

Junior College Students Move In In September

They Can't Sink Air Station!

By JEAN ALLEN
(News Staff Writer)

Naval Air Station Barracks at Broward International Airport is a "one - year" school stopgap which stretched into 14 years; and the old wooden rattletraps aren't finished yet.

Broward County's first junior college will open there in September to begin a new chapter in the career of the cluster of buildings which were built in 1942.

And though Dr. Joe Rushing, the junior college's new president, would prefer to move into a new and modern college campus, his reaction is much like that of the School Board since 1947: "It will do."

Nobody, it seems, likes the

barracks except the students who go to school there. Dozens of elementary and junior high schools have had their temporary beginnings at the station since 1947, moving into new school buildings all over the county after a year or two of NAS classes.

Once the students began attending classes in the huge classrooms, nearly all of them liked it.

WATCHED THEM MOVE

Each year the School Board watched them move out, then counted up the county school enrollment and decided they needed the old frame buildings "just one more year" for still more schools.

In 1959, the County Commission,

which leases the buildings to the School Board, clamped down and put the lease on a month-to-month basis to serve notice that 1959-60 was the final year for school operation.

The buildings were firetraps, the commissioners agreed. And anyway, the advent of jet airplanes at the airport caused too much noise, and imminent danger for the students, they said.

But the School Board, waiting for the 1961 State Legislature to appropriate funds to build a college, could not find another location for its new institution. The county agreed to lease the barracks for "one more year."

Moving out to make way for

the college will be Driftwood Elementary School and New River Junior High, both due to occupy new schools in the fall. The Exceptional Child School headquarters will move into a new center, and no announcement has been made about the future of the county school auditors offices, also located at the station.

BUILT IN 1942

Naval Air Station was built in 1942, and at its World War II peak, housed 3,500 U. S. Navy personnel.

The station closed four years to the day after it opened, on Oct. 1, 1946, and the county took it over on a lease basis in 1947

after deciding that the airport (now Broward International) might just possibly have a future in commercial aviation.

In 1948, the Navy threatened briefly to reactivate it and reclaim the field from the county. Before the Navy changed its mind at the last minute, the county had ousted 27 business firms and more than 100 of the 153 families living in low-cost housing units on the station. An elementary school was already in operation and two children's homes were functioning as well as the Flight Deck Theater.

Lack of funds was blamed for the Navy's about-face, and it never did reclaim the station.