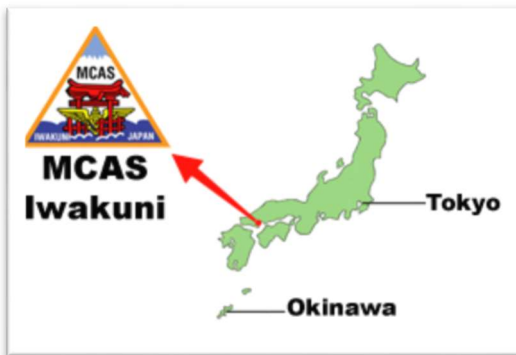


Introduction



The map of Japan

Japan consists of four major islands (Hokkaido, Honshu, Kyushu and Shikoku) which are home to more than 90% of its 123 million residents. Iwakuni is located on the southeastern tip of Honshu - the most populated island in Japan.

Abrupt shorelines and numerous small mountains characterize the landscape of Iwakuni. Since flat land is scarce, rice and grain fields can be seen terraced up the hills and mountains. Hillsides are heavily wooded with many varieties of pine, bamboo and hardwood trees. Narrow highways hug the coastline, winding around the numerous small bays that penetrate Honshu's rugged coast.

Many sections of Japan are accessible to the Iwakuni traveler. Modern, convenient trains make it possible to visit many towns and resort sites.

Although there are several large cities near Iwakuni, Hiroshima is the most notable one. Hiroshima is located approximately 25 miles northeast of Iwakuni. It is a great place for shopping, cultural tours and entertainment. It is famous for the Peace Park and Museum which preserves pictures and relics from the atomic bomb explosion.



Iwakuni Castle

Japan's climate is similar to that of coastal North Carolina. Winters are mild with some snow and the summer months are warm and humid. In January, the coldest month, temperatures may drop to 34 degrees Fahrenheit. August temperatures can reach 90 degrees Fahrenheit. Typhoons occasionally pass near Iwakuni but rarely strike the area directly.

Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan, is situated approximately 600 miles southwest of Tokyo. It is located in the Nishiki River delta at Iwakuni City, where it lies at the eastern end of Yamaguchi Prefecture, the southern end of the main island of Japan. The city is backed by the mountains and fronted by the Seto Inland Sea, and its northern part adjoins Otake City in Hiroshima Prefecture. Running from east to west, the Nishiki River is vital to the over 150,000 residents and the large number of factories in the city.

MCAS Iwakuni is home to approximately half of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing that is headquartered on Okinawa, elements of the 3rd Marine Logistics Group, Fleet Air Wing 31 of the Japan Maritime Self Defense Force, and other units of JMSDF. At present the station has about 15,000 personnel, including Japanese national employees.

History of the Iwakuni Air Station



The Station's main gate

The reclaimed area was all farmland and village until the Japanese government bought a large portion of it in 1938, with the view of establishing a naval air station. They commissioned the new base July 8, 1940. When World War II started, the Iwakuni air station was used as a training and defense base. In September 1943, a branch of the Etajima Naval Academy was established here, with approximately 1,000 cadets undergoing training in the Basic, Junior and Senior Officer's schools at any one time. American B-29's bombed Iwakuni in May and August of 1945, concentrating on the oil refinery and Rail Transport Office or train station areas. The last air raid took place just a day before the war was brought to a close.

The first allies to reach Iwakuni at the war's end were a group of U.S. Marines who had signed papers ending the conflict for the Japanese air base. After the end of World War II, various military forces from the United States, Britain, Australia, and New Zealand occupied the base. It was designated a Royal Australian Air Force Base in 1948.

When the Korean Conflict started in 1950, units from the Royal Navy and U.S. Air Force arrived at Iwakuni as U.N. forces. Jets flew daily to support front-line troops in Korea, returning each evening to refuel and rearm. The troop processing center located here throughout the war earned Iwakuni the title "Gateway to Korea."

The U.S. Air Force took command of the station April 1, 1952. During its period of command, the Air Force did much to improve the base's facilities. The U.S. Navy took over the station October 1, 1954. Naval Air Station Iwakuni was greatly enlarged in July 1956 when the 1st MAW moved its headquarters here from Korea. A whole new area was procured on the North side of the station to make room for approximately 2,500 incoming Marines.

The Marine Corps first took control of the installation as Marine Corps Air Facility Iwakuni in 1958. The station, which is just over 1,300 acres, was officially designated as MCAS Iwakuni in 1962. Its mission includes support of operations, maintenance and supply of tenant units and ships.

History of Iwakuni City



Kintai Bridge

Three hundred fifty years ago the waters of the Seto Inland Sea occupied the area where aircraft wheels now screech across an airstrip. The land here has been reclaimed from the ocean through hundreds of years of effort on the part of generations of Japanese workers. It's all part of Iwakuni's ancient history – the seldom told story of how the present air station came to be.

At the beginning of the 1600's the feudal Lord Kikkawa, a supporter of the defeated shogun, was banished to remote Iwakuni for supporting the losing side. After building himself a castle on Shiroyama, the mountain west of Kintai Bridge, Kikkawa found that he was a very

poor lord. His land was officially valued and taxable at 60,000 koku of rice or 297,600 bushels, but the land only yielded 35,000 koku. To improve the situation, Kikkawa ordered his subjects to cultivate the hillsides and reclaim land along the sea front. The reclamation program has gone on ever since, with the largest area of reclaimed land being the Kawashimo delta on which MCAS Iwakuni is built. Nearly 2,000 acres of the delta have been taken back from the sea.

Today's Iwakuni City and MCAS Iwakuni



The aerial photo of MCAS Iwakuni

Modern Iwakuni is represented by several major industries such as petroleum refining, paper manufacturing, and textiles to form a part of the Seto Inland Sea-side industrial area. The presence of Americans from the station coming and going throughout the city creates an international atmosphere. The people of Iwakuni, although shy and reserved, welcome the opportunity to get to know members of the station's community.

The runway relocation project, which relocated the runway of MCAS Iwakuni 1,000 meters offshore, started in 1997 by reclaiming a half mile of the Seto Inland Sea. Barge loads of land reclamation fill material for the Iwakuni Runway Relocation Project were excavated from Atago Mountain in

Iwakuni City and carried by three miles of conveyor to the barge for transport. Its main purpose was to reduce noise and safety concerns, strengthening the positive relationship between the station and local community. The project was completed March 2010, and the new runway started to operate on May, 2010.

The civilian airport, Iwakuni Kintai-kyo Airport opened Dec, 2012.

MCAS Iwakuni Historical Highlights

1943	Branch of Eta Jima Naval Cadet School opened (September).
1945	Allied B-29 bombers attacked air station and city (May and August). Last raid conducted one day before war's end. U.S. Marines from the 4th Marine Regiment occupy air station (September). U.S. Army demolition Disposal Team arrived shortly thereafter to destroy Japanese munitions.
1945 – 1948	Air station occupied by various Allied military units from; United States, Britain, India and Australia.
1948	Air station designated a Royal Australian Air Force Base (March).
1950-1953	3rd USAF Bomber Wing B-26 began combat operations against North Korea from Iwakuni (June). U.S. Navy aircraft squadrons of Fleet Air Wing Six and Task Forces 77 and 95 also used the base to fly Korean combat missions.
1952	Base redesignated a U.S. Air Force Base (1 April).
1954	Fleet Air Wing Six began tenancy (January). Base redesignated a U.S. Naval Air Station (1 October).
1958	Air Station redesignated a U.S. Marine Corps Air Facility (1 January)
1962	Air Facility redesignated a U.S. Marine Corps Air Station (20 July)
1965	Operational control of the air station transferred from COMNAVFORJAPAN to commander Marine Corps Bases Pacific (June). 1st MAW units deployed to Da Nang and Chu Lai, Vietnam (April).
1969	VMFA-334 became the first unit to redeploy to MCAS Iwakuni (August). Establishment of 1st Marine Aircraft Wing (Rear) (November).
1970	Establishment of FEN-TV station at Iwakuni (December).
1971	Reestablishment of 1st MAW Headquarters from Da Nang (April). Return of VMA311 from Vietnam (last squadron) (May)
1976	1st MAW Headquarters (Rear) relocated to Okinawa, Japan.
1982	MCAS receives UC-128 aircraft to replace C-117 fleet.
1983	MWWU-1 relocates to NAS Agana, Guam.
1989	MAG-15 stands down. MABS-15 and MABS-12 combine to form MALS-12. First deployment of AV-8B Harrier to Japan occurs at MCAS Iwakuni.
1993	The air station is awarded a Meritorious Unit Commendation for period Jan 1 to Dec. 31, 1991.
1997	The runway relocation project started.
2001	Multiple activities involving the Air Station in response to the terrorist attack 9.11.
2005	The new port administratively turned over to the U.S. Forces on July 1.
2008	VMFA-212 became in a cadre status, March 31.
2010	The runway relocation project was completed (March), and the new MCAS Iwakuni runway was commissioned.
2011	The air station participated in Operation TOMODACHI and response to the earthquake and subsequent tsunami struck northern Honshu, Japan, on March 11.
2012	Osprey (V-22) replaced CH-46's helicopters, and made its first flight in Japan at Iwakuni (July). The Iwakuni Kintaikyo Airport officially opens (Dec. 9).

MCAS Iwakuni Commanding Officers

Col. E. H. Vaughan	Jan 1958	—	Feb 1958
Col. R. R. Yeaman	Feb 1958	—	Aug 1958
Col. J. L. Neefus	Aug 1958	—	Sep 1959
Col. J. H. Earle	Sep 1959	—	Jun 1960
LtCol. P. L. Crawford	Jun 1960	—	Aug 1960
Col. A. C. Lowell	Aug 1960	—	Jul 1961
Col. J. H. McGlothlin	Mar 1962	—	Jun 1962
Col. M. E. W. Oelrich	Jun 1962	—	Jul 1963
Col. V. H. Hudgins	Jul 1963	—	May 1964
Col. C. D. Wolverton	May 1964	—	Dec 1964
Col. H. A. Peters	Dec 1964	—	Aug 1965
Col. J. T. McDaniel	Aug 1965	—	Jul 1966
Col. W. M. Lundin	Jul 1966	—	Jul 1967
Col. F. A. Shook	Jul 1967	—	Jul 1969
BGen. W. R. Quinn	Jul 1969	—	Aug 1970
Col. H. L. Van Campen	Aug 1970	—	Aug 1972
Col. E. S. Murphy	Aug 1972	—	Feb 1975
Col. M. V. Statzer	Feb 1975	—	Jul 1976
Col. R. D. Miller	Jul 1976	—	May 1979
Col. S. F. Shea	May 1979	—	Jul 1983
Col. D. J. McCarthy	Jul 1983	—	May 1986
Col. J. B. Hammond	May 1986	—	May 1988
Col. R. L. Pappas	May 1988	—	Sep 1989
Col. R. R. Renier	Sep 1989	—	Jul 1992
Col. S. A. Brewer	Jul 1992	—	Jun 1995
Col. R. S. Melton	Jun 1995	—	Apr 1998
Col. R. C. Dunn	Apr 1998	—	Jun 2001
Col. D. T. Darrah	Jun 2001	—	Jun 2004
Col. M. A. Dyer	Jun 2004	—	Jul 2007
Col. M. A. O'Halloran	Jul 2007	—	Jun 2010
Col. J. C. Stewart	Jun 2010	—	Jul 2013
Col. R.V. Boucher	Jul 2013	—	Jul 2016
Col. R.F. Fuerst	Jul 2016	—	Aug 2019
Col. F.L. Lewis	Aug 2019	—	Present