



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 along side of the U.S. Coast Guard on the Lighthouse Reservation. 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 and fuel to our troops in Europe, especially those which left the port of New Orleans, traveled near this coast, where German submarines and their unending torpedoes lay in wait. The first half of 1942 was especially dangerous – in February two ships were sunk off Jupiter Inlet: the *SS Republic* and the *SS W.D. Anderson* killing approximately 40 men. 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 silently listened and 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 back to Germany. Station J transmitted this information to Gulf Sea Frontier Tactical Net Stations. As a result, the U-boats were caught on the surface by US aircraft that seemed to come out of nowhere. These attacks caused enough damage to end the German dominance of the Atlantic.

With the expanded presence required by World War II, the 12-acre Station J reached its peak in 1943 when the secret operation had 95 men on this site, plus 11 Marines who stood guard. 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.

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. Many of the service men stationed here returned to marry local women, start businesses and found the community that exists today.

www.jupiterlighthouse.org

Loxahatchee River Historical Society
Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse Outstanding Natural Area