A study of community reactions to the Weymouth Naval Air Station and its jet aircraft operations.
BOSTON UNIVERSITY
School of Public Relations and Communications

Thesis

A STUDY OF COMMUNITY REACTIONS TO THE WEYMOUTH NAVAL AIR STATION AND ITS JET AIRCRAFT OPERATIONS

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

One of the most intriguing problem areas in the public relations field is that involving public nuisances. Whether the nuisance is a factory's pollution of local streams, disagreeable odors, smudging smoke, or the glare of bright lights in bedroom windows at night, strong emotions are aroused. Where the responsible agent is a community benefactor and the nuisance seems essential to its operation, the total reaction is apt to be very mixed. Under such circumstances, analyzing the problem of community reactions involves psychological and sociological considerations basic to any proposed solution or adjustment.

One of the public nuisances coming increasingly into common experience is that of jet aircraft noise. Man's experience in the world of sound cannot relate it to much that is previously known. Its effect upon those who are exposed to it for the first time is reminiscent of the psychological shock accompanying the first appearance of the steamboat, the locomotive, the automobile and the early airplane. The physical shock of the jet, however, transcends that of all these put together. One of the problems plaguing those in the aircraft industry and
responsible public officials is how to reduce the physical and psychological effects of this latest aeronautical development.

President Truman succinctly stated the essential problem in a letter to James H. Doolittle appointing him as chairman of the President's Airport Commission in February, 1952:

On the one hand, provision must be made for the safety, welfare and peace of mind of the people living in close proximity to airports. On the other hand, recognition must be given both to the requirements of national defense and to the importance of a progressive and efficient aviation industry in our national economy.\(^1\)

Up to this point, the use of jet engines in the United States has been confined to the military services. These, therefore, have borne the brunt of the public's response to this new phenomenon. The problem has been so recent and so intense that few solutions have even been proposed in the general bewilderment of "Where do we go from here?" Thus, as recently as June, 1956, airport noise was termed one of their chief problems in public relations by a special group of Air Force officers taking an intensive course at the Boston University School of Public Relations and Communications.

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Relations between the Weymouth Naval Air Station and its surrounding communities offer an example of the effect of jet noise. This has been so great, especially at the outset, as to be viewed by some as a public nuisance for which the Navy should be held responsible.

Established in 1942 as a lighter-than-air craft base, the Station was closed after the end of World War II, and reactivated in late 1953 as a jet aircraft field. It has expanded slowly but steadily since then. Each week-end 500 Naval reservists from five New England states come to the base for flight training. Many jet aircraft are included in flying operations from early morning till late evening hours.

The impact upon some local residents of the roaring jet planes taking off and landing close to their homes during what could be quiet, restful week-end hours may perhaps be imagined. Mothers angry because their sleeping children are blasted into fearful wakefulness; ministers' sermons drowned out by the noise overhead; classes disturbed in schools; patients upset in the hospital: these are the sketches drawn as the early by-products of required operations at the Station.

In addition, the Station has had plans pending for two years for the extension of one runway a little more than half a mile into what is now the town of Rockland, Mass. Much of this extension will inevitably dislocate life in the
community. It will eliminate 26 civilian homes, force a detour on a major artery where some local businesses are located, and make many drivers travel an added two and a half miles to reach their destinations. Opposition to this on the part of Rockland citizens has been active and intense, reinforcing some of the hostile community sentiment in Weymouth.

The general situation was not improved in December, 1955, when a jet plane taking off from the base crashed and burned in South Weymouth, killing the pilot and narrowly missing a group of homes and stores in the vicinity.

All in all, the circumstances have added up to a monumental problem in community relations.

B. IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of this study is to be found on several different levels. The most immediate significance relates to its implications for improving the community situation by bringing community reactions systematically to the attention of the Station. This has been partly done previously through the medium of individual complaints but this study is the first effort to present the jet noise and associated problems affecting Weymouth and Rockland as a whole to Station authorities for whatever alleviations or explanations they may be able to make.
The study is also important in developing additional materials on the basis of which the Station's present public relations efforts may be focused even more effectively on the best ways of improving community relationships. The findings are based on responses of the people most vitally concerned and should reveal "pegs" on which community education efforts may be hung. The study also reviews community leadership resources which would not ordinarily come to the attention of the Station. If used, the net result should be an improvement in community-Station relationships. This will be important to the Station's naval personnel and civilian employees who either live in the community or depend upon it to satisfy some of their needs.

The Weymouth situation is only one of hundreds, however, and is probably duplicated wherever air reserve training, jet planes and/or runway extensions characterize the aviation installations near neighborhoods. Other services have the problem along with the Navy and no reduction in the problem-producing factors is foreseeable. Jet engines cannot now be quieted without sacrificing efficiency of crucial importance to military aircraft. And runways must be extended to accommodate jet planes. The importance for military public relations in all services, therefore, is also easily apparent.

The study is important also for commercial aviation operation. Both noise and runway extension problems must be
met by civil airports as jet airliners begin to make their appearance in increasing numbers after 1959. Indeed, even more persons will be affected in view of the greater size of metropolitan centers adjacent to civilian airports and the way areas around the latter are being built up. Experience has shown that commercial aviation tends to follow military aviation precedents. Observations and conclusions drawn from the Weymouth situation may enable the commercial aviation field to prepare now for some of the adjustments necessary when they begin jet operation. Although some of the physical problems were pointed out four years ago by the President's Airport Commission, little has since been published on how to investigate and meet community reactions to these problems.

Finally, there is the importance of the methodology used as suggesting one approach to the study of a public nuisance. The effort has been made to look at community reactions from the standpoints of those who have complained overtly and those regarded as community leaders. Inasmuch as community leaders are usually selected as important channels for public relations activity, what are the differences, if any, between these viewpoints and what are their implications for public relations? Is the systematic interview with interpretations an effective device for gauging public reaction even where time and financial limitations make stratified sampling unfeasible?
How does one determine who the community leaders are or should be in a given situation? The answers to these questions are important methodologically.

C. DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

None of the terms used is apt to be misleading or ambiguous with the exception of the word "nuisance" as used here.

**Nuisance**: An offensive, annoying, unpleasant or obnoxious thing or practice; a cause or source of annoyance, especially a continuing or repeating invasion or disturbance of another's right.

**Public nuisance**: A nuisance affecting the public or a community in general.

**Mixed nuisance**: A nuisance both affecting the public and doing special individual damage.²

D. SCOPE

Geographically, the study includes the Weymouth Naval Air Station and the towns of Weymouth and Rockland, Massachusetts as the focal points of study. It also includes some comment from other neighboring communities although it was physically impossible in the time allotted to give the attention which should ideally have been paid to all the towns on which Station operations have had an impact.

Temporally, the study was conducted and written up between June 15 and August 30, 1956.

Topic-wise, the study includes the general social impact of the Station on Weymouth and Rockland and community opinions about the impact; effects of jet noise on community life; attitudes associated with reactions to the noise; an appraisal of what the Station has done to meet the problem; solutions proposed by the community; and solutions attempted elsewhere along with recommendations emanating from the study.

E. METHOD

The principal methods employed was that of the personal interview using a questionnaire for obtaining community attitudes. Also used were straight interviews and record research for fact-finding; and library research for background and additional information.

The principal sources explored were citizens known to have made complaints; Chamber of Commerce, real estate, newspaper, church and civic leaders -- the position holders; leaders designated by complainants; municipal officials; Station personnel; files of local newspapers; and available current literature.

Literature on the aircraft noise problem and airport-community relationships was read at the outset, followed by preliminary interviews with Station personnel. The questionnaire was then designed and interviews held with all
persons known to have expressed some open criticism of the noise or runway problems. Interviews were then held with those designated leaders 1) whom most complainants said they would like to see involved in any committee set-up to deal with Station-community problems and 2) whom most interviewees thought were most influential. Meanwhile, a few interviews were also held with the main "positional" leaders such as the chairman of the Board of Selectmen, service club heads, newspaper editors, etc.

Forty interviews were taken, not including those made for fact-finding purposes only. Twenty each were made in Weymouth and Rockland. The Weymouth interviews included six with complainants, three with complainant-leaders, nine with designated leaders and two with "positional" leaders who were not mentioned by other interviewees. The Rockland interviews were all with designated leaders except for four whose homes were to be possessed in the runway extension development. Efforts to locate other complainants were frustrated because the Station had disposed of its records relating to them.

An effort was made to take an abbreviated approach similar to that used by social researchers such as John Dollard, Allison Davis and the Gardners, and Floyd Hunter, in which a realistic community picture would emerge without depending necessarily upon precise statistical validation.
F. ORGANIZATION OF REMAINDER OF THESIS

This is best apprehended by reference to the table of contents.
CHAPTER II

GENERAL ASPECTS OF AIRCRAFT NOISE AND AIRPORT-COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

A. HISTORICAL SKETCH

Since the Wright brothers launched their plane at Kitty Hawk, N.C. in 1903, community reactions to aircraft operation have increased in complexity with the expanding size, speed, sound and numbers of airplanes in use. Probably few farmers today take pot-shots at planes which they claim frighten their livestock. Nonetheless, the growth in plane numbers, airports, passenger travel and aircraft noise has progressively brought the industry into growing contact with the public and increased the number of possible friction areas with various sections of that public. Indeed, a new field of aeronautical law has had to develop because of problems brought by this expanding industry.

As industry plans called for heavier planes driven by more powerful engines, this had the general effect of increasing the sound of those engines. No widespread community hostility was encountered, however, probably because the increases were so gradual as to be almost unnoticeable. World War II saw a tremendous spurt in plane and engine design and use, however, and
Captain Edward V. Rickenbacker, president of Eastern Air Lines, traces recent problems of airport-community relationships to this period:

During the war, residents near airports had patiently and patriotically refrained from protest against noise and hazard of military aircraft activities. But with the war's end this tolerance did not carry over to fast-growing operations of aircraft engaged in civil pursuits.

Neither did it carry over to Air Force flying.¹

It remained for a series of tragedies in the metropolitan New York area in the winter of 1951-52 to crystallize slumbering resentment among airport neighbors nationally against noisy, low-flying planes -- against public nuisances. Between December 16, 1951 and February 11, 1952, three commercial planes using Newark Airport plunged into nearby Elizabeth, killing a total of 119 persons, eleven in their homes. Significantly, it was noted that "annoyance at noise thus became linked with fear of falling planes."²

Events moved swiftly after that. The Civil Aeronautics Board closed Newark Airport. The National Air Transport Coordinating Committee, chaired by Captain Rickenbacker and including the presidents of nine airlines, was organized the day after the third crash. President Truman appointed the President's Airport Commission eight


days later. The crashes also prompted the formation of the National Aviation Noise Reduction Committee.

Some idea of the intense reaction evoked among airport neighbors in the metropolitan New York area at that time may be gained from one study made by the National Air Transport Coordinating Committee a few months after its organization. The results found 43 per cent of the residents were greatly annoyed by airplane noise, 17 per cent were in favor of closing LaGuardia and Idlewild airports too, and 7 per cent said they thought civilian air transportation was not even necessary.³

Since that time, the increasing appearance of jet aircraft at military fields or commercial airports used by the armed forces has only aggravated the problem of noise and no relief is in sight now or in the immediate future. Although the National Aviation Noise Reduction Committee, the President's Airport Commission and aircraft industry leaders have suggested a number of ways in which to try to adapt to the noise of jet engines, little has been done to reduce the engine noise itself.

While some officials such as C.W. LaPiere, General Electric vice-president and general manager of the aircraft turbine division, think that some progress in noise reduction

³Ibid.
may be expected in the future, the consensus is that the outlook is not bright. "There is no known method of reducing noise and retaining power," says M.M. Miller, Douglas Aircraft Company acoustical engineer. "Engines of greater thrust make more and more noise. Noise and power go hand in hand."[4]

One other historical development deserves mention. At the time many airports were first constructed they were located relatively some distance away from population concentrations and there were only few neighbors to be bothered by comparatively small airport traffic. The tremendous expansion of most urban areas in the last 30 years meant that many large airports are now encompassed by suburbia. In some instances concessions have mushroomed adjacent to the airport as it has become an increasingly popular attraction. There are thus more neighbors to be affected by more -- and noisier -- air traffic. An important by-product is that of social accretion, whereby those uttering complaints receive social support and this support in turn seems to give the basis of the complaint even more validity.

B. PHYSICAL ASPECTS OF JET SOUND

The objective and subjective effects of jet sound are but dimly appreciated by those who have not been exposed to it. According to Major Elizabeth Guild, psychologist,

U S A F School of Aviation Medicine, the annoyance quality of a given noise depends on its quality as much as its quantity. And a jet's scream has been called "an ocean of discord, a 'white' noise compounded of pitches ranging from that of a low rumble to that of a shrill whine. Thus it is rich in tones to which the human ear is most sensitive (three to four octaves above middle C)."  

Major Guild found that the average jet engine at cruising speed produces 108 decibels above the hearing threshold, or about as much noise as riveters on a construction job next door. A jet taking off and passing directly over a home near the runway could rattle the dishes with up to 120 decibels. Jet planes overhead rarely yield more than 86 decibels, but this is enough to drown out all conversation.  

Medical men have been seriously concerned about the human organism's response to aviation noises, especially those of jet planes. The noise effects are most intense, of course, on those most exposed to the blasts and servicing crew members have experienced reactions from temporary deafness to nausea, vomiting and loss of normal nerve-muscle coordination. Ruptured ear drums have also been reported to occur.

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6 Ibid.
although the individuals were protected with ear plugs, ear muffs and special helmets.\textsuperscript{7} Other tests show that fatigue, nervous strain and even deterioration of human tissue follow long exposure to very loud jet noises. Prostration, excessive body heating and extreme nervousness are cited by some researchers.\textsuperscript{8}

The average airport neighbor would not be exposed long enough or close enough to jet noise to experience these reactions. Reference to them is, however, suggestive of the type of reaction which may be expected on a smaller scale among civilians subjected to the jet roar over a prolonged period of time. It must be remembered that some persons are constitutionally more sensitive to certain types of noise than others or may be psychologically more vulnerable at particular times. In any event, appreciation of some of the physical effects of the noise helps us to view more understandably the hysterical quality of some neighbors' complaints which will be mentioned later.

The likelihood is that these physical effects will become more, rather than less, severe in the future. The effects alluded to were caused by jet engines. Even greater noisemakers, in ascending order, are the jet engine with

\textsuperscript{7}Spencer, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 91.
\textsuperscript{8}Larsen, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 74.
afterburner, the rocket engine and probably the supersonic propeller.9

One illustration of grim future expectations was the performance of an Air Force F-100 afterburner-equipped supersonic fighter in the fall of 1953. Coming out of a supersonic dive, the plane generated a boom that "knocked one reporter sprawling off the chair, smashed plate glass, and cracked four-by-four frames."10

Another portent of things to come may be found in an analysis of the noise levels measured at various distances from take-off point, presented by Dr. Leo Beranek of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology at a meeting of the Acoustical Society of America:

With a six-engine jet transport, the area of sizeable irritation is a path 4 miles wide and 2½ miles long, Dr. Beranek computed, and with a four-engine turbo-prop craft, the area will be 4 miles wide and 32 miles long.11

C. COMMUNITY REACTIONS TO AIRCRAFT NOISE

Some of the ways citizens have responded to the deluge of airplane noise near their homes have already been briefly mentioned and this topic will receive expanded attention

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9The Airport and Its Neighbors, p. 45.

10Larsen, loc. cit.

later. Reaction to piston engines and propeller noise was so great in communities adjacent to the three large metropolitan New York airports that authorities decided against allowing jet-powered "Comet" to land at Idlewild even for exhibit purposes. Their estimate of probable adverse public response was based on solid experience. Residents of what newspapers have called "Jitter Alley"—along one of the La Guardia flight paths—have tried to get Federal legislation passed which would forbid jet aircraft the use of both La Guardia and Idlewild airports.

Elsewhere also, community resentment has risen to such a pitch that Charles F. Horne, Civil Aeronautics Administrator at the time, told an industry advisory group that aircraft noise in residential areas was "one of the gravest problems facing the aviation industry" and that "unless the problem is solved with dispatch the entire industry will suffer bitterly."

A graphic, tragi-comic description of the reaction of some individuals is supplied by Col. Harry Shoup as he encountered it at the Air Force's Truax Field, near Madison, Wisconsin:

After lunch, we hit the all-time high of the day on squawks. It was always a woman on the phone and a baby

13Spencer, op. cit., p. 91.
14Ibid., p. 87.
would be screaming in the background. It took no mental giant to imagine the care with which the lady had finally gotten junior off to sleep, only to have one of our jets go over with reverberations that shook him awake.

There was no appeasing these women. I thought I knew a lot about women, what with a wife and three daughters, but I found out during this tour of duty in personally handling many of these reactions that I knew very little about women.

I learned that a woman has enough mad and enough breath saved up to make an impenetrable conversational barrier anywhere from four to six minutes after she starts. A man is a fool to try to break in during that period to explain why a jet makes noise.  

As Col. Shoup's closing remarks indicate, airport authorities faced by a hostile community may find themselves in the position of being able to do little about the noise problem itself except explain why it is an inevitable accompaniment of jet operation. A complaint calling for the elimination of jet noise calls, in effect, for the abolition of jet flying. Since the latter is militarily unfeasible, the airport and the community find themselves with opposing interests. In such a situation where the basic problem cannot be solved, there can only be minor adjustments on either side because of it. How to expand the area of these adjustments is the nub of the problem of airport-community relationships.

CHAPTER III

COMMUNITY SETTINGS

A. WEYMOUTH, MASSACHUSETTS

Weymouth is a corporate cluster of several delightful New England communities. Settled in 1622, the town is located 11 miles south-southeast of Boston. It covers an area 9 miles long (North and South) by 2 3/4 miles wide. Within this area lie five business centers: North Weymouth, Weymouth Landing, East Weymouth, Weymouth Heights and South Weymouth. The five neighborhoods tend to be fairly distinct and community life is somewhat decentralized.

Weymouth's 1955 population is estimated at 42,747. The town has almost doubled in size since 1940 when its population was 23,868. Its people are 90 per cent native-born Americans. In 1950, only 3,226 residents were foreign-born out of a total population of 32,965--and one-third of the foreign-born were Canadian.

Although the town has had a growing population, it has seemingly been a stable one. In June, 1955, 90 per cent of its 10,887 dwelling units were owner-occupied. It had a total of 18,435 registered voters as of the same date: 7,030 Republicans, 2,720 Democrats and 8,685 Independents.

1Statistical data from Emerson R. Dizer, town accountant.
Map Showing Relative Positions of Weymouth (in white)
Rockland, and U. S. Naval Air Station (outlined in ink with Runway Pattern Included)
There are three local weekly papers: the Weymouth Gazette, the Weymouth Truth and the Weymouth Independent, but residents rely heavily upon the Quincy Patriot-Ledger published in Quincy, Massachusetts for daily local news. There are the usual service clubs, social organizations and other aspects of American community structure, except that the Chamber of Commerce is largely inoperative, its functions being handled largely by neighborhood businessmen's associations.

Weymouth residents depend upon a wide variety of light manufacturing plants for livelihood and many merely live in Weymouth while working elsewhere. Its tax rate is most reasonable (1956 rate: $4.38 per $1,000 assessed valuation). Its schools, libraries, recreation facilities and other community features make it a generally desirable residential community. Although some financial and commercial forces are actively trying to attract new industry and expand the community, there is a counterbalance of senior citizens interested in preserving the distinctive flavor of the "Oldest Settlement in the Massachusetts Bay Colony."

B. ROCKLAND, MASSACHUSETTS²

Rockland traces its origin to 1673 when it was settled as a part of the town of Abington. In 1874, the

²Statistical data from sources in offices of Ralph Belcher, town clerk, and Norman Beals, town assessor.
eastern section of Abington was established as a separate town and named Rockland. It is 20 miles south-southeast of Boston and covers a land area of 10.2 square miles.

The town started as a lumber center for the wooden ships which were once made in the North River. It then became the cradle of the shoe industry in 1800 and the site of many shoe factories. The shoe industry remained dominant until the 1920's when it was lost to other areas. The town is now characterized by a diversified range of enterprises including welting and webbing, buffing wheel, glassware, sportswear, rubber and other light manufacturing. Many people who live in Rockland work elsewhere, and its general economic level is somewhat lower than that of Weymouth.

Rockland's 1955 population was set by the state census at 10,516. This is an increase of more than 25 per cent from the 1940 tabulation of 8,087, and most of the gain has come since 1950 when 8,960 persons were recorded. The rate of population growth, while significant, has been only half that of Weymouth. Like Weymouth, its population is 90 per cent native-born.

Sixty-five per cent of the town's 2,706 dwelling units were owner-occupied in January, 1956, a favorable figure compared with the national average though by no means approaching Weymouth's ratio of 90 per cent owner occupancy. Many of the new homes now being built sell for $10-12,000, one indication of the relatively modest economic status of
many of the town's newest settlers. June, 1956 registration figures showed a total of 4,858 registered voters: 1,576 Republicans, 761 Democrats and 2,521 Independents.

Rockland seems to have become a community to which families in modest circumstances who have wanted to escape from the city have turned. This has caused mild resentment on the part of settled community leaders who think that the newcomers do not know enough to resist being drawn into housing developments which are slated for rapid decline. The tax rate has just been raised $9 to $75 per $1,000, but the assessed valuation is only about 40 per cent of the present sale value.

The town has a sizeable shopping district, three banks, two credit unions, a weekly newspaper, library, four parks, beach and children's playground. It relies for hospital service on the South Shore Hospital in South Weymouth and receives other health and welfare services from agencies operating out of Brockton. It has a moderately active Chamber of Commerce and one service club: Kiwanis. As might be expected, everyone seems to know everyone else.
C. WEYMOUTH NAVAL AIR STATION

Function and Composition

The U. S. Naval Air Station, South Weymouth, is one of 28 Naval Air Reserve training centers in the country. It was first established March 1, 1942, as a blimp base. It suspended operations in June, 1949 as part of a Navy economy drive and was carried along on "caretaker status" until the end of 1953. Naval Air Reserve training in this region had been carried on at Squantum, Massachusetts since 1923. By 1953, however, the increased Reserve program and need for longer runways to accommodate the new jet aircraft called for a larger base in this same general area. The Weymouth Station was therefore reactivated on December 4, 1953 for reserve training and the Squantum operation was transferred there.

Primarily, the Naval Air Reserve Training program is designed to provide refresher training for the many men who complete four years of naval air training and service and then elect to return to civilian life. Under the program, the men volunteer for one week-end a month and two weeks a year of active duty training, thus remaining ready for extended active duty if it should be necessary. Specialists required to keep planes in the air are trained at the Station.

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3Based on information obtained from interviews with Station personnel and from files of the Quincy Patriot-Ledger.
Youths 17 to 18½ years old are given specialists' training as Ready Reservists on the same basis of one week-end a month and two weeks a year. The Station also houses members of the Naval Air Development Unit which tests much of the Navy's new equipment for blimps and advanced planes.

These groups are in addition to the members of the Training and Administration of Reserves section, called stationkeepers, who man the Station permanently. These are apt to be veterans of World War II and Korea, many of them married and with families, who live on or near the base.

Before the Station was reactivated in the winter of 1953 it had a caretaker crew of 15. Today the usual total Station complement is approximately 700 officers and men. It also employs 13½ civilian employees who live off base. Five hundred and thirty-six of the Station's enlisted men live off the base: 110 in Weymouth, where 52 own homes; and 48 in Rockland, where 33 own homes. Twenty-eight of the 13½ civilian employees also live in Weymouth, the rest being distributed in surrounding communities including Boston.

In addition, each week-end approximately 500 reservists from all New England states except Connecticut converge upon the base for refresher training, a total of almost 2,500 during the course of a month. Maximum personnel on the base at any time, therefore, is 1,200. The Station is still expanding slowly.
Commanding Officer of the Station is Captain Leif Melsom. Commander Daniel Wells is the Command Liaison Officer responsible for relations between the Station and the community.

Physical Setting

The Station comprises 1252 acres at the southern tip of South Weymouth, bounded on the East and South by Rockland, and on the West by Abington and the southwesternmost part of Weymouth. The Station is laid out so that the main entrance is in South Weymouth and almost all traffic must come through the center of the neighborhood in order to reach the base.

The 7,000 ft. North-South runway which is the main one now used takes planes directly over South Weymouth on one hand and the easternmost section of Abington on the other. There is an East to West runway of 4,000 feet—not long by jet standards and therefore rarely used by them now—which takes planes over Southeast Weymouth on one hand and over Rockland on the other.

Following the recommendations of the President's Airport Commission, the Station would like to develop one major runway primarily. This would run East to West along the line

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4See map.

5See Appendix A, photographs 1 and 2.

6See Appendix A, photographs 3 and 4.
of most prevailing winds in this area. Extending the present East-West runway 4,000 feet into the border zone between Rockland and Hingham would make this possible. This would necessitate cutting the present Union Street and rerouting traffic about two and a half miles around the end of the extension. Plans for this are about to be launched after a reported delay of more than two years because of local opposition.

In visualizing the physical setting of the Station, it must be remembered that the population of Weymouth has almost doubled since the Station was established in the early 40's and the population increase in surrounding communities has presumably been almost as rapid. This tangibly illustrates the point made by the President's Airport Commission that the progressive encompassing of many airport areas by community residents helps establish the physical conditions for heightened airport-community tensions.
CHAPTER IV

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROBLEM OF
STATION-COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

Although the U.S. Naval Air Station at South
Weymouth was not established until March 1, 1942, its
problems with surrounding communities started almost from
the time it was conceived for that site.

A. DEVELOPMENTS IN WEYMOUTH

On January 15, 1941, the Weymouth Board of Selectmen
was reported to have divided into factions over the issue of
whether to try to attract the base to the town.\(^1\) Serious
consideration was given for a time to a proposal for the
town to buy up the land which would be needed for the base at
a cost of about $40,000 and then lease it at no cost to the
Federal government so that the Station could be established
there.

Soon afterwards, however, following a visit by
Captain Charles E. Rosendahl, Chief of the Navy's lighter-
than-air operations, a Weymouth town meeting voted 138 to 10
against acquiring land to lease to the Navy for dirigible
usage. Strong feelings were voiced that the proposed

\(^1\)Quincy Patriot-Ledger, January 15, 1941.
$5,000,000 air base would result in a decline of real estate values. At the same time, they voted local cooperation if such a base were built while "carefully avoiding any action which might be interpreted as an invitation to the Federal government to locate the proposed dirigible base in South Weymouth."2

In this mixed atmosphere of welcome and at least indirect local rejection, the Navy started construction of the base for lighter-than-air craft operations. Even this was marked by ruffled local feelings. Two days before Pearl Harbor, residents from South Weymouth, Abington and Rockland complained that blasting operations at the base were breaking dishes, cracking ceilings and damaging walls. Complaining that not enough local residents were being used in construction, Selectman Everett E. Callahan said, "The town of Weymouth was promised many things when land in South Weymouth was first sought for this air base. Now that the land is in their hands we get nothing."3

During the war and early post-war years, local opposition and discontent disappeared or were soft-pedaled for no adverse comments were reported until after the base was closed in June, 1949. (As a matter of fact, one person, Mrs. Alice Phelan Keefe, was active in efforts in March, 1949

20. cit., February 12, 1941.
30. cit., December 5, 1941.
to halt the closing of the base.) In April, 1950, however, three of Weymouth's selectmen tried unsuccessfully to get funds from the First Naval District for the town's services such as fire and police protection of the idle base.\(^4\)

Seven months later, a proposal to reopen the base for jet aircraft then stationed at Squantum Air Station became public knowledge. Among rumors that the Navy planned to acquire more land for the base and take 100 houses in the process, Weymouth selectmen voted on November 27, 1950 to protest the removal of Squantum activities to the Weymouth base.\(^5\)

Activities lagged for three years thereafter in which plans for base operation which leaked to the public were changed several times. At one point considerable concern was shown over the estimate that 250 to 300 school children of servicemen would be brought into the community. Selectman George E. Lane, who had strongly opposed the base's location in 1941, urged that the Navy pay the cost of a $500,000 school building to house the children and also absorb annual operating and maintenance costs.\(^6\) The reports were either exaggerated or plans were changed, for when the base was reopened on December 4, 1953 as a Naval air reserve

station which would handle jet aircraft, it was with less
than the modest complement of men we have already noted.

Soon after the base was reopened, complaints started
pouring in about the effects of jet noise. These were
investigated and then answered personally by Captain Melsom
who had assumed command of the Station on April 15, 1954.
At the outset, the Captain reports he was called at all hours
during the day up to 1:00 and 2:00 A.M. His individual
explanations and frequent speaking engagements before all
kinds of neighborhood groups, coupled with some adjustments
on the Station's part, gradually diminished the number and
intensity of complaints. The only semblance of an organized
community approach to the noise problem came when the Pond
Plain Improvement Association called on Captain Melsom for
an explanation which was seemingly acceptable to most members.

B. DEVELOPMENTS IN ROCKLAND

When the Navy announced that the East-West runway
would be extended half a mile to the East, cutting Union
Street and forcing a rerouting of traffic between Rockland
and South Weymouth, organized opposition to the proposal was
quick to develop. Those opposed to the move maintained that
it would add six miles to the round trip between Rockland
and Weymouth. This, they said, would discourage South
Weymouth shoppers from coming to the Rockland shopping
center with consequent great economic loss to Rockland.
They also maintained that the greater distance would increase automobile commuting costs for Rockland residents working in Boston by as much as $150 annually.

The Navy's position was that the existing 4,000 feet of its East-West runway were inadequate to handle jet planes safely, that the prevailing wind pattern pointed to East-West take-offs and landings as the most feasible in this area, that the East-West approaches were safer for pilots and less annoying to residents than the North-South runway approaches which were over more heavily populated areas, and that the East was the only direction for the proposed extension to take because of the presence of a major railroad line (New York, New Haven and Hartford) and two highways on the West. (See map, page 21 and aerial photographs in appendix.)

On August 30, 1954, Captain Melsom met with planning board officials from several surrounding communities in a meeting arranged by Dr. Joseph Lelyveld, Rockland podiatrist and chairman of the Rockland Planning Board. The Captain's presentation was enough to persuade Harold P. Davis, Hingham Planning Board official; John F. Newton, chairman of the Weymouth Planning Board; and Frank Hale, also of the Weymouth Board. It did not move Dr. Lelyveld who later said, "I have very little confidence in our selectmen (on this issue)"
because they are inclined to be conservative and pacifists."7

On October 18, 1954, in response to a request from Dr. Lelyveld, Weymouth selectmen formally opposed the runway extension. Curiously enough, the Rockland Board of Selectmen never acted formally to oppose the extension although Rockland would be far more affected by the move than would Weymouth. A few residents from five communities including Weymouth and Rockland met on November 17, 1954 to organize a citizen's group against the runway extension but this was short-lived and nothing further was heard of its activities.

On September 23, the Rockland Retail Merchants Association had presented to U.S. Senators Leverett Saltonstall and John F. Kennedy and to Congressman Donald W. Nicholson a petition signed by the executive officers of two of the town's banks and thirty Union Street businessmen asking their assistance in keeping Union Street open. This was followed by voluminous correspondence between Dr. Lelyveld and a number of State and Federal officials including those just mentioned, Assistant Navy Secretary R. H. Folger, Rep. Carl Vinson, Rear Admiral John Perry and finally, on August 18, 1955, President Eisenhower. Dr. Lelyveld's contentions and the replies of the various officials were given great publicity in the local newspapers and kept the issue before the public. It should also be noted that at the

urging of State Representative Martha Ware from Abington, the Massachusetts House of Representatives passed a resolution favoring an underpass under the extension to keep Union Street open.8

According to Captain Melsom, the controversy brought about a suspension in December, 1954 of the Navy's plans to take land for the extension. Rockland residents voted in a March, 1955 town meeting to drop the matter as an active issue but continued clamor resulted in a special public hearing in Rockland on September 28 between high Navy officials headed by Rear Admiral B. E. Moore from Washington and town officials, with the public urged to attend. The Rockland Standard estimated attendance at 100 persons including fewer than four Union Street merchants.

Navy officials listened to Dr. Lelyveld's arguments about the economic effects of cutting Union Street and heard from Abraham Lelyveld, "dean of Rockland merchants" and Dr. Lelyveld's brother, who was the only merchant to speak. The Navy's arguments for the extension were then presented. When Dr. Lelyveld asked about the possibility of a tunnel under the extended runway through which Union Street traffic could pass, Navy officials said that this would cost

8Brockton Enterprise and Times, August 17, 1955.
$4,600,000 compared with $2,500,000 for Union Street rerouting and could therefore not be considered.\(^9\)

This meeting climaxed the conflict between the Station and those in Rockland opposed to the extension. Immediately afterwards, the Quincy Patriot-Ledger urged continuance of the runway extension in an editorial which said in part:

> It seems to us that there is an overriding question of patriotism involved in a person's attitude toward the South Weymouth base. We don't like the presence of a jet training center in our midst with the noise it may create, and we don't like the heavy taxes we are called upon to support the type of government we must have in an atomic age. We don't like a lot of other things that we have to do today in order to survive and protect ourselves against world powers bent on our destruction.

Pointing out that there are 13-14,000 houses in Weymouth, Abington and Rockland, the paper added:

> If the Navy's proposed project was to be such a serious blight to the area as the opponents would have you believe, it seems unusual that only 200 people showed up at the hearing to listen to the Navy's explanation. We feel that most citizens in the area affected realize that the South Weymouth base has a vital role to play in the well-being of this community and if there are inconveniences to the community because of its presence here, these burdens must be borne as part of the price of our overall defense picture.\(^10\)

Although hostile editorials against Navy officials subsequently appeared in the Weymouth Truth, the meeting marked the turning point in the struggle over the runway extension as far as local public utterances were concerned at least. No record can be found of any local official's


daring to speak in favor of the extension before the meeting, but one week later, Norman J. Beals, chairman of the Rockland Board of Assessors, made a public statement favoring the Navy plan for economic reasons.

Mr. Beals said that it would mean higher, not lower valuation of properties; only six minutes added travel time; greater safety; development of what is now swampy uninhabitable land; and that tunnel maintenance would cost $15-20,000 annually. He thought the rerouting development would make it into an area "capable of producing an income tax dollar receipt of approximately $132,000, as compared with the approximately $7,000 tax receipt from the Union Street section which the Navy plans to acquire, a section which has reached a tax saturation point."\textsuperscript{11}

Following publicity on his position, Mr. Beals said that he received 5-800 compliments from local citizens.

On October 27, 1955 the Navy announced its intention of going ahead with its extension, permitting the state and city to finance a Union Street tunnel if they should so desire. This idea was rejected locally on the grounds that the Federal government should finance such a project. Two days later, Dr. Lelyveld and other officials took advantage of Senator Kennedy's appearance at the Station for a military inspection to conduct him on a tour of the area. On

\textsuperscript{11}Rockland Standard, October 6, 1955.
December 5, Dr. Lelyveld released correspondence between Assistant Secretary of the Navy Folger, Representative Carl Vinson, others and himself, in which he claimed the town's right to say whether the Navy shall close its roads.12

Dr. Lelyveld publicly observed early in January, 1956 that the Miami airport let cars cross one of its runways, the cars being stopped by a gate and light when a plane was approaching. He raised the question with Washington officials whether the same thing could be done with Union Street traffic. The Navy rejected the idea as not a safe alternative.

The last public announcement by Dr. Lelyveld came in March, 1956 when he spoke on an appropriation request for $3,650 to resurface Oregon Avenue from Union Street to Greenwood Street. At that time he said:

Since trucks hauling heavy loads to and from Naval Air Station, South Weymouth, have destroyed much of the surface of Oregon Avenue, I think the highway surveyor ought to contact the Navy to see if they'll do something about the repair of that street.13

Shortly thereafter, a meeting was held of the Rockland Planning Board of which Dr. Lelyveld had been chairman for three years. Dr. Lelyveld is reported to have been asked to resign as chairman on the grounds that frequently his public announcements and press releases implied that he was speaking for the Planning Board when they had taken no

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12Quincy Patriot-Ledger, December 5, 1955.
action authorizing him to do so. He was removed from the chairmanship of the five-man Board by a four to one vote but still retains Board membership.

In mid-June, 1956, the First Naval District announced that it was letting the contract to collect appraisal data and by the end of July, all but four of the 24 home-owners in the path of the projected extension had agreed to accept the government's offer for their land. Even the most adamant opponents of the runway extension accepted its likelihood as a fact.
CHAPTER V

GENERAL IMPACT OF THE STATION ON WEYMOUTH AND ROCKLAND COMMUNITY LIFE AND OPINION

As the President's Airport Commission has pointed out, air bases involving many men should be located reasonably near cities which can supply recreational and other resources for morale and general welfare. Proximity to large urban concentrations is all the more necessary for Reserve units expecting to draw their contingents for part-time duty of short duration from those urban areas. On the other hand, "the presence of such an air base creates not only advantages to the city but also problems of noise and hazard as well as social and economic dislocations of concern to the citizen taxpayers."¹

One of the first observations made by the study was that the size of the Station compared with that of Weymouth and Rockland was not as great as might be expected. Any installation of 700 men in one community of 43,000 and another community of 10,000 will have some effect on its environment, of course. That effect is lessened, however, with the realization that three-fourths of the men live off

¹The Airport and its Neighbors, p. 97.
the base in neighboring communities, including over 100 in Weymouth itself, and that many of the week-end reservists are also drawn from local areas.

For the purpose of analysis in this chapter, the 20 Weymouth questionnaire results were divided into two categories: a) those who thought that jet noise was a bad or acute problem locally (7); and b) those who thought it was only a slight problem (9), plus those who regarded it as no problem at all (3), and one who could not decide. The results are thus analyzed from the standpoint of the seven who thought the problem was bad or acute as opposed to the remaining thirteen. Incidentally, the seven—whom we shall call the critical respondents—include five of those who had complained to the Station at some point or other. The other thirteen will be identified as the non-critical respondents.

The Rockland results were similarly divided into a) those who thought the noise or runway extension made bad or acute local problems (7); and b) those who thought these were only slight problems (12), plus one who thought there was no problem. Here again, the seven will be called the critical respondents and the other thirteen the non-critical.

Opinion About General Effect of Station Locally

Although there is no objective criterion for the total impact of the Station locally with which community opinions can be compared, the replies of respondents to the general question show an interesting range.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Mixed</th>
<th>Bad</th>
<th>Very bad</th>
<th>No effect</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grand Totals</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weymouth</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-critical</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rockland</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>critical</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-critical</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
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Table I shows a noticeable difference between the reaction of Weymouth and Rockland respondents to the base as a whole. Where the chronology would lead one to expect more hostile feelings in Rockland than in Weymouth, it develops that only one Rockland respondent thought that the overall effect of the base on the community had been bad or very bad, compared with five in Weymouth.

Rockland residents who were critical seem not to have carried their attitudes over to a hostile appraisal of the base as a whole. Almost a third of the Rockland respondents characterized the general base effect as good, in fact, compared with a one-tenth favorable response in Weymouth. About a third of the responses from each community regarded the Station's effect as a mixture of positive and negative factors.
Employment, Income and Commercial Effects

The Station's disbursing office places its annual payroll at $3,250,000. This includes $590,000 for 134 civilian employees. Twenty-eight of these live in Weymouth and represent an annual income of $123,000. Including the approximately 110 service personnel living in the town, Weymouth families receive at least $750,000 annually in direct income from the base. To this economic impact must be added the $50,000 paid each year to the Weymouth Light and Power Company for electrical service and the much smaller sum spent by the base itself on local purchases.

TABLE II

OPINIONS OF SELECTED WEYMOUTH AND ROCKLAND RESIDENTS ON LOCAL ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF STATION, 1953 TO PRESENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>No effect</th>
<th>Slight</th>
<th>Definite</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
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<tr>
<td>Grand Totals</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weymouth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>critical</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-critical</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rockland</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>critical</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-critical</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most of the 20 persons interviewed in Weymouth agreed that the base had had some economic effect on the community. Ten said the effect was definite; two called it slight; four said it had had no effect and four persons said they did not
owned by persons unknown and therefore produced no tax income anyhow. In no instance has property been reassessed because of the base and consequently it is still producing the same tax income. To the extent that servicemen have purchased and are living on improved property, in Mr. Bearce's opinion, they have increased the tax yield to the city. It is certain that the presence of the base has not raised taxes. 2

A similar situation exists in Rockland where the parcels originally purchased by the Station yielded a tax income of only $300-400 including tax title land which Rockland gave the government. Thus, no significant decrease in tax revenues has been experienced by Rockland. A slight loss in tax income will be suffered when twenty-one houses and land are taken for the runway extension. Representing a sale value of $140,900, their assessed value is $56,360 and at current tax rates would bring the city $4,226. The position of the Rockland tax assessor's office is that this income loss will be more than compensated for by the increased value of properties adjoining the new bypass road. 3

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2Interview with Harry E. Bearce, Weymouth town assessor, July 9, 1956.

3Interview with Norman J. Beals, Chairman, Rockland Board of Tax Assessors, July 20, 1956.
TABLE III
OPINIONS OF SELECTED WEYMOUTH AND ROCKLAND RESIDENTS ON STATION'S EFFECT ON LOCAL TAXES, 1953 TO PRESENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>No effect</th>
<th>Raised</th>
<th>Lowered</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grand Totals</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weymouth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>critical</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-critical</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rockland</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>critical</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-critical</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table III, two-thirds of the respondents in Weymouth and Rockland agreed with the objective evidence that the Station had had no effect on the local tax situation in either town. In Rockland, six of the twenty respondents thought the effect had been to raise taxes. Indeed, almost a fourth of all those interviewed in both towns had the impression that the base had somehow raised taxes. The most general explanation was that the educational needs of servicemen's children were responsible.

Housing and Real Estate Values

The objective effect of the Station upon local housing and real estate values was most difficult to determine. From the standpoint of the Weymouth tax assessor's office, the base has had no effect pro or con. Mr. Bearce backs up this viewpoint by recalling that in mid-1955, a
half-dozen people in the vicinity of the base wanted their property reassessed because of the noise. He asked them to fill out forms requesting lower assessments. No application had been returned by mid-1956. When he saw them recently, they explained that they had become used to the noise.

Mr. Bearce said:

The town has averaged more than 400 new houses a year for seven consecutive years and many of them are in South Weymouth. I haven't heard of anyone who wants to get out. People who say they want to sell ask double what they paid, so they must not really want to leave. 4

In Rockland, the chairman of the Board of Assessors says that instead of a decrease, the base has had the effect of raising the values of the land immediately adjoining. He reports that when the base was first opened, he was asked to appraise its effects. He wrote many communities adjoining air bases and found that the effect was to increase the value of adjacent land. He asserts that the same thing has taken place in Rockland. 5

On the other hand, the realtor appointed to appraise the properties to be taken in the runway extension and negotiate for their acquisition estimates that the Station has had the effect of depreciating property in its immediate vicinity by 10 per cent. He thinks this is confined mainly to the parcels at the end of runways. The first effect of

4 Interview with Mr. Bearce, July 9, 1956.
5 Interview with Mr. Beals, July 20, 1956.
an air base is to depreciate the contiguous property, he said, and then as personnel connected with the base continue to move in, the housing demand reduces this depreciation. At the present time values are still somewhat depressed, though it must be remembered that this effect does not extend more than a short distance from the base. 6

### TABLE IV

**OPINIONS OF SELECTED WEYMOUTH AND ROCKLAND RESIDENTS ON STATION'S EFFECT ON REAL ESTATE VALUES, 1953 TO PRESENT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>No effect</th>
<th>Raised</th>
<th>Lowered</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grand Totals</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weymouth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>critical</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-critical</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rockland</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>critical</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-critical</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table IV shows, almost three-fourths of the forty respondents in both communities thought that local real estate values were lowered by the base's presence. Almost half of those with this opinion said specifically they thought it applied primarily to the property closest to the base or at the end of the runways. It may be significant that all the critical Weymouth respondents shared this view.

---

6Interview with Francis A. Gunn, Gunn Real Estate Company, Weymouth, July 31, 1956.
These results are interesting when recalled in the framework of replies to the question of how the base had affected the local demand for housing. To this, fifteen of the forty thought it had increased the demand, four thought the demand was lowered and fifteen thought the base had had no effect. There is obviously some discrepancy in attitudes between the three-fourths who think the base has either increased the housing demand or had no effect whatever and the nearly three-fourths who think real estate values have been lowered.

One factor which seemed to influence views on this point was the reported attitude of the Veterans Administration toward insuring loans for homes near the base. The Veterans Administration and Federal Housing Administration were said to have refused loan insurance on homes constructed within a mile of the base and a number of respondents pointed to this as evidence that property in this area had depreciated. One of the largest realtors in the area pointed out, however, that this policy had been modified on appeal and that the Veterans Administration had insured one home only a quarter mile from the base and another located directly in the present flight path. A Rockland banker added that even where the Veterans Administration had not approved new houses, they were being built and sold. His own bank had financed a half-dozen homes for Station personnel.
One of the most influential men in Weymouth thought that the base had helped lower the quality of housing because its personnel could not afford homes in the $15-20,000 range and either rented or purchased the lowest-priced homes available. He also said that the Station had depreciated property by as much as 25 per cent.

School Enrollment and Expense

In Weymouth, 155 of the 8,500 school children in 1955-56 were children whose parents were associated in some way with the base as either servicemen or civilian employees. Twenty-three of these were children whose parents live on the base. For each of them the Federal government pays the town $240.97 as the estimated per capita cost of their education. For the 132 children whose parents live in town but work at the base, the Government pays half their cost on the assumption that their parents' local taxes more than carry the rest of their expense. Thus Weymouth received $21,148 in 1955-56 for the children of base personnel and the school system is very satisfied with the arrangement. It considers, in fact, that the number of children involved is insignificant compared with the problem of overall school expansion.7

7Interview with Elmer S. Mapes, Superintendent of Weymouth Schools, July 11, 1956.
The same general picture applies to Rockland where there are forty-five children of parents attached to the base but living in the town with the school system receiving a half-subsidy for the school costs of each. Here, however, the town is anxious to take advantage of other Federal funds to aid in their school building program. In terms of current expenses, the children of base personnel represent no educational cost to the community.8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE V</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OPINIONS OF SELECTED WEYMOUTH AND ROCKLAND RESIDENTS ON STATION'S EFFECT ON SCHOOL EXPENSES, 1953 TO PRESENT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>No effect</th>
<th>Increased</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grand Totals</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weymouth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>critical</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-critical</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rockland</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>critical</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-critical</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The study results shown in Table V indicate that slightly over half the forty respondents in the two communities thought that the base had no effect on their local school expenses. A significant ratio of a third of the

8Interview with R. Stuart Eston, Superintendent of Rockland Schools, July 19, 1956.
total, however, did think that the Station's personnel had increased the expense for educational purposes, quite contrary to the actual situation.

Traffic

The paucity of public transportation between the Station and other neighborhoods has forced reliance upon their cars by almost all those with business at the base. The amount of traffic at the start and close of the working day is therefore noticeably higher considering that more than 700 persons are going and coming from work. The Weymouth Police Department has noticed the increase but it has not been a serious or unmanageable problem. The same situation exists to a lesser degree in Rockland. The only serious problems produced by the base have come with two or three special occasions a year as when open house is held on the Fourth of July. Auxiliary police are required then with help from the Shore Patrol. On the whole, the base's effect on the traffic problem is small.

Public reaction to the traffic situation conforms very closely with the facts, as Table VI shows.

---

9Interview with Joseph O'Kane, Chief of Police, Weymouth, July 9, 1956.

10Interview with Adolph Johnson, Chief of Police, Rockland, July 30, 1956.
TABLE VI
OPINIONS OF SELECTED WEYMOUTH AND ROCKLAND RESIDENTS ON STATION'S EFFECT ON LOCAL TRAFFIC, 1953 TO PRESENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>No effect</th>
<th>Special occasions</th>
<th>Increase AM - PM</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grand Totals</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weymouth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>critical</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-critical</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rockland</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>critical</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-critical</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only two people were critical of base personnel in this connection. One very influential Weymouth person said that there had been a number of accidents by "wild sailor drivers." Another reported a lack of courtesy in driving habits based on one experience he had had. The consensus, however, was that the Station presented no traffic problems of consequence.

Police Problems

The police chiefs of both communities were emphatic in saying that they had experienced no problems from men at the base. They thought the general conduct of officers and men was exemplary and in marked contrast with the stereotyped behavior of servicemen on leave. They praised the cooperative relationships between the base and local law enforcement agencies.

Public opinion showed greater uniformity on this point than on any other. Eighteen of twenty Weymouth residents—including all the critical ones—said that the base had brought no increase in police problems. Two did not know. Nineteen of the Rockland residents—including six of the seven critical ones—agreed that the base had produced no problems of law and order. The lone deviate declared himself unable to judge.

One person said that although he thought Station
Public opinion showed greater uniformity on this point than on any other. Eighteen of twenty Weymouth residents—including all the critical ones—said that the base had brought no increase in police problems. Two did not know. Nineteen of the Rockland residents—including six of the seven critical ones—agreed that the base had produced no problems of law and order. The lone deviate declared himself unable to judge.

One person said that although he thought Station personnel had behaved excellently, the Rockland Police Department had recently added patrolmen and two-way radios because it felt it should be prepared in the event of difficulties from servicemen. The chief of police said the Station had nothing to do with the department's expansion.

Clearly no correlation can be found between any resentment of Station activity in other respects and the judgment of personnel behavior. Many persons volunteered the information that they had never heard or read of any difficulty involving men from the Station, and several were exceptionally laudatory in their praise of base personnel.
CHAPTER VI

SPECIFIC IMPACT OF JET OPERATION AND RUNWAY EXTENSION
ON INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY LIFE

A. EFFECT ON INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES

Considering the reactions to jet sound reported by other observers, it is not surprising that about half the Weymouth respondents said that they or their families had been personally affected by the noise of jet motors overhead or being "run up" at the base. A check of locations showed most of these were somewhere near the flight paths being followed on landings and take-offs, though a few were some distance from where the greatest flight activity would be expected.

At one end of these reactions was the comment that "I'm affected only if I want to pay attention to it. The trains around here are noisier than planes." At the other end of the scale was the man who, when asked how the noise had affected him personally, replied forthrightly, "It's destroyed my temper, for one thing." One man complained about the effect on his children, another mentioned his sick wife and a third reported having dived under the kitchen table once as one plane seemed about to hit the house. Some pointed out that the problem was sporadic. "Sometimes it bothers you a lot and other times you don't
The reaction on the nervous system was the common complaint of those affected, some saying they could not sleep soundly, others asserting that their week-end rest was disturbed, others that the sound made conversation impossible.

Almost half the Weymouth respondents said that the noise represented no problem to them. The consensus, even among those reporting still being disturbed on occasion, was that most people either are accustomed to the noise by this time, or are becoming so.

One person reported a fear of crashes as his most immediate response to jet operations. Several mentioned a jet plane which crashed shortly after take-off with a visiting Marine Corps pilot, Captain Arthur Rubenstein, in a wooded area near Main Street on December 5, 1955. The pilot, who was killed, just missed a cluster of houses, a garage and a block of stores and was credited with swerving to divert his plane from the homes and stores. The understandable effect was to leave local citizens in a state of jitters, though most seem to have recovered from it now.

In Rockland, the individual and family effects were more diluted. Thus, only four of the twenty respondents reported being upset personally by the jet noise, and one complained that the vibrations may have cracked the glass on his sun porch. Five said they had adjusted to the sound and eight reported no effects at all. Four of those inter-
viewed were being forced to move for the runway extension including one who was being put out of business by the move. Their general reaction, with one exception, was one of resigned acceptance. In the one case, the man had lived in the one location for fifty years, had no family, and seemed bewildered about his next move.

Personal feelings were correspondingly milder than those expressed in Weymouth and only three persons spoke with any degree of feeling about personal inconvenience experienced or expected because of Station activity.

B. EFFECT ON SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

In both Weymouth and Rockland, the effect on community institutions such as the hospital, schools and churches has been very slight because of adjustments and concessions made by the Station on the basis of earlier complaints.

Weymouth's South Shore Hospital lies in what would be the direct flight path for planes taking off runway 356 northward. By Captain Melsom's orders issued in mid-1954, however, planes bank sharply to the left as soon as they are airborne to avoid passing over the hospital. The hospital superintendent reports no disturbances to patients at any time because of the planes.

The Weymouth Superintendent of Schools reported that Nevin School, located across the street from the hospital, has not protested but that South Junior High School has
complained upon occasion. Pond Street School made its first complaint during a hot week in early June that planes were flying low. The Superintendent called the Station's operations office which said they would stop all flights for the day which was done. The Rockland Superintendent of Schools says that planes have occasionally distracted children in Memorial Park Elementary School but this is no continuing problem.

The initial effects on Sunday morning church services have also waned since the issuance of an order prohibiting flying during Sunday morning worship hours. Though one Weymouth layman said that the Station was beginning to slacken in its observance, clergymen in Weymouth and Rockland reported that their colleagues had no complaints about interference from planes now.

Interestingly enough, plans for a new school in Norwell three miles due East of the proposed runway extension are reported still going forward although the school officials were informed by the base that the school would be in the direct flight path.

C. EFFECTS ON COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE

When asked about the specific effects of jet flying on the community as a whole, half the Weymouth respondents mentioned the personal annoyance of the noise. Five cited property depreciation, four mentioned a heightened fear of
crashes, and only two thought the flying did not affect the community at all. One person mentioned the travel inconvenience in getting to Rockland which would be caused by the runway extension.

When the same question was put to them, Rockland residents replied with the range shown in Table VII.

TABLE VII

OPINIONS OF ROCKLAND RESIDENTS ABOUT EFFECTS OF JET FLYING AND RUNWAY EXTENSION ON THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinions</th>
<th>Number Holding Opinion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No appreciable effect</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ultimate benefit to town</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too early to know economic effects</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal annoyance of noise</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel inconvenience</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of trade</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property depreciation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property appreciation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less safety</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: some persons had more than one opinion.

The four persons who said the runway extension would benefit the town ultimately thought that the first effect might be a small decline in trade, but they and most others thought the amount of trade Rockland gets from South Weymouth is rather small. They believed that any loss would be more than offset by the new road which would link Rockland by way of Route 3 to other communities to the North and East. The four who thought it was too early to know what the economic effects would be said that people were
only guessing when they said that the town would be adversely affected by cutting Union Street. They preferred to see what would happen and did not seem very worried.

The two people who said that Rockland would lose trade predicted a general decline of business. One said that the town was already losing residents and businesses because of the prospects. He said that the A and P and First National Stores were planning to move to new locations and that Stop and Shop was planning to close—due in large measure to the threat of trade loss when Union Street is cut.

A talk with the manager of the First National Store confirmed the future moves of the three stores but attributed them to the lack of parking space in Rockland's business district. He said that the Station's expansion plans had nothing to do with their decision to move and that they were going where they had more parking space to attract customers. Significantly, the A and P move to Market Street is in the direction away from South Weymouth but toward Tedeschi's, their supermarket competitor.

Only a fraction of the Rockland residents interviewed believe that the extension will definitely have adverse effects on the town's business. Only two out of twenty so believe, in fact, including the person who has led the extension's opposition. This is strikingly in contrast with the impression conveyed about the town's
attitude during the extension battle. Those who expressed any opinion—including businessmen, financiers, and the past and present Chamber of Commerce presidents—felt in general that business would either benefit, that there would be no effect either way, or that it was too soon to know. Some of these conceded that they had changed their minds from their first reactions. Many felt that the town's position had been greatly overstated by one or two overzealous community representatives.

On the whole, Rockland residents viewed the community effects of the runway extension and jet planes with much equanimity. There was a general feeling of regret that the families in twenty-one houses must move, though a few thought that some of the houses should be removed. One high city official who at one time had strongly opposed the extension expressed himself thus:

Most of us would prefer not to have to have the field in our back yard but if we're going to have it, it should be safe and this means that the runway should be extended.

As might be expected, almost every person asserted that he was voicing the opinions of the majority of people who had opinions, with only three exceptions. Several said that most of the people in their respective communities simply did not care. One Rockland leader thought that probably less than 100 of the 3,000 families in Rockland were concerned. One of the most highly respected Rockland leaders thought that if the issue were forced, the town
would vote five to one against the position taken by Dr. Lelyveld. If the responses shown in this study are any criterion, this is a conservative estimate. In Weymouth, one leader in position to know said, "I move around quite a bit. I don't even remember a single discussion since last fall on the problem of jet noise. It can't be a general complaint."

These comments reinforce the distinct impression of the study that community reactions against the Station's operations have been greatly exaggerated in each town. A newspaper article such as that on the following page indicates how these impressions are created. The author was mentioned by only one of the twenty Weymouth respondents as an influential person who would also represent the community well on a Station-community committee.
I

**PARI-MUTUEL RACING**

★ **BUDRY-WAGNER'S STUNTS-CAPADES**
World's Champion Hell Drivers
Sunday afternoon and evening only

★ **PARI-MUTUEL RACING**
8 races, Monday thru Thursday
9 races, Friday and Saturday
Post time 2:30 P.M. — double closes 2:15 P.M.

★ **ALL-STAR STAGE SHOW**
Sunday afternoon and every evening

★ **VALUABLE PRIZES GIVEN AWAY**
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday

★ **MONSTER POLITICAL RALLY**
Governor's Day — Thursday
Horse-pulling contest Sunday — 4-H Groups — Agricultural & horticultural exhibits — Rabbit show — Food exhibits — plus all the other features that make Marshfield Fair the typical country fair!
- Admission 50¢ — children under 12 25¢
- Servicemen in uniform admitted free.
- Parking 25¢.
- Open daily except Sunday 8 A.M. — Sunday 1:00 P.M.
- Races in Park Square Greyhound Terminal 3:30 and 12 Noon.
- Field Corner 9:45 and 12:15.
- Quincy — Eastern Mass. Waiting Room — 8:00 and 12:30 P.M.
- Returning after last race.

**GALA OPENING**
SUN., AUG. 5 thru 11

MORE FUN FOR EVERYONE
RTE. 3A — MARSHFIELD
Facts, Not Fiction
By George E. Lane

July 24, 1956

Honorable Leverett Saltonstall
United States Senate
Senate Office Building
Washington, D. C.

Dear Senator:

On January 3, 1941 the following editorial appeared in part in this paper:

"If the dirigibles that are to fly from the proposed Air Field in South Weymouth are going to make one percent of the noise the Juggernaut Graf Zeppelin made in 1928, then by all means let us get together and protest. . . . If the noise scare is a hocuspocus, let's forget it and get down to the business of having an airport. . . . If the noise element is a real threat to the peace of our homesteads, we believe that Uncle Sam can be trusted to have due respect to the needs of the case."

There were some of us who protested in 1941 on the argument of noise from a South Weymouth Airport and the possibility of it being converted from a lighter than air base to a Government or Municipal Airport and becoming a menace to the homes and residents of Weymouth.

We were told in 1941 that the lighter than air base was merely an emergency measure when in reality it was never planned to be anything but a permanent base designed for future aircraft such as jet planes.

The citizens have long since accepted the Naval Air Base as a measure of air protection but they do not willingly submit to the serious disadvantages of the present jet plane base.

We undoubtedly would appear ridiculous to suggest that the Navy Department remove the operation to another location which would offer a longer life and a more happy atmosphere to the people of South Weymouth.

You are well aware of the situation which the jet base has developed in the South Weymouth area. The course of peace is the argument for many actions by our government and the deterioration of real estate values probably has to be accepted as one of the more unfortunate results of such an installation of a jet base.

The hazard of accidents to these speedy demons probably must be considered in the category of the occasional liability which includes automobiles, trains, or just plain airplanes.

The continuous roar of the jets as they shake houses, China, parents and children alike, and also all life in South Weymouth is something more than even the most patriotic citizen should be asked to accept and we certainly should be concerned with the health and welfare of the hundreds of patients in the South Shore Hospital close to the Air Station.

Yet, understanding that jet air protection must be continued and progressed even at the discomfort, disturbance, and mental upheaval of our people, we believe that Uncle Sam should now come to the aid of these people, if only on the Lord's Day.
CHAPTER VII

FACTORS RELATED TO PRESENT COMMUNITY ATTITUDES

One of the few assumptions behind the present study was that attitudes for or against the public nuisance aspects of the Station might be either the cause or effect of other attitudes and factors. The settling of this question would be basic for any charting of a public relations program lest the efforts be directed at only superficial rather than real attitudes.

A number of questions were therefore included to determine if any relationship could be found. For this purpose, the responses of the fourteen critical respondents in Rockland and Weymouth were grouped together and compared with the twenty-six non-critical respondents where significant differences emerged.

A. SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

Although two-thirds of the critical and non-critical respondents could think of no bad features about an airport in the community other than the noise and runway extension problems, a third of each group thought of the possibility of plane crashes. The first response of the
crash-conscious was frequently "no bad feature" followed by mention of the crash possibility as an afterthought.¹

In reply to the question about the chance of a plane crash in the community at any given time, the following results were obtained as shown in Table VIII.

**TABLE VIII**

OPINIONS OF SELECTED WEYMOUTH AND ROCKLAND RESIDENTS ON LIKELIHOOD OF LOCAL PLANE CRASHES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Estimates</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highly probable</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More likely than average</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A noticeably higher percentage of the critical respondents thought the chances of a plane crash were greater than did the non-critical respondents. It would be

¹One person responded to the question by saying the airport was an advantage. She said that they had recently flown out five tons of DDT to Maryland during an emergency and added that if any emergency should develop in Weymouth, supplies could be flown in just as easily.
difficult to say without further study whether the respondents were more critical because of their belief in the likelihood of a plane crash or whether the order was reversed.

One critical respondent said that the chances for a crash were highly probable because of the inexperience of pilots. Another mentioned one or two crashes which had occurred on the base. A third said that the law of averages will inevitably produce some local crashes and the only question is whether houses will be involved.

The importance of attitudes about plane safety was even more tellingly shown when respondents were asked whether they were personally concerned about local crash possibilities. Eleven of the fourteen critical respondents expressed concern, compared with only nine of the twenty-six non-critical ones. Six of the critical persons said they were very much concerned--none of the non-critical respondents was to this extent. The fear of crashes thus emerges as a strong consideration in the attitude of persons critical of the Station's operations, though again it would be hard to say conclusively which attitude came first.

A final indication of the relationship between attitudes about plane safety and reactions to the Station's operations is to be found in responses to the next question. Respondents were asked to rank trains, planes, autos and busses in total fatalities from all causes per same number of passenger miles traveled. The basis of this question
was statistics showing that "In 1950, the 1.3 'all death' rate per 100,000,000 miles for scheduled air transport was 60 per cent below that for passenger automobiles and less than one-third of the rate for railroad passenger trains." We should therefore expect planes to rank behind trains and automobiles in danger with only busses being considered safer.

The fact that respondents could not remember the statistical ranking or never did know is not important since the question was designed to test attitudes rather than knowledge. At the same time, the results may have been influenced by the fact that two widely publicized plane crashes which killed a total of 173 persons occurred only a few weeks before the study was made. Some referred to these before they gave their answers.

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²The Airport and its Neighbors, p. 52.
TABLE IX
OPINIONS OF SELECTED WEYMOUTH AND ROCKLAND RESIDENTS ON GENERAL SAFETY OF PLANES AS MODE OF TRAVEL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Safety Ranking</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Totals</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most dangerous</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Next dangerous</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Next dangerous</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Least dangerous</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table IX shows, six of the fourteen critical respondents thought planes were the most dangerous form of travel compared with one out of twenty-six non-critical. When considered along with the results from the other safety questions it seems clear that there is some connection between the critical attitudes of some respondents on one hand and their estimates and fears of plane crashes on the other. It is pertinent here to recall again the words of one of the reporters on the Newark airport disaster associating noise with the fear of falling planes.

B. DISTANCE OF SUBJECT FROM SOURCE OF PROBLEM

As might have been expected, those persons who lived in other parts of Weymouth were not as much affected as those who lived in South Weymouth itself. Within the confines of South Weymouth and Rockland, however, it was
impossible to find any geographical pattern distinguishing those critical of the Station's air operations from those who were not critical.

Thus, in Rockland and Weymouth, there were some residents living close to the base and in the direct path of the planes who were certainly disturbed, while others living in the same neighborhood reported that they had become adjusted to the noise and were not particularly bothered. Still others were found as far as two miles away from the base and not discernably in the flight pattern who said they were disturbed and mentioned night "run-ups" or engine warmups on the base itself.

The evidence is inconclusive but it is likely that whether a person is affected by the noise depends not only upon whether he is in the flight path close to the base but upon such factors as whether planes "stack up" or circle above him and upon changes in atmospheric conditions including wind direction. Shifts in the sound depending on wind eddies are a fairly common experience among those exposed to jets over any period of time.

C. LARGER MILITARY CONSIDERATIONS

Understanding Purpose of Station

When asked the purpose of the base, thirty-six respondents gave replies ranging from the training of reserves (21) to general defense (8). Four said they did
not know. What is significant is that five of the respondents (including only one critical person) thought that the base trained flying recruits as well and one other person thought that this was its main function.

The possible effect of this misinformation may be seen in the comments which accompanied the response. One person (the critical one) said, "These week-end fliers are a menace. They're not accomplished fliers. They have to learn their first few stages of flight here." Another said, "A lot of the 'Week-end Warriors' are just learning to fly." Two others mentioned recruiting efforts to induct teen-agers at the Station where they would get pilot training.

The enormity of this erratic information and some suggestion of its effect on apprehensive residents may be grasped when it is remembered that the only men flying planes from the base at any time are those who are fully qualified pilots some of whom, as Reservists, merely keep in regular practice.

Most of the critical and non-critical respondents thought that their attitudes would not be affected at all if they knew it was an active interceptor base. Only one of the critical and three of the non-critical persons said that this knowledge would make them more tolerant. On the other hand, three of each group said that the base's use for interceptor purposes would tend to accentuate the problem because of more traffic.
Proximity to Station

A strikingly higher proportion of the critical respondents felt that proximity to the Station in the event of war would make them feel more vulnerable. Ten of the fourteen responded thus, compared with two who would feel more protected and two who would feel no differently. By contrast, only four of the twenty-six non-critical respondents said they would feel more vulnerable. Most thought they would either feel more protected or that it would make no difference. Table X shows the difference in critical and non-critical responses clearly.

TABLE X

ATTITUDE OF SELECTED WEYMOUTH AND ROCKLAND RESIDENTS TO PROXIMITY TO STATION IN TIME OF WAR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reaction</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Critical</th>
<th>Non-critical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grand Totals</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More protected</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More vulnerable</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No different</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The relatively large number of critical respondents who felt they would be more vulnerable thought the base would become just another enemy target. Those who thought it would make no difference pointed out that the Station was just one of a number of possible targets in the area such as
the Hingham Naval Ammunition Depot, Fore River Shipyards, etc. They thought the entire area was vulnerable.

Reactions to Air Defense and Training Expenditures

No significance emerged from responses to the question about how respondents felt about military expenditures. The general reaction was that the Administration knew its business and was spending just what it thought was necessary, and almost all respondents were willing to trust its judgment. No appreciable differences were found in critical and non-critical responses.

D. EXTENT OF CONTACT WITH STATION PERSONNEL

The degree of association with men at the Station was inconclusive regarding its bearing on community attitudes toward the noise and runway problems. Twenty-six of the forty respondents said they had not had very much contact or none at all with base personnel. Although this included eleven of the fourteen critical persons, and a higher percentage of the critical than the non-critical persons said their contact had been very limited, the results justify no conclusion that lack of contact is necessarily associated with critical attitudes.

This is especially noticeable when the comparison is made between the extent of contact and the esteem with which the base personnel is viewed. Lack of contact did not diminish in any way the high opinion placed upon Station
personnel behavior by the community. Extent of contact must therefore be ruled out as any definitive factor associated with other attitudes.

E. ATTITUDES TOWARD CONDUCT OF STATION PERSONNEL

As noticed earlier, one of the surprising results of the study was the uniformity of opinion regarding the general decorum of men from the base. This carried over into the question of how respondents felt about this conduct. There was no meaningful difference between critical and non-critical respondents as they answered without exception that the Station's servicemen showed exemplary behavior. This was called either good or excellent depending on the meaning those terms had for the users.

Several said they never saw men loitering in the square or heard of their behaving improperly towards women. One man said he had seen no uniformed man drunk in two and a half years. The general reaction was one of unquestioned praise. Community attitudes toward Station personnel conduct must therefore also be ruled out as a contributing factor to any negative feelings about base operations. One may conjecture with some plausibility, of course, that there would have been many more negative feelings about the base had the behavior of the men not been so good.
F. PARTICIPATION IN STATION ACTIVITIES FOR THE PUBLIC

Although only two or three events are staged each year at the Station to which the public as a whole is invited—such as open houses—there is a continuous round of public visits to the base in smaller groups. It seems significant that of the fourteen critical persons, only three have ever taken part in these public activities. By contrast, sixteen of the twenty-six non-critical respondents have participated. One would assume that those already favorably disposed toward the Station would be more apt to attend its functions, but the results suggest that the Station's public activities play some part in the retention of favorable attitudes if not in the moulding of them.

G. MISCELLANEOUS FACTORS

Towards the end of the study, a few of those interviewed suggested they thought the base would be expanding in the future. One high Rockland official said he expected the base strength to reach 8-10,000 men. Apprehension about a large military installation in the vicinity could be a factor in people's other reactions to the base but this is only conjectural since the possibility arose too late for inclusion in the study.

A set of factors which cannot be overlooked has to do with the weather. The increase in flying with better
weather, the effect on plane performance and noise, and other by-products characteristic of summer operation in Weymouth have been well-described by Colonel Shoup on the basis of his Wisconsin experiences:

The summer increase in flying had much to do with our problem. There is a decrease in efficiency of jet engine operation as temperatures rise. So we were taking off more planes, getting less lift for the power applied. This made us go lower over houses and made more noise. While it was hot, more people slept with their windows wider open at night. Most of them were perspiring in the heat, making them naturally more disagreeable, and we multiplied this by our aeronautical racket.3

One of the more intangible factors related to present community attitudes deals with the personalities of the principals involved. There seems little doubt that Captain Melsom has won many people over to a more positive appreciation of the Station and its problems by his sincerity, forthrightness and willingness to inconvenience himself to explain his position. Repeatedly, respondents called him a "fine fellow," "high type," "real gentleman," even those who were most critical. Not once was he referred to derogatively. He has obviously won friends and influenced people for the base.

Dr. Lelyveld, on the other hand, while credited by some with having had the courage to try to think ahead, state his position and stick to it, seems to have aroused varying

3Colonel Shoup, op. cit., p. 3.
degrees of hostility by the very forcefulness of his position and by the amount of personal publicity he received during his struggle. A gradual reaction against what some describe as his self-aggrandizement set in, so much so that linking his name with a proposal now is said by some to generate much automatic opposition to it. Some of the cooling of feelings against the base in Rockland may possibly be attributed to this counter-reaction.
CHAPTER VIII

STATION APPROACHES TO THE PROBLEM

The Station has approached the problem of its relationships with neighboring communities on three different levels: adaptation where possible; respectful attention to individual complaints; and a broad community relations program. Captain Melsom says that for his first year and a half he did almost nothing else but try to deal with the community problem.

A. MODIFICATION OF STATION OPERATIONS

We have noted that only a few months after the base was reactivated, complaints that pilots on their take-offs north from runway 350 were flying low over South Shore Hospital and Nevin School caused the issuance of orders that all pilots were to make an immediate left turn as soon as they were airborne. Although this represents a slight increase in hazard for the pilot, it was thought well worth it to satisfy a legitimate community complaint.

Similarly, complaints from churches in Abington that their services were being disturbed because of jet noise resulted in an order prohibiting flying during Sunday morning church hours.
A third change in Station operations in the direction of satisfying the public has been for descending planes to begin their break for landings at 1,500 feet instead of 1,000 feet as is the practice at many other stations. This aims to keep planes as high off the ground as possible until the last possible minute before their descent.

Fourth, complaints were received from turkey farms in the vicinity that their production had dropped because of the fear created in the birds by the jets. The Captain ordered all pilots to stay away from the farms.¹

Finally, individual temporary adjustments have been made in some instances as, for example, where the Station stopped its flight operations on one day when Pond Street School complained about low plane take-offs, or where flying was cancelled during outdoor school commencement exercises.

B. HANDLING OF COMPLAINTS

The number of complaints about jet noise has dropped markedly from the base's first few months of operation when Captain Melsom says he answered the phone all day long till 1:00 and 2:00 A. M. Unfortunately, the Station has kept no

¹Interview with Lieutenant Commander C.J. Makin, Operations Officer, July 6, 1956.
record of its early calls or letters. The most recent report shows no complaint letter this year and only twelve phoned complaints from August 5, 1955 to June 23, 1956. The complainants were distributed between Weymouth, Hingham, Abington, and North Quincy. (All those from Weymouth were interviewed in the study.)

The procedure was established that phone complaints would be received in the Operations Office which would not attempt to answer the complainant then but would investigate to see whether the offending plane was from the Station, whether the pilot was following orders, etc. This information was then transmitted to Captain Melsom who would call the complainant and explain what had transpired and why. Where the Captain was not able to make the call, another high-ranking officer did so.

Captain Melsom says that he did not bother with those persons who would not leave their names but that with all other complainants he talked until he thought that they were satisfied. Where he felt they did not accept his explanation he visited in person. He found, he said, that women were more hysterical to start with but easier to talk with and sell than men, who were inclined to adopt a fixed position.

This plan seems to have worked successfully to mollify all but the most critical complainants. Several of those interviewed thought that the Captain had presented his case very well. One person said she felt quite ashamed to
learn that her complaint had suspended flight operations over that take-off position for the rest of the day. Another felt highly pleased when Captain Melsom called him at work with an explanation of what had happened. "It gave me a good feeling to have the other fellows on the job know the Captain had called me up," he said. "It made you feel important."

C. GENERAL COMMUNITY RELATIONS PROGRAM

Speaking Engagements

An outstanding aspect of the Station's community relations efforts have been the speaking engagements filled by Captain Melsom. He estimates that in the slightly more than two years of his service at the Station, he has given possibly 200 talks to Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions, Boy Scouts, employers, PTA's, school boards, boards of selectmen, church groups, women's clubs and town meetings in Weymouth, Rockland, Abington, Hingham and other nearby communities.

These talks seem to have been very effective. One Weymouth official says he heard the Captain speak at a Kiwanis meeting in June and sell the club on the idea they were lucky to be located near the base for protection in case of war. A newspaper publisher reported, "I know that Melsom has never hesitated to go to a community meeting, walking into a hornet's nest, and usually persuading them."

A high Rockland official says he was convinced to change his
attitude towards the runway extension by Captain Melsom's explanation of why a Reserve base had to be located near Boston. With a few exceptions, respondents who were interviewed expressed a similar sentiment.

The Captain said he thinks the responsibility for dealing with the public rests on his shoulders, though he has occasionally delegated it to other officers when he thought the group to be addressed was not overly hostile. There has not, however, been any systematic involvement of other Station personnel specifically on the problem of community relationships--outside of the Command Liaison Office, of course.

Open Houses

The Station has held open house for the public on occasions such as Armed Services Day and the Fourth of July when as many as 10,000 visitors have come to see high speed jet exhibitions, helicopter demonstrations and view the largest hangar in the world. An annual feature has been the Weymouth and Rockland Kiwanis Clubs' sponsorship of a model aircraft meet on the Fourth of July in cooperation with the Station.

During the year the base is open for visits by Boy Scouts, school children and any other interested groups. The base has also been the site of special meetings such as the annual meeting of the Old Colony Boy Scout Council, the monthly meeting of the Plymouth County Police Officers'
Association, etc. In this way, the range of persons who have had some contact with the Station has been extended and it will be remembered that nearly half the persons interviewed had visited it at some time.

Community Participation

The extent of participation in general community affairs by base personnel appears to have been good. Thus, the base cooperated in helping to make the 1955 Polio Ball a success and was publicly credited for its efforts. In February, 1956, eighty-four volunteers from the Station contributed to the Red Cross Bloodmobile. Some men are reported to have Boy Scout troops, be active in PTA and church groups, etc. Captain Melsom is an active member of the Rotary Club.

The base gets about two requests monthly to participate in local parades which they cannot do because of limitations, but the calls are referred to the First Naval District. Twice the Station contributed a float for occasions such as the Quincy Christmas Festival. The base also sends motion pictures about Navy affairs out to neighborhood groups along with a projector and speaker. At one time they showed the Air Force film on the Madison story, but Captain Melsom discontinued it lest people get the idea the Station was trying to say, "I told you so."

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2Weymouth Independent, October 20, 1955.
Special Activities

Although it does not carry on these activities with an eye on their public relations results, it is certain that the Station's efforts in various rescue and emergency operations have helped create favorable public sentiment. Boston and local papers gave good publicity to the Station's contributions to rescue operations during the Connecticut and Massachusetts floods of 1955.

Understandably good treatment was given the story of a helicopter crew which rescued a Waterbury, Connecticut flood victim, learned later that she had been hospitalized and had other reverses, and returned to Waterbury a few days before Christmas to present her with food and money they had collected from men at the base. Station assistance in hunting lost persons, effecting sea rescues, etc., is also carefully noted in the press releases emanating from the Command Liaison Office, and duly reflected in the notices.
CHAPTER IX

RESOURCES FOR COMMUNITY RELATIONS APPROACHES

A. SUGGESTIONS FROM COMMUNITY

While the fourteen critical respondents were evenly divided on the question of whether there is a present problem of relationships between the Station and the community, the non-critical respondents thought that no problem existed by a three to one ratio. Where problems were mentioned, they were the ones with which we are already familiar: noise, low planes and the physical dislocation of the runway extension. Five persons suggested--three of them half-humorously--that moving the base would be the only solution they could think of and three thought an underpass would take care of the extension problem. The general reaction was that there was no solution from the communities' viewpoints except that of adjustment to the inevitable.

The question of what respondents would do for community relations if they were in the commanding officer's position drew varied but general suggestions to: make sure that the flying routes are the best compromise between safety and consideration for community feelings; make adjustments to individual complaints where possible; educate people that it is a Reserve base; conciliate and placate; stress the patriotic motif; put in the underpass; affiliate
with local service clubs and encourage the base staff to do likewise; show the Air Force film on the Madison story; and be pleasant mainly.

More than a third of those interviewed replied that they would do just what Captain Melsom had done. The comment recurred frequently that, "Captain Melsom has done a good public relations job. He's gone out of his way to make friends for the base. That's what he was sent here for."

The overwhelming majority of respondents seemed to be able to understand the problem from the base's point of view also. After voicing the community's complaint, many said, "Of course, defense comes first," "the Government is going to have its way anyhow," or "the Captain has his job to do." They were able to change roles rather easily and would probably be able to make more specific suggestions or at least support those adopted if they felt some continuing identification with the Station.

B. USE OF OPINION LEADERS

Writing on the importance of the community leader in public relations programs, Edward L. Bernays has said:

How can the persuader reach these groups that make up the large public? He can do so through their leaders, for the individual looks for guidance to the leaders of the groups to which he belongs. The group leader thus becomes a key figure in the molding of public opinion, and his acceptance of a given idea carries with it the acceptance of many of his followers--through many
channels. The function of key leaders as mediums for reaching large groups of the population is of primary importance and must never be overlooked. Moreover, they not only convey ideas to the public, but also interpret and make articulate to the propagandist, for his guidance, the groups they represent. Taken all together, they represent the whole public.¹

The Station has shown keen awareness of this point of view in establishing "Operation Pensacola" to take a number of community leaders for three days to observe the Pensacola Naval Air Academy in Florida. Since the base's reactivation, more than 150 leaders have been guests of the Station, giving them not only first-hand knowledge of Navy training problems but also establishing a feeling of identification with the Navy which is calculated to pay off in good public relations.

Millard Faught has suggested that public relations practitioners identify and chart all the individuals in a community who are the 'prime movers' with the idea of persuading their followers through the persuasion of these key individuals.² The study followed this suggestion and modified the procedure followed by Floyd Hunter to obtain a picture of the leadership structure of the community.³


Respondents were asked for the names of three persons they would like to see on a Station-Community Committee if one should be set up to work on mutual problems. Later, they were asked for the names of the three persons they considered most influential in the community. From these two lists a picture emerged of the persons we may call opinion leaders who should be involved in any efforts made by the Station to win support of its position in the community.

**Weymouth Leaders**

A total of thirty-eight names were mentioned by the twenty Weymouth respondents for either membership on the hypothetical committee or as influential persons. Only eleven people were mentioned by at least two or more of the respondents and these are listed in Table XI. Ten of these were included in the study and one was out of the country.

In only three instances did a respondent name as a committee member one of the persons he considered as one of the most influential in town. This suggests either that people did not think the problem of Station-community relationships was important enough to involve their most influential persons, or that they think the latter are not necessarily the best community representatives for the particular problem. The former explanation seems the more likely.
TABLE XI

WEYMOUTH LEADERS SELECTED BY TWO OR MORE RESPONDENTS FOR COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP OR AS PERSONS OF INFLUENCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Total mentions</th>
<th>Committee member</th>
<th>Influential person</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allen Jarvelin</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank executive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warren Burrell</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selectman, lawyer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel O'Donnell</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town moderator, lawyer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph O'Kane</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief of police</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Crehan</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chairman of selectmen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Barnes</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawyer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albert Vinal</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Kenneth Martin</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank executive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minot Hollis</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realtor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Clayton Nash</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry Hoffman</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance agent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Out of town and not interviewed.

There is obviously more agreement on who are the most influential people than there is on who should represent the community on a committee. This is partly due to a tendency
on the part of some to name as committee members their friends and neighbors whom they knew would represent their point of view. The results were also affected by the reluctance of six respondents to name persons for the hypothetical committee without more thought.

**Rockland Leaders**

Thirty-four names were mentioned by the twenty Rockland respondents for either membership on the hypothetical committee or as influential persons. Fifteen of these were mentioned by two or more of the respondents and are listed in Table XII.

More tendency was noticed for Rockland respondents to name persons they considered most influential as members of the hypothetical committee. Official position also ranked more highly in the naming of committee members as in the case of the chairman of the board of selectmen and chief of police. There was about the same degree of consensus regarding influential persons and a greater measure of agreement on the most desirable persons for committee membership.
# TABLE XII

ROCKLAND LEADERS SELECTED BY TWO OR MORE RESPONDENTS FOR COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP OR AS PERSONS OF INFLUENCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Total mentions</th>
<th>Committee member</th>
<th>Influential person</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*Arthur Marks</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chairman of selectmen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Adolph Johnson</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief of police</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Arthur Wilcox</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realtor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margorisk Walls</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town moderator</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*H. Carleton Damon</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Businessman, C. of C. head</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Ross</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selectman</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bernard Monahan</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selectman, Tel. Co. exec.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Todd Taylor</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*R. Stuart Eston</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supt. of schools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>*Charles Orr</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politician</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Dr. Joseph Lelyveld</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Podiatrist</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*John F. Spence</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>John Burke</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawyer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Ralph Belcher</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town clerk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dana Collins</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mortician</td>
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*Included in study.
The results identify those "prime movers," opinion leaders, power figures or community representatives with and through whom the Station must work if its influence is to be lastingly effective. At the same time, they suggest the importance of distinguishing between the roles a given opinion leader may be asked to play.

Some persons were designated as committee members who were known to be without much influence but were thought especially qualified by their integrity and ability to present the community's viewpoint. One person was mentioned by one respondent as an influential person who should not be appointed to any such committee because he would only impede its work. Balance must be struck between those persons who are influential and those who are representative of the community with the ideal arrangement that in which most persons are both.

C. EXPERIENCES OF OTHER AIR BASES

Matters have improved since August, 1952 when Major Elizabeth Guild of the Air Force, called in regarding jet noise problems at MacDill Field, could only advise community residents, "Don't build homes near runways."4 Faced with the same problems, some fields have developed approaches which have at least eased the impact if not eliminated it.

Truax Field\textsuperscript{5}

In a setting much more complicated and taut than the Weymouth situation, the Air Force's Truax Field authorities took the following steps:

1. They charted the time and location of complaints, sex of complainant, etc.

2. They indoctrinated Field personnel so they would be able to answer critical comments they encountered in the community.

3. They held open house for selected community leaders and the press, made them feel very important, and conveyed the idea of sharing secrets in explaining the Field's military mission.

4. They obtained the cooperation of the mass media to publicize the Field's concern and the remedies they were trying.

5. They prepared commanders and pilots to talk before community groups at every possible opportunity on what the Field was doing.

6. They explained the economic effect of the Field's payroll locally, paying off the men at times in $2 bills to get the message across to local merchants.

\textsuperscript{5}Materials drawn from \textit{Shotgun Wedding} (Office of Information Services, Hq Air Defense Command, Ent Air Force Base, Colorado Springs, Colo.) and Colonel Harry Shoup, \textit{The Madison, Wisconsin Story}. See these for more complete description of the steps taken.
7. They placed engine warm-up areas as far as possible from populated sections, built blast fences around the Field to deflect the noise to unpopulated areas, and stopped engine run-ups at night when sound carried so well. These acts were well publicized.

8. They revised the traffic pattern to take planes across the least inhabited areas, with attendant publicity. They let the public know they had mapped schools, hospitals, mink farms, etc., and passed over them only when on instruments or in trouble.

9. Field personnel joined various civic clubs and were as active as possible in them.

The result was a change in community understanding and Field acceptance to the point where the Madison approach became the prime example for similar Air Force fields in the country.

L. G. Hanscom Field

Located near Bedford, Massachusetts, Hanscom Field has had many problems similar to those of the Weymouth Naval Air Station in the disturbance it has created in established community patterns of living. It has tried to meet these by measures such as these:

---

1. They changed their take-off and landing patterns to reroute planes from the vicinity of schools and thickly populated areas as much as possible.

2. They stopped motor run-ups after 10:00 P.M.

3. They stopped flying during Sunday morning church service hours.

4. They required all pilots to stay above 5,000 feet except for take-offs and landings, and to reach this altitude as soon as possible.

5. They had civilian experts conduct noise tests at different points on the base and in the community.

6. They organized a community council to get the help of various opinion leaders.

7. They sent teams of pilots to persons with complaints.

8. They held open houses for residents of various towns and demonstrated flights of planes at different altitudes which showed how much many had been misjudging altitudes.

9. They conducted twenty tours a month so the public could inspect facilities and learn about the Center's work.

10. They made town leaders—and through them, hopefully, the rest of the town—feel important by flying them to Florida for annual firepower demonstrations and by having the Wing Commander maintain personal contact with them.
11. They kept neighboring communities informed through stories, speakers, movies and displays.

Two basic policies have underlain all these activities and formed the basis of Hanscom Field's community relations program:

1. In the belief that an informed public is a happy public we have endeavored to tell the local public everything about the field and its mission up to the point of security.

2. Developments which have an impact on the community are explained before they happen.7

The realization that the commanding officer will tell the town about any matter affecting it and will do so as early as possible has built up trust by local citizens which the Field regards as its most important asset in its community relations efforts.8

7Jet Operation and Community Relations, p. 18.

8For other suggestions, see Air Force Community Relations Problems (unpublished papers of Air Force officers attending a short course in public relations at the School of Public Relations and Communications, Boston University, June 4-30, 1956).
CHAPTER X

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The introduction of jet aircraft into American domestic experience has highlighted one of the continuing problems facing the aviation industry and the country as a whole: how to meet defense requirements and maintain aviation progress while at the same time ensuring that the public enjoys a reasonable degree of physical and emotional security.

Although the military services have borne the brunt of effecting this adjustment, the anticipated introduction of jet aircraft for commercial purposes points to the importance of wider attention now to the human relations problems involved in order to forestall severe public reactions.

Through groups such as the National Air Transport Coordinating Committee and the National Aviation Noise Reduction Committee, the aviation industry has begun to deal with the problem of how to change conditions so that jet aircraft will be regarded as more of a public benefit than a public nuisance. The Federal government also, through the President's Airport Commission, has suggested some improvements.
The early prospects for reducing the amount of jet sound are by no means bright. Realistically, a future must be faced in which more jet engines will be used which will be even more powerful—and more noisy—than those already in existence.

The seriousness of this prospect for those living near airports is grasped when the sound of a jet motor is heard for the first time at close range. The physical and emotional effects of the noise are intense and show considerable range in their effect upon the human nervous system.

No adequate answer for this dilemma has yet been found beyond 1) the attempt to modify some of the conditions under which jet planes will be used and 2) efforts to gain psychological acceptance of the planes and the necessity for their use.

The problem of relations between the Weymouth Naval Air Station and its surrounding communities, especially Weymouth and Rockland, goes back to the circumstances under which the base was originally established, and community reactions to jet aircraft operations at the base today are doubtless colored by this history. It has been the problem of towns whose community-ways are firmly established and who look with disfavor upon new developments the necessity for which they may accept rationally but not emotionally.

Community reactions have been marked by a feeling that "we are for national security, but give some other area the
disagreeable problems associated with it." They have been characterized, in effect, by a certain inability to identify national and local self-interest. They have also been affected to some degree by viewpoints which at first seemed to be generally held but which on closer examination appear to be the views of individuals whose position gives them a respectful hearing—though without real public support. All these characteristics have been undergoing progressive modification.

Opinion about the general effect of the Station locally is mixed. Only a small percentage seem to feel active resentment and a slightly larger number were found to be very favorably disposed. Most persons fell between. More positive feelings toward the base were found in Rockland than in Weymouth, probably because Rockland residents are not as personally affected by noise problems as are some Weymouth residents. The problems in Weymouth which do exist are confined mainly to South Weymouth.

The base has had a positive economic effect on both communities which is generally appreciated. Most persons also realize that the Station's effect on taxes has been negligible. The record should be set straight, however, for those persons who mistakenly think that the Station has helped raise their taxes. This applies particularly to school expenditures where the base pays its own way. A widespread opinion exists that the Station has lowered real
estate values and there is need for clarifying just what has happened here. The Station's effect on traffic and police problems has been negligible and understood as such locally. On these specific topics the opinions of those who were critical about the noise or runway varied but showed some relationship to attitude sets.

A third of those interviewed in Weymouth thought that the problem of noise was bad or acute and a third in Rockland felt the same about the runway extension and noise. The general opinion was that most people have become accustomed to the sound of jets by this time, though there are notable exceptions. The planes have had almost no effect on institutions such as schools, churches or the hospital because the Station has adjusted its patterns to avoid flying over them.

Only a fraction of the Rockland residents believe that the proposed runway extension, over which a long, running battle was fought, will have the adverse economic effects locally which its opponents claimed. Whatever support there may have been originally for opposition to the extension has now largely disappeared and the sentiment has gained that it may instead have a beneficial effect. The extent of critical reaction, especially in Rockland, has been greatly exaggerated by the prominent press attention given those persons who were opposing the extension.
As Albig has pointed out, "Any fruitful examination of expression of opinion must relate the opinions to the subjective states out of which the opinions have emerged."¹ The same holds true for attitudinal expression. It is clear that certain attitudes and opinions of those interviewed in Weymouth and Rockland tend to be associated with other attitudes and opinions. Thus, those who were most critical of the noise or the extension tended to be those who were most afraid of plane crashes and thought them most likely to occur. They were also those who thought they would be more vulnerable in wartime because of their proximity to the Station. Finally, they included only a small proportion of those who had taken part in the Station's activities for the public. These considerations would be important in drafting any community education program directed to attitudes critical of Station operations.

The extent of contact with Station personnel and appraisal of their behavior had no measurable relationship to attitudes toward noise or the extension except as it may be presumed that the good conduct of the personnel affected the general attitudes of all respondents positively toward the base. While they did not show up quantitatively as important, some replies showed how misinformation about the

Station's purpose could contribute to the development of critical attitudes. Factors such as the effect of the weather and the association of noise with danger have been documented by other studies.

The Station's approaches to its community relationships were generally praised even by those who were critical of its specific effects. It has modified its operations wherever possible. It has handled complaints so personally and adroitly that these have dwindled to a minor figure. Captain Melson's vigorous speaking campaign before many community groups has had tangible results. Open houses, tours, community participation and vigorous publicizing of its public benefit aspects have helped win the Station's case before the public. The Captain has gained a reputation as a good public relations man primarily in some quarters and other Station personnel have not been utilized very fully in community appearances.

Most community leaders seem sympathetic to the Station's situation. Although their suggestions about what the Station could do were very general and include little which the base has not considered or tried, they are potentially good liaison members with the general community. The study shows a picture of eleven South Weymouth leaders and fifteen Rockland ones considered most influential on one hand and most helpful on a possible Station-community committee on the other. The power and ability patterns which
emerge from the opinions of their members themselves have implications for the more effective involvement of community leaders.

The experience of two other military installations faced with the same problem shows some common approaches such as adjustments in take-offs and landings, elimination of Sunday morning flying during church services, personal approaches to complainants, steady mass communications media campaigns, etc.

The time may not be far off when what has been a matter of playing by ear to gain community harmony will become a matter of applying tested techniques. This will be good to the extent that it provides the harassed commanding officer or commercial airport manager with a body of serviceable knowledge. It will be bad if he should rely on any set of techniques as a substitute for basing his program on the peculiar local pattern of community reactions which emerges only at the end of a period of systematic study.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

Although it is beyond the scope of this study to suggest a public relations program to improve the relatively good community relations already established by the Station, certain conclusions inevitably point to a few recommendations for consideration.
1. The general approach used by the commanding officer and the Command Liaison Office has been eminently successful in the past and its broad outlines should by all means be continued.

2. The commanding officer should, however, involve more Station personnel in community interpretations so that in the event of any change of key personnel, there will be no disruption in community relations. So many community leaders think of the Station now in terms of their personal appreciation of the commanding officer that his leaving would make it initially difficult to continue getting across the message which is constantly needed. This involves informing key officers and other personnel who can be encouraged to take more active participation in local community activities.

3. The formation of a community council composed of Station officers and strategic community leaders from the several adjacent communities would open broader channels for Station-community communication. Sub-committees on plans and development, health and sanitation, recreation and education, religion, law enforcement and publicity would attend to details in their respective areas. Local community leadership would appear ready to participate on such a council.²

²See Jet Operation and Community Relations for description of a community council's success in handling the problems of Hanscom Field.
4. The Station should explore all possibilities of reducing ground run-up activities including the construction of blast-deflection fences to divert the noise skyward, the use of buildings, bushes, etc., to act as baffles or sound absorbers, and the avoidance of run-ups as far as possible during late evening and early morning hours. Publicizing the Station's cognizance of the problem and efforts to cope with it would help reduce its emotional effects.

5. The Station could follow the example of General Electric's Cincinnati jet engine plant and Hanscom Field by setting up a sound patrol for an objective check on the amount of noise created in various sections of the towns by the base's jet motors.

6. Particular cultivation should be made of local newspaper editors and publishers, radio station owners and directors.

7. The Station should conduct a systematic community education program through local mass media directed at points of misinformation now known to be held by some community representatives. For example, the relationship between fear of plane crashes and critical attitudes towards noise has been shown to be close. One subjective state supports the other. A program highlighting the safety features of plane operation seems therefore indicated. The study has shown many opinions held by individuals which would be good pegs
for community education efforts. Continuous, sensitive community contact is also required to locate other opinions or attitudes for interpretation and modification.

The community relations problems faced by the Station are continuing ones for new persons are moving into the communities each year. Those in charge have shown their ability to work diligently and effectively and their efforts have reduced the original problem to more manageable size. The need will continue for exploring ways to adjust the impact of technical progress so that men and machines may coexist. Meanwhile, the people of Weymouth, Rockland and the Naval Air Station have begun successfully to live with their problems.
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B. SPECIAL PUBLICATIONS


C. MAGAZINE ARTICLES


D. NEWSPAPERS

Quincy Patriot-Ledger Press Clips on Weymouth Naval Air Station from January 15, 1941 to Present.

Press Clips on Weymouth Naval Air Station July 1, 1955 to July 1, 1956 from the Following Newspapers:

Lowell Sun
Rockland Standard
Weymouth Independent
Weymouth Gazette and Transcript
Brockton Enterprise and Times
Pembroke Colonist
Weymouth Truth
APPENDIX A

Photograph 1: North-South Runway Looking South (Runway 170)

South Weymouth in foreground. School and hospital at lower left. Railroad depot at center right.
APPENDIX A

PHOTOGRAPH 2: North-South Runway Looking North (Runway 350)

Abington in foreground.
APPENDIX A

Photograph 3: East-West Runway Looking West (Runway 260)

Rockland and part of Weymouth Territory in foreground. This shows area to be affected by runway extension. Some houses in extension path are not visible.
APPENDIX A

Photograph #: East-West Runway Looking East (Runway 080)

Part of Southeast Weymouth in foreground.
PERCENTAGE OF PREVAILING WINDS ON RUNWAYS
APPENDIX C

1. NAMES AND POSITIONS OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED IN WEYMOUTH AS RESPONDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>George L. Barnes</td>
<td>Attorney; former Massachusetts House and Senate member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warren Burrell</td>
<td>Selectman; former president, Pond Street Improvement Assoc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Crehan</td>
<td>Chairman, Board of Selectmen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Lenora Descalzo</td>
<td>Stenographer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry Hoffman</td>
<td>Insurance agent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minot E. Hollis</td>
<td>Realtor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allen Jarvelin</td>
<td>President, South Weymouth Businessmen's Association;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assistant Treasurer, John Logan Branch, Granite Trust Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. William Knox</td>
<td>Minister, Old South Union Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laurier Lelievra</td>
<td>Manager, Boston Trucking Co.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elmer Mapes</td>
<td>Superintendent of Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Kenneth Martin</td>
<td>President, South Weymouth Savings Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phillip O'Connell</td>
<td>Retail businessman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel O'Donnell</td>
<td>Town moderator; attorney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph V. O'Kane</td>
<td>Chief of Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Arthur E. Perkins</td>
<td>Director, South Shore Hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarence Pierson</td>
<td>Naval Air Station employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward Ralston</td>
<td>Editor and publisher, Weymouth Gazette and Transcript</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Richard Spear</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. NAMES AND POSITIONS OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED IN ROCKLAND AS RESPONDENTS

Norman J. Beals
John Bond and W. M. Sadler
Mrs. Eva Caseley
Fred Chandler
George Chapman
George Crawford
H. Carleton Damon
R. Stuart Eston
E. Wayne Harlow
Edward Hart
Adolph Johnson
Abraham Lelyveld
Dr. Joseph Lelyveld
Arthur H. Marks
Charles E. Orr
Lawrence B. Shearer
John F. Spence

Treasurer, Stetson Shoe Co.
Truck driver
Chairman, Board of Assessors
Publisher and editor respectively, Rockland Standard
Machine operator
Retired welder
Service station lessee
Clerk, Planning Board, real estate agent
President, Chamber of Commerce; owner, Damon Electric Company
Superintendent of Schools
Treasurer, Rockland Savings Bank
Machine operator
Chief of Police
Owner, Lelyveld's Shoe Store
Member, Planning Board; podiatrist
Chairman, Board of Selectmen
Manager, Collins Packing Co.; local politician
President, Kiwanis Club; insurance broker
President, Rockland Welting Company; President, Rockland Trust Company
Ralph Tedeschi

Arthur Wilcox

Rev. Clayton F. Witt

Owner, Tedeschi Supermarkets

General manager, A.W. Perry Real Estate Company; President, Rockland Savings Bank; Chairman, School Committee

Minister, First Congregational Church
InterVIEW GUIDE

1. Name ___________________________________________ Sex __________________

2. Address __________________________________________ Age __________________

3. Position __________________________________________

4. How long in community ___________ Distance from airfield ________________

5. Does Station flight pattern send planes over your house? __________________________
   Actual relation to flight paths ____________________________________________

6. Total effect of Station locally from '52-56 has been: excellent____; good____;
   mixed_____; bad_____; very bad_____; no effect_____; don't know_____.
   a. Income __________________________________________________________________
   b. Taxes ___________________________________________________________________
   c. Housing __________________________________________________________________
   d. Real estate values __________________________________________________________________
   e. School enrollment and expense __________________________________________________________________
   f. Traffic ________________________________________________________________________
   g. Police problems __________________________________________________________________
   h. Other _______________________________________________________________________

7. What have been (will be) the effects of jet flying (runway extension) on the
   community that you can put your finger on? _______________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________

8. It has been said that jet noise (runway extension) is a problem locally. Do
   you agree? ______. How much of a problem: acute____; bad____; slight______

9. How has the problem affected you personally? How do you feel about it?
   ____________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________
10. Do many people feel the same as you? If not, how do you think they feel?

11. Apart from noise (runway extension) etc., are there any bad features about an airport itself in the community? If so, what?

12. a. What do you think is the chance of a plane crash in the community at any given time: highly probable; somewhat more likely than in average community; average; somewhat less likely than in average community; improbable.
b. Are you personally concerned about this? If so, how much: very much; moderately; only slightly.
c. How would you rank trains, planes, autos and busses in total fatalities from all causes per million passenger miles traveled: most dangerous; next; next; least fatal.

13 a. What is the major purpose of the Station?

b. How would you feel about the noise (runway) problem if you knew it was an active base for intercepting enemy bombers?

c. If war came, would nearness to the Station make you feel: more protected; more vulnerable; no different. Explain.

d. Do you think the U. S. is spending too much; just enough; or not enough on air defense and training.

14. a. How much contact have you had with men at the Station: extensive; a great deal; a fair amount; not very much; none.
b. How do you feel about the general community conduct of Station personnel: excellent; good; average; poor; terrible.
Comments
15. Are there any organized community groups which have expressed concern over the noise (or runway) situation

____________________________________________________________________________________

16. In your opinion, is there any problem of Station-community relationships?_____.

b. If yes, what is the problem?

____________________________________________________________________________________

c. What solution would you suggest?

____________________________________________________________________________________

17. If a Station-community committee were set up to look into any of these problems and recommend solutions, what three local citizens would you like to see on the committee:

<table>
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<th>Name</th>
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<th>Position</th>
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1) Why?

____________________________________________________________________________________

2) Why?

____________________________________________________________________________________

3) Why?

____________________________________________________________________________________

18. If you were the Station commanding officer and had received complaints because of the noise (or runway) but couldn't stop it because of defense requirements, what would you do?

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

19. Have you ever taken part in any of the Station's activities for the public, e.g., open houses_____; film loans_____; Other______________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________
20. Who are the three most influential persons in the community?

<table>
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<th>Name</th>
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<th>Position</th>
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21. Has the Station commanding officer ever visited you? _____
   If so, do you feel any differently after talking with him? _____
   How? ________________________________

Were there any questions to which he did not give an answer which satisfied you? _____
   If yes, explain ________________________________

22. General comments: