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Oro on Paz, Fierro on Guerra:
The United States Military and the
San Francisco Bay Area

On August 13, 1941, Douglas Dashiell (Director of Physical Training at the West Coast Air Corps Training Center, Moffett Field, California) wrote to Frederick W. Cozens. The purpose of Dashiell's letter to the Dean of Physical Education at U.C.L.A. was to inquire about an achievement test for aviation cadets that Cozens was devising. Within a year, Cozens (now Chair of Physical Education at the University of California, Berkeley) was communicating with the commanding officer at Treasure Island, the head of the U.S. Navy Pre-Flight School at St. Mary's College, and other military personnel throughout Northern California about a number of matters pertinent to preparing both the armed services and citizens to meet the challenges of world war.

Since 1846 with the take over of the Presidio of San Francisco by the United States Army there has been a permanent presence of the U.S. military. In California this has included all branches of the armed services. The Presidio of San Francisco became an important point of embarkation for troops during the Spanish-American War and the Philippine Insurrection. Large numbers of troops (especially from the midwest) bivouacked at the Presidio. Among the diversions organized for them were competitions in the emerging game of American football. Over the decades, sports of various types were organized at the many military establishments that extended throughout the Greater San Francisco Bay Area and Northern California. During the 1920s and 1930s, for example, a fairly extensive program of activities ranging from recreational bowling leagues to baseball and ice hockey competitions existed. Additionally, a series of west coast army-navy football games were played at San Francisco's Kezar Stadium and the University of California's Memorial Stadium. However, nothing matched the extent and the intensity that emerged following the outbreak of World War II. With the bombing of Pearl Harbor San Francisco emerged as a frontline of defense against the Empire of Japan.