

# History of Grissom Water Utility

On July 1, 1942, the United States Navy opened the Bunker Hill Naval Air Station. According to a U.S. Air Force Fact Sheet titled: History of Grissom Air Reserve Base, Indiana, the base was in operation for four years as a training site for Navy, Marine and Coast Guard pilots.

The fact sheet goes on to outline the history of the base with some interesting facts:

- After World War II the base was closed.
- The base was reopened as Bunker Hill Air Force Base on June 22, 1954.
- On May 12, 1968, the base was renamed Grissom in honor of Lieutenant Colonel Virgil I. “Gus” Grissom, an astronaut from Mitchell, Indiana, who lost his life tragically in an Apollo capsule fire on January 27, 1967.
- Baseball legend and Hall of Famer, Ted Williams, was stationed at the base in the 40s.

The water plant was built to serve the needs of the Naval base in 1942. The operation was owned and operated by the military until 1994, when the base was deactivated. The operations of the water facility were turned over to the Grissom Redevelopment Authority (GRA) and continued to operate while the base was being reorganized. In 2000, the water and wastewater assets were transferred to Peru Utilities in a public benefits transfer from the United States Department of Health and Human Services.



*Grissom Water Plant Building – Original Construction, still in use.*

While the water system was still being operated by the GRA, the State of Indiana constructed the Miami Correctional Facility. The facility is located on the original base

and is within easy access of Highway 31. As a part of that construction, modifications were made to the water system to accommodate the proposed correctional facility population. Those improvements were also transferred to Peru Utilities, the most obvious part of that being the 1,000,000 gallon tower just off the highway.



Traffic on the highway can easily see the water tower with the Grissom Aeroplex logo and Peru Utilities logo on the faces. The tower was repainted in 2012 in a bright white paint and stands out as a local landmark for the area.

The water plant is a ground water operation with aeration, settling, gravity filters and disinfection. The original operations building has been maintained and is a part of the growing history of the area.

Improvements have continued on the water system through Peru Utilities. New high service pumps, controls, water lines and metering have been among the projects completed. Improvements will continue to be made to satisfy the needs of the Aeroplex as it grows in the future. Those served presently include residents, industry, businesses, the Miami Correctional Facility, The United States Air Reserve, churches, a nursing home, an assisted living complex and a museum.