

**Treasure Island, Naval Station, 1937-**

Located in the center of the San Francisco Bay midway between San Francisco and Oakland, Treasure Island is the largest man-made island in the world. It was created in the fourteen-month period following November 1937 to serve as the site for the 1939-1940 Golden Gate International Exposition. It is connected to Yerba Buena Island by a narrow causeway.

The 403-acre island rests on the Yerba Buena shoals, a one-time navigational hazard that was covered with tons of rock and silt dredged from the bay bottom to build the island.

Originally planned for use as an airport for the city of San Francisco after the fair, the island was leased to the Navy early in 1941. After World War II San Francisco traded the deed to the island for government land south of the city, which is now San Francisco International Airport.

During World War II Treasure Island was built up to a major naval facility, processing up to 12,000 men a day to Pacific area assignments and thousands more in the days and months following the war, as Navy personnel returned from the Pacific. For many years it was the headquarters of the Twelfth Naval District.

Three permanent buildings, at the southern end of the island, remain from the fair. Building 1, the administration building for the fair, now houses the Navy/Marine Corps Museum and serves as headquarters for the Commanding Officer, Naval Station Treasure Island/Chief of Staff, Commandant Naval Base, San Francisco. Buildings 2 and 3, built as aircraft hangars, are now occupied by the Navy/Marine Corps Reserve Center and the island's Public Works Center.

Today Naval Station Treasure Island processes Pacific-bound and homecoming personnel and serves as host to a number of tenant commands. Approximately 3,000 military and 1,000 civilian personnel with a total annual payroll of \$70 million comprise the island's population. There are 704 units of enlisted family quarters at the north end of the island. The following activities are also located on Treasure Island:

- Navy Marine and Coast Guard Museum
- Twelfth Marine Corps District
- Naval Technical Training Center
- Naval and Marine Corps Reserve Training Center
- Naval Regional Dental Center
- Naval Reserve Recruiting
- Naval Investigative Service Office
- Navy Office of Information San Francisco Branch
- Office of Naval Research San Francisco Branch
- Regional Financial Service Department

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SUE LEMMON

**San Francisco Bay. Navy Public Works Center, 1974-**

The Navy Public Works Center, San Francisco Bay was established on 3 June 1974 at the Oakland Army Base, located on the east side of San Francisco Bay. It is one of nine Navy Public Works Centers serving major shore station complexes and provides logistical support to nearly all Army and Navy sites in the Bay Area plus some forty Navy ships. It has been filling this role since the Department of Defense consolidated the Public Works agencies of various sites into a single, more efficient center.

It serves as a maintenance service company, an engineering company, a public housing agency, a public utilities company, and a transportation company (maintaining a pool of 1,400 vehicles including cars, buses, trucks, and a 100-ton floating crane).

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**Yerba Buena Island, Naval Training Station, 1896-1941**

Yerba Buena Island is centuries older than its man-made neighbor, Treasure Island, both of which are located in the middle of San Francisco Bay between San Francisco and Oakland. Yerba Buena's history predates the first recorded sighting of Spanish explorers in 1775 by centuries. According to archeological evidence, Indians used the island as a fishing station and as a ceremonial and burying ground.

Mexico ceded the California territory to the United States in 1848, and, on 12 October 1866, the island was "set aside for military purposes" by presidential proclamation. Two months later it was occupied by Army personnel. In 1896 Congress authorized the establishment of a Navy Training Station on Yerba Buena Island, which remained through World War I. During the peak years up to 13,000 men were in training there. When West Coast training was transferred to San Diego in 1923, the island became a Navy receiving station. At the beginning of World War II, naval activities were transferred to Treasure Island, and today Yerba Buena serves as a residential suburb, with 110 units of officer family housing for its neighbor island.

The name Yerba Buena is Spanish for "Good Herb," and was reportedly given to the island for the wild mint growing there and used by Spaniards to flavor their tea. The island has also been known as Wood Island, Bird Island,

and most popularly, Goat Island, its official name from 1895 to 1931. That name came from the herds of goats raised there for food from about 1850 until the last goat was removed in 1931, when the name was officially changed back to Yerba Buena Island.

A Coast Guard Station is located at Yerba Buena Island.

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#### SAN PEDRO, TERMINAL ISLAND, CALIF., NAVAL AIR STATION, 1938–1947

One of the ten Naval Reserve Air Bases used during the 1930s to provide primary flight training was that at San Pedro, Calif. (33°44'55"N., 118°15'15"W.). It was located on Reeves Field, Terminal Island, a sand-filled island in the Los Angeles-Long Beach-San Pedro harbor approximately 3.5 miles long and 1 mile wide. The station proper was on a rectangular parcel of land on the seaward side of the island of 328.6 acres, of which 96 acres were submerged. Adjoining was the Naval Operating Base, Terminal Island, San Pedro, (q.v.) which included Roosevelt Base, naval dry docks, and a naval small craft training center. All the filled land had been transferred by the city of Los Angeles, which was eager to see the development of its harbor. In 1935 the Commander in Chief of the U.S. Fleet directed that the station be developed to provide facilities for seaplanes attached to the battleships and cruisers of the Pacific Fleet and that it be adapted for use by landplanes as well. At no charge to the federal government, Los Angeles on 31 July 1935 transferred the site on condition that its use be renewed annually but not beyond 30 June 1965. Between 1935 and 1936 funds provided by WPA and the City of Los Angeles underwrote the rebuilding of the existing breakwater and dredging of an enclosed area for use as a seaplane anchorage; construction of a concrete mat for parking seaplanes; providing water mains, hydrants, access roads, and two asphaltic concrete landplane runways 4,200 and 2,350 feet long and 100 feet wide with sand taxiways; one runway 2,600 feet in length; and a fence around the entire land site of the station. In three buildings also transferred by the City of Los Angeles the Navy established its operations, aerology, and medical offices. The Navy then enlarged the barracks and mess hall so that they could support 1,000 naval and Marine personnel and built three storehouses and a shop.

With the Navy as cosponsor, in 1937 a second WPA-City of Los Angeles project included construction of a steel hangar and eight wooden buildings, and a third similar contract of 1938 saw the completion of the work of the second contract by WPA funds and additional construction as well. To the end of 1938, \$1,379,413.07 has been expended, with the Navy granting \$236,162.80; WPA labor amounting to \$799,590.37; WPA nonlabor costs amounting to \$289,920.37;

and the City of Los Angeles contributing \$53,739.53. For fiscal year 1938 the Bureau of Yards and Docks contributed an additional \$140,102.73, and on 1 July 1939 a Navy-sponsored PWA and WPA project toward which the State of California also contributed provided \$1,036,370.66 for additional improvements to the breakwater, building a 30,000-gallon underground gasoline storage facility and additional buildings and hangars. Maintenance and upkeep costs during FY1939 amounted to \$81,213.75.

Early in 1939 the Commandant of the Eleventh Naval District persuaded the City of Long Beach to grant 40 acres it had been using as a ball park for a training base named Roosevelt Base, which would include a small craft training facility. A fourth WPA project of 1939 permitted some improvements, as did the last WPA project, of 1940, with the total of these two amounting to \$500,000. With 15,000 aircraft called for in 1941, extensions to the air facilities were provided by an agreement under which a new reserve air base was built at Los Alamitos, a short distance inland from San Pedro and Terminal Island which by 1945 had a personnel capacity of 5,200.

With the nation at war after 7 December 1941, on 20 February 1942 the federal government condemned 40 acres located to the north across Seaside Avenue from the station proper and paid \$300,000 for it. This area as well as the older sections beginning in January 1942 were defended by the Army, which built eight revetments to park its aircraft on the field. At about the same time, one of the largest colonies of Japanese in the State of California, engaged mainly in the fish canning industry, was evacuated, and the Navy took over the two buildings they had been using.

New construction costs at NAS San Pedro amounted to \$785,197.82 in FY1943 and rose to \$1,158,578.74 in FY1944. After 25 September 1941 the station was under the command of the Commandant of NOB San Pedro, but after 10 August 1944 under the command of the Commander, Naval Air Bases, Eleventh Naval District. On 16 October the Naval Air Facility at Litchfield Park, Ariz. (q.v.) came under its purview until 4 December 1944.

The functions and use of NAS San Pedro changed over time. It originally provided beaching and services for the seaplanes on battleships and cruisers of the Pacific Fleet, with the work accomplished by fleet personnel. Beginning on 3 March 1939, the station began to service and overhaul aircraft on ships in the entire Los Angeles-Long Beach-San Pedro area. When fleet air detachments were on board, facilities were provided for indoctrination, landplane familiarization, and intensive training including that in aerial gunnery in accordance with the station's primary mission—to provide facilities for the operation, maintenance, and repair of fleet aircraft. Between September 1940 and 1942, when Roosevelt Base was established at Terminal Island, NAS San Pedro also served as a receiving station.

During the war the station was equipped to rearm Army, Navy, and Marine Corps aircraft, including two squadrons of Army P-38s and P-40s, and six Marine Corps SBDs. The Army recompensed by providing base defense, in-