

# Welcome Aboard!

Dear Sailor,

Welcome to AUTEK! I hope you find the following information to be beneficial to you as you prepare to report to your next duty station.

I would like to take this time to encourage you to read the information contained herein. It will make the transition for you and your family much smoother. The Bahamas is a wonderful place; however, it does require making some adjustments.

In addition to this booklet, your Welcome Aboard packet contains a wealth of information regarding West Palm Beach and AUTEK. Please take the time to review the information. While some of it may not make sense to you at first, in time, it will become clearer and helpful.

If you need any assistance or have any questions, please feel free to contact your sponsor or myself. You can contact the Navy Admin office at 561-655-5155 x5122 and they can direct you as to the best way to answer your questions.

Regards,

CDR Robert Lopez  
OIC  
AUTEK

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## Organization of AUTECH

AUTECH, Atlantic Undersea Test and Evaluation Center, is a United States Navy project offering underwater testing, in-air test facilities and support to United States, Canadian, British, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and other military and civilian organizations. AUTECH Andros Island, Bahamas (ASD) and AUTECH West Palm Beach, Florida (WPB) are United States Navy facilities. A small detachment of US Navy personnel are stationed at these facilities, with primary responsibility for protection of military interests. The Maintenance & Operations contractor maintains and operates AUTECH under contract with the US Navy. Approximately 45 civil service personnel, Naval Underwater Warfare Center (NUWC), have responsibility for oversight of AUTECH operations and the Maintenance & Operations contractor.



## History

When Columbus landed in the Bahamas, the islands were populated by a people who call themselves the “Lukku-cairi” or “Island people” and their name for Andros Island was “Lucayoneque” or “island which is of islands”. This name appeared on many of the early maps until the Spanish renamed the islands “bajar mar” (shallow sea), now pronounced Bahamas. Later the name “Isla del Espiritu Sanctu” (Island of the Holy Spirit) replace Lucayoneque.

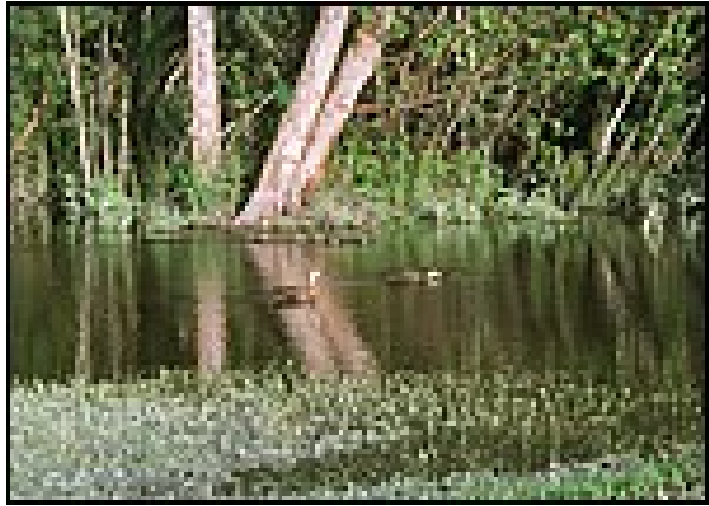
In 1670, the Bahamas were granted to six British Lord Proprietors; Andros Island was officially named for Sir Edmund Andros. The spellings of the names Andros has varied over the years as different nationalities, accents and literacy affected the way it was pronounced and written. Variations such as Andrews Island, St. Andros and Andrus can be found in spongers and pirates’ map rooms. Andros Island’s economic potential includes; farming, fishing, basket weaving and tourism.

In the period following World War II, the US Navy encountered difficulties in testing and evaluating new developments of weapon systems and anti-submarine warfare (ASW) detection devices. These new assets focused attention on the need for a deep water three-dimensional range that would simulate open ocean conditions. After surveying several sites, the “Tongue of the Ocean” (TOTO) located east of Andros Island, Bahamas was chosen.

In 1963, in concurrence with the Bahamian Government, an agreement was signed between the US and the UK whereby the US Navy would have the use of certain territories in the Bahamas for 20 years and would install equipment for three offshore test facilities. In October 1966, the AUTECH Andros range was in use. When the Bahamas achieved full independence in 1973 from the UK, the US State Department entered into negotiations for a new treaty. In 1984, the first five year agreement between the US and Bahamas became effective, backdated to January 1983. A second agreement was negotiated in 1988; as a result the US agreed to pay an annual rent to the Bahamian Government. The agreement also allowed for UK and other military forces to conduct testing on AUTECH Andros ranges.

## Geography

The primary site for AUTECH operations is located on central Andros Island, Bahamas (ASD). Andros is the largest island of the Bahamian archipelago, situated some 30 miles SW of Nassau and about 150 miles SE of Miami, Florida. Andros Island is approximately 104 miles long and 40 miles at its widest point, and is actually divided into three separate islands or bights. Andros has a population of approximately 7,300 people, with 2,000



of these settled in Fresh Creek Township, the community located just outside the main base, Site 1. A primitive road system runs north and south; however, none run from east to west, as the western side of Andros is unpopulated. The island elevation is just above sea level with no elevation over 75 feet. Andros is sparsely vegetated with evergreen and assorted palm trees; the majority of the land surface is covered with a mixture of coral and limestone, with isolated areas of topsoil. Andros is considered a family island which is governed by a resident administrator. The administrator functions in the capacity of magistrate and civil administrator. The administrative offices for Andros are located in Fresh Creek.

# Travel

Travel to and from the island is provided and is conducted on a space available basis. The AUTEK aircraft has 15 seats and is scheduled to fly 12 flights per week. Flights are suspended on 4<sup>th</sup> of July, Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day. There is a personal luggage weight limit of 50lbs per seat which is strictly enforced. Flights are on a space-available basis and are determined by a priority system A through E. You will need your AUTEK badge and a passport to board the plane. Military members will need to also have a copy of their orders. Children under the age of 2 are not assigned a seat and must ride in the lap of their guardian (weight limit is not increased and is still 50 lbs.).

Military members taking leave or vacation will fly priority C. Military members with scheduled appointment for routine medical care will fly priority B. Flight paperwork must be signed by the IDC.

Immediate family members: spouses, children, parents, brothers, sisters and their spouses and children can be sponsored at a cost of \$200.28/per person round trip and will fly priority D.

For departing flights from West Palm Beach, the AUTEK terminal is located on the south side of the Palm Beach International Airport adjacent to the US Customs and Immigrations Port of Entry building. Check in time begins 60 minutes prior and closes 45 minutes prior to departure time. If you are not present you will be considered a "no show" and your seat will be given to someone else. No parking is available at the AUTEK terminal. Parking is available at the Clematis Street office or PBI Airport. Transportation is provided via the AUTEK bus and picks up at the shelter C6 located in the PBIA Park and Ride parking lot. The bus picks up 70 minutes prior to departure time. When you arrive at Andros Island the AUTEK bus will transport you to AIROPS on the main base.

For flights departing Andros, AIROPS is located in front of the helo port and across from the BOQ. Check in time begins 60 minutes prior and closes 45 minutes prior to departure time. If you are not present you will be considered a "no show" and your seat will be given to someone else. The AUTEK bus will transport you to the Andros Town Airport. Upon arrival in WPB the AUTEK bus will provide transportation to PBIA main terminal and Park n Ride (shelter C6)

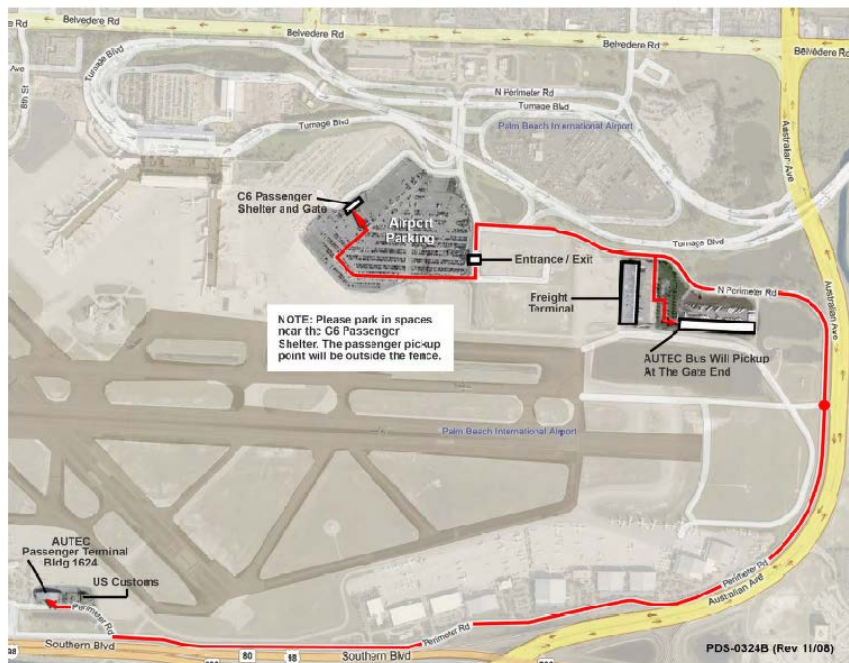
# Hotels in West Palm Beach

AUTEC has set up a special rate with the following hotels around the airport in West Palm Beach. When making reservations, tell them you would like the AUTEC rate.

- Hilton Airport Inn (561) 684-9400
- Best Western (561) 471-8700
- Embassy Suites (561) 689-6400
- Doubletree Hotel (561) 689-6888

# Parking in West Palm Beach

If you plan to leave a vehicle in West Palm Beach, there is parking available at the West Palm Beach Airport for \$25 a month. You will need to register your vehicle with Security at the AUTEC office on Clematis and fill out the PBIA Liability Waiver. If no parking spaces are available at PBIA, you will be placed on a waiting list where you can opt to park at the Clematis Street location, however, getting to and from Air Ops is your responsibility. The parking lot is behind a locked gate, however AUTEC will not be liable in the event your vehicle is broken into or stolen. If you would prefer, you can store your vehicle at a local storage facility for a fee.



## Site 1 Main Base

- |                 |                                 |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Admin East   | 7. Medical                      |
| 2. AIROPS       | 8. Fire Dept.                   |
| 3. AUTEC School | 9. Main Dining                  |
| 4. BOQ          | 10. Post Office / Movie Theater |
| 5. BEQ          | 11. Retail Store                |
| 6. P197         | 12. ARA                         |



## **Security**

Physical Security controls overall access to Andros and West Palm Beach AUTEK facilities. All permanent government and M&O contractor personnel are issued a permanent photo badge. Badges must be worn ABOVE THE WAIST at all times. Physical Security handles a wide variety of customer support details such as incident complaints, lost or stolen property, escorts, patrols and dispatching. Physical Security also manages the motor vehicle traffic program for all permanently assigned AUTEK employees, visiting family and friends.

## **Housing**

Housing is provided to all Navy personnel. All housing units include air conditioning, and are furnished with sofas, chairs, beds, dressers, nightstands, desks, lamps, curtains, and refrigerator. In addition, Multi-Bedroom Units are furnished with coffee tables, kitchen table and chairs, stove, washer/dryer, and dishwasher.

Neither BAH nor OHA are authorized at this location, but there is no rent due.

Lawn care is provided by the contractor for those members living in concrete block housing (CBH). For those in Multi-Bedroom Units (MBU) or single bedroom unit (SBU), lawn equipment (lawn mower, weed-eater, shovels, shears) is provided and stored at the end of designated streets. The key for the shed can be checked out at Post 2 and is expected to be returned the same day.



## Meals/Food



The main dining hall is a self-service cafeteria.

The cost for meals is as follows:

Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
\$3.45	\$5.55	\$4.85

The dining hall hours are:

Mon – Fri	Sat, Sun & Holidays
0530 – 0730	0530 – 0730
1100 – 1300	1000 – 1230
1630 – 1830	1630 – 1830

The Lighthouse Café located next to the BOQ provides a lunch and dinner menu. The hours of operation are:

Mon – Fri	1030 – 2100	Sat & Sun	1400 – 2100
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At AUTEK there is no Navy exchange or commissary, however there is a contractor run retail store that sells a variety of tax-free goods. They are open:

Mon – Fri	1100 – 1830
Sat & Sun	0900 – 1500



Many members fly to West Palm Beach and shop due to the limited availability of items at the Retail Store. Members usually mail the items back to the island.

If you decide to bring cold items back on the plane, remember that AIROPS does not allow ice in coolers on the plane. You will be required to dump it out prior to boarding.

## Communications

**Post Office:** You will have a box at the post office which is run by Navy personnel. Mail is received and sent daily, Monday thru Friday via the AUTEK flight. Mail boxes, first, third priority, registered and certified postage are available. Members often shop in West Palm Beach and will mail their purchases over in order to make weight on the flight. When mailing items, note that they are going to AUTEK. You can ship just about anything (luggage, boxes, Rubbermaid containers, bags of dog food) as long as it weighs less than 70 lbs.

**Phone Service:** Telephone calls around the base and to the local area are free. Navy personnel will be issued a PIN which will allow them to make phone calls. If you should have any problems with your telephone service, contact Communications at x4444. It is also suggested that you purchase a calling card to avoid high international telephone rates.

**Internet:** Internet is available at your residence. Currently we have wireless, which is at no cost. If you should have any problems with your service, contact Computers and Networks at x4318.

**Cable:** Cable is available for \$20/month and there are approximately 40 stations available. If you have any problems with your cable service, contact Communications at x4444.

## Medical Services

**Medical and emergency services** are limited on the island. At AUTEK there is a contractor run dispensary manned by a medical doctor and 2 registered nurses. There is also an Independent Duty Corpsman stationed at AUTEK. The IDC is currently seeing military members. All routine appointments should be made in West Palm Beach. Members flying over for medical appointments will be entitled to lodging, travel and per diem. Upon arrival you will need to enroll in TriCare Prime Overseas (Latin American/Canada).

In the event of pregnancy, women will need to schedule their check-ups with a physician in West Palm Beach. Once a woman reaches 7 months, it will be necessary for her to move off island. She and the new baby will be allowed to return after clearance from her doctor and the baby has reached six weeks of age. It is suggested that women wait to return until after the child's eight-week checkup.

If you require prescription medications, sign up with Express Scripts to have the items mailed.

**Dental hygienist services** are available by appointment. Basic dental services are also available monthly by appointment. Currently there are no cosmetic services (braces) available on the island. If you are not currently enrolled, it is suggested that member enroll in United Concordia for dental insurance coverage (TriCare affiliate)

**Fire and Emergency Medical services** are available at any time by calling 911. In the event of an emergency, patients will be stabilized by the on island medical staff and if necessary flown by life flight to the states.

## **Finance**

Currency on Andros is either Bahamian or US dollars at a ratio of 1:1. You may cash personal checks, payroll checks, and pay rent at the Finance Office. Currently there are no ATMs on the base, so be sure to bring your checkbook. The retail store will accept MC/VISA credit card. Finance is open Monday through Friday 0900 – 1500.

## **Religious Program**

The Base Chapel holds weekly Catholic and Protestant services which are conducted by visiting clergy. Special services and religious programs are conducted during the week and on religious holidays.

## **Vehicular Traffic**

Newly assigned personnel will note that all driving in the Bahamas occurs on the left-hand side of the road instead of the right. The maximum speed limit is 20 mph unless otherwise posted on base. Speed limits off base are 45 mph for cars, 35 mph for trucks and 15 mph unless otherwise posted in all settlements.

Gas is available on base for those choosing to bring their personally owned vehicles. Most personnel choose to drive Low Speed Vehicles (LSV's) or ride bikes on base as the base is only one square mile.

## **Pets**

The following animals are allowed to be maintained at AUTEK as pets: dogs, cats, domesticated parakeets or canaries, guinea pigs, hamsters, gerbils, fish and insects housed in aquariums and/or terrariums. Dogs and cats require clearance for entry through the Commonwealth of the Bahamas for a small fee, and again each time the pet re-enters the country.

Pets must also be registered with Pass & ID. Members are allowed no more than one pet per adult family member.

There is not a vet available on the island. Every three months or so, the contractor will arrange for a vet to fly over. Otherwise, members can take their pets to Nassau to be seen by a vet there.

## **Entertainment**

AUTEK has four lounges; The Beach House, TFC, TOTO and China Post. All are open various hours. The Beach House has pool tables and an outside deck. The TFC has pool tables, shuffle board, darts and occasionally a DJ.

ARA also offers a pottery shop, wood working shop, gym, marine and movie rentals, and shows movies at the Base Theater. The gym is open 24 hours.



## MWR

Morale, Welfare and Recreation offers rental of items like; kayaks, various balls, softball and tennis equipment, golf clubs, snorkeling gear, and more. MWR has also set up a single sailor recreation room located just behind main dining.

## Visitors

Visitors can be sponsored on the base by permanently stationed members or contractors. All visitors will fly priority E for the cost of \$200.28. There is a \$29 departure tax per person payable to AIROPS for all visiting guest, family or friend when departing. Keep in mind that during testing, it becomes more difficult for family and guests to make their flights and often times are bumped.

Housing is available for guests at a rate of \$75 per night per room and can be arranged through the housing office.

## Miscellaneous Information

**Colors:** As part of military tradition, the posting and striking of colors occurs daily at the Administration Building East (Admin East) at 0800 and sunset. All vehicles within sight of Admin East are to come to a complete stop and remain stopped until colors has been completed. Pedestrians will stop and face in the direction of the flags.

**Base Siren:** At noon each day the base siren will sound once announcing the noon hour. The base siren may also be activated in conjunction with impending announcements on AUTECH Channel 4.

**Pay:** Monthly pay is your normal base pay, BAH (only for stateside dependents), BAS and \$50 a month Hardship Duty Pay.

**PCS Travel Arrangements:** When finalizing your travel arrangement through your releasing PSD, make sure that they fly you into Palm Beach International Airport (PBI) and not to Nassau or North Andros. From PBI you will fly over to the island on the AUTECH flight, which lands at the Andros Town Airport just outside the main base, where an AUTECH bus will transport you to the base.

**Duty Free Status:** Military members and their non-working dependents fall under duty free status and are not required to pay duty on items purchased outside the country.

**Stocking Up:** It is suggested that members stock up on any special items: (toiletries, over the counter medications, supplements and even food) and have them sent with the household goods pack out. The retail store is limited in what they carry and only carries one or two brands of certain items.

There is no SOFA agreement between the Bahamas and the United States. All personnel should follow the Bahamian laws as the United States has no jurisdiction over personnel off base.

**Care Package:** It is suggested that personnel mail a care package containing a small kitchen set and toiletries as there is a delay between your arrival on island and the arrival of your household goods shipment. The delay can be anywhere from 3 to 10 weeks depending on weather conditions.

**Uniforms:** There is no uniform shop on island and no seamstress to sew patches.