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# UNITED STATES NAVY AND MARINE CORPS BASES, DOMESTIC

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On 7 November 1949 the first jet, an FJ-1 *Fury*, was received by Los Alamitos. With all FGs replaced with F6Fs, on 1 December 1950 a reorganization occurred in which there was provided a Wing Staff with twenty-five squadrons. During the summer of 1950, 105 midshipmen from the Naval Academy reported for four days of an air cruise and 112 seamen reported for eight weeks of training duty. Meanwhile there was a waiting list for pilots and ground officers. When the naval aviation cadet program, which had opened on 1 July, closed on 25 October Los Alamitos had obtained a tenth of the cadets recruited in the entire nation. Meanwhile, in answer to the president's request for reservists to volunteer for duty during the Korean War, VG-781 requested mobilization as a complete unit, and was accepted—the first squadron in the nation to do so—VP-772 reported for active duty on 1 September; three Marine Corps Organized units were ordered to active duty, and so was VP-772. To speed up training, on 6 March and again on 16 May 1951 ninety-day trainees reported on board, and on 15 January 1952 the first helicopter unit came on board. The third group of trainees came on board for training 16 June, and many of them as well as station personnel helped save lives and property during heavy rains and floods that damaged the nearby town of Los Alamitos. In 1952 a Reserve Air Intelligence Unit came on board.

For the next decade operations at Los Alamitos were routine. In 1970, however, the Navy closed the station as a Naval Air Reserve Training Facility and let it serve merely as a Naval Air Station until 1972, when it was changed into an Armed Forces Reserve Center to be used by Reserve Components. From leased facilities at commercial airports helicopter elements of both the National Guard and Army Reserve moved to the center. Following approval by an Environmental Impact Statement filed in August 1973, the Navy was designated host to the Armed Forces Reserve Center, with the California National Guard charged with operating the airfield. While the Army and the California National Guard use about half of the physical facilities, about all the Navy has left there is the Aero Club it sponsors.

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#### LOS ANGELES/LONG BEACH, CALIF., NAVAL BASES, 1935–

In early 1935 Adm. Joseph M. Reeves, the Commander in Chief of the U.S. Fleet, negotiated with the City of Los Angeles for a thirty-year lease on 228 acres of land and 100 acres of water to be developed into a facility for fleet aviation units. The first naval activity on Terminal Island, Naval Air Facility, Reeves Field, was commissioned in 1938 to provide support for seaplanes attached to battleships and cruisers in the Pacific. In August 1940 the Navy purchased from the City of Long Beach, twenty-five miles south of Los Angeles,

a strip of coastline along Terminal Island for the nominal sum of \$1. A seawall was constructed and the area between the wall and the shoreline was filled with materials dredged from the ocean floor. The island was enlarged to such an extent that the present site of Naval Station Long Beach is about 60 percent manmade. The housing, storage, and other facilities built on Terminal Island were designated "Roosevelt Base" in September 1942 and, while continuing to grow in size, the facilities served throughout World War II.

In 1947 a change made in name from U.S. Naval Base, Terminal Island, San Pedro, Calif., to U.S. Naval Base Los Angeles/Long Beach made little difference in the size or number of installations involved. When the change occurred, there were in the latter the Terminal Island Naval Shipyard, U.S. Naval Station, Motion Picture Exchange, Public Works Department, Registered Publication Issuing Office, Fleet Training Center that included a Fire Fighters School and Electronics School, a Naval Supply Depot with an annex at Torrance, the Ammunition and Net Depot at Seal Beach, the Naval Hospital at Long Beach, the Radio Station and Port Director's Office at Terminal Island, Shore Patrol Long Beach, Disciplinary Barracks Terminal Island, Fleet Support Office, and housing and recreation areas.

In 1947 Los Angeles/Long Beach provided support mainly for inactive ships of the Reserve Fleet and the active service types normally there. Cruisers and carriers were based either at San Diego or San Francisco, but Military Sea Transportation Service (MSTS) ships, mostly tankers, used Los Angeles/Long Beach (hereafter called simply Long Beach).

From 1947 to 1950 a decrease in activity resulted in the closing of the old naval base and naval shipyard. With fewer ships operating, the Navy Department concluded that it could not support four shipyards on the West Coast. With the shipyard inactivated on 1 April and the naval base on 15 April 1950, their functions for administrative purposes were assumed by the commanding officer of the Naval Station Long Beach. With the economy of Long Beach hit hard, California's congressmen appealed for relief to Secretary of the Navy Francis P. Matthews and to Secretary of Defense Louis A. Johnson. Their efforts were to no avail. Furthermore, as an economy move that would save \$25 million annually, the Naval Hospital at Long Beach was given to the Veterans Administration.

Long Beach was reactivated because of the Korean War at a cost of \$9,239,804 beginning on 1 February 1951. By June 1952 an attack carrier, seven other large ships, sixteen destroyers from San Diego, and some Atlantic cruisers and destroyers had been transferred there; by mid-June 1954 the Mine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet had come aboard from Pearl Harbor with its thirty ships and 3,000 men. The dependents of transferred men followed. In consequence, the naval shipyard was reactivated under a captain and then provided a rear admiral, Robert L. Campbell, USN, on 19 November 1953.

New facilities at Long Beach included a \$5.5 million Navy landing at the foot of Magnolia Ave. to replace the old one of the 1930s at Pico Ave. and the

reactivated fuel depot and supply depot as its annex on 1 December 1955. A Dental Clinic was added on 29 January 1958, when a destroyer escort conversion program was instituted, new construction proceeded on minecraft, and ships were transferred to several foreign nations under the Military Aid Program; the last involved teaching crews how to operate their ships. Among special projects were the leasing of a portion of Pier E to handle two *Essex*-class carriers (October 1956 to 30 June 1960); creating a new homeport for four carriers, in January 1958; a new YMCA; and the berthing of a hospital ship in 1957, even though the commander was battling for a hospital. Among VIPs visiting were Chief of Naval Operations Robert Carney and his successor, Arleigh Burke, the Commander in Chief of the Pacific Fleet, and high-ranking officers from Chile and France. In sum, by the end of 1958 Long Beach had on board as major or sub-components a naval station, receiving station, commissary store, the USS *Haven* (AH-12), the Long Beach Naval Shipyard, ammunition and net depot at Seal Beach, Marine Barracks at the Naval Base Los Angeles, which also hosted a dental clinic, and the fuel depot San Pedro.

Unfortunately, some of the history of Long Beach has been lost because the requirement to submit command histories was discontinued, some command records have been transferred and others have been retired, and Federal Records Storage Centers have been established. This much appears to be known: Terminal Island, San Pedro Naval Shipyard became Naval Shipyard Long Beach on 1 March 1948; dates are lacking for the disestablishment of the Fleet Training Center and firefighter and electronics schools; the naval supply depot was disestablished on 30 November 1955 and transferred to Long Beach Naval Station, and on 30 June 1950 the Naval Hospital Long Beach was transferred to the Veterans Administration. The functions of the radio station at Terminal Island were absorbed by the Naval Station Long Beach, as was the old Fleet Support Office. In 1958, then, under the Commandant of the Eleventh Naval District, there were in the Long Beach-San Pedro area a Branch Hydrographic Office, Field Intelligence, Harbor Defense Unit, Industrial Manager, Naval Air Station Los Alamitos (q.v.), Naval Accounts Disbursing Office, Resident Inspector of Naval Material, Supervisor of Shipbuilding and Inspector of Ordnance, and the Naval Reserve Training Center San Pedro. Tenant activities aboard the Naval Station Long Beach included the Naval Base (staff headquarters), Mine Force Pacific Fleet (staff headquarters), Naval Receiving Station, Commissary Store, Marine Barracks, Harbor Defense Unit, sub-Registered Publications Office, dental clinic, Navy Accounts Disbursing Office, Naval Ordnance Test Station, Admiralty Office, Naval Reserve Training Center San Pedro, MSTS Office, Naval Control and Shipping Office (NCSO) Office, TraPac Liaison Team, Long Beach Naval Shipyard, the hospital ship *Haven*, Long Beach Group Pacific Reserve Fleet, service craft assigned, and Fleet Boat Pool.

Despite all these changes, the mission of Long Beach remained quite the same as it had been when known as San Pedro: "To maintain and operate medium base facilities for refitting of all fleet types except submarines. Provide logistic

support for the operating groups of the Pacific Fleet and MSTS vessels. Provide communications for limited fleet support including NTX relay facility. Provide for sub-issuing office of Registered Publication Issuing Office San Diego." In addition, Long Beach would support federal, civil, and local authorities during periods of emergency and civil and natural disasters, such as forest fires, floods, earthquakes, and civil disturbances, in cooperation with Army and Air Force commands in the Southern Sector of the western United States.

With an adequate number of officers on his staff, the commander at Long Beach in 1959 supervised, among many other projects, the repair and supply of 126 ships including five carriers and five cruisers. On 30 June 1959, when the NCSO was disestablished, he assumed its functions. Then the Harbor Defense Unit was disestablished, on 1 December 1959, and he had little luck in obtaining a naval hospital. Although in 1960 the City of Long Beach generously offered 60 acres just south of Caron Street and east of the San Gabriel River to the Navy for \$10, the projected hospital was deleted from the FY1961 budget by the Department of the Defense, with CNO Burke seeking to soften the blow by saying that there were other overriding priorities but that he would try to get the project into the FY1962 budget.

When Rear Adm. Frederick Julian Becton, Commander Mine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, relieved Capt. Thomas Kent Bowers as commander, U.S. Naval Base Long Beach, on 30 September 1962, he inherited an insufficient staff yet had to serve 114 naval ships homeported in his command and to prepare ships for transfer to such countries as Greece, the Republic of China, Japan, and Korea. With plans in hand for a 500-bed hospital, he urged its inclusion in the FY1962 naval budget. Meanwhile he presided at the ceremonies for the opening of the new fleet landing at Magnolia Ave., which would cost \$1 a year to lease, with the lease renewable for twenty-five years. He then worked hard to get off increasing numbers of ship movements to the Western Pacific as the Vietnam War heated up. From the Marine Corps Supply Center at Barstow came cargo assembled at Port Hueneme (q.v.) that would be loaded out on AKAs, APAs, LSTs, and LSDs, with 24,604 miles/tons shipped out between January and September 1959 and 3,983 miles/tons of retrograde cargo received.

Admiral Becton was relieved by Rear Adm. Kenneth L. Veth on 7 October 1961 as Commander Mine Force Pacific and Commander Naval Base Los Angeles. At the end of the year 109 naval ships were homeported at Long Beach, including the carriers *Hornet*, *Kearsarge*, and *Yorktown*. Hope sprang forth when funds for the naval hospital were included in the FY1962 budget—only to be dashed again. In any event, with the Vietnam War winding down, there were transferred from the command a cruiser-destroyer group and two destroyer divisions, and Commander Mine Flotilla THREE succeeded Commander Mine Division.

In consequence of a Secretary of Defense Shore Establishment Realignment, Naval Station Long Beach was disestablished and redesignated as Naval Support Activity in 1974, when it had to transfer forty-seven naval ships and 16,000

personnel to other ports on the West and East coasts. However, on 1 October 1979 the Naval Support Activity was disestablished and redesignated Naval Station Long Beach, and the return of ships and personnel was awaited.

For the ensuing years matters were fairly routine at Long Beach. In 1974 nine ships were commissioned and ten decommissioned, supply assistance teams helped fit out ships to be transferred to Greece, Korea, and Turkey, and at last the Naval Regional Medical Center was established. The greatest event, however, was the coming on board in the spring of 1981 of the USS *New Jersey* and an appropriation of almost \$300 million to convert her from a battleship carrying full batteries of 16-inch guns to a mixed gun and cruise missile ship carrying some 1,500 cruise missiles with 60 *Harpoons* mixed in, yet able with her stern gun batteries to provide powerful shore bombardment. She was undocked late in 1982 and proceeded with her sea trials.

Naval Station Long Beach has the full gamut of personal services, including a family service center, family ombudsman, religious services, children's centers, several housing units (the last completed in the spring of 1983), Red Cross, counseling and assistance center, the usual Navy Exchange and commissary, and a Naval Regional Dental Center. Among its tenant commands are Commander, Naval Surface Force U.S. Pacific Fleet Representative; Destroyer Squadron Nine; Military Sealift Command; Mobile Mine Assembly Group, Detachment One; Naval Telecommunication Center; Navy and Marine Reserve Center; the Shipyard; and ample recreational services. Cultural activities may be enjoyed in nearby Los Angeles. Mountain, lake, and desert resorts are also nearby. For those who desire to continue their formal education, there is the Servicemembers' Opportunity College of Long Beach City College, as well as the various colleges and universities in Los Angeles.

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**MARGINAL PARKWAY, BROOKLYN, N.Y.** See Continental Naval Air Patrol Stations, World War I.

**MARIETTA, GA., NAVAL RESERVE AIR BASE AND NAVAL AIR STATION.** See Atlanta, Marietta, Ga., Naval Reserve Air Base and Naval Air Station.

**MASTIC, LONG ISLAND, N.Y.** See Continental Naval Air Patrol Stations, World War I.

#### **MAYPORT, FLA., NAVAL STATION, 1941-**

Located in the extreme northeastern corner of Florida at the mouth of the St. John's River, Mayport's primary mission is to serve the approximately thirty ships ranging from tugs to aircraft carriers currently homeported there as well as frequent British and American visitors assigned to NATO. In an emergency a two-mile channel allows carriers to reach the sea in forty-five minutes; smaller ships take even less time. Mayport is easily reached in twenty minutes by a four-lane highway from Jacksonville. It can also be arrived at from its own airport, which has an 8,000-foot runway capable of handling the largest planes, from Jacksonville International Airport on the other side of the city, by AMTRAK, and by both Greyhound and Trailways buses. With an average temperature of 67.8°F and short winters, its climate facilitates both sea and air operations.

In 1939 the Navy initiated plans to develop the Mayport area for an aircraft carrier basin and chose Ribault Bay as the site of the port complex, which would include a naval air station. In July of that year the citizens of Duval County passed a \$1,106,000 bond issue to buy the land. Although the Jacksonville (q.v.) Naval Air Station was commissioned in 1941, a shortage of funds delayed the construction of the basin until late in the year, when it was used only for patrol and crash boat training. However, with the need for a section base in the South Atlantic area, work proceeded in earnest. With a channel dredged to a depth of