

## Base Portsmouth History

On New Year's Day 1776, the British having lost control of the city of Portsmouth, VA to the rebels, burned the city to the ground. Recognizing its strategic value and location, a British army soon returned and fortified the area under the command of none other than Benedict Arnold. In the two hundred years that have since passed, the value of Portsmouth has not been forgotten.

The United States Lighthouse Service established a Lighthouse Depot on the Elizabeth River in Portsmouth, VA in 1870 to provide support for aids to navigation in Hampton Roads. Then in 1939 when the Coast Guard and the Lighthouse Service merged the Depot was expanded and renamed the Portsmouth Coast Guard Base. This base provided support to cutters, aids to navigation, and personnel.



As the need emerged, land was purchased to create the Coast Guard's only shore based facility designed by the Coast Guard for the exclusive use of the Coast Guard. First commissioned as Support Center Portsmouth in 1974, the original 165 military and 130 civilian employees committed to providing quality support products and services to Coast Guard units and personnel throughout the Fifth District Area of Responsibility.

In 1996, a new organization was born: the Integrated Support Command (ISC) Portsmouth whose purpose was to meet the demands of a growing and changing Coast Guard. ISC Portsmouth became the home to six 270s, one 210, one patrol boat, three buoy tenders, and eight other tenant commands. Once again providing the superior support customers had come to expect and need.

Over the years, the mix and number of cutters and tenant commands have changed, but the mission is the same, to provide Excellent Mission Support. A superb example of this was the support provided after the tragic events of 9/11 when ISC Portsmouth became the processing point for all Coast Guard personnel who volunteered for service with Patrol Forces Southwest Asia (PATFORSWA).



With the advent of Coast Guard Modernization another change was afoot. On September 28, 2009 Integrated Support Command (ISC) Portsmouth was disestablished. Three new units, Base Support Unit (BSU); Personnel Services and Support Unit (PSSU); and Health, Safety and WorkLife Field Office (HSWL FO) Portsmouth were established to continue providing services to ISC customers. Unit responsibilities are:



Base Support Unit (BSU) provides base utilities, all building and grounds maintenance, and enforces environmental responsibilities for the base; provides all shore services to home ported and visiting vessels; Comptroller support; manages Shipping and Receiving, warehouse facilities; and base security. PLA -- COGARD BSU PORTSMOUTH VA

Personnel Services and Support Unit (PSSU) provides personnel support functions for the command and supported units. Services include pay and personnel records management; a Customer Service Center that provides ID cards, Mutual Assistance, travel arrangements and HHG shipments; the Area Housing Office which oversees the UPH; and the Morale, Wellbeing and Recreation services, including a service club, pool, gym, and auto hobby shop. PLA -- COGARD PSSU PORTSMOUTH VA

Health, Safety and WorkLife Field Office (HSWL FO) provides medical and dental care to active duty Coast Guard and DoD personnel. The clinic also provides these services to dependents and retired personnel on a space available basis. It also manages the WorkLife program and the Safety and Environmental Health program. PLA -- COGARD HSWL SC NORFOLK VA\FOD5\

Additionally, we proudly refer to the 187 acres that we used to call ISC Portsmouth as Base Portsmouth. Base Support Unit (BSU) Portsmouth is but one of the 24 commands located on the Base.

