, the base helped organize a “Civilian/Military Liaison Committee” which consisted of “an equal number of base officers and city businessmen that met...once a month” which focused on improving relations. The committee accomplished this by sponsoring “various activities that [brought] the two communities together.”¹⁵⁸ This committee was very important to relieving tensions as the committee gave the local residents a voice in the relationship. Prior to the committee, the base was perceived to hold all of the power and the townspeople did not have a real forum through which they could address concerns to the base and have their views represented. While the base still held most of the power, the establishment of the committee helped to cement the idea that

¹⁵⁶ *Semper Fidelis: A Brief History*, p. 90.

¹⁵⁷ These events were well documented in *The Jacksonville Record* and the Onslow County Museum.

¹⁵⁸ *Semper Fidelis: A Brief History*, p. 63.

the base no longer wanted to alienate the civilians but rather work with them to improve the situation. This was imperative because Camp Lejeune was a permanent installation and both sides acknowledged that antagonism would not be conducive for a stable working relationship.

These efforts worked to an extent as the community was reported to take to the Marines for the first time.¹⁵⁹ Yet, resentment towards the Marine Corps as an entity and the US government did not disappear completely. Rather the negative feelings became less blatant and a more apathetic attitude dominated the base-town relationship.

Conclusion

The construction of Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune transformed Jacksonville and Onslow County. These immense changes forced local residents “to learn to get along with new people, new creditors, and new surroundings,” generating bitter reactions in both the civilian and military community.¹⁶⁰ These reactions’ strength was due both to their relatively short timeline and their dramatic effects almost every aspect of life in the area. Civilian reactions varied, however, depending upon a person’s economic relationship to the base, relative newcomer status to the area, or displacement. In particular, displacement stirred up residents’ resentment towards the base and the Marines.

The blatant negative feelings for the Marines did not change until after World War II when the base and town made improving the relationship a priority. After that point, the local population began to embrace individual Marines as the population

¹⁵⁹ Arthur Interview.

¹⁶⁰ Arthur Interview.

realized that these individuals were not responsible for the base's actions. While not ideal, the interaction between town and base improved markedly from where it had begun and the two communities were able to co-exist. On the whole, the relationship saw only marginal improvement. Apathy became more common than blatant disregard, though resentment towards the Marine Corps as a whole and the U.S. government still existed in a less overt form. That apathy and resentment would linger until the 1980s and the 1990s when a shared sense of loss and dependence would rid the community of the 'us vs. them' mentality once and for all.

Chapter Three

Introduction

Between the end of World War II and the early 1950s, many wartime trends continued: the growing military presence swelled the town's population, and the economy continued to shift towards retail and service industries to accommodate the new growth. While the postwar relationship between Jacksonville and Camp Lejeune was characterized by uneasy peace that détente was challenged when a water contamination scandal broke out on Camp Lejeune.

Between the early 1950s and the late 1980s, Camp Lejeune's water wells were contaminated with chemicals that entered the well system from a variety of sources. During those three decades, any individual who lived or worked on the base likely came in contact with the harmful volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and industrial solvents in the water.¹⁶¹ Because Camp Lejeune is the largest Marine Corps base on the East Coast of the United States, officials from the Agency of Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) believed that thousands of military personnel and civilians were exposed to the contamination.¹⁶² While data on toxin concentration is sketchy and unreliable, experts believe that the tainted water caused widespread medical problems, including several types of cancer and female infertility.¹⁶³

Jacksonville and Camp Lejeune have very similar water systems in that both draw their water from underground aquifers with wells and send that water to treatment plants before distributing it to their communities. Due to both the similar water systems and the

¹⁶¹ "Camp Lejeune, North Carolina" (Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry; March 16, 2014), <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/sites/lejeune/>.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

close proximity of the base to the town, one may assume that the water contamination scandal created an uproar in Jacksonville just as it did throughout the USMC. One may also assume that a scandal like the water contamination may have worsened the already tense relationship between town and base. Those assumptions would be wrong. The poor relationship between civilians and the base left the majority of people in the Jacksonville community feeling that, since it did not directly affect them, the water contamination on Camp Lejeune was not their problem.

The relationship between Jacksonville and Camp Lejeune morphed from one that was overtly negative in the early 1940s to one that was subtly apathetic by the late 1940s and early 1950s. That apathy, in conjunction with the treatment of locals by the base and the feelings of resentment that the establishment of the base sparked, contributed to an ‘us vs. them’ mentality that lingered in the community until the 1990s. The existence of this mentality and the relative isolation of the contamination to people who lived or worked on the base created a situation which was viewed as the ‘others’ problem and not a concern for the people of Jacksonville.

Throughout this chapter, I will examine the water contamination with emphasis given to how both Marines and civilians reacted to the scandal. The origin and evolution of the scandal will be outlined before concluding with researchers’ efforts to understand the potential health effects. Further, I will trace the constant divide between town and base which was strengthened by the water contamination.

Overview of Contamination History

Both Marine Corps Camp Lejeune and the surrounding community of Jacksonville are home to approximately 170,000 people including active duty, dependent, retiree, and civilian populations who work and live on the base.¹⁶⁴ The number of military personnel and their dependents assigned to the base fluctuated throughout the period of contamination. During the 1960s, the military population “hovered around 32,000” while the service members and their families made up approximately 60 to 70 percent of the inhabitants of Jacksonville which had a population of 13,491 in 1960.¹⁶⁵ In the 1970s, more than 40,000 military personnel, 32,000 dependents and 4,000 civilian workers were assigned to the base.¹⁶⁶ Those numbers increased to approximately 41,200 service members, 40,000 dependents, and 5,000 civilians in the 1980s.¹⁶⁷ The fluctuation in numbers at Camp Lejeune reflected the fluctuation in numbers that was occurring in the larger military depending on whether or not the country was at war.

Due to the large number of people who call Camp Lejeune home, the base developed housing units for families to live in and built barracks for single service members. By the 1980s there were fifteen different housing areas for families to live in which included “4,454 units, 232 barracks, and 19 Bachelor Officer Quarters/Bachelor Enlisted Quarters.”¹⁶⁸ Family housing units and barracks were served by “three water distribution systems” which had their water provided by eight water treatment plants (Tarawa Terrace, Hadnot Point, Holcomb Boulevard, Courthouse Bay, Rifle Range,

¹⁶⁴ "Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune" (Marines: The Official Website of the United States Marine Corps, Accessed August 26, 2015), <http://www.lejeune.marines.mil/About.aspx>.

¹⁶⁵ *Semper Fidelis: A Brief History*, p. 77-80

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

¹⁶⁷ *Semper Fidelis: A Brief History*, p. 90.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

Onslow Beach, Montford Point/Camp Johnson, and New River) prior to 1987.¹⁶⁹ Three of these treatment plants were contaminated with toxins. Those treatment plants were: Hadnot Point, Tarawa Terrace plant, and Holcomb Boulevard.

The Hadnot Point treatment plant was built during the initial construction of the base and began operating in 1942. This treatment plant serviced an industrial area, the base hospital after its construction in 1943, base administrative offices, schools, recreational areas, and bachelor housing units in addition to family housing at Midway Park, Paradise Point, and Berkley Manor.¹⁷⁰ However, the plant stopped supplying water to the family housing units in 1972 at which point the Holcomb Boulevard plant was constructed and took over those areas.¹⁷¹ The primary contaminant of the Hadnot Point plant was trichloroethylene (TCE) but other contaminants detected included tetrachloroethylene (PCE), DCE, vinyl chloride and benzene.¹⁷² In 1982, the maximum level of TCE detected in drinking water supplied by Hadnot Point was 1,400 ppb – the current limit for TCE in drinking water is 5ppb.¹⁷³

There were multiple sources of contamination for this plant – in particular, “leaking underground storage tanks” and improper “waste disposal sites.”¹⁷⁴ The faulty storage tanks are attributed to a fuel leak at the Hadnot Point Fuel Farm.¹⁷⁵ According to an ATSDR report, approximately 20,000-30,000 gallons of fuel were leaked between 1979 and 1987 which contaminated the shallow groundwater in the Castle Hayne

¹⁶⁹ "Camp Lejeune Water Modeling (FAQs)" (Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry; January 16, 2014), http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/sites/lejeune/faq_water.html.

¹⁷⁰ "Summary of the Water Contamination Situation at Camp Lejeune" (Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry; January 16, 2014), http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/sites/lejeune/watermodeling_summary.html.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² "Summary of the Water Contamination Situation at Camp Lejeune".

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

Aquifer.¹⁷⁶ For decades, the military had unsafe waste disposal practices such as “dumping, burning, and burying” the waste materials.¹⁷⁷ Yet as Michael Waller, a Marine stationed at Camp Lejeune during the 1960s, pointed out, these practices were “acceptable or even standard operating procedure years ago” as people did not know about the hazardous environmental and human health effects. That does not excuse the Marine Corps from taking responsibility for the health effects those exposed to the contamination face but it may show that many of the sources of contamination were introduced to water systems unintentionally. However, the ATSDR considers many of these waste disposal methods to be intentional sources of contamination on Camp Lejeune.

The ATSDR used modern definitions of proper waste disposal when it evaluated the intentionality of contamination on the base. For instance, the ATSDR reported that the base intentionally “disposed of liquid wastes in landfills and in temporary pits and trenches.”¹⁷⁸ That report described the disposal of “common by-products of dry-cleaning processes” which “typically contain high concentrations of PCE” in an improper manner on the base. While the base intentionally disposed of wastes by burying them or storing them, this was not considered improper until the 1970s. Further, it wasn’t until 1974 that a base order “required safe disposal of solvents and warned that improper handling could cause water contamination.”¹⁷⁹ It is unclear if unsafe disposal practices continued on the base after 1974.¹⁸⁰ Regardless, Hadnot Point’s wells were contaminated because of these

¹⁷⁶ "Hadnot Point-Holcomb Boulevard Reports" (Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, January 16, 2014), <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/sites/lejeune/hadnotpoint.html>.

¹⁷⁷ Michael Waller, "Interview with Michael Waller" (E-mail interview by author. February 16, 2016).

¹⁷⁸ "Hadnot Point-Holcomb Boulevard Reports".

¹⁷⁹ David Zucchino, "Camp Lejeune Residents Blame Rare Cancer Cluster on the Water" (*Los Angeles Times*: August 26, 2009), <http://articles.latimes.com/2009/aug/26/nation/na-military-cancer26>.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

practices and the fuel leak and the “most contaminated wells were shut down by February 1985.”¹⁸¹

Tarawa Terrace was another contaminated treatment plant. It began operation in 1952 and primarily served family housing units – including both single and multifamily housing at Tarawa Terrace housing and Knox trailer park.¹⁸² According housing data from the 1970s and 1980s, the “estimated annual averages of people living in housing units’ served by the Tarawa Terrace system was about 5,814.¹⁸³ The system also provided water to schools, recreational areas, and base administrative offices.¹⁸⁴ The primary contaminant in the Tarawa Terrace plant was PCE and the maximum level detected in the water was 215 ppb in 1985 – the current maximum contaminant level is 5 ppb.¹⁸⁵ The ATSDR determined that the source of the contamination for the Tarawa Terrace treatment plant to be ABC One-Hour Cleaners.¹⁸⁶

ABC One-Hour Cleaners was a dry cleaning business located off-base on Lejeune Boulevard. The business built its septic system and began operation in 1953.¹⁸⁷ ABC One-Hour Cleaners’ septic tanks were built “adjacent to a supply well for the Tarawa Terrace water system.”¹⁸⁸ These tanks contaminated the Tarawa system with PCE when they began to leak the same year that the septic system was built.¹⁸⁹ Based on historical

¹⁸¹ “Summary of the Water Contamination Situation at Camp Lejeune”.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Marcia Crosse, *Defense Health Care: Issues Related to Past Drinking Water Contamination at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune* (United States Government Accountability Office, 2007), p. 8.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ “Summary of the Water Contamination Situation at Camp Lejeune”.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Crosse, p. 8.

¹⁸⁸ *Defense Health Care Issues*, p. 8.

¹⁸⁹ ML Maslia, JB Sautner, RE Faye, RJ Suarez-Soto, MM Aral, WM Grayman, W. Jang, J. Wang, FJ. Bove, PZ Ruckart, C. Valenzuela, JW Green, and AL Krueger, *Analyses of Groundwater Flow, Contaminant Fate and Transport, and Distribution of Drinking Water at Tarawa Terrace and Vicinity, U.S. Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, North Carolina: Historical Reconstruction and Present-Day*

reconstruction modeling conducted by the ATSDR, the PCE concentration levels exceeded 5ppb beginning in at least 1957.¹⁹⁰ The ATSDR estimated that the concentration levels exceed modern day limits for approximately between 333 and 346 months between 1957 and 1987.¹⁹¹ ABC One Hour Dry Cleaners was designated a superfund site by the EPA in 1989.¹⁹² The United States National Library of Medicine defines a superfund site as “any land in the United States that has been contaminated by hazardous waste and identified by the EPA as a candidate for cleanup because it poses a risk to human health and/or the environment. These sites are placed on a National Priority List.”¹⁹³ Camp Lejeune itself is also a superfund site.¹⁹⁴ Tarawa Terrace’s most contaminated wells were shut down at the same time as Hadnot Points in 1985.

The final contaminated treatment center on the base was Holcomb Boulevard. The Holcomb Boulevard plant was built in the early 1970s and began operation in 1972.¹⁹⁵ At that time, Holcomb Boulevard took over serving family housing units at Midway Park, Paradise Point, Berkeley Manor, and Watkins Village all of which had been previously serviced by Hadnot Point.¹⁹⁶ The Holcomb Boulevard treatment plant was expanded in the 1980s and that expansion was completed in 1987. Once the plant expansion was completed, the Tarawa Terrace plant was closed and all of the water to

Conditions – Executive Summary (Atlanta, GA: Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry; 2007), p. 10.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 10-15.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² EPA, "Site Information for ABC One Hour Cleaners", *Superfund Site Profile*, https://cumulis.epa.gov/supercpad/cursites/dsp_ssppSiteData1.cfm?id=0402718#Status.

¹⁹³ "What Are the Superfund Site "NPL" Statuses?" (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services: National Library of Medicine; December 2009), <http://toxmap.nlm.nih.gov/toxmap/faq/2009/08/what-are-the-superfund-site-npl-statuses.html>.

¹⁹⁴ "EPA Superfund Program: Camp Lejeune Military Res. (US NAVY), Onslow County, NC" (United States Environmental Protection Agency), Accessed 28 January 2016, <https://cumulis.epa.gov/supercpad/cursites/csinfo.cfm?id=0403185>.

¹⁹⁵ "Summary of the Water Contamination Situation at Camp Lejeune".

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

Tarawa Terrace was subsequently provided by the Holcomb Boulevard plant.¹⁹⁷

According housing data from the 1970s and 1980s, the “estimated annual averages of people living in housing units” served by the Holcomb system was 6,347.¹⁹⁸

The Holcomb Boulevard’s water contamination was fundamentally different in that the wells feeding the Holcomb system were not contaminated. Any contamination found in the treatment plant were from the Hadnot Point system due to the fact that, at different points in the 1970s and 1980s, the Hadnot Point system supplemented and supplied water to the Holcomb Boulevard system. For example, in 1985 there was a generator fuel line leak which caused the system to be shut down and flushed out.¹⁹⁹

While the Holcomb system was offline, emergency water was pumped from the Hadnot Point system into the Holcomb system.²⁰⁰ Water samples taken from Berkeley Manor Elementary School because of the fuel leak showed TCE levels of 1,148ppb.²⁰¹ Samples were taken from the Hadnot Point plant on the same day and the findings there were consistent with the samples taken from the elementary school. This indicated that the “contamination originated from the emergency water supplied by the Hadnot Point Plant.”²⁰² Five days later clean water from the Holcomb plant was restored to the system. Out of all three treatment centers, the Holcomb Boulevard system is the only one that is still operational.

¹⁹⁷ “Summary of the Water Contamination Situation at Camp Lejeune”.

¹⁹⁸ *Defense Health Care Issues*, p. 8.

¹⁹⁹ United States Congress House of Representatives, *Poisoned Patriots: Contaminated Drinking Water at Camp Lejeune: Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, House of Representatives, One Hundred Tenth Congress, First Session, June 12, 2007* (Washington: U.S. G.P.O., 2008), p. 23.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁰¹ “Summary of the Water Contamination Situation at Camp Lejeune”.

²⁰² *Poisoned Patriots*, p. 23.

Camp Lejeune Response

The Camp Lejeune response to the water contamination is controversial among service members and their dependents today. The base maintains that it took every measure to correct the problem once officials learned of the high contamination levels in the water. Those personally affected by the contamination maintain that the base attempted to cover-up the scandal and has been negligent in its duties to former military personnel and civilians who lived or worked on the base.²⁰³ There are issues with both sides in the matter due to bias as base officials created and maintain a narrative that attempts to protect the reputation of the installation, and the affected persons' narrative paints Camp Lejeune as a dishonorable and irresponsible institution. Due to these biases, I will only briefly outline the Camp Lejeune response according to both sides before focusing on military and civilian reactions to the contamination as well as the lack of effect that the contamination had on the town-base relationship.

The official stance of the Marine Corps is that "it closed drinking water wells...as soon as it found they were tainted with toxic chemicals."²⁰⁴ The following overview is a summarization of the timeline of events provided by a USMC sponsored site called Camp Lejeune Historic Drinking Water.

According to base documents, the first testing of water systems began in October 1980 when "an official with the Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Atlantic Division (LANTDIV), collected samples from all eight water systems".²⁰⁵ This testing

²⁰³ Jerry Ensminger and Mike Partain. "Camp Lejeune Toxic Water." *The Few, The Proud, The Forgotten*. Accessed September 22, 2015. <http://www.tftptf.com/>.

²⁰⁴ William R. Levesque, "Camp Lejeune Water Contamination History Detailed in Documents" (*Tampa Bay Times*, October 16, 2009), <http://www.tampabay.com/news/military/veterans/camp-lejeune-water-contamination-history-detailed-in-documents/1044542>.

²⁰⁵ USMC, "Events Summary." *Camp Lejeune Historic Drinking Water*, Accessed September 15, 2015, <https://clnr.hqi.usmc.mil/clwater/home.aspx?aspxerrorpath=/clwater/index.aspx>.

indicated 11 volatile organic compounds (VOCs) were detected “at their detection limits, which were the lowest level at which the chemicals could be reliably identified by the instruments being used.”²⁰⁶ However, base officials maintain that “they didn’t get results until 1982” for reason that are unclear.²⁰⁷ From that point until 1983 there were either problems reported with samples taken or uncertainty in the measurements obtained in the water systems. The only notable exceptions being samples taken from the Rifle Range water system and a 1982 letter from a private laboratory which reported that TCE and PCE levels in the water at Tarawa Terrace and Hadnot Point appeared to be high. In the case of the Rifle Range, whose high contamination levels were caused by a chemical dump, the base contends that the USMC did not act on the information because established regulations did not apply to the system because it did not serve more than 10,000 people. The Marine Corps also did not act on the laboratory letter because TCE and PCE were not regulated under the Safe Drinking Water Act and a Camp Lejeune environmental official memorandum noted that “were presently within the limits provided by the [EPA] suggested no adverse response levels.”²⁰⁸

In July 1984, Camp Lejeune initiated the Navy Assessment and Control of Installation Pollutants (NACIP) which was a confirmation study whose purpose was to “further investigate potential contamination at 22 priority sites...identified in an initial assessment study.”²⁰⁹ The initiation of this study and the results it gathered prompted the removal of ten wells from service that had over 5ppb of chemicals such as TCE and PCE in 1984 and 1985. The last contaminated wells were closed in 1987. President Obama

²⁰⁶ *Poisoned Patriots*, p. 107.

²⁰⁷ Levesque.

²⁰⁸ *Camp Lejeune Historic Drinking Water*.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

signed into law the ‘Honoring America’s Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012,’ known as Janey’s Law in honor of Janey Ensminger, a young girl who died of leukemia caused by the toxic water, and subsequent studies were conducted and released about the water contamination.

Other Camp Lejeune and Department of Defense authorities claim that they have actively cooperated with investigative bodies and that the Marine Corps made efforts to reach people who may have been exposed to contaminated water. A Government Accountability Office report in 2007 concluded that the work of the ATSDR was not delayed or hindered by the DOD despite “difficulties and disagreements regarding availability of information.”²¹⁰ The same year the Senate approved a bill authorizing the Secretary of the Navy to inform former personnel of the contamination and the base did so by launching the Camp Lejeune Water Study Call Center. The center had a web-based notification registry and a toll-free number for the public. The Marine Corps reported that it encouraged all personnel that resided or worked on the base between 1957 and 1987 to register. In 2010 the ATSDR formally complained to the Marine Corps for “withholding data” but three independent reviews and an EPA and DOJ criminal probe found that “there had been no violations of the Safe Drinking Water Act, no conspiracy to withhold information, falsify data, or conceal evidence.”²¹¹ The Marine Corps and base officials assert that they made every effort to reach 100 percent of people and their descendants who lived or worked on the base during the contamination and they actively cooperated with ATSDR and the National Research Council.

²¹⁰ *Camp Lejeune Historic Drinking Water.*

²¹¹ Levesque.

The USMC's official perspective is clearly intended to promote and preserve the reputation of the Marine Corps. This complicates analysis of the military's involvement in water contamination as it does not address reports that the Marine Corps deliberately published misleading about the scandal and gave inaccurate information to former residents. Clearly this view is intended to salvage the reputation of a Marine Corps which took a hit during the revelation of the scandal though it is unclear how much information was concealed in this effort.

The view of events from the perspective of those affected by the contamination paints a very different picture. It depicts Camp Lejeune and Marine Corps officials as nefarious and lacking in accountability in addition to deliberately withholding information and documents from the public. The following overview is a summarization of the timeline of events provided by The Few, The Proud, the Forgotten (TFTPTF), a private website run by former personnel negatively impacted by the contamination: Michael Partain and Jerry Ensminger.²¹² Michael Partain was diagnosed with male breast cancer which he believes to be caused by the time spent on Camp Lejeune during his childhood while Jerry Ensminger lost a daughter to childhood leukemia because of the toxic water. Rather than restating the above information the overview will look at the differences between TFTPTF's timeline and the Marine Corps' official timeline. Much of the timeline was dedicated to looking at how there was organic solvent contamination in the Rifle Range system and that action was taken there as early as 1981. However, since the Rifle Range system was not one of three systems indicated in the water contamination scandal, that information will be omitted from this overview with notable exception being

²¹²*The Few, The Proud, The Forgotten.*

that action was taken at the Rifle Range in 1981 whereas no action was taken at other systems whose wells showed organic solvent contamination.

Warnings from scientists involved in testing Camp Lejeune's water appear to have been ignored in the early 1980s which gives credence to Partain and Ensminger's views that the base acted negligently upon learning of the contamination. In 1980 water testing, separate from the Jennings Lab testing that the Marine Corps did not receive the results of until 1982, was conducted by the U.S. Army Lab from Fort McPherson on samples taken from the Hadnot Point system. On the bottom of the report, issued in October, Army Laboratory Service Chief William Neal warned officials that "water is highly contaminated with low molecular weight halogenated hydrocarbons."²¹³ No action was taken then or in December or February when Neal warned the Navy again that they needed to analyze water samples for chlorinated organics. Neal continued to warn the Navy until September 1981 after which their analysis for the total trihalomethanes (TTHMS) in the Hadnot and New River systems ceased. Yet, it was not until May 1982 that PCE and TCE were found in the Tarawa Terrace and Hadnot Point water systems. At that point Mike Hargett of Grainger Labs informed a base environmental official of the findings. The base official reported later in May that the findings were not passed up the chain of command that they did not correct the problem.²¹⁴

Further warnings were either ignored or did not reach the top of the chain of command on the base for reasons that are unclear. In August 1982, Grainger Lab sent the Commanding General of the base results from samplings taken in July. The lab called attention to the appearance of PCEs at high levels and stated that they were more

²¹³ *The Few, The Proud, The Forgotten.*

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*

important from a health standpoint than the other chemicals. There was no action recommended though and no action was taken. No action was taken in December when Grainger Labs warned of the resumption of VOC interferences in the Tarawa Terrace and Hadnot Point system nor again in 1983 when the base was further warned. Also in June 1983 the Environmental Engineer for the State of North Carolina requested the original Grainger Lab reports. In November 1983 transcript from a phone conversation indicated that those reports had not been submitted. In July 1984 samples from wells and the water distribution plants were taken by the base for the presence of VOCs in the raw water supply. There is no explanation for why it took five to seven additional months after the results of these tests were given to shut down contaminated wells.²¹⁵

Throughout the timeline the author, Michael Partain, hints at a cover-up of the contamination by base officials by highlighting handwritten notes and reports that later went missing. However, it is unclear if any of those notes or reports made it to the attention of high ranking officials with the authority to act on the problem. Rather than a cover-up, it appears that a breakdown in communication occurred which allowed the contamination to go on longer than should have been allowed because, at the same time as the warnings of high level VOCs, base officials were also receiving reports that water systems were within standards. Also throughout the timeline, the author points out that water samples were collected inappropriately and were not treated in a timely or appropriate manner which could have altered results. This is extremely relevant as the base official timeline also points out problems with sampling. It is unclear, however, if

²¹⁵ *The Few, The Proud, The Forgotten.*

the problems with sampling were deliberately designed to distort result or if they were accidental.

The most damning evidence in the TFTPTF timeline are accusations that the Marine Corps deliberately misled regulators and provided incomplete information by hiding and denying reports. For instance, in 2010 the ATSDR formally complained that the Marine Corps withheld “details of and access to databases containing more than 700,000 electronic documents related to the water contamination.”²¹⁶ The site also alleges that the base was unwilling to release information regarding the contamination or provide notice to former residents. As noted previously, an EPA and DOJ probe cleared the base of any wrong doing. Criminal charges against the base would have been inappropriate because: 1) the statute of limitations was five years and thus would have been up unless it could be proved that a conspiracy existed from the time period in question to the present (that was not able to be proved) and 2) the Safe Drinking Water Act “does not provide criminal penalties for knowingly providing drinking water which violates standards. Rather, the act only provides criminal penalties for introducing chemicals with the specific intention to harm.”²¹⁷ Therefore, even if they knowingly provided contaminated water to military and civilian personnel, base officials could not be charged under the Safe Drinking Water Act because they did not introduce chemicals with the specific intention to harm.

The TFTPTF timeline clearly has an agenda to paint the Marine Corps as complicit in the contamination and criminally negligent. It is correct in that the Marine Corps used technicalities to push back acting on the water contamination in order to

²¹⁶ *The Few, The Proud, The Forgotten*.

²¹⁷ *Poisoned Patriots*, p. 80.

avoid the information leaking out to the public. It is also correct that the Corps needs to be more forthcoming with reports and information on the scandal and that the base needs to acknowledge any negligence on its part, even if the negligence was a result of honest miscommunication, so that understanding of the contamination can be reached.

The TFTPTF view of events suggests that deliberately allowed contaminated wells to be operated despite multiple early warnings of both the contamination and the health problems that could result from it. The official base stance on the situation maintains that the base acted appropriately and in a timely manner when it learned about the contamination. It is likely that the truth exists somewhere between these two stances though it is still unclear what that truth will end up being.

Reactions to the Contamination

The reactions to Camp Lejeune's water contamination scandal varied greatly depending on if one was observing either the military or civilian community, if one drank the water themselves and experienced negative health effects, or if one knew someone that attributed health issues to the toxic water. For example, some in the military reacted by filing law suits against the base and the USMC in order to get health compensation while civilians in the community, who had connections to the base, condemned the base's handling of the toxic water. Many in both groups lost faith in the USMC's integrity. Yet, civilians not affected by the water and with no connections to the base had little to no reaction to the scandal. This lack of reaction is a direct result of the divide between civilian and military as the water contamination was viewed as a military problem and not something that local residents needed to be concerned about. The reactions of all of

these different groups exemplify not only the divide between military and civilian but also the state of the town-base relationship when the scandal was reported in the 1980s.

The military personnel and civilian workers who were exposed to the contamination were greatly perturbed by the situation. Ronald Johnson, a retired Marine who lived on the base during the timeframe of the scandal, contributes his lung cancer to his exposure to the bad water.²¹⁸ An undetermined amount of others also contribute their health problems to the time spent onboard Camp Lejeune.²¹⁹ The VA currently identifies fifteen health conditions, including several types of cancer such as lung, esophageal, breast (especially in men), kidney, lung, bladder, and leukemia) and other conditions such as miscarriage, female infertility, and neurobehavioral effects as being linked to the toxic water.²²⁰ The negative health effects combined with the manner in which the base handled the situation, has left many of these individuals feeling betrayed.²²¹ Others are in disbelief at how the government handled the situation but still maintain that the Marine Corps will do what's right by the veterans.²²²

Some of those personally affected began to fight the government to receive details on the contamination. One of the leaders in the fight for full disclosure on the toxic water was Jerry Ensminger. Ensminger served in the United States Marine Corps for nearly 25 years and retired as a Master Sergeant in 1994.²²³ He learned of the contamination from

²¹⁸ Ronald Johnson Interview.

²¹⁹ For more on the health effects of the contaminated water see Bove, Frank J. et al. "Mortality Study of Civilian Employees Exposed to Contaminated Drinking Water at USMC Base Camp Lejeune: A Retrospective Cohort Study." *Environmental Health* 13 (2014): 68. PMC.

²²⁰ "Public Health - Camp Lejeune: Past Water Contamination." (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, updated on January 05, <http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/camp-lejeune/>).

²²¹ Alexander Nazaryan, "Camp Lejeune and the U.S. Military's Polluted Legacy; the U.S. Military Is Supposed to Protect This Country's Citizens and Soldiers, Not Poison Them." (*Newsweek*, July 25, 2014), http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-375221630.html?refid=easy_hf.

²²² Levensque.

²²³ *The Few, The Proud, The Forgotten*.

a local news report in 1997, twelve years after his nine year old daughter Janey passed away.²²⁴ Ensminger believes that his daughter's cancer and death were related to the contamination on the base and he immediately got involved in the "quest for answers".²²⁵ Ensminger's quest is documented in *Semper Fi: Always Faithful* – an award winning documentary produced in 2011.²²⁶

Another battle these toxic water victims are fighting is to receive medical compensation for health problems linked to the contamination. At least 850 former residents of Camp Lejeune "have filed administrative claims, seeking nearly \$4 billion, for exposure to the industrial solvents".²²⁷ In 2012 it appeared that these residents were making progress when President Obama signed Janey's Law. However, a 2014 US Supreme Court ruling on a NC statue of repose could hinder lawsuits related to the Camp Lejeune contamination. The Supreme Court reversed a ruling by a lower court that "said federal environmental laws should trump state laws allowing action within two years of the date of discovery."²²⁸ With the reversal, lawsuits cannot be filed if the contamination occurred more than 10 years prior to the suit. This will negatively affect the legal action filed by the 850 residents and make it harder for the residents to receive compensation.

It is also extraordinarily difficult for civilians who worked on the base during the contamination to seek compensation. Veterans can file claims through the VA, which is working to make the process of filing claims easier for Camp Lejeune contamination

²²⁴ "Semper Fi: Always Faithful | The Award-Winning Documentary Film", <http://semperfialwaysfaithful.com/>.

²²⁵ *The Few, the Proud, The Forgotten*.

²²⁶ "Semper Fi: Always Faithful".

²²⁷ Kimberly Hefling, "Camp Lejeune Water Under Scrutiny" (*The Washington Post*; June 12, 2007), http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/06/12/AR2007061200162_pf.html.

²²⁸ Thomas Brennan, "Supreme Court Verdict to Affect Lejeune Water Contamination Victims" (*Jacksonville Daily News*, June 09, 2014), <http://www.jdnews.com/article/20140609/News/306099865>.

victims, and their dependents have to file ‘federal tort claims, and sue the government under the federal tort claims act’ which may not be an easy process but it is still easier than the avenue civilian workers have to pursue.²²⁹ Civilian workers are not covered by the 2012 bill like the veterans and their dependents.²³⁰ Instead, the civilians are covered by the Federal Employees Compensation Act but they have to be able to claim that their medical troubles were directly caused by the time they spent on the base.²³¹ It is extremely difficult to do so as links between the contamination and health problems have not been conclusively proven. These technicalities have complicated an already difficult process and has left many people feeling betrayed by the government in addition to being betrayed by the Marine Corps.

The reaction to the contamination was more of a non-reaction in the civilian community – at least among those who had no connections to the base or its personnel. Surveys conducted in 2009 by the Environmental Restoration Program (ERP), started by Camp Lejeune in response to the water contamination, revealed that community members were only concerned about the scandal as much as it would impact their life. The people surveyed wanted to know if their water or if the water they use for recreation and fishing would be impacted.²³² Yet there was “very little specific concern about past hazardous waste disposal practices” at Camp Lejeune.²³³

The town’s non-reaction to the toxic water was significant for several reasons.

²²⁹ Brennan.

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ Hefling.

²³² *Final Community Involvement Plan Update*. Publication no. 5090.3a. (Virginia Beach, VA: CH2MHILL, 2011), p. 30-38.

²³³ Ibid.

First, the town's water system was built similarly and worked in a similar manner to the base's water system. Second, the contamination news broke in the aftermath of the Vietnam War when national regard for the military was at an all-time low. Yet, at the same time, the lack of reaction supports the idea that a strong 'us vs. them' mentality existed in the Jacksonville community. While that mentality improved in 1990 due to the Gulf War, as will be discussed in the next chapter, town residents remained unconcerned about the base's toxic water. Bella Riggs, an Onslow County resident and business owner, confirmed the prevalence of the attitude in regards to the contamination when she said, "Why should I care what happens on Camp Lejeune? Or what happens to Marines? It ain't none of my business and it doesn't hurt me or mine."²³⁴ Some service members affected by the contamination thought it made sense that civilians would not care. Frank Johnson, a retired Marine who was stationed Camp Lejeune during the contamination, said, "why should people in town care? It wasn't their problem."²³⁵ That is exactly the attitude that many civilians took in regards to the situation and it appears to have been extended to the civilians who worked on the base based on the lack of outrage in the community over civilians being harmed by base practices.

The water contamination scandal onboard Camp Lejeune had little to no effect on the relationship between town and base. Rather, the contamination and the town's reaction to it confirmed the "us vs. them" mentality that was prevalent in the community since the base was built in the 1940s. However, surveys conducted in the 1990s revealed that community members "had a high level of trust in the Base's cleanup efforts and its

²³⁴ Bella Riggs, "Interview with Bella Riggs." Interview by author. December 16, 2015.

²³⁵ Frank Johnson and Claudia Johnson. "Interview with Frank and Claudia Johnson." Interview by author. December 29, 2015.

role as a part of the community” which points to the changing mentalities in the aftermath of the Gulf War.²³⁶

Conclusion

Beginning in the 1950s, the United States public became increasingly concerned over humans’ negative impact on the environment. Prior to that time, and until the National Environmental Policy Act was passed in 1969 and the Environmental Protection Agency was created to manage national policy, the people throughout the United States practiced unsafe environmental practices.²³⁷ Dumping waste in river systems or burying chemical waste were fairly regular occurrences as people did not understand the risk associated with these actions.²³⁸ These actions did have extreme health risks that did not become apparent until decades later.

One entity that practiced unsafe environmental actions during the twentieth century was Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune. Water wells on the base were contaminated for over thirty years. There are uncertainties about the scandal due to a lack of data about toxin concentration in the wells over certain periods of time. It is also unclear how complicit base officials were in allowing the toxic water to be delivered to military personnel, their dependents, and civilian workers during the time period in question. Some people harmed by the water, such as Jerry Ensminger, felt that the base at least deliberately spread untruths and misleading information about the scandal in an attempt to save its image. Further, Ensminger believed that the base was not being as proactive as it could have been in informing former residents about the toxic water if not

²³⁶ *Final Community Involvement Plan Update*.

²³⁷ "The Origins of EPA." EPA. Accessed February 22, 2016. <https://www.epa.gov/aboutepa/origins-epa>.

²³⁸ James Ralph Hanson, *Chemistry in the Kitchen Garden* (Cambridge UK: RSC Pub, 2011), p. 38.

deliberately negligent. It is impossible to say when or whether these uncertainties will be cleared up, but it is clear that the water scandal harmed the health of certain groups of people in addition to undermining their trust and belief in the integrity of the military.

Specifically, people suffered and are still suffering because of the toxic water and are engaged in a difficult fight to get compensation and answers to the questions they have about the contamination. Those people have to fight to get compensation for those health issues by either going through the VA, suing the government, or petitioning federal compensation programs. Certain laws in North Carolina make that fight more difficult as it puts a limitation on the time that can pass between a contamination and pursuing a law suit. These difficulties, in addition to the scandal itself, have tarnished the legacy of Camp Lejeune in the eyes of thousands of people.

The only group of people whose view of the base did not appear to be harmed by the scandal were the people living in the Jacksonville community. Rather than worsening the base's reputation among local residents, the contamination simply enforced the 'us vs. them' mentality that had developed since the establishment of the base. This is indicative of the fracture relationship that still existed between the base and civilian communities despite attempts to fix it following World War II. It would take the combination of the tragic Beirut Bombing claiming the lives of over two hundred service members from the Jacksonville community and the economic recession of the Gulf War to fix this broken relationship. The alleviation of the tension and the changing mentality after these two events will be the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter Four

Introduction

In the aftermath of both the Vietnam War and the water contamination scandal, base officials put in place quality of life improvements. According to *Semper Fidelis*, a report on the history of Camp Lejeune and Jacksonville that was produced by the Marine Corps, new construction of family housing and bachelor accommodations in addition to significant pay raises were included in the improvements.²³⁹ For instance, the lower pay grades “enjoyed spectacular raises of almost 400 percent.”²⁴⁰ These improvements immediately reverberated through the base and the Jacksonville community because the pay raises meant that Marines could to live off base.²⁴¹

These higher wages flowed into local businesses and helped the area shift from being impoverished to relatively wealthy. By the end of the twentieth century, Camp Lejeune was the largest regional industry and it provided about “one-fourth of the county’s total economic activity.”²⁴² The economic prosperity can be directly correlated with America’s military buildup in the twentieth century as the permanent expansion of US military forces during the Cold War brought more military personnel and thus more money into the Jacksonville community. As a result, the city began to advertise itself as “The City on the Go” in the 1970s.²⁴³ However, not all of the economic growth was welcomed by the town. Ever since 1941 when construction of the base began, the service members stationed at Camp Lejeune and its satellite bases have been the life-blood of

²³⁹ *Semper Fidelis: A Brief History*, p. 84.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*

²⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 28.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

the town and wider county as they pump money into the economy. With this financial transformation, citizens of Jacksonville and Onslow County found themselves economically dependent on the base.

That economic dependence, when combined with the lingering tension between town and base, created a deep fear of the unequal balance of power between the communities. One local legend highlights both that fear and the base's economic leverage in the town. Many individuals who grew up and went to school in the area heard this story about a time when the base blacklisted, or placed "off-limits", the entire town. This situation may have taken place; many Onslow County residents all claim that they lived through the incident although there is no substantial evidence to support their account. More likely, it is a manifestation of civilian's latent fears related to the base's growing power. Placing the entire town off-limits would have been economically distressing to the community as it means that service members and their dependents would not be allowed to spend money in the off-limits zone. Therefore, the economy of the town would suffer an immediate recession due to the stemming of the cash flow from the base to the town.

Regardless of whether the base ever isolated itself from the wider county, Jacksonville did experience the downside of the Marines' economic dominance in the area during the Gulf War in the 1990s. The deployment of several thousand service members to the Persian Gulf and an exodus of their dependents out of the town caused the economy to suffer. While the Gulf War hurt the Jacksonville community economically, it also worked to ease the divide between military members and civilians by clarifying the position of service members in the area. Rather than an 'other' whom

the residents were forced to contend with, the service members had become vital members of the community that were missed during the war.

The changing mentality and attitudes contributed to the blurring of the divide between civilian and military. For the first time in the fifty year long relationship, an apathetic ‘us vs. them’ mentality simply became an ‘us’. In this chapter, I will analyze the economic dependence of Jacksonville on Camp Lejeune through the two separate but interrelated case studies mentioned above: the story of the blacklisting of the town and the Gulf War. I will argue that; despite the tension and mutual uneasiness that shaped the relationship between town and base, economic factors ultimately overpowered these surface-level tensions and attitudes and created mutual interdependence between town and base.

Blacklisting the Town

The following text is a combination of background and the narrative of the blacklisting situation as it was explained to me by Frank Johnson and his wife Claudia in their home in Maysville, North Carolina on December 23, 2015.²⁴⁴

According to the Johnsons, in either the late 1960s or the 1970s Jacksonville became infamous in the Marine Corps for how the civilians were treating the Marines. Businesses throughout the community took advantage of the service members by hiking up prices on goods and services around military payday. “It was price-gouging and it wasn’t fair. Service members like me and our families were treated like second class citizens if business owners knew that we were affiliated with the Marine Corps and Camp

²⁴⁴ Narrative has been marked appropriately with quotation marks. Frank Johnson and Claudia Johnson Interview.

Lejeune.” In addition to discriminatory practices in local businesses, Marines and sailors were also always getting in trouble in downtown Jacksonville. “The downtown was basically all drinking establishments and they took advantage of the young Marines by overpricing alcohol and calling the police even when there was nothing going on. I don’t know how many times we were called to bail a young boot out of jail or pay a fine. It was a very bad time to be a Marine or Sailor in Jacksonville.” Service members often chose to go to neighboring communities such as Wilmington rather than go out in town because of these practices. However, the commanding officer of Camp Lejeune took control of the situation after the town refused to treat service members better by blacklisting the entire town of Jacksonville. What that meant was that he made it so that military personnel and their families were not allowed to spend money off of base. “People that resided on base were not allowed off of Camp Lejeune and those that resided off base were only allowed to go directly home and back to work. Any money coming from the United States Marine Corps needed to be spent on Camp Lejeune and not in town. This hit the town where it hurt the most – their wallets. It was amazing to see how quickly the town and the mayor changed their tunes after the economy suffered and the town became a ghost town. After that things got better and the civilians didn’t treat us service members like dogs anymore.”²⁴⁵

Frank and Claudia were unsure of the exact year that the blacklisting occurred and could not reliably name the commanding officer who ordered the town to be off limits. This story was corroborated by others interviewed from the community who had no connection with Frank and Claudia such as Michael Waller a former Marine and former

²⁴⁵ Frank Johnson and Claudia Johnson Interview.

resident of Onslow County, Ronald Johnson a former Marine and former resident of Onslow County with no connection to Frank and Claudia, and Patsy Bernier the daughter of Marine and resident of Onslow County for over fifty years among others. However, many of the people interviewed were not willing to go on record placing a name to the commanding officer due to the lack of accessible hard evidence to support their claims. Michael Waller, Frank Johnson, and Ronald Johnson all named the same commanding general, H. Lloyd Wilkerson, but retracted their statement after they were respectively unable to: find information on the subject themselves to answer further questions or remember the year in which they experienced the blacklisting. While it is possible that these individuals are misremembering the event in question or superimposing a town legend over their memories, though the idea that this incident never occurred is doubtful for a variety of reasons.

First of all, Department of Defense Directive 5120.36 gave commanding officers the power to deal with discrimination against military members and their dependents. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara issued this directive in July 1963 in order to give military commanders a way of dealing with discrimination, specifically racial discrimination, in “areas under his immediate control, but also in nearby communities.”²⁴⁶ Racial discrimination was a large issue that the military had to contend with because, while the military had desegregated prior to the 1960s, racism was a huge issue throughout the United States. While Directive 5120.36 was drafted to empower

²⁴⁶ *Homefront: A Military City*, p. 124.

commanders to deal with racial discrimination, the directive also gave them the power to use economic means to influence businesses by declaring an area 'off-limits'.²⁴⁷

At first this meant that, with the approval of the Secretary of Defense, a military commander could declare an area off-limits if they practiced racial discrimination.

However, the wording of the directive is as follows:

Every military commander has the responsibility to oppose discriminatory practices affecting his men and their dependents and to foster equal opportunity for them, not only in areas under his immediate control, but also in nearby communities where they may live or gather in off-duty hours. (para. II.C)²⁴⁸

The wording in this section of the directive is not specific in terms of what discriminatory practices commanders should oppose. At least theoretically, the lack of clarity and clearly defined terms meant that commanders could oppose any discriminatory practices that they faced. The requirement that commanders get authorization from the Secretary of Defense restricted the incidents of discrimination that received an official response.

The Armed Forces Disciplinary Control Board (AFDCB) and the individual branches published their own regulations as early as 1965. This was done in order to not only officially codify the directive in the regulations of each branch but also to put in place structures and processes to uniformly handle these incidents.²⁴⁹ In 1966 DOD Directive 5120.36 was cancelled and a new directive, DOD Directive 1 100.15 was issued to include "religion, sex, and national origin to the list of prohibited

²⁴⁷ *The Secretary of the Army's Senior Review Panel Report on Sexual Harassment*. Report no. HD 6060.5.U6 S43 1997. Vol. 1, (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 1997), p. 103-104.

²⁴⁸ Department of Defense. "Full Text of "Defense Equal Opportunity Council, Report of the Task Force on Discrimination and Sexual Harassment, Volume 1 and 2"" National Archives and Records Administration. April 28, 2015. Accessed January 03, 2016. [https://archive.org/stream/DefenseEqualOpportunityCouncilReportoftheTaskForceonDiscriminationandSexualHarassmentVolume1and2/Defense Equal Opportunity Council Report of the Task Force on Discrimination and Sexual Harassment Volume 1 and 2_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/DefenseEqualOpportunityCouncilReportoftheTaskForceonDiscriminationandSexualHarassmentVolume1and2/Defense%20Equal%20Opportunity%20Council%20Report%20of%20the%20Task%20Force%20on%20Discrimination%20and%20Sexual%20Harassment%20Volume%201%20and%202_djvu.txt).

²⁴⁹ *The Secretary of the Army's Senior Review*, p. 103-104.

discriminations.”²⁵⁰ Then the requirement that permission from the Secretary of Defense was necessary to utilize the power to place an area off-limits was lifted in 1970.²⁵¹ After that point, a commanding officer had the authority declare housing areas, businesses, etc. off-limits to military personnel under his command without prior approval.

While military commanders no longer needed explicit permission from the Secretary of Defense to place an area off-limits, there was a check system put in place so that the power was not abused. The AFDCB served to “advise and make recommendations to the Commanding General concerning the correction of conditions which may adversely affect the health, safety, morals, welfare, morale, or discipline of military personnel.”²⁵² The AFCB is an investigative committee “established by local commanders” and composed of “members from each of the services and civilian advisers, who seek to protect the interests and welfare of service members when they are off post.”²⁵³ Marine Corps Installations East provides the Operation Forces and tenant commands and the AFDCB for Camp Lejeune.²⁵⁴ Camp Lejeune’s standard practice is to publish lists of blacklisted areas and post the lists in the Camp Lejeune *Globe*, barracks, and other public spaces so that service members are knowledgeable about off-limits establishments.²⁵⁵ This is necessary as “any service member from Marine Corps Base

²⁵⁰ *The Secretary of the Army’s Review Panel*, p. 128.

²⁵¹ *Homefront: A Military City*, p. 124.

²⁵² “Armed Forces Disciplinary Control Board.” Marines: The Official Website of The United States Marine Corps. Accessed November 26, 2015. <http://www.mcieast.marines.mil/StaffOffices/CommandInspectorGeneral/ArmedForcesDisciplinaryCtrlBd.aspx>.

²⁵³ Charles H. Criss, “Armed Forces Disciplinary Control Board Fills a Need.” (US Army Alaska. June 20, 2010), <http://www.usarak.army.mil/alaskapost/Archives2008/080620/Jun20Story10.asp>.

²⁵⁴ “Marine Corps Installations East.” Marines: The Official Website of The United States Marine Corps. Accessed February 26, 2016. <http://www.mcieast.marines.mil/>.

²⁵⁵ I personally read issues of the *Globe* from the 1960s and 1970s in order to determine what areas were off-limits at what times. One issue in particular from _____, described a broad off-limits area that may match the situation described by the interviewees though this could not be determined with one hundred percent confidence.

Camp Lejeune or its tenant commands found on the premises [of off-limits establishments] will be charged in accordance with the Uniform Code of Military Justice.²⁵⁶

Since there is a system in place to allow the Commanding General of Camp Lejeune to place areas off-limits as well as a system to evaluate and retract the decision, it is entirely possible that a base commander has, in the past, made the decision to place the entire town off-limits. This would only occur if there was extreme discrimination occurring in the town. A history of Camp Lejeune and Jacksonville, published by the base, briefly mentions that General H. Lloyd Wilkerson eliminated blatant discriminatory practices in the selling and rental of off-base housing though it does not detail how or when this occurred.²⁵⁷ This may be referring to the incident which is the basis for the town legend though the lack of details in the history and the lack of evidence found for this thesis makes it impossible to say with any amount of certainty. Regardless, this event shows that there is a precedent for base commanders utilizing their powers to change discriminatory practices in Jacksonville.

Further, declaring a town off-limits is not unique to Camp Lejeune and Jacksonville or even the Marine Corps. During World War II Hamilton, Ohio was declared off-limits to all military personnel due to an active gambling and prostitution district.²⁵⁸ There were Army Air Force Bases and air support facilities built throughout Ohio and it was the personnel on those bases and air fields that were targeted by this ban. Also during World War II, the Army placed a ban on the entire town of Moffett,

²⁵⁶ "Armed Forces Disciplinary Control Board".

²⁵⁷ *Semper Fidelis: A Brief History*.

²⁵⁸ "Hamilton Ohio." Touring Ohio. Accessed August 26, 2015.
<http://touringohio.com/southwest/butler/hamilton.html>.

Oklahoma because of “nightspots offering round-the-clock liquor, gambling, and other temptations to young Army recruits.”²⁵⁹ According to Douglas Johnson, a retired Navy Chief, Naval Submarine Base New London and the AFDCB placed the town of Groton, Connecticut off-limits for a short period of time due to how sailors were being treated by civilians.²⁶⁰ There is no official documentation supporting Johnson’s story though it has been corroborated by other naval personnel.

While it is unclear whether or not Jacksonville, NC has ever been placed off-limits in its entirety by the Marine Corps, it is clear that situations similar to the story told by Onslow County residents have occurred elsewhere in the country with the result being a temporary blacklisting of entire towns. Therefore it is possible that Jacksonville was placed off-limits like the story claims though it appears unlikely that the entire town would be blacklisted considering that Jacksonville had a population of 13,491 in 1960 and 16,289 in 1970.²⁶¹ While the population of the town was less than the population stationed at Camp Lejeune, drawing the ire of those residents would have resulted in bad publicity for the military which was already suffering a downturn in popularity due to the Vietnam War.

It seems more likely that, rather than blacklisting the entire town, the Marine Corps would place downtown Jacksonville, Lejeune Boulevard (a stretch of road between the base’s main gate and downtown), and the New River area off-limits. The majority of the business in Jacksonville such as large department stores or restaurants were concentrated in the downtown area though some businesses did expand out into New

²⁵⁹ Jim Etter, "Moffet Having a Difficult Time Living Down Its Off-Limits Reputation." (*The Oklahoman*, April 17, 1983), <http://newsok.com/article/2021369>.

²⁶⁰ Douglas Johnson. "Interview with Douglas Johnson." Interview by author. December 15, 2015.

²⁶¹ "Census of Population and Housing."

River when the New River Shopping Center opened in the 1950s.²⁶² Businesses also began to “flourish along Lejeune Boulevard” in the 1960s.²⁶³ If the base placed these three areas off-limits, then it would have the same effect as placing the entire town off-limits. This is because there was no large service/retail businesses outside of those three areas until the latter part of the 1970s and the 1980s. Further, the downtown area was home to problematic businesses such as bars, strip clubs, pawn shops and other industries that were known for cheating Marines.²⁶⁴ A base commander would be well within their rights to place the downtown area, specifically Court Street, off-limits because of the trouble young marines would get into in those establishments. A commander would also be permitted to place Lejeune Boulevard and New River off-limits if businesses were known for price-gouging. If this did happen it would have had an almost immediate negative effect on the area as the “economic life-blood” – the money of the Marines and their dependents – would not have been spent in Jacksonville.²⁶⁵ These economic troubles would have forced local businesses to capitulate to the demands of the USMC in order to avoid financial ruin.

Due to the precedent set for placing communities off-limits, the nature of the establishments on Court Street, the attitude of civilians towards Marines during the 1960s and the 1970s, and the number of residents of the area who remember the incident, it is possible that the incident occurred. Yet, the extent to which the area was blacklisted is

²⁶² Lindell Kay, "Officials Look at Changes Downtown as Western Boulevard Grows" (*Jacksonville Daily News*, December 30, 2012), <http://www.jdnews.com/article/20121230/News/312309935>.

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ *Semper Fidelis: A Brief History*, p. 75.

²⁶⁵ North Carolina Division of Community Planning, "Jacksonville, N.C., Population and Economic Summary" in the State Library of North Carolina Collection (National Archives and Records Administration: April 15, 2010), https://archive.org/stream/jacksonvillencpo00nort/jacksonvillencpo00nort_djvu.txt.

uncertain as individuals may have exaggerated the story due to misremembering the incident.

It seems unlikely that all of these individuals, seven out of ten people interviewed, who have no primary connections to one another would misremember the same incident and detail it as happening in the same period if it did not actually occur. Yet it is always possible that citizens of Jacksonville knew about other towns that had been declared off-limits and feared that it would happen to them due to their economic dependence on the base. This story may have resulted as a reflection of that fear and simply grown and gathered vague details over time. If that is what occurred, it would be an in-depth look into the psyche of the town in regards to the base and could be viewed as a reflection of the heavy-handed military policies used in this community. It would show that the tensions and conflicts that plagued the area in the immediate aftermath of the construction of the base were long lasting and more complicated than they first appeared.

Whether this base closure took place or the legend simply became a way to express fears about the base, this story expresses an important idea that. These residents shared the sense that the town's economic dependence of the town on the base casts the town as the subservient partner in the relationship and the well-being of the area is dependent on service members putting money into local businesses and industry. The 'City on the Move' was only on the move because of its proximity to the base – everyone knew it and many citizens resented it. This is a problem, especially during the 1960s and 1970s, because the mentality of town-base relations was 'us vs. them'. Many Jacksonville residents viewed the Marine Corps as "invaders" that were ruining the area

while some Marines viewed Jacksonville as a small hicktown.²⁶⁶ These views meant that any action done by either side could inflame latent tensions left over from the displacement that occurred in the 1940s. This mentality would not begin to change until the Beirut Bombing and the Gulf War.

While some members of the Jacksonville community openly resented the base, there were others who either did not feel strongly about the base or who considered it to be a positive influence on the area. Rather, the majority of individuals with no connection to the base were apathetic to it. Even some of the descendants of the displaced persons of Onslow County recalled that there was no blatant anger towards the base remaining in the community.²⁶⁷ Yet, the tenuous nature of the relationship in the early twentieth century and the view that the service members were ‘invaders’ still colored the overall relationship of civilians with the military. This is evident in how there was still an ‘us vs. them’ mentality throughout the community. As Claudia Johnson, the wife of a retired Marine and resident of Onslow County for over fifty years, described it best:

People didn’t have to be blatant in their disregard for us to know that we weren’t welcome in town. You saw it in how businesses hiked up their prices when it was military members and their dependents trying to buy something or in how they made us feel like second class citizens. It wasn’t everyone but you could just feel it in town.²⁶⁸

The disconnect between civilian and military existed until the Gulf War in 1990 and 1991. The Gulf War was especially critical to the Jacksonville narrative not only because

²⁶⁶ Interview with Leah H. Jones by Karen Kruse Thomas, 18 May 1995 (K-0074), in the Southern Oral History Program Collection #4007, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

²⁶⁷ Stroud Interview.

²⁶⁸ Frank Johnson and Claudia Johnson Interview.

it was the point at which remaining tensions dissipated from the area, but also because it proved that fears about the economic dependency of the town were prophetic.

Overview of the Gulf War

The Gulf War began in 1990 in response to Iraq's annexation and invasion of Kuwait in the Persian Gulf. Iraq invaded Kuwait in August of 1990 and won control of the country within two days of intense combat. The invasion was condemned internationally and on November 29, 1990 the United Nations authorized the use of "all necessary means" against Iraq if it did not withdraw from Kuwait by January 15, 1991 in Resolution 678.²⁶⁹ Iraq's leader Saddam Hussein refused to withdrawal his forces from Kuwait and in response an international coalition force of 34 nations led by the United States began an offensive against Iraq.

The US aerial and ground campaign in the Gulf War were codenamed Operation Desert Storm. The aerial bombardment was sustained over weeks and targeted Iraq's air defenses, communication networks, infrastructure, and fortifications amongst other targets. The ground campaign culminated in a decisive victory for the coalition as they drove the Iraqi military out of Kuwait and advanced into Iraqi territory. The advance was stopped and a cease-fire was declared 100 hours after the ground campaign began.

The United States deployed the "largest amount of troops for the war, about 540,000" to the Gulf War and led coalition forces during the combat portion of the conflict.²⁷⁰ On the surface the Gulf War appears to be a decisive and easy victory for the

²⁶⁹ "UNIKOM: United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission - Background." (UN News Center, 2003), <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/past/unikom/background.html>.

²⁷⁰ *Semper Fidelis: A Brief History*, p. 93.

coalition forces. Yet that is not entirely correct as a number of issues emerged or were revealed during the war such as: friendly fire in the coalition forces, the Gulf War illness that effected service members, and the beginnings of Operation Southern Watch. The most important international issue that emerged from the Gulf War was the violent suppression of Kurdish uprisings by Hussein's government, the implementation of economic sanctions against Iraq, and Iraq's refusal to allow weapons inspectors to enter the country.²⁷¹ These issues helped to contribute to the events that led to Iraq War in 2003.

Despite those issues, the Gulf War did improve the public perception of the military in the United States which had been damaged during the Vietnam War. In addition to changing perceptions nationally, the Gulf War was directly responsible for changing attitudes in Jacksonville. Building on a sense of community that had been built in the wake of the Beirut Bombing, as will be discussed later in the chapter, the immediate aftermath of the Gulf War showed a dramatic change in the relationship between town and base.

The Gulf War and Jacksonville

The Gulf War had an enormous effect on Jacksonville. Out of the 540,000 troops that the United States sent to the Persian Gulf, the Marine Corps had 92,000 Marines in action at its peak strength in February of 1991.²⁷² Camp Lejeune specifically contributed the 2nd Marine Division, the 2nd Force Service Support Group (FSSG – now the MLG),

²⁷¹ The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, "Persian Gulf War" (Encyclopedia Britannica Online; Accessed August 21, 2015), <http://www.britannica.com/event/Persian-Gulf-War>.

²⁷² *Semper Fidelis: A Brief History*, p. 93.

2nd Surveillance, Reconnaissance, Intelligence Group (SRIG), and 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing (MAW) to the war.²⁷³ In total, Camp Lejeune sent about two-thirds of its 40,000 Marines to the Persian Gulf in addition to serving as the station of “initial assignment for the 24,703 SMCR who had been called to active duty and processing, equipping, and training them for integration into their gaining commands.”²⁷⁴

When the Marines left for the Persian Gulf in 1991, a large portion of Jacksonville’s population went with them. In 1990 the city annexed portions of Camp Lejeune, specifically the residential areas of Camp Lejeune and New River Air Station, causing the population to jump to 30,013.²⁷⁵ This population change did not drastically effect the demographics of the town due to the large amount of both service members, which includes those who were single and those with families, and others who came to reside in the area due to the base and the business it brought to Jacksonville.²⁷⁶

Approximately 20% of the 1990 population left the area not only because of the Marines that departed for the war but also because their dependents left the area while the service members were at war.²⁷⁷ Frank Johnson recalled that “Jacksonville became a ghost town almost overnight and the economy suffered.”²⁷⁸ The town clearly depended on the base economically as did the wider county – at that time, Onslow County depended “on Camp Lejeune for half of its \$1.4 billion in annual personal income.”²⁷⁹

²⁷³ *Semper Fidelis: A Brief History*, p. 93.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁶ The statistical information on demographics remained essentially the same as what it had been in 1960 in regards to both race and gender. For further information please consult the US Census.

²⁷⁷ *Semper Fidelis: A Brief History*, p. 94.

²⁷⁸ Frank Johnson and Claudia Johnson Interview.

²⁷⁹ Jeff Kunerth, "Casualty of War: Military Boom Town Gone Bust" (*Orlando Sentinel*, February 4, 1991, War in the Persian Gulf sec.), Accessed November 11, 2015, http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/1991-02-04/news/9102040300_1_camp-lejeune-jacksonville-saudi-arabia.

The economic depression that hit the town and the county because of the war was evident in the unemployment rate. The unemployment rate doubled during the war as shops, restaurants, and other businesses could not support their staff without the money from the Marines flowing into the economy. The *Orlando Sentinel* reported that in the “first two weeks of January [1991] alone the number of unemployment claims in Jacksonville jumped 500 percent from a year earlier.”²⁸⁰ Twenty percent of the work force in the community, prior to the Gulf War, was composed of military spouses – many of whom left the area while their spouses were away.²⁸¹ The exodus of military personnel and their dependents from the area devastated local industry.

Businesses in the community suffered as the purchase of goods and services slowed down by at least 50% during the war.²⁸² Businesses were forced to lay off workers, “cut back on employees’ hours”, or shorten their business day in order to stay open.²⁸³ Small business were hit especially hard as men like Roger Newbold, a used-car salesman, saw “business drop to half of what it was [in 1990]”.²⁸⁴ Bars and strip clubs in the area suffered from the lack of young Marines. Topless dancers at Tobie’s Lounge normally made about “\$150 in tips on a normal Friday night [were] making less than \$50” during the war.²⁸⁵ As a line in one *Orlando Sentinel* article quipped, “Jacksonville and Camp Lejeune grew up together as Siamese twins joined at the paycheck” and the Gulf War hit the area’s wallet hard.²⁸⁶

²⁸⁰ “Casualty of War”.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² *Semper Fidelis: A Brief History*, p. 94.

²⁸³ “Casualty of War”.

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

The economic damage to Jacksonville and Onslow County was so severe that U.S. Rep. Martin Lancaster was “considering legislation that would qualify [the area] for federal disaster assistance – the same as if they had been hit by a hurricane” in 1991.²⁸⁷ Town officials and long-time residents feared that the war would go on for months and that the “town wouldn’t survive.”²⁸⁸ The local residents had no way of knowing that all of the Marine units on the ground in Kuwait would be on their way home by May 1991.²⁸⁹

In the aftermath of the Gulf War, the Jacksonville community went out of its way to pour accolades on the returning service members. On July 2, 1991 the town held a “Home Again Parade” to welcome the men and women back.²⁹⁰ Further, “State Route 24 and U.S. Routes 17 and 70 were designated ‘Freedom Way’” in addition to a “Freedom Fountain” being designated in downtown Jacksonville.²⁹¹ The dynamics between town and base had changed drastically while the Marines were deployed and for the first time the ‘us vs. them’ mentality was gone from the community.

Relationship dynamics between the civilian and military communities in Onslow County shifted slightly prior to the Gulf War due to the Beirut Bombing. On October 23, 1983 terrorist attacks on the US Marine barracks in Beirut claimed the lives of 241 Marines and sailors. The explosion and resultant lives lost “represented the largest loss of life in a single day for the Marine Corps since the Battle of Iwo Jima”.²⁹² The majority

²⁸⁷ “Casualty of War”.

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

²⁸⁹ “Persian Gulf War”.

²⁹⁰ *Semper Fidelis: A Brief History*, p. 94.

²⁹¹ Ibid.

²⁹² The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, “1983 Beirut Barracks Bombings” (Encyclopedia Britannica Online; Accessed December 13, 2015), <http://www.britannica.com/event/1983-Beirut-barracks-bombings>.

of the victims of the suicide bombing were residents of Jacksonville and the town was stunned by the loss.²⁹³

Margaret Bera, the daughter of a retired Marine and resident of Onslow County for over forty years, remembered that the bombing brought the town and community together like never before. “People in town knew those Marines. Maybe they were your neighbor or went to your church. It doesn’t matter how you know them, just that you knew them. They weren’t just nameless Marines but people that were loved and respected and who were a part of this community.”²⁹⁴ The town and base came together to grieve over the loss of life and it was that shared loss that began to blur the lines between civilian and Marine.

By 1991, the civilian and military community worked together to: plant trees along Lejeune Boulevard (one tree for each lost life), to construct a memorial to the service members, and to commission a statue that was added to the memorial after its dedication in 1986.²⁹⁵ This is evident in how middle school students from town were involved with raising money for the trees and how Camp Lejeune offered Jacksonville’s Beautification and Appearance Commission “4.5 acres of highly visible and publicly accessible land” to build the memorial on.²⁹⁶ According to the official Camp Lejeune website, the Beirut Memorial was the first time that “a civilian community constructed a memorial of this dimension, honoring their military neighbors.”²⁹⁷ The Beirut Memorial project began to accomplish what forty-three years of proximity had not – unity.

²⁹³ "Beirut Memorial", Marines: The Official Website of The United States Marine Corps, Accessed August 26, 2015, <http://www.lejeune.marines.mil/Visitors/BeirutMemorial.aspx>.

²⁹⁴ Margaret Bera, "Interview with Margaret Bera." Interview by author. December 08, 2015.

²⁹⁵ "Beirut Memorial".

²⁹⁶ "Beirut Memorial".

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

The Gulf War expanded the shifting local attitudes by dismantling the “other” mentality that had existed in the Jacksonville area since 1941. Part of changing local attitudes may also be attributed to the changing age and population structure in the community as well as the fact that many service members chose to retire in the community due to its proximity to the base. Jacksonville boasts the youngest population for a metro area in the country because of the military which increased both the amount of young adults in the area and the amount of young families with small children in the community.²⁹⁸ The base is directly related to almost half of Jacksonville’s population being below the age of twenty-one and in turn that younger population contributes to the easing of tensions in the area.²⁹⁹ As more time passed since the construction of the base and the initial displacement, more and more people in the community had little or no connection to the initial causes of resentment and apathy. Further, there was a larger military presence in the community as more military personnel and their dependents began to live off base and older service members began to retire in the area with their families. This growing presence, in addition to the “economic devastation that resulted from the deployment” during the Gulf War, reinforced the idea taught in the aftermath of Beirut: that these service members are a part of the community and that they would be missed if they were no longer there.³⁰⁰ This attitude is a complete reversal of the ideas that existed in the area after World War II when some residents suggested that Jacksonville would have been better off without the base and some resented the

²⁹⁸ G. Scott Thomas, "Military Presence Makes Jacksonville, N.C., the Youngest Metro Area in the U.S." *The Business Insider*, June 22, 2011. <http://www.bizjournals.com/bizjournals/on-numbers/scott-thomas/2011/06/jacksonville-nc-is-youngest-metro.html>.

²⁹⁹ United States. Bureau of the Census.]. *1990 Census of Population. General Population Characteristics. North Carolina*. Washington, DC: For sale by the Supt. of Docs., U.S. G.P.O., 1992.

³⁰⁰ *Semper Fidelis: A Brief History*, p. 94.

disruption the base had caused and the presence of the service members in the community.³⁰¹

While the improved attitudes were undoubtedly beneficial to the relationship between town and base, the local community lacked support services necessary for keeping military families in the area during times of war or conflict. This issue needed to be contended with by the local government if they did not to see a repeat of the mass exodus of dependents that occurred during the Gulf War. In response to this issue, the Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce formulated the idea for the Community Action Readiness Effort (known as Project CARE).³⁰² Project CARE “combines the efforts of various local government, military, Chamber and community organizations” in order to provide assistance to both the “families of deployed military personnel” and “local businesses that may suffer because of large-scale deployments.”³⁰³

Project CARE was not fully activated until 2003 for Operation Iraqi Freedom due to the lack of large-scale conflicts between the Gulf War and the beginning of the Iraq War. The mission of Project CARE is to offer benefits and support to the spouses of those that are currently deployed such as discounts at local businesses and free childcare.³⁰⁴ This program is intended to both convince military dependents to stay in the area during war as well as benefit local industry. The realization of the need for a support program illustrates not only how much Jacksonville is dependent on the pay flow of the military, but also how far both the civilian and military community had come from the

³⁰¹ Alberti Interview.

³⁰² "Project CARE", Jacksonville Onslow Chamber of Commerce Project Care, Accessed January 26, 2016, <http://www.jacksonvilleonline.org/projectcare.html>.

³⁰³ "Project Care".

³⁰⁴ "Project Care".

either tense or apathetic attitudes that dominated the area for the majority of the relationship.

Conclusion

The presence of the United States Armed Forces is palpable throughout the state of North Carolina but is an especially integral part of Eastern North Carolina. Both the Cold War-era militarization and the Vietnam-era quality of life improvements impacted the area and the relationship between town and base.

That large military presence has been both a blessing and a curse to the city of Jacksonville throughout the entirety of its proximity with Camp Lejeune. On the one hand, the townspeople realized that they benefitted from the unprecedented influx of wealth the base brought. On the other hand, the economic reliance on the military for prosperity was a curse in that no other area industry could rival it. This power imbalance gave the Marines economic leverage over the town. It also meant that if the Marines were ever to leave, the economy would nosedive.

The story told by Frank Johnson about the Marine Corps placing the town off-limits reflects the fear in the town that the military would use that leverage to force the town to capitulate with the base's demands. While the story shows the unknown base commander using the power to combat discrimination against Marines and systems were in place to ensure that the power would not be abused, the fear remained. This latent and lingering fear is a direct result of the resentment that remained in the community for the military's heavy-handedness when the base was built. This resentment and fear was not felt by all in the community, even among those that whose family members had been

displaced, but its presence highlights both the lopsided nature of the relationship as well as the often apathetic and 'us vs. them' mentality in the area.

The relationship between town and base improved remarkably after both the Beirut Bombing and the Gulf War. The Marine Corps publication *Semper Fidelis* called the improving relations "a curious thing" as those two incidents accomplished what forty plus years of living in close proximity had not: destroying the majority of the 'us vs. them' mentality and creating an 'us'.³⁰⁵ This did not mean that every single person in the community liked or supported the military or that every service member stationed at Camp Lejeune liked or supported the town. It also did not mean that all issues between town and base were fixed as there are still issues between the two entities in the present day. What it did mean, however, was that the average attitude towards the town or towards the base improved significantly and the apathetic view of the base all but disappeared from the area for the majority of residents.

³⁰⁵ *Semper Fidelis: A Brief History*, p. 94.

Conclusion

The establishment of Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune was the single most important catalyst for change in the Jacksonville, North Carolina community during the twentieth century. The construction of the base changed a small, rural town into a thriving military community and the fifth fastest growing town in the state of North Carolina. However, not all of the changes were welcomed and an atmosphere of tension and resentment was created between the two communities.

These tensions were exacerbated by the displacement of locals by the base, the economic dependency of the town on the base, and the uprooting of local traditions and ways of life. Simple concerns such as the fishing waters became areas of major contention between the communities, as the base wielded growing power in the relationship. It was not until the Military/Civilian Liaison Community was formed that the local residents were given a voice in the relationship.

Camp Lejeune has also been the source of tension in the military community due to a water contamination scandal that occurred on the base for over thirty years. Some former base residents felt betrayed because of how the base handled the situation and blamed health issues on their exposure to the toxic water. The one group that had a limited reaction to the contamination was the Jacksonville community. The non-reaction of this group showcases that the 'us vs. them' mentality was still going strong despite the efforts to integrate the two communities. The unequal power balance, in addition to the heavy handedness of the US government and the Marine Corps, led to the creation of an 'us vs. them' mentality that would persist until after the 1990s.

The economic dominance of the base, displayed during the Gulf War, was a double-edged sword for the Jacksonville community. On the one hand, the base improved the quality of life in the area due to the influx of cash that followed the base. For example, the basic services such as running water and indoor plumbing spread across the area due to both increased wealth and improvements to infrastructure because of the base. On other hand, the town was economically dependent on the military which gave the base even more power in an already unbalanced relationship. This was evident in how the economy slumped following the deployment of military personnel and the exodus of their dependents from the area during the Gulf War. Despite this large drawback, the relationship between town and base improved immediately after the Gulf War as residents began to view military personnel as part of the ‘us’ rather than the ‘other’.

Today, community leaders emphasize this accord in marketing the area to outsiders. Agencies such as the Jacksonville Tourism Development Authority use motifs like “Receive a Hero’s Welcome” to advertise the town and encourage settlement in the community by military retirees.³⁰⁶ The local newspaper also boasts about the “recession resistant” nature of the local economy thanks to the base in order to promote the community.³⁰⁷ Modern-day Jacksonville has embraced being the home of Camp Lejeune – though there are still those that resent the moniker of ‘military town’ being applied to Jacksonville as the “town existed and would still exist without the base.”³⁰⁸ While not all

³⁰⁶ Michael Todd, "Local March Mobilizes Multi-agency Organization" (*Jacksonville Daily News*, February 05, 2016), <http://www.jdnews.com/article/20160205/NEWS/160209502>.

³⁰⁷ Bill Dedman. "Recession-resistant, but Would You Want to Live There?" (*NBC News*, May 5, 2009), http://www.nbcnews.com/id/30216797/ns/business-eye_on_the_economy/t/these-cities-resist-recessions-would-you-want-live-there/.

³⁰⁸ Brown Interview.

issues between town and base have been resolved, the tenor of the relationship is certainly better than would have been imagined in 1941.

I conclude this thesis by addressing several limitations to the argument presented above. First of all, my research was limited by the number willing people that I was able to access and interview. It is difficult to discuss the changing nature of base-town relations if you are unable to find people willing to share their perspective and thoughts on the subject. The most obvious perspective not covered extensively by this thesis is the perspective of service members. It was extremely difficult to find service members who had lived in the community for long periods of time who could speak to how the base-town relationship changed. I chose to focus more on the civilian perspective as they were the ones who were completely immersed in the relationship. The military perspective is important, however, and its presence is an area which could and should be expanded.

Another direction this thesis could be expanded is to look at gender relations in the community. Studies have been conducted on gender equality in the workforce in communities associated with the defense industry such as “The Impact of Military Presence in Local Labor Markets on the Employment of Women” by Booth, Falk, and Segal.³⁰⁹ The conclusions drawn by this study, which looked at the thirty largest bases in the country, is that bases produce potentially negative effects on female employment and job outcomes.³¹⁰ Camp Lejeune ranks in the top three of the largest military bases in the country and Jacksonville is specifically cited in the study as a metropolitan area due to its proximity with the base. This thesis could have benefitted greatly from looking at gender relations and female employment in Jacksonville prior to the establishment of the base

³⁰⁹ Booth.

³¹⁰ Ibid.

and after to see if helped or hurt the position of women in the community. That addition would have made the thesis more nuanced and shown other social effects of Camp Lejeune's presence on the community rather than briefly focusing on race relations, an aspect of this thesis which can also benefit from expansion.

However, scholars have lacked a holistic approach to analyzing the influence of domestic bases on local communities. This thesis has engaged such an approach in order to bridge a gap in the knowledge about domestic bases through the study of the relationship between Camp Lejeune and Jacksonville. As I hope this thesis has conveyed, base-town relations are a subject ripe for closer study. I encourage others to expand on this topic. More research into these relationships which gives voices to communities overlooked in the larger national narrative, will be essential to developing a more nuanced and contextualized understanding of the base-town relationship and the domestic consequences of living in close proximity with the United States military.

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