

FLEET ACTIVITIES YOKOSUKA

Fleet Activities, Yokosuka is located in the Kanto Plain area of the Pacific coast in central Honshu, largest of the four main islands that comprise the Japanese archipelago. Yokosuka lies at the entrance of Tokyo Bay and is located approximately 70 km (43.4 mi) south of Tokyo and 30 km (18.6 mi) south of Yokohama.

The base was first established as the "Yokosuka Iron Works" in 1865, when Lord Oguri, Minister of Finance to the Tokugawa Shogunate government, urged the Shogun to construct facilities to build and maintain large seagoing vessels so Japan could assume an active role in world trade. After inspecting several sites, the French engineers employed by the Shogun chose Yokosuka because its natural harbor could accommodate deep draft vessels.

The keel of the first ship built at Yokosuka was laid in 1866. In 1871, the name of the facility was changed to the "Yokosuka Navy Yard." More than 100 Imperial Japanese Naval ships were built here; at the peak of activity during World War II, the yard employed 40,000 workers. The most famous Japanese ship ever built here was the largest — the ill-fated SHINANO, a 68,000-ton aircraft carrier. Launched in October, 1944, the ship was sunk by a U.S. submarine while on trials enroute to the Inland Sea, never having launched a plane or fired a shot.

The base was surrendered to Allied Forces on 30 August 1945; Commander Fleet Activities, Yokosuka was created shortly thereafter.

"Service to the Fleet" is the motto of Commander Fleet Activities, Yokosuka, who is tasked to maintain and operate base facilities for logistic servicing of U.S. Naval Forces, Japan and units of the operating forces assigned in the Western Pacific. The Navy occupies the Fleet Activities complex under the Status of Forces Agreement signed by the Governments of Japan and the U.S. The complex occupies more than 590 acres, including more than 5 1/2 miles of waterfront, and hosts 45 tenant commands which support the U.S. Seventh Fleet.

Among the major tenant commands that supply direct service to the fleet are the Naval Supply Depot (NSD), the Naval Ship Repair Facility (NAVSHIPREPFAC), Public Works Center (PWC), Naval Communications Station, Japan (NAVCOMMSTA), personnel Support Activity Far East (PSAFE), U.S. Naval Hospital (USNH), U.S. Naval Dental Clinic, Japan, and Marine Barracks, Japan.

Yokosuka is also the home for several forward deployed units under the Overseas Family Residency Program, including USS BLUE RIDGE (LCC-19), Flagship for the Commander, U.S. SEVENTH FLEET; the aircraft carrier, USS MIDWAY (CV-41), Flagship for Commander, Task Force 70; Carrier Air Wing Five; and Commander Destroyer Squadron 15 (COMDESRON 15).

1871 artist's conception of Yokosuka Navy Base.

