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NARRATIVE

PB4Y, with a wing spread of 104 feet, could pass down the taxiway. Furthermore, the taxiways were hilly, most of the hardstands were sloped, and the taxiways had sharp corners in them.¹ It was impossible during the first three (3) weeks operation at West Field to avoid broken wing tips and broken nose turrets. During the first three (3) weeks, however, considerable work was put on the field by the SeaBees to improve these conditions, and at present, while conditions are not ideal, they are vastly improved. Seventy-five (75) hard stands are now available, and while they are not deep enough it is felt that they are at least passable. Difficulty was also experienced in breaking tail skids on PB4Y's when these planes were being towed along the hilly taxiways. It was essential that thoroughly experienced men tow the planes, while an equally experienced plane crewman ride the plane brakes. As plane crews and towing crews became used to conditions, the damage to tail skids ceased. However the field will always be a difficult one to operate unless several hundred thousand cubic yards of coral are brought in to level the taxiways.

Generally speaking, living and working conditions at West Field are a great improvement over those at North Field. Work facilities had been erected in accordance with the suggestions of the CASU, and therefore the maintenance divisions were provided with necessary facilities to a greater extent than at North Field. Instead of tents and make-shift lean-tos and shacks, Quonset huts were furnished for all departments and divisions of the CASU, many of them with cement decks. This difference caused a marked increase in efficiency. It is surprising how much more work and how much better work can be done with clean and dry facilities. In

1 See Appendix, Encl. 57 -