

# JOINT TASK FORCE GUANTANAMO

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## Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba

Located in the Oriente Province on the southeast corner of Cuba, the base is about 400 air miles from Miami, Fla. The installation is the oldest overseas U.S. Naval base and is the only base located in a country with which the U.S. does not maintain diplomatic relations.

In February 1903, the United States leased 45 square miles of land and water at Guantanamo Bay for use as a coaling station. As technology advanced, it evolved into a refueling station. The treaty was finalized, ratified by both governments and signed in Havana in December 1903.

A 1934 treaty reaffirming the lease granted Cuba and her trading partners free access through the bay, modified the lease payment from \$2,000 in gold coins per year, to the 1934 equivalent value of \$4,085 U.S. Treasury dollars, and added a requirement that termination of the lease requires the consent of both the U.S. and Cuba governments, or the U.S. abandonment of the base property.

Base relations with Cuba remained stable through two world wars and the periods between, and did not significantly change until the Cuban revolution in the late 1950's. That revolution, led by Fidel Castro, began in the hills of Oriente Province, not far from the base.

On June 27, 1958, 29 Sailors and Marines returning from liberty outside the base gates were kidnapped by Cuban rebel forces headed by Raul Castro, brother of Fidel, and detained in the hills as hostages until they were finally released 22 days later.

United States and Cuban relations steadily declined as Fidel Castro openly declared himself in favor of Marxist ideology, and began mass jailing and executions of Cuban dissidents. Cuban territory outside the confines of the base limits was declared off limits to U.S. servicemen and civilians on Jan. 1, 1959.

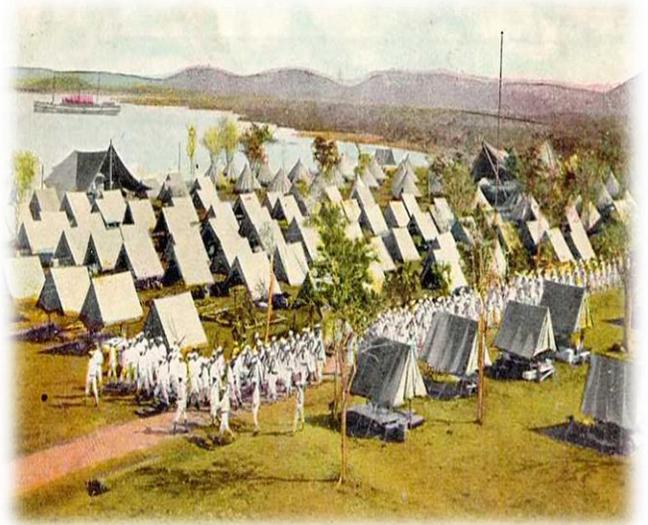
Official diplomatic relations with Cuba were severed in January 1961 by President Dwight Eisenhower just prior to the inauguration of President John F. Kennedy. At this time, many Cubans sought refuge on the base and many still live and work here today.

In October 1962, family members of service people stationed here and many base employees were evacuated to the United States as President Kennedy announced the presence of Soviet missiles in Cuba. This was the start of the Cuban Missile Crisis which resulted in a naval quarantine of the island until the Soviet Union removed the missiles. The evacuees were allowed to return to the base by that Christmas.

Another crisis arose just 14 months later on Feb. 6, 1964, when Castro cut off water and supply avenues to the base in retaliation for several incidents in which Cuban fishermen were being fined by the U.S. government for fishing in Florida waters. This led to actions to make the base self-sustaining, and for more than 40 years Guantanamo Bay has provided its own water and power.

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**Fleet Camp at Deer Point, circa 1910**

In 1991, the station's mission was expanded as some 34,000 Haitian refugees passed through Guantanamo Bay. The refugees fled Haiti after a violent coup brought on by political and social upheaval in their country. The naval base received the Navy Unit Commendation and Joint Meritorious Unit Award for its effort.

In May 1994, Operation Sea Signal began and the base was tasked to support Joint Task Force 160, providing humanitarian assistance to thousands of Haitian and Cuban migrants. In late August and early September 1994, 2,200 family members and civilian employees were evacuated from the base as the migrant population climbed to more than 45,000, and the Pentagon began preparing to house up to 60,000 migrants on the base.

The last Haitian migrants departed here Nov. 1, 1995. The last of the Cuban migrants left the base Jan. 31, 1996. Family members were authorized to return in October 1995, marking an end to family separations. An immediate effort began to restore base facilities for family use, including reopening the child development center, youth center, two schools and Sunday school. Additionally, the revitalization of Boy and Girl Scout Camps and the Guantanamo Bay Youth Activities (a sports program for children) were initiated.

Since Sea Signal, Guantanamo Bay has retained its migrant operations assistance mission with a migrant population of less than 30. The base has also been involved in two contingency migrant operations: Operation Marathon in October 1996 and Present Haven in February 1997. Both of these short-fused events involved the interception of Chinese migrants being smuggled into the United States.

When an earthquake struck Haiti on Jan. 12, 2010, the Naval Station became designated a Joint Logistics Hub to support Operation Unified Response. The Naval Station is located approximately 170 miles west of the earthquake's epicenter. As a Logistics Hub, Naval Station Guantanamo Bay Cuba and U.S. Southern Command's Combined Task Force 48 provided air and sea receiving and transport capabilities. Once the supplies, equipment, and personnel arrived, they were quickly moved by ship or aircraft to Haiti.

Directly supporting the base are offices of the Naval Criminal Investigative Service, Resident Officer-in-Charge of Construction, Human Resources Office, Fleet and Family Support Center, Red Cross, and the Navy Exchange and Commissary.

The most recent addition to the base is the Southern Command Joint Task Force-Guantanamo. Following the attacks on New York and Washington on September 11, 2001, Joint Task Force-Guantanamo was tasked to accomplish detainee operations in support of the War on Terror.

The naval station has three categories of Cuban residents aboard the base.

**Special Category Residents** - In 1959, when Fidel Castro took power, there were thousands of Cubans who worked aboard the Naval Station. Many of the Cubans did not want to live in a communist state, so the United States allowed approximately 380 of them to stay aboard the base to work and live. Today, there are 33 remaining.

**Commuters** - In pre-communist Cuba, Cuban citizens entered the base each day to work for the U.S. government. When the communists came to power, they allowed those already employed at the Naval Station to continue that employment, but no others were allowed to accept jobs at the Naval Station. Over time, an elaborate system evolved for these commuters to leave communist Cuba each morning and return in the evening through the base's North East Gate. In 1959 there were approximately 3,500 such commuters each day. The two final commuters retired December, 2012.

**Migrants** - The migrants are either interdicted at sea by the U.S. Coast Guard or asylum seekers who make it across the border by land or by water. They live in migrant facilities on the base. They often take jobs on the base while waiting processing.

If officials find the interdictees or asylum seekers have legitimate grounds to be granted asylum, they are eventually moved to a third-party country, generally in Latin America.

**Naval Station Guantanamo Bay**      *By the numbers:*

**Personnel:**

Military – 2,132  
Civilians – 2,828 (Includes approx. 321 attached to JTF)  
**Total:** 4,960

**Installation:**

The base has a 38 – 42 ft. deep natural harbor, enabling ships to moor closer to shore.

**Land area:** approximately 45 square miles (28,817 acres)  
**Fence Line:** 17.4 miles of security fence is guarded by U.S. Marines

**Utilities:**

No utilities are received from the government of Cuba. The base is self-sufficient.

- Desalination plant produces 1.2 million gallons of water per day
- Power plant produces more than 350,000 kilowatt-hours of electricity per day.
  
- Wind Turbines
  - o On average 2-3 percent of the base's electric energy per day comes from the Naval Station's four 262 ft. tall, three-blade turbines.
  - o Each of the turbines produces 950 kilowatts of electricity.
  - o The wind turbines save approximately 250,000 gallons of diesel fuel per year.

**Major Units and Tenant Commands:**

- Naval Hospital
- Marine Corps Security Force
- Personnel Support Activity
- Naval Atlantic Meteorology and Oceanography Command Detachment
- Naval Media Center Detachment
- Department of Defense Education Activity – W.T. Sampson Schools
- International Organization for Migration
- The GEO Group
- Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) Southeast, Public Works Detachment
- Fleet & Industrial Supply Center (FISC), Jacksonville Detachment, GTMO
- Joint Task Force Guantanamo (Detention Center)
- U.S. Coast Guard Aviation Detachment – Guantanamo Bay, Cuba