

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic Wheeler Field

and/or common Wheeler Air Force Base

**2. Location**

street & number ----- not for publication

city, town ----- X vicinity of Schofield Barracks

state Hawaii code 15 county Honolulu code 003

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name U.S. Department of the Air Force

street & number

city, town Washington ----- vicinity of ----- state D.C.

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. U.S. Department of the Air Force

street & number

city, town Washington ----- state D.C.

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title ----- has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date -----  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records

city, town ----- state

---

## 7. Description

---

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved    date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

---

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

Established in 1922 as an army airfield, Wheeler Field occupied a former cavalry drill field adjacent to Schofield Barracks in central Oahu. Permanent structures, including officers' quarters and club, noncommissioned officers' quarters and club, chapel, dispensary, and administrative buildings were erected in the early 1930s. Three paved runways arranged in a triangle allowed for three aircraft to take off simultaneously. A separate, fourth runway was constructed later. A row of metal hangars and a flight line bordered the north side of the northernmost runway. A large reinforced-concrete enlisted men's barracks and administrative buildings stood behind the hangars. The barracks was bombed in 1941, but the damage was soon repaired. By 1941, Wheeler Field was the Army Air Force's principal fighter base in Hawaii, housing the headquarters of the 14th Pursuit Wing. Today, only the runway paralleling the hangars is operational and, since 1971, U.S. Army helicopters operate from the air force base. The recommended historic district includes the flight line, hangars, and the barracks building.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates December 7, 1941

Builder/Architect

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The bombing and strafing of Wheeler Field was an important objective of the Japanese task force that attacked Oahu on December 7, 1941. Wheeler had a large number of fighter (pursuit) planes and the success of the Japanese attack on the American fleet in Pearl Harbor was dependent on the destruction of these planes in order to prevent them from interfering with the attack. The Japanese carrier planes were successful. Wheeler, along with other military airfields on Oahu, was rendered practically helpless with 83 of its aircraft destroyed. But Japan's immediate victory at Pearl Harbor aroused in the American people a fierce desire to win the long struggle that lay ahead.

### Background

Wheeler Field's history began in 1922 when twenty enlisted men arrived from Luke Field on Ford Island in Pearl Harbor to clear a cavalry drill field at Schofield Barracks. It was named in honor of Major Sheldon H. Wheeler, commanding officer of Luke Field who was killed there in an aircraft accident in 1921. During the 1920s and early '30s, Wheeler was the principal Army Air Corps field in Hawaii, although it did not become an independent permanent military post until 1939. As to be expected, several "firsts" in flight history occurred on the field. In 1927 Lieutenants L. J. Maitland and A.F. Hengenberger made the first nonstop flight from Oakland, California to Wheeler. A year later the first aircraft from Australia arrived safely. Amelia Earhart took off from Wheeler on the first solo flight between Hawaii and California.

By December 1941, Wheeler Field, a part of the Hawaiian Air Force, contained the headquarters of the 14th Pursuit Wing and the 15th and 18th Pursuit Groups. Approximately 90 aircraft were on the ground on December 7, of which 52 were new P-40s and 39 were older P-36s. During the summer of 1941, army troops had constructed eighty-five aircraft revetments at Wheeler. Because of the growing tensions between the United States and Japan and the large number of

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle name Schofield Barracks

Quadrangle scale 1: 24,000

UTM References

A	0 4	5 9 9 3 0 0	2 3 7 6 4 4 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
C	0 4	5 9 8 7 6 0	2 3 7 5 9 2 0
E	0 4	5 9 9 1 2 0	2 3 7 6 3 0 0
G			

B	0 4	5 9 9 3 8 0	2 3 7 6 1 7 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
D	0 4	5 9 8 6 8 0	2 3 7 6 1 2 0
F	0 4	5 9 9 1 0 0	2 3 7 6 3 9 0
H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Erwin N. Thompson, Historian		
organization	Western Regional Office, NPS	date	June 19, 1986
street & number	450 Golden Gate Ave	telephone	556-4165
city or town	San Francisco	state	CA 94102

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national     state     local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

\_\_\_\_\_ title \_\_\_\_\_ date

For NPS use only.

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

\_\_\_\_\_ date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_ date

Chief of Registration

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persons of Japanese descent, Lieutenant General Walter C. Short, commanding the Hawaiian Department, issued an alert in late November directing army units to take action to prevent internal sabotage. For easier guarding, the aircraft were to be bunched, not dispersed. On Wheeler Field, the aircraft were lined up on the flight line in front of the hangars wing-tip to wing-tip and in rows only twenty feet apart.

**The Attack**

In the early morning of December 7, 1941, 275 miles north of Oahu, Japanese pilots flew from six aircraft carriers toward the island. The first wave of 183 planes (43 fighters, 49 high-level bombers, 51 dive bombers, and 40 torpedo planes) struck its targets at 7:55 a.m. At Wheeler Field twenty-five dive bombers aimed at the hangars, dropping approximately thirty-five bombs. They hit and set fire to hangars 1 and 3 and two storehouses. One bomb struck the barracks occupied by the 6th Pursuit Squadron, inflicting a large number of casualties. The same planes returned to strafe the flight line, turning it into a river of fire. Some of the attackers also strafed adjacent Schofield Barracks.

In the lull between attacks four fighters of the 46th Pursuit Squadron managed to take to the air at Wheeler. They attacked Japanese planes over southeastern Oahu, claiming they knocked down two of the enemy but losing one of their own. The second wave of 167 Japanese planes struck Oahu beginning at 8:40 a.m. Probably because the first raid had been so successful, only seven enemy planes came over Wheeler at 9:10 a.m. Again they strafed the field but caused little additional damage. By 9:45 a.m. the Japanese attack on Oahu was over. Wheeler Field counted its wounds. Eighty-three aircraft had been destroyed, fifty-four of which burned in the fire storm on the flight line.

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Casualties amounted to thirty-eight enlisted men killed and fifty-nine wounded.<sup>1</sup>

After the Battle

Wheeler Field quickly recovered from the attack and played an important role through World War II. In 1944, the Seventh Air Service Command was established at the airfield. The command provided service and supply for the B-29 bombers in the Marianas which began their massive raids against Japan that fall. Placed in a caretaking status in 1949, Wheeler Air Force Base was reactivated during the Korean War. Still an air force base, Wheeler today is home to helicopters of the U.S. Army.

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1. Figures used throughout this nomination differ from most published accounts. They are believed to be accurate having been taken from Brigadier General H.C. Davidson, commanding the Hawaiian Interceptor Command, "Report of Enemy Activity over Oahu, 7, Dec. 1941," to Commanding General, Hawaiian Air Force, December 18, 1941. Copy at Wheeler Air Force Base.

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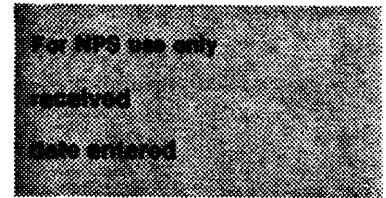
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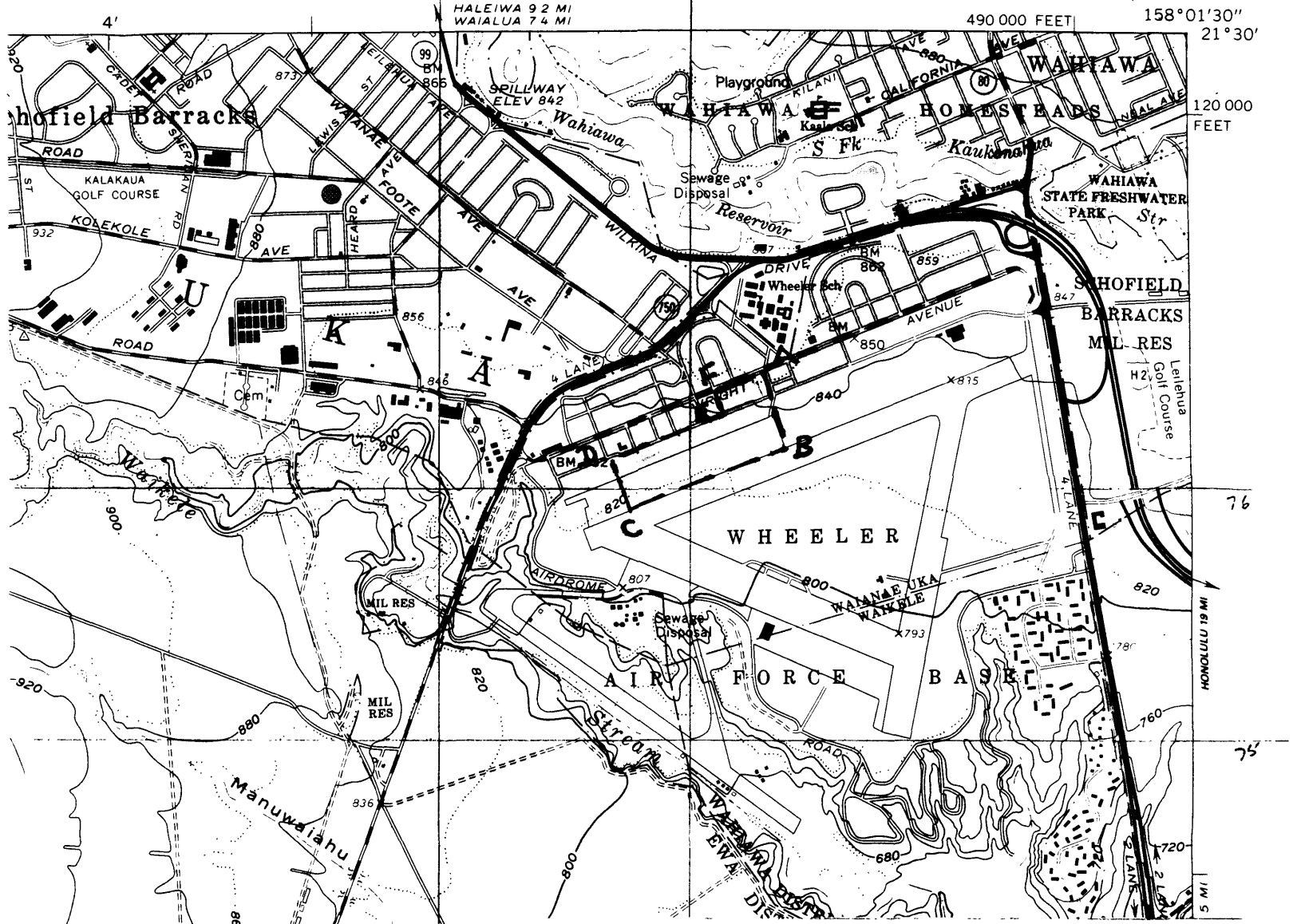
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**Boundary**

Beginning at the southwest intersection of Wright Avenue and an unnamed north-south street that is 400 feet southwest of the boundary of Wheeler School; then south-southeast in a straight line along the west curb of an unnamed street following along a jog in the street and along the east boundary of the flight line for a distance of 1,000 feet; then west-southwest in a straight line along the boundary between the flight line and a runway for a distance of 2,200 feet; than a right angle turn to the north-northwest and in a straight line for a distance of 725 feet to the south curb of an unnamed street one block south of Wright Avenue; then east-northeast in a straight line along the south curb of that unnamed street for a distance of 1,660 feet (five blocks); then north-northwest in a straight line along the east curb of an unnamed street for a distance of 275 feet to its intersection with Wright Avenue; then east-northeast in a straight line along the south curb of Wright Avenue to the point of beginning.



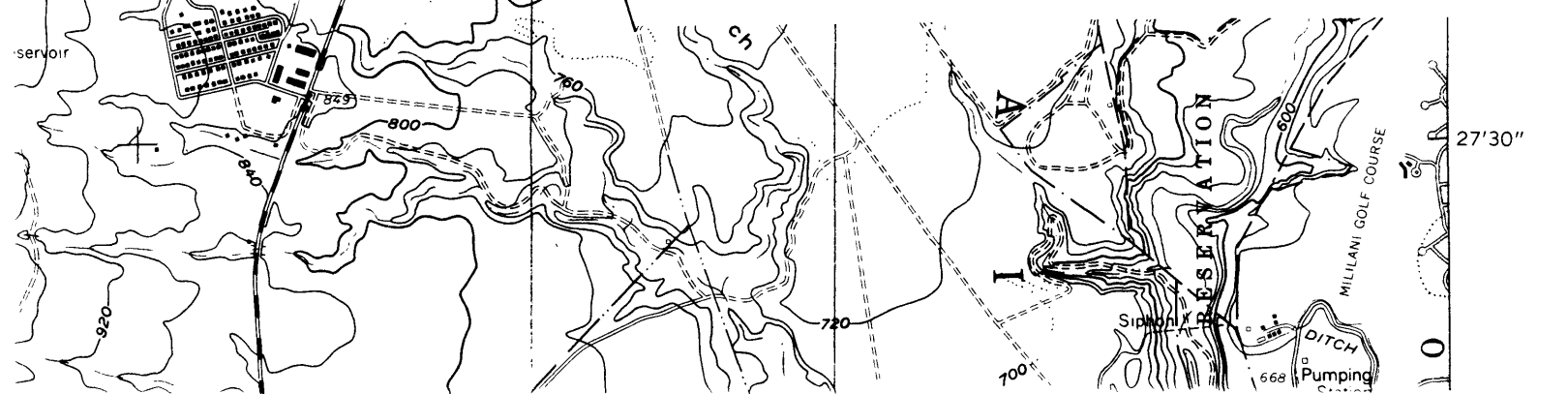
SCHOFIELD BARRACKS QUADRANGLE  
 HAWAII—HONOLULU CO.  
 ISLAND OF OAHU  
 7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)



**Wheeler Field**

**Schofield Barracks Quadrangle (1: 24,000)**

- |                        |                        |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| A. 04/599 300/2376 440 | B. 04/599 380/2376 170 |
| C. 04/598 760/2375 920 | D. 04/598 680/2376 120 |
| E. 04/599 120/2376 300 | F. 04/599 100/2376 390 |



LEGEND

AIRFIELD PAVEMENTS

- EXISTING TO BE RETAINED
- EXISTING TO BE ABANDONED
- PROPOSED
- EXPANSIBILITY

STRUCTURES

- EXISTING PERMANENT
- EXISTING MODIFICATION OR SEMI-PERMANENT
- EXISTING TEMPORARY TO BE RETAINED
- EXISTING TO BE ABANDONED
- PROPOSED
- UNDERGROUND

ROADS, PARKING & R.R.

- EXISTING TO BE RETAINED
- EXISTING TO BE ABANDONED
- PROPOSED ROAD
- PROPOSED PARKING
- EXISTING RAILROAD
- PROPOSED RAILROAD

BOUNDARIES

- EXISTING PROPERTY LINE (IN FEE)
- PROPOSED PROPERTY LINE (IN FEE)
- EXPANSIBILITY (IN FEE)
- EXISTING PROPERTY LINE \*
- PROPOSED PROPERTY LINE \*
- EXPANSIBILITY \*
- EXISTING FENCE
- PROPOSED FENCE
- APPROACH ZONE & R/W CLEARANCE
- EASEMENTS OR PERMITS

NATURAL FEATURES

- EXISTING CONTOURS
- STREAMS & RIVERS
- DRAINAGE CHANNEL OR DITCH

ANTENNAS

- RHOMBIC ANTENNA
- DISCORN ANTENNA

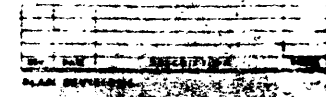
- ANTENNA MIDPOINT
- HORIZONTAL CONTROL POINT OF MEASUREMENT
- POLE SUPPORT WITH GUY
- UNDERGROUND COAXIAL CABLE EMERGENCY LINE

APPROX. MAG. DECL. 11° 0' E

SCALE 1/8" = 100 FEET

SCALE 1/8" = 100 FEET

CONTOUR INTERVAL - 50 FEET



AIRFIELD ELEVATION 425 M.S.L.  
DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

WHEELER  
AIR FORCE BASE

