

# NEWPORT NEWS PORT OF EMBARKATION IN WORLD WAR I GUIDE



Newport News Virginia  
Where Great Things Are Happening

## A. Downtown / Newport News Point

### 1 BRITISH REMOUNT STATION

Between 30th and 34th Streets near downtown piers

Newport News played an important role even before entering WWI. The brutal fighting exhausted Great Britain's supply of horses, which were vital to the movement of its troops, artillery, and supplies. The British Remount Commission established a Remount Station and by the end of the war, almost 500,000 animals, worth nearly \$3 billion today, had been transported from this compound.

### 2 CURTISS FLYING SCHOOL

30 Jefferson Ave. at Newport News Point

On November 10, 1910, Eugene B. Ely made aviation history when he became the first person to take off in an airplane from a warship anchored off Newport News Point. This set the stage for aviation pioneer Glenn Curtiss to establish his Atlantic Coast Aeronautical Station. On September 6, 1916, the Army selected the Curtiss Flying School as its aviation training station, which trained 1,000 of the Army, Navy and Coast Guard's first aviators and would-be flyers from around the world.

### 3 CAMP STUART

20th St. and Marshall Ave.

Construction of Camp Stuart, named for Confederate Lieutenant General J.E.B. Stuart, commenced in July 1917 and included 481 buildings. It was located between the Small Boat Harbor and Salter's Creek and was America's largest troop clearinghouse during the war, with 3,071 officers and 111,475 enlisted men passing through its gates en route to Europe.

### 4 NEWPORT NEWS EMBARKATION PIERS

East of 23rd St. between the old C & O Depot and coal piers

Here the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad reached its deep water port. Between 1917-1919 the extensive freight and passenger facilities were used by the War Department for the rapid embarkation and return of men, animals and material from across the nation.

### 5 VICTORY ARCH

25th St. and West Ave.

On November 11, 1918 the war ended and Newport News' embarkation camps were converted into receiving facilities. A Welcome Home Committee was established, and funds for a wood and plaster arch of triumph were collected through public subscription and built by volunteer labor. The words "Greetings with love to those who return; a triumph with tears to those who sleep" were penned by shipyard attorney Robert G. Bickford. Dedicated on April 13, 1919 (and reconstructed in 1962), over 441,000 doughboys found their way back home through Newport News.

### 6 NEWPORT NEWS SHIPBUILDING & DRYDOCK COMPANY

4101 Washington Ave.

The *Wickes*-class destroyers built between 1917-19, along with the preceding *Caldwell*-class and *Clemson*-class destroyers, formed the "flush-deck" or "four-stack" type for the U.S. Navy. The shipyard constructed 10 *Wickes*-class and 25 *Clemson*-class destroyers, and today continues building ships for the U.S. Navy. It is the largest industrial employer in Virginia, is the sole builder of nuclear-powered aircraft carriers and teams with General Dynamics Electric Boat in Groton, CT, to build nuclear-powered submarines.

## B. Huntington Park

### 7 ANIMAL EMBARKATION DEPOT NO. 301

Between 30th and 34th Streets

On August 4, 1917, this depot had the capacity of 900 men, 10,000 animals and a veterinary hospital for 1,500 animals. A total of 57,944 animals were handled at this depot, and it was recorded that "when running at capacity, it required 900,000 lbs. of bran, 4,500,000 lbs. of oats and 9,000,000 lbs. of hay per month for feeding purposes."

### 8 CAMP HILL

Warwick Blvd. and 64th St.

In July 1917, construction began for Camp Hill, named in honor of Confederate Lieutenant General A.P. Hill. In addition to serving as base to the Motor Truck Corps, Camp Hill also processed 67,887 men for overseas and 10,000 animals. This required 900 men to staff the large veterinary hospital and livestock pen. A total of 58,178 animals were handled by this camp.

### 9 CAMP ALEXANDER

Jefferson Ave. and Hilton Blvd.

Earlier known as "The Stevedore Cantonment and the Labor Encampments," Camp Alexander was named in honor of Lieutenant John H. Alexander, one of the first African-American graduates of West Point. The African-American personnel of the Stevedore Regiments formed 30 labor battalions totaling approximately 50,000 men sent overseas and three organized battalions that stayed for permanent duty.

### 10 VIRGINIA WAR MUSEUM

9285 Warwick Blvd.

The Virginia War Museum was founded in 1923 by Major General Bowell Collings under the sponsorship of the American Legion Braxton-Perkins Post #25. It was designed as the American Legion Memorial Museum of Virginia in 1936 and was subsequently chartered as the state repository for war-related artifacts. The museum's permanent home was constructed in 1941 and has a collection of over 70,000 artifacts.

### 11 HILTON VILLAGE

Main St. and Warwick Blvd.

In January 1918, shipyard President Homer L. Ferguson testified before the U.S. Senate on the alarming housing shortage related to the war effort. An immediate appropriation of \$1.2 million was issued and the property occupied by an old homestead called "Hilton" was purchased. Construction of the first government-subsidized "planned community" began with Henry Vincent Hubbard and Francis Joannes designing 500 English cottage-style homes. A battalion of laborers constructed Hilton Village and the formal dedication was held on July 7, 1918.

### 12 CAMP MORRISON

Warwick Blvd. and James River Dr.

Camp Morrison, named after Colonel J.S. Morrison, construction engineer of the C & O's Peninsula division, officially opened as a military post on December 1, 1917. The camp was primarily an embarkation camp for Air Service Troops, and a total of 9,091 enlisted men and 329 officers were sent overseas.

## C. Lee Hall

### 13 JOINT BASE LANGLEY-EUSTIS

300 Washington Blvd., Ft. Eustis

Camp Eustis, named after War of 1812 veteran Brigadier General Abraham Eustis and founder of Fort Monroe's Artillery School of Practice, was created in March 1918. Although 20,000 soldiers were shipped overseas from this camp, its primary purpose was to house several schools. Used as a coast artillery training camp and artillery range, it also hosted motor transport, trench mortar and anti-aircraft artillery units. Of the various camps and depots established in present-day Newport News during WWI, Camp Eustis (known as Fort Eustis after 1923 and now known as Joint Base Langley-Eustis) is the only military installation which has survived. It is now home to the U.S. Army's Training and Doctrine Command and the U.S. Army Transportation Museum.

### 14 U.S. ARMY TRANSPORTATION MUSEUM

300 Washington Blvd., Besson Hall (757) 878-1115

Throughout America's military history, the Army's transportation soldiers have been "first in, last out." Established in 1976 and inspired by the nation's Bicentennial celebration, the U.S. Army Transportation Museum examines more than 240 years of Army transportation history by road, rail, sea and air, through exhibits, dioramas, equipment, models and full-scale scenes.

### 15 BOXWOOD INN

10 Elmhurst St. (757) 888-8854

Simon R. Curtis, who resided across from Lee Hall Depot, rented rooms to Army officers, their wives and the camp's construction superintendent. Among the prominent guests the "Curtis Hotel" (now known as the Boxwood Inn) accommodated were General "Blackjack" Pershing and comedian W.C. Fields. It was built in 1897 and features four guestrooms, each with en suite bathrooms, antique furnishings, and free WiFi. Complimentary breakfast provided.

### 16 LEE HALL DEPOT

Corner of Elmhurst St. and Warwick Blvd.

With a wye turnaround at Camp Eustis, Lee Hall Depot served as the camp's rail connection to the C & O Railway's artery down the Virginia Peninsula. In addition, thousands of soldiers and civilians passed through en route to other camps, the embarkation piers, and downtown Newport News. To handle the increase of freight and ridership, a new passenger waiting room was built during the war.

### 17 LEE HALL ARMY BALLOON SCHOOL

Lee Hall District

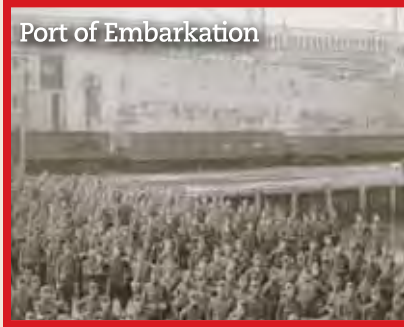
Constructed at the cost of \$1.5 million, this school had the capacity for 1,442 students and provided specialized training for Army Air Service Officers on how to direct heavy artillery fire on the battlefield from observation balloons.

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## The Transformation of a City for Wartime Use



Port of Embarkation

When the United States entered World War I in April 1917, it selected New York City as its Port of Embarkation, sending a massive number of forces to Europe. It was soon realized by chief of staff Quartermaster Gen. Henry G. Sharpe, "that the port of New York be

designated for the transportation of troops and general supplies, and that Newport News be used principally for the shipment of animals, forage and heavy ordnance."

Newport News was a natural choice as a port of embarkation due to its protected deep-water port, excellent rail connections through the C & O Railway, and its location in the middle of the Eastern Seaboard, which gave it a direct route to Europe.

During WWI more than 250,000 soldiers left Newport News for Europe, along with four million tons of supplies, and close to 500,000 horses and mules.

To handle the massive influx of men, animals and supplies, the City of Newport News was transformed through the building of:

- five Army posts and multiple depots
- an Army Balloon School and the Curtiss Flying School
- 35 *Wickes*-class and *Clemson*-class destroyers
- the country's first federally funded housing project, Hilton Village
- the Victory Arch, a memorial for our returning soldiers.



Lee Hall Army Balloon School

By the war's end, over 700,000 troops had passed through Newport News and over 9,000 acres of real estate, or roughly 20 percent of the present-day city, had been utilized by the Army during the 19 months the U.S. was involved in the war. By 1919 the economic impact of the war to Newport News was in excess of \$35 million which equates to over \$1 billion today.

## Newport News World War I Sites and Related Attractions

### A. Downtown / Newport News Point

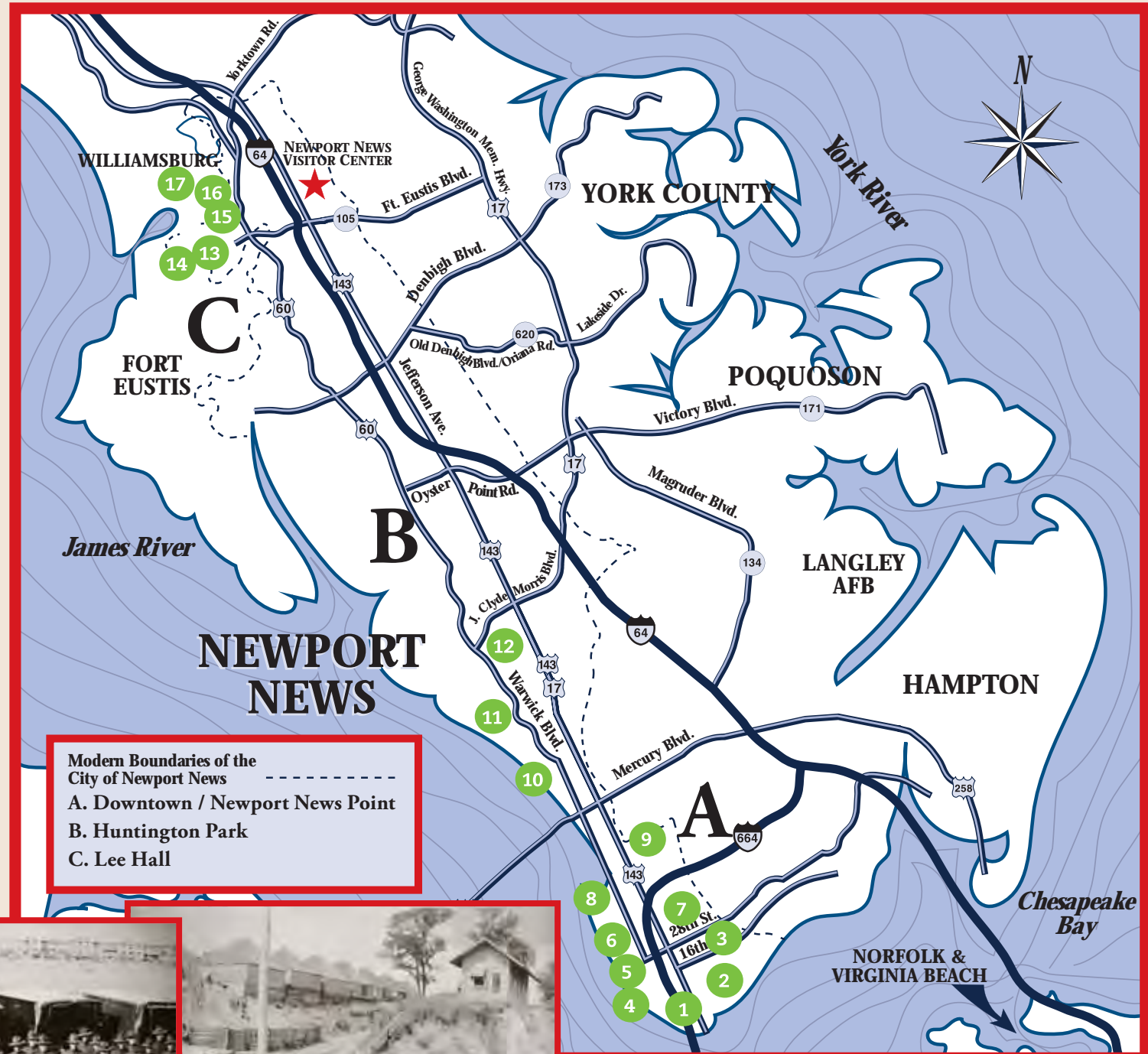
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Modern Boundaries of the City of Newport News  
 A. Downtown / Newport News Point  
 B. Huntington Park  
 C. Lee Hall



Camp Hill



Downtown Newport News

### ★ NEWPORT NEWS VISITOR CENTER

13560 Jefferson Ave., Newport News, VA 23603  
 (757) 886-7777 (888) 493-7386  
[www.newport-news.org](http://www.newport-news.org)

Travel counselors are here to help with directions, up-to-date information on special events, museum exhibits, and much more. You'll also find a wide variety of souvenirs - from teddy bears and mugs, to *Virginia is for Lovers*® merchandise, and discount coupons.