



JUPITER INLET LIGHTHOUSE *a n d M u s e u m*

STATION J

The Loxahatchee River Historical Society's **Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse & Museum** occupies the last remaining building from an important World War II installation that existed on this site. That installation was officially called a **U.S. Naval Supplementary Radio Station**, code named **Station J**.

While Jupiter and Station J may have seemed far from the front lines of World War II, they were, in fact, very close to the action. Merchant ships carrying war supplies to Europe, especially those which left the port of New Orleans, traveled near this coast, where German submarines lay in wait. The first half of 1942 was especially dangerous -- and during one week, six ships were sunk off Jupiter Inlet. Clearly, something had to be done.

That something was Station J -- a secret operation designed to intercept U-boat radio messages, warn Allied ships and help U.S. forces attack enemy vessels. With radio receivers tuned to the frequencies used by the U-boats, Station J was able to pinpoint the names and locations of the submarines, which would surface every night to charge their batteries and send their locations and weather reports to their home base. The plan worked. In May 1943, 30 German submarines were destroyed, and in June another 37.

While that station was built to help the war effort, the Navy had been present on this site for many years. In 1929, the Navy acquired 8.4 acres near the Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse for an installation to broadcast weather information and monitor ship-to-shore and aircraft distress calls.

With the expanded presence required by World War II, the 12-acre Station J reached its peak in 1943, when the operation had **95 men on this site, plus 11 Marines** who stood guard and were quartered elsewhere. The station included an operations building with 24 radio receivers; two barracks buildings; a mess, administration and recreation hall; an emergency power house; a garage and workshop; a dispensary; a service store; tennis and volleyball courts, a house for the commanding officer; and quarters for the families of six married men.

All the buildings were of frame construction, except for the cement power house and corrugated iron workshop. A 1943 description of the station, contained in a classified naval report, noted that "climatic conditions are best during the late fall, winter and early spring." "During the hot summer months," the report said, "the humidity is quite high; and horseflies, sand flies and mosquitoes arrive in full force."

The Town of Jupiter itself was very small at the time, having a population of only about 200 people. Following the war, Station J was closed in 1945.

The **Married Men's Quarters**, which was constructed in the 1930s and which received a \$1.1 million restoration by the Town of Jupiter in 2006, is now the headquarters and museum of the Loxahatchee River Historical Society.

www.jupiterlighthouse.org