

“Where Education Becomes Fun” Self-Guided Walking Tour



This guide is designed to assist educators, parents and group leaders in maximizing the National Naval Aviation Museum’s educational resources.

Virtual Tour or Self Guided Tour

The Virtual Tour takes online visitors throughout the facility, giving them a window to the aircraft and exhibits displayed in honor of the achievements and sacrifices made over a century of Naval Aviation. Visit this link at <http://www.navalaviationmuseum.org/explore/exhibits-and-collections/virtual-tour> or you can download our Self Guided Walking Tour for your group.

But by reviewing this guide prior to arrival, you will be able to select or suggest the exhibits that will not only fit into your allotted visit time, but also correspond with the educational level of your students and their interests. This guide also serves as a tool for classroom review once before and after the students are back at school or home.

Exhibits located on the First Floor of the Museum

**Each exhibit is link back to our website for further discussion. Before you begin your tour through the Museum, please be sure to pick up a Museum Map at the information desk located to the right of the main entrance.*



[The World War I](#) exhibit is divided into four distinct dioramas, including a seaplane as it would have appeared on the shores of Naval Air Station (NAS) Pensacola, Florida, and an airfield scene somewhere in France showing a battle-scarred building that serves as a makeshift home for combat pilots complete with wartime music and a flickering flame in a pot belly stove. A machine gun nest guards a muddy airstrip on which a biplane sits ready to launch on a mission. This diorama also includes a period ambulance poised to take wounded airmen to a field hospital.



Squadron Patches

During World War I, the pilots that engaged in dogfights over the Western Front came to be called the Knights of the Air. Thus, it is fitting that throughout aviation history squadrons have adopted insignias as veritable coats of arms, capturing the esprit of airmen that wage war in the air to this day. Colorfully adorned with unit insignias, this exhibit displays hundreds of squadron, ship and station patches collected by the Museum through the years.

[NC-4 Flying Boat](#)

The NC (NAVY-CURTISS) Aircraft was designed during World War I as an antisubmarine aircraft. With a wingspan of 126 feet and powered by four Liberty engines, the U.S. launched the aircraft displayed here on May 8, 1919. A tangible symbol of historic developments in aviation, the NC-4 flying boat completed the historic 3,000-mile trip from Naval Air Station Rockaway Beach, New York to Lisbon, Portugal in 19 days. Finishing its journey on May 27, 1919, the NC-4 became the first aircraft to cross the Atlantic Ocean.



[NC-4 Flying Boat](#)

Complementing the display of the famous NC-4 flying boat is an exhibit telling its brief, but eventful, career. The exhibit, built to look like the interior of a wooden hangar from the era in which the NC-4 operated, tells the story of its construction, transatlantic flight, recruiting tour of the Southeastern United States, and eventual restoration by the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum. Included are artifacts from members of the crew.

[PBY-5 Catalina Cutaway](#)

This aircraft is the only one of its kind known to exist. During World War II, *Catalinas* performed a variety of essential duties, including long-range scouting and anti-submarine patrols, convoy escorts, search and rescue and bombing operations. It was in the latter functions that the PBY established its greatest legacy, equipping so-called Black Cat squadrons that carried out effective night attacks against Japanese shipping and installations.



PBY-5 Catalina



Two other PBY squadrons were equipped with magnetic anomaly detection gear in order to locate submerged submarines. Retro-bombs were also installed which, when fired backwards at a velocity equal to the speed of the aircraft, dropped straight down upon a target.

USS Cabot

Commissioned July 24, 1943, the USS *Cabot* (nicknamed the “Iron Woman”) was one of the light carriers to serve in the Pacific during World War II. During the 16 months spent in the combat zone, she steamed 133,880 nautical miles and launched 116 strikes against the enemy. Viewing the World War II aircraft displayed on her deck, one gains an appreciation for the limited size of a light aircraft carrier flight deck. This exhibit also includes a 40mm anti-aircraft gun from the USS *Cabot*; climb in, take aim and defend the ship!



Sunken Treasures



The centerpieces of the museum's Sunken Treasures exhibit are two aircraft resurrected from Lake Michigan that have been preserved in the condition in which they were found. This F4F Wildcat, like many of the aircraft recovered, was remarkably well preserved in the cold, freshwater environment.



Like all of the aircraft recovered by the museum from Lake Michigan, this SBD Dauntless displayed in the Sunken Treasures exhibit has a story. It spent most of its operational career flying from Naval Air Station (NAS) Norfolk, Virginia, before being used for carrier qualification. Flown by Ensign Charles C. Witkowski, it experienced engine failure on a 24 August 1944, launch from the training carrier *Sable*. The pilot made a water landing and was rescued.

Home Front U.S.A.



The centerpiece of the museum's Home Front U.S.A. exhibit is the recreation of a typical Main Street scene as it would have appeared in most any small town during World War II. A Marine home on leave gets a shoe sign outside a barber shop, the window of the local drugstore next to him proudly displaying photographs of the town's young men and women serving in the armed forces. Down the street, a pawn shop beckons shoppers in an era in which rationing was the norm.



Period signs advertising everything from cigars to soft drinks adorn the exterior wall of a country store and gas station. Inside, museum volunteers who grew up during the war years describe the point system and use of ration stamps that governed the purchase of food and other products during World War II. More than half of U.S. drivers during the war were issued "A" stickers for their cars, limiting them to four gallons of gas per week from pumps like that displayed in the exhibit.



Space

“One giant leap for mankind.” Walk with the astronauts in America’s final frontier and relive the first lunar landing on July 20, 1969. See the Apollo command module, Skylab 2, that carried an all-Navy crew to the earth orbiting Skylab.



[The Motion-Based Simulator Ride](#)

The fully enclosed capsule, which accommodates up to 15 passengers, can move in six directions, allowing you to experience horizontal rolls, longitudinal pitches and vertical climb featured are two pulse pounding rides, Desert Storm and Fly With The Blues! The ride provides each student with a fun experience in what it is like to fly in a Blue Angel aircraft.

Pacific Island Exhibit



An F4F Wildcat recovered from Lake Michigan is an authentic wartime centerpiece for the museum's exhibit that recreates the environment of a jungle airfield in the World War II Pacific Theater. Note the cactus painted on the cowling of the aircraft, which commemorates the nickname of the aircraft and personnel that flew from Henderson Field on Guadalcanal during 1942-1943. With the island's codename "Cactus," they were called the "Cactus Air Force."



Once airfields became operational and enemy resistance on the islands on which they were located ceased, it did not take long for personnel to establish a haven for their off-duty hours. Rustic bars like "One-Eyed Jack's" in the Pacific Island Exhibit featured the standard pin-ups of starlets back home. "Torpedo-juice" made from alcohol removed from torpedoes coupled with liquor obtained on leave or in trades with aircraft crews that delivered supplies to the airfield kept personnel fortified.



Although impossible to recreate the heat, humidity, insects, and danger from enemy attack that was part of everyday life at airfields all across the Pacific during World War II, the rustic shower gives visitors a sense of a life out of the ordinary. The rules limiting water usage reveals that showers were a luxury rather than an everyday occurrence in the combat zone. Note the sign behind the shower, which displays distances to points around the world, the most important one being to Tokyo, the capital of Japan, at which the bomb atop the sign is thumbing its nose.

[World War II Aircraft Carrier Exhibit](#)



With the maze of pipes overhead providing the look of a real ship, the ready room in the World War II Aircraft Carrier Exhibit captures the environment of the space that for pilots and aircrewmen was a haven on board ship. Here, in the stuffed chairs, they sat anxiously receiving preflight briefings prior to launching on combat missions.

World War II Aircraft Carrier Exhibit



On board wartime carriers, doctors and pharmacist's mates, the latter's workspace depicted in the exhibit complete with original bottles from the carrier *Hornet* (CV 12), cared for thousands on a variety of levels. The routine of treating common maladies could be transformed in moments by a propeller blade slicing into the shoulder of a sailor on the flight deck or wounded air crewmen returning from a mission.



A common word heard on board naval vessels is "gedunk," which is the term given to ice cream, candy, and other snack foods served aboard ship. It also refers to the ship's store in which they are sold. In assembling the gedunk in the World War II Aircraft Carrier Exhibit, the museum contacted companies around the country to obtain examples of product labels from the World War II time frame, the result an authentic look for the shipboard equivalent of the corner drugstore.



Views of Lighter Than Air Exhibit

From this cockpit removed from the control car of the ZPG-2 airship "Snow Bird," Commander Jack R. Hunt commanded a crew that flew into history during March 1957. Launching from Naval Air Station (NAS) South Weymouth, Massachusetts, the airship made two crossings of the Atlantic before touching down at NAS Key West, Florida. All told, "Snow Bird" spent just over eleven days aloft in covering 9,448 miles without refueling. For his performance on the flight, Hunt received the Harmon International Trophy for Aeronauts.



Side view of the forward section of the famed ZPG-2 "Snow Bird" showing the insignia and nickname. In March 1957 the airship completed a record-setting 9,448-mile flight without refueling during which it remained airborne for just over eleven days

Welcome to Hangar Bay One



The newest addition to the National Naval Aviation Museum, Hangar Bay One, adds 55,000 square feet of exhibit space to a facility that is already one of the largest of its kind in the world. Its façade reminiscent of hangars of old, the new structure primarily displays aircraft from the museum collection that flew during the post-World War II era. Among them is the R4D-5L *Skytrain* nicknamed “Que Sera Sera” that in 1956, became the first aircraft to land at the South Pole as well as the P2V-1 *Neptune* nicknamed the “Truculent Turtle” that in 1946, established a long-distance record during a flight between Perth, Australia and Columbus, Ohio. In addition, Hangar Bay One is now home to the museum’s collection of U.S. Coast Guard aircraft, with a revised exhibit devoted to that service scheduled to open in the hangar in the future.