

## Field Guide to Coronado History:

### Looking Back 80 Years

By Bruce Linder



There was a time when Coronado was quieter, slower ... we all know that. In 1930, for instance, the city's population was only 5,424 and the *Coronado Journal* kept everyone apprised of bridge parties, polo results and new residents moving to the island.

Here is an interesting snippet written in 1937 by a young naval aviator from a squadron at North Island taking off to join a carrier off the coast. It that provides a nice snapshot of a Coronado eighty years ago:

“If you drove across from San Diego you would board a ferryboat, cross the bay between hurrying destroyers and cruisers, and drive out into the little town of Coronado. More than seven-tenths of this quiet little resort is taken up with the homes of the naval officers from the air station, who have only to drive across Spanish Bight, a backwater from the bay, in order to be on the base.

“Here, along the palm bordered streets, Navy wives stop to chat and discuss the affairs of Navy life as only Navy wives can. Along the sand beaches and on the tennis courts, Navy juniors romp – amid the roar of “daddy’s squadron coming up the Strand ...

“We ran up our engines, checking them carefully and then followed Alex down the line out onto the field. Noz raised his hand, as Bill Kane and I edged up into position on his wings, and then we were off the mat, out over Spanish Bight, and swinging down for the lower bay, climbing as we went, almost passing over the huge, sedate structure of the Hotel Del Coronado.

“You could pick out the crowds of people and automobiles that lined Ocean Avenue along the seawall and see their upturned faces. There were probably some dismayed looks down there. The businessmen of Coronado almost close up shop when the cruise leaves, for nearly half the population has gone with the ships. It is a good time for their vacations ...

“Now the group commander swung left in a lazy, sweeping turn, to allow plenty of room for the four eighteen-plane squadrons behind, and then, as the individual squadrons closed up into a solid group formation, he led us back over Coronado and then toward the Coronado Islands.

“I chanced quick looks down past the wing at the town. We were at six thousand feet, and I could make out the kids waving along the avenues, the officer’s families still filing out of North Island in a stream of cars heading for home – where they would await daddy’s return some three or four months hence.”

*Quoted from Air Base by Boone Guyton. Photo courtesy of Coronado Historical Association. [www.coronadohistory.org](http://www.coronadohistory.org) © CHA*