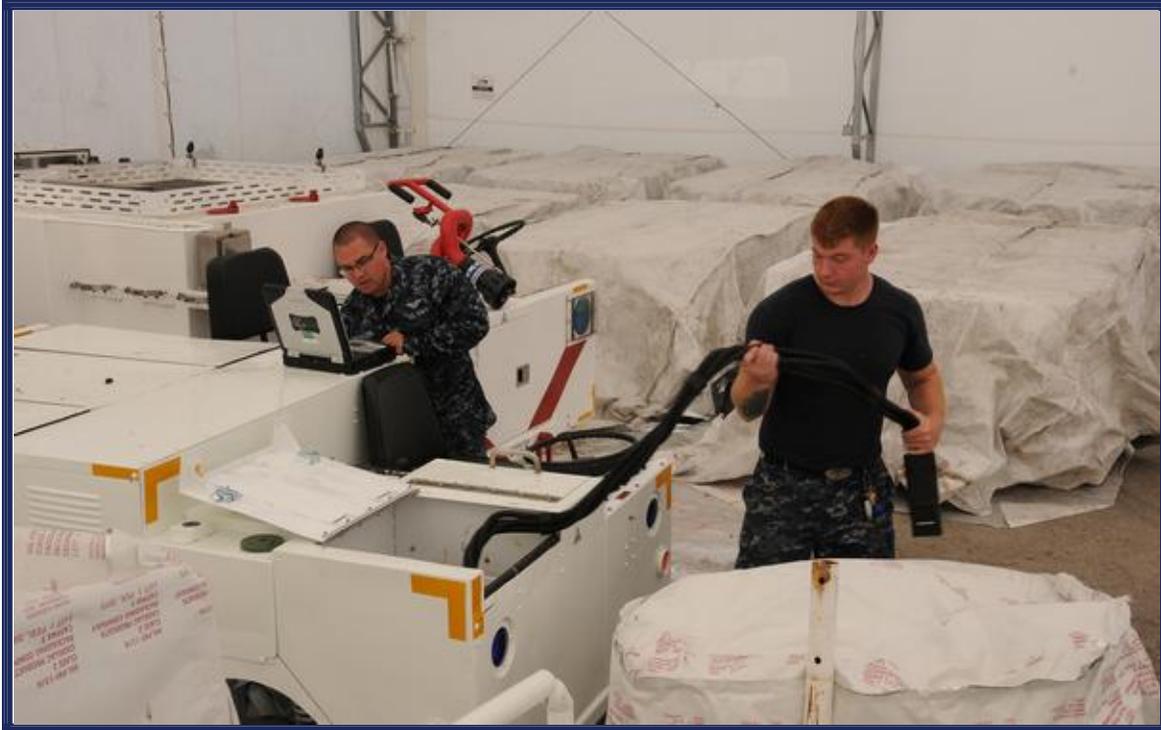




USS Iwo Jima finds good neighbor in FRCSE Detachment Mayport



Aviation Support Equipment Technician (AS) Airman (AW) Shane McMaster, left, and AS3 Travis Shelhamer, right, of USS Iwo Jima's 900 Division, perform maintenance on a mobile electric power plant in a shelter built for the ship's equipment at Fleet Readiness Center Southeast Detachment Mayport. The vehicle is used to supply power to aircraft aboard the ship. (U.S. Navy Photo/Released)

Jacksonville, Fla. – When the USS Iwo Jima (LHD-7) first arrived at Naval Station Mayport in August 2014 after a seven-month deployment, Fleet Readiness Center Southeast (FRCSE) Detachment Mayport welcomed it with open arms.

Seven months at sea dished out the normal beating to the ship's ground support equipment. The crew needed some dry ground to do the post-deployment tasks of cleaning, stripping, repainting and repairing things like the ship's fire trucks, tow trucks, nitrogen carts and tow bars.

"We knew right off the bat that the Iwo Jima was coming this way and we prepared a place for them," said Chief Aviation Support Equipment Technician Angel Gaud. "They came in and we told them, 'We have plenty of space including an office with computer access to work in.'

"Any assistance that we could provide to them, that's what we've been doing."



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A crew erected an enormous framed tent on the Detachment Mayport grounds, which was filled nearly wall-to-wall.

“They needed the facilities because of the amount of gear they had,” Gaud said. “They needed to store some of the gear they weren’t currently working on.”

“At the same time, they could move around and bring it to where they were working on it.”

Gaud had a good idea how much space the Iwo Jima would need.

“That was my first ship back in 2003 to 2007,” Gaud said. “I knew the gear, and that helped out because I knew exactly what they were going to bring and how it worked.”

FRCSE Detachment Mayport’s main mission is to maintain, repair and supply the support equipment for the station’s helicopter squadrons. But whether it’s the Navy’s fleet of aircraft or ships, it’s just different sides of the same coin, according to Aviation Support Equipment Technician 1st Class Benjamin Taylor, the detachment’s quality assurance representative who worked with the Iwo Jima’s crew during the transition.

“It’s all a big circle,” Taylor said. “In reality, we’re all just helping each other.”

In addition to the new structure, FRCSE Detachment Mayport also opened up its calibration lab.

“With some of the avionics equipment, you have to be on solid ground to calibrate them,” said Chief Aviation Electronics Technician Chief Alfonso Maroni. “We made room for them and even worked together on a few items.

“Anything they needed to calibrate, they brought here.”

For the Iwo Jima, the assistance was invaluable.

“The use of FRCSE’s facilities has been vital to the rework of our support equipment,” said Lt. Cmdr. Shawn Collins, USS Iwo Jima maintenance officer. “It has allowed us to have a safe and secure work environment since our return from deployment August 2014.

“We extend our gratitude for all the generousities FRCSE offered to our ship and crew, ensuring calibration and support equipment efforts remained ongoing through the ship’s CNO maintenance availability period.”

The new space will also help FRCSE Detachment Mayport as well.

“When they’re gone, that’s more space for us,” Taylor said. “Once we get something finished and it looks all nice and new, we can store it there and keep it out of the elements.”



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USS Iwo Jima's support equipment is housed in a tent structure at Fleet Readiness Center Southeast Detachment Mayport. The structure was set up at the detachment to provide Iwo Jima's 900 Division with a place to rework and store the ship's equipment at its new homeport of Naval Station Mayport (U.S. Navy Photo/Released)