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NPS Form 10-900  
(Oct. 1990)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

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Registration

OMB No. 10024-0018

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

HISTORIC NAME: Barracks and Mess Building, U.S. Coast Guard Air Station at Dinner Key  
OTHER NAME/SITE NUMBER: Building No. 4, Naval Reserve Center - Tigertail, Miami, FL

2. LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: 2610 Tigertail Avenue  
CITY OR TOWN: Miami  
STATE: Florida CODE: FL COUNTY: Dade  
NOT FOR PUBLICATION: N/A  
VICINITY: N/A  
CODE: 025 ZIP CODE: 33133

3. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this x nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets    does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant X nationally X statewide X locally. (    See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

R. N. Johnson  
Signature of certifying official  
R. N. JOHNSON  
Preservation Officer  
Date: 21 December 1994  
Dept. of the Navy  
State or Federal agency and bureau  
SOUTHNAVFACENGCOM

In my opinion, the property ✓ meets    does not meet the National Register criteria. (    See continuation sheet for additional comments.)  
Suzanne P. Walker, Deputy SHPO  
Signature of commenting or other official  
The Division of Historical Resources  
Date: 4/7/95  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:  
✓ entered in the National Register  
   See continuation sheet.  
   determined eligible for the National Register  
   See continuation sheet.  
   determined not eligible for the National Register  
   removed from the National Register  
   other (explain):     
Signature of the Keeper: Edson H. Beall  
Entered in the National Register  
Date of Action: 5/10/95

**5. CLASSIFICATION**

**OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY:** public-Federal

**CATEGORY OF PROPERTY:** building(s)

<b>NUMBER OF RESOURCES WITHIN PROPERTY:</b>	<b>CONTRIBUTING</b>	<b>NONCONTRIBUTING</b>	
	2	2	<b>BUILDINGS</b>
	0	0	<b>SITES</b>
	1	2	<b>STRUCTURE</b>
	0	0	<b>OBJECTS</b>
	3	4	<b>TOTAL</b>

**NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES PREVIOUSLY LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER:** 0

**NAME OF RELATED MULTIPLE PROPERTY LISTING:** N/A

**6. FUNCTION OR USE**

**HISTORIC FUNCTIONS:** DEFENSE: coast guard facility (barracks)  
DEFENSE: naval facility (offices)

**CURRENT FUNCTIONS:** VACANT

**7. DESCRIPTION**

**ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION:** Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival

<b>MATERIALS:</b>	<b>FOUNDATION</b>	Concrete
	<b>WALLS</b>	Stucco
	<b>ROOF</b>	Asphalt
	<b>OTHER</b>	Wood

**NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION** (see continuation sheets 1 through 5).

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**8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

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**APPLICABLE NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA**

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic value, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**CRITERIA CONSIDERATIONS:** N/A

**AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE:** Transportation, Maritime History

**PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE:** 1938-1945

**SIGNIFICANT DATES:** 1938, 1941, 1945

**SIGNIFICANT PERSON:** N/A

**CULTURAL AFFILIATION:** N/A

**ARCHITECT/BUILDER:** Simon, Louis A., supervising architect

**NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE** (see continuation sheets 6 through 13).

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**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES**

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**BIBLIOGRAPHY** (see continuation sheets 14 through 17).

**PREVIOUS DOCUMENTATION ON FILE (NPS):** N/A

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # HABS No. FL-383-A
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

**PRIMARY LOCATION OF ADDITIONAL DATA:**

- State historic preservation office
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository:

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

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**ACREAGE OF PROPERTY:** approximately 3.8 acres

UTM REFERENCES	Zone	Easting	Northing
	17	576720	2846060

**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The Barracks and Mess Building is on a parcel described as New Biscayne Subdivision (Amended) Block 39, Lots 5 and 6; Block 40, Lots 1 and 2; and the undedicated right-of-way for Blaine Avenue, between Tigertail Avenue and South Bayshore Drive. See attached site plan (see continuation sheet 18).

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The property includes land associated with the 1938 expansion of the U.S. Coast Guard Air Station at Dinner Key. The original station originally include a parcel on the south side of South Bayshore Drive. It was here that the hangar was constructed in 1932. When Coast Guard officials decided to enlarge the base and construct on-site barracks, they acquired land on the north side of South Bayshore Drive, including four lots in the New Biscayne Subdivision and an unplatted portion of Blaine Avenue. The land was obtained through condemnation proceedings and a quit claims deed from the City of Miami and Dade County. Since 1938, when the Barracks and Mess Building was constructed, the land has remained unpartitioned and has been associated with the Coast Guard through 1965 and the Navy from 1966 until 1994.

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**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

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**NAME/TITLE:** David W. Moore - Historian; Diane Elizabeth Williams - Architectural Historian**ORGANIZATION:** Hardy-Heck-Moore & Associates, Inc.**DATE:** September 15, 1994**STREET & NUMBER:** 2112 Rio Grande**TELEPHONE:** 512-478-8014**CITY OR TOWN:** Austin**STATE:** TX**ZIP CODE:** 78703

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 1 Barracks and Mess Building, U.S. Coast Air Station at Dinner Key

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The Barracks and Mess Building at the old U.S. Coast Guard Air Station, at Dinner Key, Miami, Florida, is a two-story building with a Spanish Colonial Revival design. Constructed in 1938, the building originally housed officers and enlisted personnel. First floor rooms were designed for public uses by officers and enlisted personnel, such as recreation, mess, galley, laundry, and storage. The second floor contained sleeping quarters and bathrooms for Coast Guard personnel. The Barracks and Mess Building, which is near Biscayne Bay in Miami's affluent Coconut Grove neighborhood, is in an urban setting and is situated amid high-rise condominiums, single-family residences, and a large marina. The north half of the site is flat but the south half slopes toward Bayshore Drive. Other features on the grounds are a garage, two wood-frame World War II barracks, a small electric distribution structure, and a complex landscape containing a paved parking lot and a large lawn area with mature trees. The Barracks and Mess Building, the oldest and most visually and architecturally significant building in the complex, is setback approximately 270 feet from the street, and the large expanse of lawn and trees in front of it creates a formal setting for the building. The main entry into the building is accessed on the southeast from Bayshore Drive, the rear entry via Tigertail Avenue. The building, vacant since 1991, is architecturally meritorious for the integrity of its plan and the simple distinguishing features of its main facade. It is in overall good condition and the exterior has changed little since its original construction.

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Dotted with mature trees and traversed by a meandering concrete walk, the grounds on which the Barracks and Mess Building is located are partially enclosed by a stone rubble wall. Stone gate posts with carved stone knobs are located at the rear driveway entrance to the site and define the northern border of the old U.S. Coast Guard Air Station. The wall and gate posts appear to pre-date the Barracks and Mess Building. Although the building has a Tigertail Avenue address, the building's front actually faces south onto Bayshore Drive, where a large lawn creates a somewhat formal park-like setting. The lawn area, which also extends to east side of the Barracks and Mess Building, is in good condition and appears to undergo regular mowing. The paved walkways are in fair condition, with some broken or cracked areas that have been invaded by plant material. The other original building to the site is a one-story garage that is northwest of the Barracks and Mess Building.

Alterations to the original site include the installation of a large asphalt-paved parking lot at the rear of the building, as well as the construction of the wood-frame barracks during World War II. The electric distribution structure was built in 1957. Despite these changes, the site retains a suburban character amid the urbanized surroundings. A temporary chain link fence

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 2

Barracks and Mess Building, U.S. Coast Air Station at Dinner Key

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surrounds the property, as all of the buildings are currently vacant. The original design of the landscape features—lawn, trees and walkways—has been eroded somewhat through the development of the site with additional buildings and parking lots.

The Barracks and Mess Building is a 2-story Spanish Colonial Revival building with reinforced concrete and terra cotta tile design and an "H" plan. The building is roughly symmetrical in form, with front-gable end wings that project at the front and rear elevations to create the crossbars of the "H" plan. A stucco finish covers the exterior walls, and the roof is composition shingle. On the main elevation, a one-story, five-arch arcade, with a flat roof and ceiling, extends sideways from the projecting wings to create a recessed porch. Two stuccoed exterior chimneys with simple banded caps are located on the rear elevation at the wall junctions of the wings and the central block of the building.

The gable walls have virtually no eaves and are finished with molded fascia mounted directly on the wall plane. A narrow vertical vent with horizontal slats is centered just below the gable peak in the front and rear elevations of the gable end walls. The eave walls have shallow boxed overhangs embellished with modillion-like brackets and metal gutters and downspouts. Gabled, triangular vents with horizontal slats terminate the roofline of the central block and project over the ridge line of the wing roofs. The porch arches are unembellished and spring from imposts located approximately two-thirds of the way up the abutments. A narrow, horizontal sign band, now missing its sign, is located just above the three center arches of the arcade. The arcade has a scored concrete floor that is raised slightly above grade. Fenestration on the front and rear elevations is symmetrical with rectangular windows and doors arranged in roughly equidistant horizontal bands of nine openings in each of the stories. Side elevations contain equidistant horizontal bands of five windows on each story. The fenestration patterns and symmetry of the exterior articulation recall the central hall plan typical of Georgian architecture. A centrally located door provides access to the building on both the front and rear elevations. There is a heavy teak entry door on the main elevation topped by a fixed pane transom window.

All of the windows have slightly projecting stuccoed sills and weatherboard hurricane shutters attached with metal hinges to the building walls. A simple metal sliding latch located in the center of each shutter originally held the two panels closed. These are still in place on most examples. The shutters on all of the windows except two on the rear elevation are now nailed shut with wooden strips, which has obscured the windows. The windows that are visible are metal frame awning type, one with 10 panes and the other with four panes. The remainder of

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 3

Barracks and Mess Building, U.S. Coast Air Station at Dinner Key

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the windows in the building are thought to be of the metal frame awning type, and may be original.

The building's exterior has been slightly modified since its construction in 1938. A small one-story, flat-roofed addition measuring approximately 10 by 12 feet has been constructed underneath a prominently projecting flat roofed awning, near the northwest corner of the rear elevation. A another flat roofed addition, measuring about 10 by 14 feet, also has been constructed at the northwest corner of the rear elevation. The heavy teak entry doors have been painted and a hollow core door has replaced one of the original window openings on the west side of the building. This door provides access via the metal roofed walkway to the building's wood-frame neighbor immediately to the west. Two windows on the rear elevation of the northwest wing and one window on the main elevation have been infilled. The main elevation window also appears to have been enlarged at some point prior to its enclosure. A room air conditioner has been installed underneath a second floor window on the eave wall of the northeast wing.

The interior of the building originally contained 31 rooms, with 19 rooms on the first floor used for recreation, mess, galley, laundry and storage, and 12 on the second floor used for sleeping quarters and storage. The interior space was designed to be functional and was finished to that end. The staircases are constructed of wood in a utilitarian fashion and the cement floors are covered with asphalt tile. Current wall surfaces appear to be smooth plaster. Original partition walls were to be constructed of terra cotta tile; some were to be finished with plaster and some with smooth-finish exposed tile. The original plans called for a bronze threshold under the main entry door.

Alterations to the building's interior include the installation of wood frame partition walls in some of the larger rooms in order to create additional rooms and provide more functional space for the classroom uses the Barracks and Mess Building served in more recent years. In addition, the ceilings in most rooms have been altered with the installation of dropped acoustical tile. Central heat and air conditioning were added about 1979.

The plan and the fenestration patterns of the Barracks and Mess Building along with the arcade and the modillion-like brackets provide its distinguishing architectural features. These elements are derived from Roman, Italian Renaissance and Georgian forms and are more formal than the asymmetrical design elements often associated with the Spanish Colonial Revival style. The simple formality of the building's design is a highly appropriate statement reflecting its function as a part of the nation's military defense system. The somewhat formal

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 4

Barracks and Mess Building, U.S. Coast Air Station at Dinner Key

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landscaped grounds of the Barracks and Mess Building is a complementary element and together the building and its grounds form a cohesive unit.

Other buildings on the grounds include a garage (Building No. 2), two World War II barracks (Building Nos. 1 and 3), the flagpole, stone fence, and an electrical distribution structure (see Site Plan, Continuation Sheet 10, page 1). The garage was constructed in 1938, at the same time as the Barracks and Mess Building. It is a one-story masonry building, with a rectangular plan. It has a concrete-slab foundation and a flat, built-up roof. Overhead metal open onto the five service bays in the building. The garage does not appear to have substantially modified since its construction and is classified as Contributing. The World War II barracks are utilitarian wood-frame buildings with wood siding. Both were constructed during World War II as temporary buildings in support of the war effort. The buildings, which are in poor condition, lack any distinguishing stylistic detailing, but are nonetheless representative of the kind of buildings erected by the military during World War II. Alterations include the removal and/or covering of original windows and the construction of additions onto the fronts of the buildings; hence, the buildings' classification as Noncontributing. The flagpole is embedded in the concrete sidewalk in front of the building. Naval records indicate that the structure was erected in 1957. Because its construction postdates the property's period of significance, the flagpole is classified as Noncontributing. The small, one-story electrical distribution structure that is behind (to the north) of the Barracks and Mess Building was built in 1957 and is classified as Noncontributing because it also does not fall within the property's period of significance. The rubble stone fence and gate that defines the north boundaries of the property were erected in 1939, according to Naval records. It is classified as a Contributing element to the property.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 5 . Barracks and Mess Building, U.S. Coast Air Station at Dinner Key

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The following table lists all resources on property that includes the Barracks and Mess Building (Building No. 4), U.S. Coast Guard Air Station at Dinner Key (also known as the Naval Reserve Center - Tigertail, Miami, FL). The table includes all extant resources at the time that the National Register of Historic Places nomination was prepared.

Resource	Resource Type	Status	Photo
Barracks & Mess Building (Building No. 4)	Building	Contributing	1,2,3
Garage (Building No. 2)	Building	Contributing	4
World War II Barracks (Building No. 1)	Building	Noncontributing	5
World War II Barracks (Building No. 3)	Building	Noncontributing	6
Electrical Distribution Structure	Structure	Noncontributing	7
Flagpole	Structure	Noncontributing	1
Stone Fence	Structure	Contributing	8

Since the nomination was originally prepared in September 1994, the World War II Barracks (Building Nos. 1 and 3) have been razed and are no longer on the property.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 6 Barracks and Mess Building, U.S. Coast Air Station at Dinner Key

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The Barracks and Mess Building at the old U.S. Coast Guard Air Station at Dinner Key, Miami, Florida, is significant because of its association with the first permanent Coast Guard air station and its supportive role with the busiest air-sea rescue facility in the United States. The building is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A and is historically significant for its direct association with Coast Guard aviation and as the first permanent Coast Guard air station in the country. Except for the old 1932 hangar, which is now a gym and recreation center for the City of Miami, the Barracks and Mess Building is the oldest and best-preserved building on the grounds of the old Coast Guard Air Station. The Barracks and Mess Building served the Coast Guard until 1965 when the Coast Guard relocated the air station elsewhere in the Miami area. The Barracks and Mess Building, along with support buildings and structures on the north side of South Bayshore Drive, were transferred to the Department of the Navy, which converted the facility into a naval reserve center in 1966. The Navy abandoned the complex in 1991 after construction of a new reserve center in northwest Dade County. The Barracks and Mess Building, along with other improvements on the property, has been declared in excess of the Navy's needs and is scheduled for disposal. The State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) has determined the building to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The preparation of the nomination is part of mitigative efforts agreed upon by the SHPO, the Department of the Navy, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. The building is currently vacant and unused.

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The Barracks and Mess Building is directly associated with the first permanent Coast Guard air station in the country. Therefore, the early history and development of the Coast Guard aviation program must be explored to fully understand the building's significance. The official beginning of the program can be traced to 1916, when Congress first authorized the U.S. Department of the Treasury to establish 10 Coast Guard air stations throughout the country. The program was never realized because Congress, though supportive of the concept, authorized no funding for the project. Nevertheless, such action laid the groundwork for the development of Coast Guard aviation.

The United States entry into World War I further delayed implementation of the program. However, in 1920 the Coast Guard occupied an abandoned naval air station in Morehead City, North Carolina, and established its first air station. Lack of additional funding prompted the Coast Guard to close the facility on July 1, 1921. Though short-lived, the base demonstrated the viability of Coast Guard aviation and the important role it could play in patrolling coastal

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 7

Barracks and Mess Building, U.S. Coast Air Station at Dinner Key

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regions of the country. Congress eventually recognized its usefulness in thwarting smuggling operations after the enactment of Prohibition, and in 1925 appropriated funds for the Coast Guard to acquire five aircraft. Even though Congress had not yet allocated funds for the construction of any facilities, the Coast Guard established air stations in Gloucester, Massachusetts, and Cape May, New Jersey, but, like the earlier one in North Carolina, they were meager facilities with inadequate equipment. Both were eventually shut down and decommissioned because of limited operating funds.

Despite such setbacks, supporters of the program within the Coast Guard persevered, and in the early 1930s, Congress finally appropriated funding for the construction of the first permanent Coast Guard air station. Coast Guard officials then developed a list of factors to be considered in the site-selection process, among them volume of air and marine traffic of the host community and prevailing weather conditions. Coast Guard officials finally chose southern Florida, and specifically Miami, as the site for the first air station.

In selecting property for the proposed facility, Coast Guard officials needed level terrain with direct access to water that is protected from sea swells. A representative for the Coast Guard contacted the Director of Aviation for the City of Miami, who suggested a small parcel of land adjoining Biscayne Bay in the Dinner Key area of the city's Coconut Grove neighborhood. To this Coast Guard officials concurred. The site's potential as a base for seaplanes had been recognized as early as 1917 when the Navy established an air station at the location. Using in-fill from dredging operations, the Navy linked a small island (Dinner Key) in Biscayne Bay with the mainland and erected barracks and hangars at the site. After a hurricane struck the area in 1925, the Navy abandoned the property. Five years later, however, Pan American Airways of New York secured the rights to much of the property and soon constructed a seaplane terminal for its burgeoning Latin American operations. Up until 1945, Pan American developed much of the property with hangars and other support buildings, and many, most notably the old terminal—currently the Miami City Hall—survive as tangible links to this important chapter in aviation history.

Property that the Coast Guard secured comprised the northeastern corner of the Pan American site. Prior to the establishment of the Coast Guard air station, the company agreed to lease this land to the City of Miami for use as a public park or a municipal airport. The City received approval from Pan American to sublease the property to the Coast Guard and, on January 4, 1932, signed an agreement with the Coast Guard permitting the establishment of the air station.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 8 Barracks and Mess Building, U.S. Coast Air Station at Dinner Key

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With Associate Engineer Ernest Santangini as superintendent of construction, the Coast Guard erected a large steel frame and masonry hangar. The general contractor was Fred Howland of Miami. When completed in July 1932, the hangar served as the centerpiece of what was known as the U.S. Coast Guard Air Station at Dinner Key, Florida, and it became the model for all hangars at first-generation Coast Guard air stations in various locations throughout the country. Its large service bay doors faced the water and a concrete ramp provided direct access to nearby Biscayne Bay.

The air station originally consisted solely of the hangar, and all enlisted personnel assigned to the base stayed in a local hotel. The Coast Guard attempted to erect barracks soon after the air station opened, but the lack of funds delayed efforts to rectify the situation. In 1934 the Department of Treasury allocated \$102,000 from its building fund for the barracks construction project. Under the supervision of Louis A. Simon of the Treasury Department, architects in the Public Buildings Branch prepared plans and specifications for a barracks, which was to be on the south side of South Bayshore Drive and adjacent to the hangar. Intradepartmental communications note that contractors' estimates exceeded available funds, which prompted shelving of the project. Other mitigating factors included limitations on the size of the site, complicated rights and access to the land, and the likelihood that the barracks would be flooded during a hurricane, as evidenced by a storm that struck southern Florida in 1935. The Treasury Department subsequently reallocated the funds for the construction of a new Coast Guard air station at Floyd Bennett Field, New York, thereby halting plans to build the Miami barracks.

Despite postponement of the barracks project, the need for such a building remained, and alternate plans were made. As Treasury Department officials instigated efforts to secure a nearby tract of land on higher ground just north of the hangar building, the Coast Guard leased an apartment building at 2013 S.W. 24th Terrace to serve as a temporary barracks for enlisted personnel. The building obviously met short-term needs, but proved less than ideal for the Coast Guard. Its location far from the hangar complicated transportation between the air station and the temporary barracks; furthermore, the building apparently was inadequate and in poor condition. In 1937, Rear Admiral R.R. Warsche, Commandant of the Coast Guard, noted that an inspector with the Public Health Service declared the building "to be unsanitary and unsuitable for quarters for personnel." The Coast Guard subsequently canceled the lease and provided enlisted personnel an allowance to arrange for their own food and lodging.

Frustrated by the slow pace of constructing barracks at the Miami air station, Admiral Warsche wrote a letter to the Director of Procurement, Public Buildings Branch, U.S.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 9 Barracks and Mess Building, U.S. Coast Air Station at Dinner Key

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Department of the Treasury, on July 19, 1937, requesting "that every effort be made to obtain title to the property now under consideration and to erect a barracks building as soon as practicable." Two days later, whether by coincidence or because of the admiral's pressure, the Treasury Department acquired from the City of Miami the title to a portion of the land that had been recommended as the site for the barracks building. This tract included a small section of Blaine Street, between Tigertail Avenue and South Bayshore Drive, which was originally platted to run down the center of the proposed air station. The proposed site for the barracks also included lots 5 and 6 of Block 39 and lots 1 and 2 of Block 40 of the New Biscayne Bay Subdivision (Amended). Obtaining the land proved a difficult task, but the Coast Guard acquired the rest of the land on May 9, 1938, through condemnation proceedings.

With the land secured, the Public Buildings Branch of the Treasury Department proceeded with construction of the barracks, which also included a mess hall. Louis A. Simon is listed as supervising architect of the project. Plans for the building, completed before all land acquisition issues had been resolved, apparently differed from the original set prepared two years earlier, and relied on a prototype developed for the barracks at Port Angeles, Washington. Internal Treasury Department correspondence notes that

The layout of floor plans as shown is similar to the barracks at the Port Angeles [Washington] Air Station with a small center enlargement made for this air station barracks at Miami. Since it is not desirable to have double deck standee bunks in such a warm climate as Miami, the barracks plans have been laid out for single bunks in all the quarters.

The Barracks and Mess Building, as it came to be called, at the U.S. Coast Guard Air Station at Dinner Key was constructed with funding from the Works Progress Administration, later renamed Works Projects Administration. The WPA, as it was known, was a federal program established to provide relief and stimulate the economy during the Depression of the 1930s. Treasury Department records indicate that the contract for the construction of the barracks building was awarded to Sofarelli Bros., Inc. of Jamaica, New York. The construction cost was \$102,069 and work had to be completed in 300 calendar days. A one-story garage was also constructed at the same time.

Nearby residents initially opposed construction of the Barracks and Mess Building and the expansion of the air station across South Bayshore Drive. However, Treasury Department architects designed the building and its grounds to be compatible with the surrounding neighborhood and its architectural character, thus mitigating concerns of surrounding

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 10 Barracks and Mess Building, U.S. Coast Air Station at Dinner Key

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residents. The stucco finish of the exterior and Spanish Colonial Revival architectural elements blended in with nearby residences.

When completed in 1938, the Barracks and Mess Building supported the operation of one of only nine Coast Guard air stations in the United States. The Coast Guard established other air stations at Biloxi, Mississippi; Brooklyn, New York; Elizabeth City, North Carolina; St. Petersburg, Florida; Salem, Massachusetts; Port Angeles, Washington; San Diego, California, and San Francisco, California. The primary mission of these air stations was to protect life and property along the coast. Coast Guard personnel regularly patrolled surrounding coastal regions and undertook rescue searches by air whenever needed. They also observed weather conditions, and provided warnings for severe storms and other dangerous and hazardous situations.

The Miami facility quickly established itself as the busiest of all the Coast Guard air stations. Year-round warm weather in southern Florida spawned much recreational boating, and the Coast Guard played a pivotal role in the safety and welfare of these boaters.

Because of its booming economy, large population base, and strategic position near the southern tip of Florida, the city of Miami became an important hub of military activity just prior to and during World War II, and the Departments of the Navy and the Army constructed new or expanded existing installations in and around the city. The U.S. Coast Guard Air Station at Dinner Key was one such facility. In November 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt decreed by Executive Order that all Coast Guard facilities, including the one at Dinner Key, be placed under the command of the U.S. Department of the Navy. As the number of flights originating out of Dinner Key increased and more personnel were assigned to the station, Navy officials constructed two additional "temporary" barracks on the grounds.

The air station's mission evolved during the war. Pilots initially patrolled coastal waters for German submarines, but eventually assumed greater air-sea rescue duties. This shift occurred because of the high number of crashes that resulted from the expansion of air-training operations in the Miami area during the war. In their summary of aviation operations during World War II, Coast Guard officials noted that "the station has assumed a vital role in present collaboration with other ASR [Air-Sea Rescue] units operating in the Gulf Frontier."

After the war, the Coast Guard resumed its peacetime status as a branch of the Department of the Treasury, and pilots from the Miami air station flew over surrounding coastal areas increasingly congested with commercial and recreational ships and boats. When Pan

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 11 Barracks and Mess Building, U.S. Coast Air Station at Dinner Key

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American Airways closed its seaplane terminal at Dinner Key in 1945, the City of Miami assumed control of the property and subsequently established a marina. The growing number of small boats in the area made flying more hazardous and complicated Coast Guard operations because of the proximity of the hangar to the marina. Nevertheless, the air station continued to fulfill its primary objectives. Local newspapers regularly featured articles on the Coast Guard and the many successful rescue missions. Throughout this period, the Miami air station reportedly was the busiest air-sea rescue unit in the world and accounted for about 25 percent of all Coast Guard air-sea rescue operations. The Miami air station also played a pivotal role during Cuban refugee boat lifts of the 1960s.

Increased costs due to the corrosive effects of saltwater on equipment, the lack of room for possible expansion, and congestion around the base eventually prompted the Coast Guard to reevaluate its commitment to the Dinner Key location. On October 23, 1963, Rear Admiral I.J. Stephens, USCG, formally announced that the Coast Guard would relocate its Miami air station to Opa Locka, about 13 miles north of the Dinner Key area. At Opa Locka a 70-acre site and a \$1.1-million building improvement program enabled the Coast Guard to utilize modern, up-to-date facilities with ample room for expansion. The last Coast Guard plane departed from the old air station on October 27, 1965, and the base was officially decommissioned by the Coast Guard.

Soon after the Coast Guard moved its air station to Opa Locka, the General Services Administration evaluated the facility at Dinner Key and declared it surplus property. The report, completed November 2, 1965, stated, "That since the operations of the Coast Air Station, Miami, have been transferred to and relocated in a new site at Opa Locka, Florida, ... [the] land waterside, structures, and facilities are therefore in excess to the needs of the Coast Guard." The report recommended that the land and all appurtenances be transferred to the Commandant of the Coast Guard for disposal.

After learning of intentions to "dispose" of the property, officials with the City of Miami attempted to acquire the property. The land fell within an area targeted by the City to upgrade and expand "marine and recreational facilities" in the Dinner Key area. Backed with funding provided by a voter-approved \$2.37-million bond program, City Manager Melvin Reese spearheaded the City's bid to acquire the old Coast Guard air station property; however, he was only able to secure a lease for the hangar and property south of South Bayshore Drive.

The remaining property (land on the north side of South Bayshore Drive and including the Barracks and Mess Building, Garage, and other support buildings) was transferred to the

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 12 Barracks and Mess Building, U.S. Coast Air Station at Dinner Key

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Department of the Navy in 1966. Navy officials relocated the Naval Reserve Center, Miami, from leased quarters on N.W. South River Drive to the old Coast Guard air station. The ceremony commemorating the facility dedication as a Naval Reserve Center took place on June 26, 1966, and principal participants included Rear Admiral T.A. Christopher, USN, and Rear Admiral Louis M. Thayer, USCG.

The newly converted facility proved to be an improvement over the former Naval Reserve Center, but it did not come without problems. Captain C.J. Rogers wrote in his annual command history for the Naval Reserve Center, Miami, that,

achieving the primary mission has been made considerably more difficult during the second half of the 1966 calendar year due to the physical move of the Training Center to a new location and performing necessary construction work to convert buildings, previously occupied by the Coast Guard Air Station at Dinner Key, into training center classrooms and offices. Considerable effort by all stationkeeper personnel and most reserve personnel had to be expended in the transfer, thereby impeding the optimal training effort normally applied for the supported Naval Reserve Units.

The World War II-era barracks were partitioned into classrooms and offices, and these and other physical changes to the buildings enabled the old Coast Guard station to operate successfully as a naval reserve training center. The original, WPA-constructed Barracks and Mess Building, redesignated as Building No. 4 of the Naval Reserve Center, Miami, contained offices, the mess hall, and drill hall. The exterior was left unchanged, but a few wood partition walls created additional office and classroom spaces.

By the early 1980s, the converted Coast Guard facility was no longer considered adequate to serve the needs of the reserve center's primary mission, and Navy officials subsequently began efforts to secure a new site. As early as 1982 plans were made to move the center to an abandoned Army missile site in northwest Dade County; however, the original contractor defaulted on the project and all work halted. After a long delay, construction resumed after a new contract was let on April 27, 1989. The building was completed and ready for occupancy in 1991.

With the construction of the new facility, the old reserve center at Dinner Key was vacated. The Barracks and Mess Building remains in relatively stable condition, but other buildings, most notably the World War II-era wood-frame barracks, have deteriorated, especially after



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 13 Barracks and Mess Building, U.S. Coast Air Station at Dinner Key

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Hurricane Andrew struck the Miami area in 1991. Overlooking a landscaped lawn that slopes toward South Bayshore Drive, the Barracks and Mess Building remains a prominent landmark in the Coconut Grove section of Miami. With its historic character and integrity largely intact, the Barracks and Mess Building survives as one of the oldest and best-preserved properties from the Coast Guard's initial development of aviation operations.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 9 Page 14 Barracks and Mess Building, U.S. Coast Air Station at Dinner Key

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 9 Page 15 Barracks and Mess Building, U.S. Coast Air Station at Dinner Key

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 9 Page 17 Barracks and Mess Building, U.S. Coast Air Station at Dinner Key

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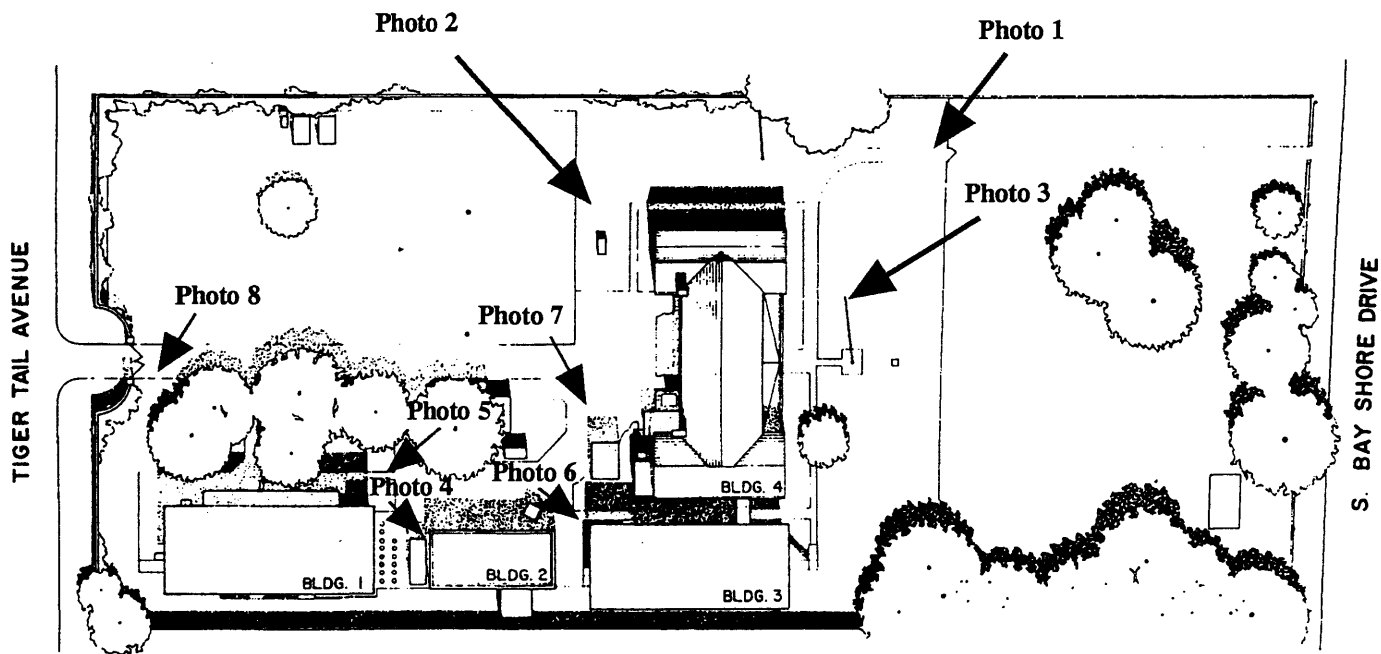
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 10 Page 18 Barracks and Mess Building, U.S. Coast Air Station at Dinner Key

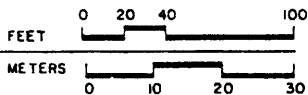
Barracks and Mess Building, U.S. Coast Guard Air Station at Dinner Key  
(Building No. 4, Naval Reserve Center - Tigertail Avenue)  
21610 Tigertail Avenue, Miami, Dade County, FL

Prepared by Craig King, September 1994



SITE PLAN

SCALE: 1" = 40'



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 10 Page 19 Barracks and Mess Building, U.S. Coast Air Station at Dinner Key

**NRHP Name** Barracks and Mess Building, (Building No. 4)  
U.S. Coast Guard Air Station at Dinner Key  
**Location** 2610 Tigertail Ave., Miami Dade County, FL  
**Photographer** David Moore, Hardy•Heck•Moore & Associates, Inc.  
**Date** July 1993  
**Subject** Barracks and Mess Building (Building No. 4) and  
Flagpole in front of building  
**Negative Location** Florida State Historic Preservation Office,  
Tallahassee, FL  
**View** Front oblique of building, camera looking west  
**Photograph** 1 of 8

**NRHP Name** Barracks and Mess Building, (Building No. 4)  
U.S. Coast Guard Air Station at Dinner Key  
**Location** 2610 Tigertail Ave., Miami Dade County, FL  
**Photographer** David Moore, Hardy•Heck•Moore & Associates, Inc.  
**Date** July 1993  
**Subject** Barracks and Mess Building (Building No. 4) and  
Flagpole in front of building  
**Negative Location** Florida State Historic Preservation Office,  
Tallahassee, FL  
**View** Rear oblique of building, camera looking south  
**Photograph** 2 of 8

**NRHP Name** Barracks and Mess Building, (Building No. 4)  
U.S. Coast Guard Air Station at Dinner Key  
**Location** 2610 Tigertail Ave., Miami Dade County, FL  
**Photographer** David Moore, Hardy•Heck•Moore & Associates, Inc.  
**Date** July 1993  
**Subject** Barracks and Mess Building (Building No. 4) and  
Flagpole in front of building  
**Negative Location** Florida State Historic Preservation Office,  
Tallahassee, FL  
**View** Detail of front arcade, camera looking west  
**Photograph** 3 of 8

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 10 Page 20 Barracks and Mess Building, U.S. Coast Air Station at Dinner Key

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**NRHP Name** Barracks and Mess Building, (Building No. 4)  
U.S. Coast Guard Air Station at Dinner Key  
**Location** 2610 Tigertail Ave., Miami Dade County, FL  
**Photographer** David Moore, Hardy•Heck•Moore & Associates, Inc.  
**Date** July 1993  
**Subject** Garage (Building No. 2)  
**Negative Location** Florida State Historic Preservation Office,  
Tallahassee, FL  
**View** Front oblique of building, camera looking south  
**Photograph** 4 of 8

**NRHP Name** Barracks and Mess Building, (Building No. 4)  
U.S. Coast Guard Air Station at Dinner Key  
**Location** 2610 Tigertail Ave., Miami Dade County, FL  
**Photographer** David Moore, Hardy•Heck•Moore & Associates, Inc.  
**Date** July 1993  
**Subject** World War II Barracks (Building No. 1)  
**Negative Location** Florida State Historic Preservation Office,  
Tallahassee, FL  
**View** Front oblique of building 1, camera looking west  
**Photograph** 5 of 8

**NRHP Name** Barracks and Mess Building, (Building No. 4)  
U.S. Coast Guard Air Station at Dinner Key  
**Location** 2610 Tigertail Ave., Miami Dade County, FL  
**Photographer** David Moore, Hardy•Heck•Moore & Associates, Inc.  
**Date** July 1993  
**Subject** World War II Barracks (Building No. 3)  
**Negative Location** Florida State Historic Preservation Office,  
Tallahassee, FL  
**View** Front oblique of building 3, camera looking south  
**Photograph** 6 of 8



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 10 Page 21 Barracks and Mess Building, U.S. Coast Air Station at Dinner Key

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**NRHP Name** Barracks and Mess Building, (Building No. 4)  
U.S. Coast Guard Air Station at Dinner Key

**Location** 2610 Tigertail Ave., Miami Dade County, FL

**Photographer** David Moore, Hardy•Heck•Moore & Associates, Inc.

**Date** July 1993

**Subject** Electrical Distribution Structure

**Negative Location** Florida State Historic Preservation Office,  
Tallahassee, FL

**View** Front oblique of building, camera looking west

**Photograph** 7 of 8

**NRHP Name** Barracks and Mess Building, (Building No. 4)  
U.S. Coast Guard Air Station at Dinner Key

**Location** 2610 Tigertail Ave., Miami Dade County, FL

**Photographer** David Moore, Hardy•Heck•Moore & Associates, Inc.

**Date** July 1993

**Subject** Stone fence along Tigertail Avenue

**Negative Location** Florida State Historic Preservation Office,  
Tallahassee, FL

**View** Front oblique of building, camera looking west

**Photograph** 8 of 8

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