

Media Coverage as of 10/24/16

http://pilotonline.com/news/local/history/ghost-tour-at-fort-monroe-tells--year-history-/article_ad75c058-bbcd-5781-9937-0347e9fe6383.html

Ghost tour at Fort Monroe tells 400-year history – and some mysteries – of the former Army base

By Robyn Sidersky
The Virginian-Pilot

Oct 21, 2016



Steve Earley | The Virginian-Pilot

Glenn Oder, ghost walk guide and executive director of the Fort Monroe Authority, leads a tour out of the main gate during a ghost walk on Friday, Oct. 21, 2016.

FORT MONROE

When the little boy in the flat cap popped out from behind a door, the crowd jumped.

Just as quickly as he appeared, he was gone, behind a slammed door in the building that used to house Fort Monroe's library.

Minutes earlier, the group had been warned that ghost children sometimes appear around the fort, playing tricks on visitors.

It was all part of the lore on the Fort Monroe Ghost Walk on Friday night.

It's the third year the Fort Monroe Authority has held the tours, just before Halloween. The 13 tours Friday night and tonight sold out.

The tour combines history and mystery, giving participants a peek into the past 400 years of the former Army base.

"There's a pretty good oral history of unexplained stories here at Fort Monroe," said Susan Lineberry, director of special events for Fort Monroe.

The tour changes each year and includes stories from people who lived at Fort Monroe.

Participants walked along a half-mile loop that stopped in some of the buildings no longer used for what they once were.

Many of them are not usually open to the public, so it's a treat.

The first stop was at the Craven Army Health Clinic, which was a hospital for 118 years.

The group walked past the morgue and several labs and into the basement, where the examination room was.

A doctor waiting there gave a short history of the hospital – how it was two stories, then three, and eventually became a clinic.

He also described stories of workers having their own unexplained experiences.

Next, another guide told the group about the old arsenal, which was built in 1860, before the Civil War.

The eerie stories have been told just in the past 30 years or so, though.

Stories of unexplained footsteps being heard, pacing, moving around, are not uncommon.

Another stop was the home where Edgar Allan Poe lived during the short time he was stationed at Fort Monroe in the 1820s. It was after that that he launched his literary career.

In the former library – where the little boy was playing – there were stories about ghosts in the reading room. The building will soon be home to the Fort Monroe Visitor Center.

The tour's final stop was the house where the commanding general of Fort Monroe would reside. It had the creepiest story.

From 1977 until 1981, Gen. Donn Starry and his family lived in the house. He was the commanding general of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command. His son, Mike Starry, was on the tour, and talked about a few unexplained experiences his family had there.

One time, his mother and a family friend were getting ready to leave for a party when a cat spooked them. The family didn't own any cats, and they watched it walk through a bookcase, he said.

Another time, Starry said, the family planned to get the home's organ repaired. The company hired to fix it was family-owned and there had been a death recently, so they warned it would take a few weeks.

Within a few days, a man showed up to the house to fix the organ. He came back several times, and the organ was fixed. When Starry's mother inquired with the business about payment, the

woman on the phone was confused. They hadn't sent anyone yet, she said. Starry's mother described the man who had come to fix the organ, and the woman went silent.

It had been her father, who had just passed away.

Stories like those are not uncommon at Fort Monroe, and are often told this time of year.

The demand for the tour has grown, and for the first time, the Fort Monroe Authority added tours, giving 13 each night, instead of 10. Any expansion past that would require more discussion, though, as it is run by volunteers.

Robyn Sidersky, 757-222-5117, robyn.sidersky@pilotonline.com

<http://www.dailypress.com/entertainment/thisweekend/dp-fea-fort-monroe-ghost-1021-20161020-story.html>

'Where history meets mystery:' Fort Monroe Ghost Walk is back

October 20, 2016

By Jonathan Black joblack@dailypress.com

Having existed for nearly 400 years, there are some unexplained mysteries at Fort Monroe.

Whether it's a cat that appears in the home of residents or a shimmering shadow at the Chamberlin, plenty of people have their tales of paranormal activity around the fort.

"It's where history meets mystery," said Susan Lineberry, director of special events with Fort Monroe Authority. "Fort Monroe is such a historical site. There are some unexplained things. Some are well documented for decades."

This year's Ghost Walk will take groups through the fort's hospital, known as the Craven Army Health Clinic; Wisser Hall, which is the old library and future visitor's center; and the Commanding General's residence. The locations aren't buildings generally open to the public.

"People like to go into buildings here where they can't get in on any given day," Lineberry said.

Each tour will be led by a tour guide to each location while storytellers will be inside the buildings to pass on the spooky tales of Fort Monroe.

While Lineberry didn't want to give any of the stories away, she did mention that many of the paranormal activities that will be mentioned have been experienced by multiple people.

"We have residents that have told us some things that they experienced. Even vendors who have worked here," she said. "Lots of first-hand experiences."

One of those is what happened to Mike Starry's family, who's father was the commanding general of the United States Army Training & Doctrine Command in the 1970s and early '80s. The family, notably Starry's mom, sister and family friend, had numerous run-ins with unexplained events in the home involving a feline and an organ.

"It sure does give me pause," Starry said. "My mom and my sister were grounded people."

Another person who's experienced unusual circumstances is Hampton City Councilman Will Moffett, who worked at Fort Monroe for nearly 30 years. Moffett worked in a building that used to be the arsenal, where things would often go missing or become misplaced.

The ghost was named Herbie, a poltergeist of one of three men killed in an explosion inside the building when it was an arsenal.

"Things that would occur, if you're working late at night. You could distinguish between natural sounds and then there were some sounds like folks walking," Moffett said. "There's been some unique occurrences."

Other strange happenings were drapes opening and closing on their own and lights on in buildings with no explanation. To enhance the creepiness of these stories, Fort Monroe has installed some minor special effects like lighting, but it will be kept to a minimum.

About 30 volunteers and 10 staff members will help with the tours. Besides the change of location, the other major difference in this year's tour is the frequency of the walks.

Tours now leave every 15 minutes, rather than every 20, which will add in about three more tours per night, Lineberry said.

In its third year, the Fort Monroe Ghost Walk saw about 500 people partake in the inaugural event. About 540 people participated last year.

Tours will start at the fort's main gate and will cover about half a mile through the area. It will wrap up outside the Casemate Museum, which will have extended hours Friday and Saturday.

While the tour isn't designed to have actors jumping out at guests, the nature of the walk means children under 12 are not recommended to join.

"Your imagination can be way creepier than when it's in your face," Lineberry said.

Black can be reached by phone at 757-247-4607.

If you want to go

WHAT: Fort Monroe Ghost Walk.

WHEN: Tours every 15 minutes from 6:15-9:15 p.m. Friday and Saturday.

WHERE: Meet at 10 Ruckman Road, Fort Monroe.

TICKETS: Tickets are \$15 in advance, until noon on day of the tour, and \$20 the night of. Contact fmauthority.com or call 757-637-7778.

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<http://wavy.com/2016/10/18/audience-fort-monroe-ghost-walk/>

Hampton Roads Show—WAVYTV10 October 18, 2016

<http://wtkr.com/2016/10/27/haunted-hampton-roads-fort-monroe/>

Haunted Hampton Roads: Fort Monroe

POSTED 6:00 AM, OCTOBER 27, 2016, BY MAKENZIE WALTER, *UPDATED AT 11:18AM, OCTOBER 27, 2016*

HAMPTON, Va. - With over 400 years of history, Fort Monroe has to be home to quite a few haunted stories.

"We don't do a whole lot of enhancements," said Aaron Whittington, the special events coordinator. "We don't have a bunch of high tech visual effects and all that, we just want the locations and the stories tell themselves."



Fort Monroe

The retired Army base is home to over 100 historical buildings, all being used for this year's Ghost Tour.

Stories from residents, visitors and employees at Fort Monroe bring life to the ghost stories."I would say that Fort Monroe lends itself to very unique and unexplainable experiences," Whittington said. "I'm not an authority on what makes something haunted or not, but I certainly would say that if you come to Fort Monroe late at night or even during the day... its likely that you may have an experience that you can't explain."

To go on a tour of Fort Monroe and to hear more about their historical, haunted history, [check out their website.](#)

<http://www.dailypress.com/news/hampton/dp-nws-hampton-bike-ped-plan-planning-commission-20161103-story.html>

Hampton Planning Commission gives nod to proposed bike, pedestrian plan

By Ryan Murphy rmurphy@dailypress.com

Nov. 3, 2016

Benches to rest your feet after a long walk. Bike lanes. A place to lock up your bike once you've arrived at your destination.

Hampton has very few of these, which makes biking and walking in the city a chore. But a proposed plan – with some elements already moving into play – may help improve the city's walking and cycling infrastructure in a bid to get more people to ditch their cars or just tool around the city for fun.

City planner Alison Alexander presented the new proposal, which includes policies and more than 30 miles worth of projects and has taken about a year to pull together, to the Hampton Planning Commission Thursday afternoon. The commission voted unanimously to recommend it to the City Council.

Right now, it's an odyssey just to get from point A to point B in Hampton without using a car — many narrow bridges with high traffic volume, a lack of connectivity between major destinations and a lack of infrastructure to help cyclists and pedestrians travel safely all serve to discourage all but a few would-be bike riders and walkers.

Keith Walker, a local cyclist, told the commission during the public hearing that a concerted effort to tell drivers to share the road would be appreciated, recounting a harrowing experience where a car passed him improperly at a traffic light and came within inches of him.

"It would be nice if there was some sort of campaign about 'give them some room,'" Walker said.

A public safety campaign is one of the main policy recommendations in the plan.

The map of existing facilities included in the plan lays out the dearth of travel options plainly –

sidewalks are fairly widespread, but there are only a handful of dedicated bike lanes or shared-use paths.

A recommended plan looks something like a diagram of circulatory system – colorful veins representing proposed bike lanes and new paths snake throughout much of Hampton in a big "X," connecting points between Hampton Roads Center Parkway, Chesapeake Avenue, the far north end of King Street, Fort Monroe and Buckroe Beach.



Road extensions, streetscaping improvements on the way for Hampton this year

The effort pushes for the cheaper, easier projects like restriping roads to include bike lanes or "sharrows" first to build momentum for the more involved parts of the project, like new shared-use paths that will require more time and money.

Some of the recommendations are very long term, Alexander told the commission. A dashed line on the new map representing a new shared-use path built parallel to Mercury Boulevard would be a big – and expensive – undertaking.

"If something's not in a plan, its very hard to get funding for it," Alexander said.

The plan doesn't include a projected cost or timeline for the projects. Alexander acknowledged that it's not all going to get done at once and each individual project will have go through the typical budgeting and procurement process.

The plan will go before the Hampton City Council in December.

Murphy can be reached by phone at 757-247-4760.

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<http://www.dailypress.com/news/hampton/dp-draft-bike-pedestrian-plan-up-for-public-comments-20161103-post.html>

Draft bike, pedestrian plan up for public comments

By Ryan Murphy

Nov. 3, 2016

After nearly a year's worth of study by city staff, Hampton is ready to unveil what may be the beginning of a sea change for cyclists and pedestrians across the city.

Looking at factors like crash data and existing cyclist and pedestrian amenities, the city's planning department has put together a concept to better connect parts of the city for people who don't always want to ride in a car.

The draft plan centers around the city's "master plan" areas — Coliseum Central, North King Street, downtown, Kecoughtan Road, Phoebus, Buckroe and Fort Monroe.

Safety was noted as one of the biggest concerns in a survey done earlier this year, so the plan includes a public awareness campaign to teach drivers to share the road and more than 30 miles of on- and off-street improvements, which includes everything from painted "sharrows" to dedicated bike lanes to new pathways.

The first public hearing on the plan will be at Thursday's planning commission meeting, which starts at 3:30 p.m. Another will be held at the Dec. 14 City Council meeting.

To see the whole 83-page plan, visit <http://hampton.gov/bikewalk>.

Murphy can be reached by phone at 757-247-4760.

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<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/2019-commemoration-receives-12-million-gift-from-dominion-resources-300354855.html>

2019 Commemoration Receives \$1.2 Million Gift from Dominion Resources

NEWS PROVIDED BY
Dominion Resources

Nov 01, 2016, 09:00 ET

RICHMOND, Va., Nov. 1, 2016 /PRNewswire/ -- The 2019 Commemoration announced that it has received a \$1.2 million gift from Dominion Resources to support commemoration events and projects marking the 400th anniversary of key events in the founding of America.

Dominion is making the gift through its charitable arm, the Dominion Foundation, to build awareness of Virginia's unique role in the creation of the United States. As a Founding Partner of the 2019 Commemoration, Dominion will help underwrite renovation of the Fort Monroe Visitor and Education Center in Hampton, Virginia.

"We are pleased to have Dominion join us as a Founding Partner," said Kathy Spangler, Executive Director of the 2019 Commemoration. "Through sponsored events and legacy projects, Dominion will assist us in commemorating the events of 1619 while using a contemporary lens to engage Americans in discussions about the present and the future."

"Our company is built on a legacy of public service, innovation and community involvement, and we are proud to partner with the 2019 Commemoration," said Thomas F. Farrell II, chairman, president and chief executive officer of Dominion Resources. "Virginia is our corporate home, and we want the nation to learn about our history and our path to democracy, diversity and opportunity."

"Designating a portion of this donation to the exhibits at the Fort Monroe Visitor and Education Center is a strategic investment in telling the story of this country and inspiring discussions about the rich history of the American Evolution," said Glenn Oder, Executive Director of the Fort Monroe Authority. "This generous gift will assist us – the Fort Monroe Authority and the National Park Service – in welcoming visitors and sharing the storied history of the early exploration of Captain John Smith, the first arrival of Africans to English North America in 1619, as well as the Contraband Decision in 1861 that led to thousands of enslaved people to seek their asylum at *Freedom's Fortress*."

The 2019 Commemoration, under the theme AMERICAN EVOLUTION™ seeks to showcase Virginia's role in the creation of the United States by highlighting events that occurred in 1619: the first legislative assembly in the New World, the arrival of the first Africans to English North America, the arrival of women to build community, the first official English Thanksgiving in North America, and the spirit of innovation and entrepreneurialism that became a model for the American spirit.

For more information about the 2019 Commemoration, visit AmericanEvolution2019.com.

About the 2019 Commemoration

The 2019 Commemoration, AMERICAN EVOLUTION™, highlights events that occurred in Virginia in 1619 that continue to influence America today. Featured programs, events and legacy projects will position Virginia as a leader in education, tourism and economic development. AMERICAN EVOLUTION™ commemorates the ongoing journey toward the key ideals of democracy, diversity and opportunity.

About Dominion Resources

Dominion Resources is the parent company of Dominion (NYSE: [D](#)), headquartered in Richmond, Va., Dominion is one of the nation's largest producers and transporters of energy. The [Dominion Foundation](#) is dedicated to improving the physical, social and economic well-being of the communities served by Dominion companies, including Dominion Virginia Power. Dominion and the Dominion Foundation support nonprofit causes that meet basic human needs, protect the environment, promote education and encourage community vitality. For more information about Dominion and the Dominion Foundation, visit www.dom.com.

SOURCE Dominion Resources

Veterans recognized at Fort Monroe National Monument



(Judith Lowery)

By Ryan Murphy

rmurphy@dailypress.com

NOVEMBER 11, 2016, 10:00 PM | HAMPTON

For Arnold Lorea, the flags represented memories — some good, some bad, most of his brothers in arms. Lorea spent 30 years in the Air Force maintaining aircraft. He said Friday he'd never wanted to leave.

"I wasn't ready to give it up, but they said, 'Sorry, you have to,'" Lorea recounted Friday morning at Fort Monroe, clad in green and brown camouflage and standing in front of a field of more than 800 American flags.

Around 90 people showed up early Friday for the inaugural Veterans Day recognition ceremony at Fort Monroe National Monument, the site of a U.S. Army post that operated for nearly 200 years.

National Park Service Superintendent Terry Brown, himself a veteran, said the nation's great natural wonders and historic places stand as a monument to the nation's service members. "They are constant reminders of the values and freedoms that our veterans protect," Brown said.

Hampton Mayor Donnie Tuck, who is a military spouse, noted the need to thank veterans for giving up time with their families, putting educations and careers on hold in order to serve. "We are all better off for their sacrifice," Tuck told the crowd.

According to figures from the U.S. Census Bureau, 29.5 percent of Hampton's adult population are veterans. Roughly 20 of the 90 or so people in attendance raised their flags in the air when veterans were asked to identify themselves.

Those who gathered were asked to plant the flags, and hundreds more, in the ground as a symbol of thanks for military veterans. The flags will be up for the next week near the Battery DeRussy on the east side of the fort.

Sandra Green, whose father, Henry Toman, was a proud World War II veteran until his death in 1994, said she was moved by the patriotism on display. She noted her father would have felt the same.

"He would be so proud that people respected the country that he sacrificed for," Green said. As for Lorea, when he was pushing the handle of his flag into the ground, he was just wishing he could have kept it.

"I wanted to take it with me, another memory," the septuagenarian San Antonio native said. "It stays with you. At least, it stayed with me."

Murphy can be reached by phone at 757-247-4760.
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Honoring veterans at Fort Monroe.

Bill Tiernan | The Virginian-Pilot

Updated Nov 11, 2016



Arnold Lorea, a 30- year veteran of the Air Force holds an American flag Friday morning, Nov.11, 2016 during a Veterans Day ceremony at Fort Monroe in Hampton, VA. He was among about 100 people who gathered at Fort Monroe to honor veterans. After the ceremony flags were planted in the ground creating a field of flags in honor of veterans.

Bill Tiernan | The Virginian-Pilot

http://www.fredericksburg.com/opinion/letters_to_editor/letter-fort-monroe-continues-to-grow-five-years-later/article_bebcfecd-1ba7-562b-8258-ee031805ce9f.html#.WBdL4eCXtne.email

Letter: Fort Monroe continues to grow, five years later

Posted: Sunday, October 30, 2016 12:00 am

Five years ago this month, President Barack Obama signed a proclamation designating portions of Fort Monroe in Hampton as a national monument under the management of the National Park Service. This marked the first time that President Obama exercised his authority to protect a site deemed to have natural, historical and scientific significance.

Now, the Park Service and Fort Monroe are working together to address the site's historic preservation, infrastructure improvements, economic development, community engagement, planning and leadership.

While only designated a Park Service site five years ago, Fort Monroe National Monument spans American history through the 21st century with stories of the American Indian presence, Capt. John Smith's journeys, the arrival of the first enslaved Africans in English North America, a safe haven for freedom seekers during the Civil War, and a bastion of defense for the Chesapeake Bay.

The Park Service and Fort Monroe will expand interpretive programs such as walking tours, first-person interpretation and environmental education. We are committed to connecting Fort Monroe's history with the people who visit and live here today.

We hope you will continue to be engaged as an active part of this building process as we move forward together.

Terry E. Brown and Glenn Oder
Hampton

Brown is superintendent of Fort Monroe National Monument. Oder is executive director of the Fort Monroe Authority.

<http://www.dailypress.com/news/hampton/dp-nws-hampton-legislative-priorities-20161112-story.html>

Hampton City Council passes pitch for General Assembly

By Ryan Murphy rmurphy@dailypress.com

November 13, 2016

The Hampton City Council approved its legislative wish list for the upcoming General Assembly session last week — and it includes a couple of pretty big proposals.

The biggest request is a petition to the General Assembly for \$9 million to build the National Institute for Seafood and Aquaculture, part of the city's Downtown Master Plan that would serve as a hub for education, research and training in association with the Virginia Tech Seafood Agricultural Research and Extension Center that is already operating on King Street.

The \$12 million project is pitched as a potential major economic boon for the city and as a model of "national and regional significance" but does not appear in the city's five-year capital plan.

The city is also asking lawmakers to write into the state code that local governments can bill property owners when the city needs to cut overgrown shrubs and trees on vacant properties. It's something that isn't currently spelled out in the code, which cites only that "grass, weeds, or other foreign growth," not explicitly allowing localities to charge people for the cost of cutting back tree limbs and oversized shrubs.

Hampton also continues to beat the drum for the PILOT — the "payment in lieu of taxes" the state pays the city for Fort Monroe. The city has argued for years that if the PILOT is really supposed to pay for services that would otherwise be covered by property taxes, the amount Virginia pays needs to go up.

The General Assembly capped the PILOT at \$983,960. The city now claims an equitable payment would amount to \$1,036,567.

If recent history is any indication, a pivot from the state on this point seems unlikely. Hampton tried to force the state's hand by putting a lien on Fort Monroe last year to which the General

Assembly responded earlier this year by writing into the state budget that Hampton wouldn't see a dime of any PILOT payment unless the lien was removed.

Hampton's legislative priorities include several other requests and more general policy positions, including pushing for dedicated funding for public transit and youth employment programs.

The council was also briefed on a potential face-lift for the City Council chambers, which haven't been updated since City Hall opened in 1975, according to city budget chief Brian DeProfio.

The project is divided into two categories and could be funded with existing money, DeProfio explained.

The first stage would be to overhaul the basic infrastructure of the council chambers to improve the safety, comfort and look of the room. That includes replacing the carpet, gallery seating where citizens watch the council meetings, the barriers that separate the council dais from the gallery and the overhead lattice lighting, as well as installing a false floor to secure electrical and audio cables that currently criss-cross the floor of the chambers.

All of that would cost about \$325,000 and could be funded with a pot of money generated via cutbacks made during the recession.

The second phase would be technology improvements to help the public better see presentations made to council.

Murphy can be reached by phone at 757-247-4760.

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<http://www.dailypress.com/features/history/dp-nws-evg-fort-monroe-preservation-20161125-story.html>

Preserving a Fort Monroe landmark

New preservation work is underway inside the fort at historic Quarters #1.

By Mark St. John Erickson merickson@dailypress.com

November 25, 2016

Historic landmark at Freedom's Fortress gets needed attention from preservation specialists.

HAMPTON — When the Army Corps of Engineers completed Quarters 1 at Fort Monroe in 1819, the strategic spit of sand chosen as the location for the nation's largest masonry fortification still looked much as God had made it.

Wooden cranes and piles of stone dotted the dunes at Old Point Comfort and a newly dug canal streamed through a sprawl of temporary buildings and wharves.

But the imposing three-story Federal structure known as the Engineer Quarters rose up as the first permanent residence at the fort — and one of its first permanent buildings at a time when the giant seacoast bastion later nicknamed the "Gibraltar of the Chesapeake" existed mainly in the imaginations of the engineers and the drawings they labored over inside their new offices.

Nearly 200 years later, the house ranks as the most important and defining part of Fort Monroe National Monument, not only because of its early date but also the historic events that unfolded inside its walls.

And now its landmark significance as the place where Maj. Gen. Benjamin Butler devised the first widely accepted argument for harboring refugee slaves — dramatically reshaping the Civil War — and President Abraham Lincoln danced in his nightshirt after the fall of Norfolk has become the focus of the five-year-old monument's first major preservation project.

"Of all the projects the Park Service is funding right now, this ranks right at the top," Superintendent Terry E. Brown said, describing the launch of a two-year effort to conserve the structure's exterior.

"This is the most historic building in the fort — and it offers us the greatest opportunities for interpreting its history. But before we can conduct tours and give the public access, our focus has to be on conservation."

Five years into its civilian life, Fort Monroe remains a work in progress

Famous figures

Though intended as the residence of Fort Monroe's commander, Quarters 1 was occupied by the chief engineer in charge of construction — Col. Charles Gratiot — for the first 12 years of the massive building project.

He erected the two-story kitchen and cistern just to the north of the house in 1823, then used the expanded complex to host the Marquis de Lafayette when the Revolutionary War hero visited Fort Monroe and its sister bastion — then known as Fort Calhoun — during a grand tour of the United States in 1824.

"Lafayette was one of the first of many significant figures to visit the fort," Casemate Museum Historian Robert Kelly said.

"And that visit sparked a lot of improvements, including the completion of the parade ground."

Among the other historic figures who came early to Fort Monroe were Robert E. Lee, who reported for duty as a young engineer in 1831, and Jefferson Davis, who accompanied President Franklin Pierce in 1855 as the secretary of war.

Famed Sauk Indian leader Chief Blackhawk became an instant celebrity when he was detained here briefly in 1832, reportedly enjoying the hospitality of the fort's officers as well as the admiration of vacationers taking in the sea breezes at the busy Hygeia Hotel.

But by far the most historic events took place during the Civil War, when a "who's who" of the conflict came through Quarters 1's doors, Kelly said.

Butler was the first, maintaining his residence and offices there when he made his momentous May 23, 1861, decision to give asylum to three runaway Hampton slaves as "contraband of war."

He came back again in 1864, when he met with Union army head Ulysses S. Grant to plot the campaign that finally brought an end to the Civil War.

Still, few moments ring out more vividly than the elation of President Lincoln on the night of May 10, 1862, when dust-covered Union officers arrived to report the fall of Norfolk.

Fort Monroe board approves more land for National Park Service

"The next thing we saw was six feet of white night-shirt at the French window," a Federal aide-de-camp later reported, describing the jubilation of the president and two accompanying cabinet members at the success of the impromptu expedition Lincoln had ordered.

"He was here four days," Kelly said.

"And we have great first-hand accounts of what happened."

Though the team from the Park Service's Historic Architecture, Conservation & Engineering Center began arriving in May, their preliminary inspections from the bucket of a boom crane were based on extensive studies that began soon after the monument was created in 2011.

"We've already learned more about this house in the past few years than we knew before," Kelly says, "and once the preservation work gets underway we're going to learn a lot more."

Sizing up the physical condition of the house is only the next step in a process expected to last at least two years if not longer.

Three weeks ago, the team erected its first scaffold in order to get a close-up look at the building's exterior fabric, which was altered several times over its life and last updated by the Army in 2000.

Among the major issues to be addressed are the masonry walls and chimneys, which not only show signs of age and exposure but also damage from past repointing carried out with a modern cement mortar rather than the lime mortar used in the 1800s.

Surveying the north side of the 1823 addition, which was connected to the house in 1871, preservation specialist Steve Elkins has traced a fault line that runs down from the chimney shoulders into the first story.

Cracked and splintered bricks have added to the toll along this trail of rotten and missing mortar, which may trace back to a past lightning strike, Elkins said.

National preservation group interested in Fort Monroe

"All these bricks are hand-molded instead of being extruded or wire-cut," he added.

"So my biggest challenge once we figure out what has to be taken out is finding replacements."

Looming just as large is the problem presented by the Carpenter Gothic porches that span the upper two stories of the structure.

Little original material survives from these late-1800s additions, preservation specialist Larry Waldrop said, and most of the extensive repairs made in 2000 have failed and need to be replaced.

So working with architectural historians at the team's northeast regional office in Lowell, Mass., Waldrop will have to determine not only what can be saved and restored but also whether the porches should be removed and the house should be returned to its original appearance.

That would mean recreating the smaller and simpler columned entrance portico that Lafayette, Davis and Lincoln would recognize but visitors from after 1875 wouldn't.

"Our job here is not as simple as repointing, repairing and repainting the building to make it look pretty again," Waldrop said.

"We need to figure out what's most important — and then we need to address those things in ways that will make them last."

Erickson can be reached by phone at 757-247-4783.

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<http://www.dailypress.com/features/history/dp-nws-pearl-harbor-75th-20161203-story.html>

Hampton Roads in 1941: Ready for war

By Mark St. John Erickson merickson@dailypress.com

December 3, 2016

Nearly 75 years after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, most Americans look back on the wrenching spectacle of burning and battered ships as a brutal surprise.

But when the news came to Hampton Roads on the afternoon of Dec. 7, 1941, the shock was tempered by the realization that the war the region had been preparing for so long had finally happened.

Beginning after the invasion of Poland in September 1939 — then accelerating rapidly after the fall of France in June 1940 — tens of thousands of sailors, soldiers, airmen and shipbuilders had streamed into Hampton Roads, driven by hundreds of millions of dollars in defense spending.

Vast expansions and improvements had reshaped every military base and shipyard, adding piers, runways, hangars, dry docks and shipways — then bringing in so many recruits that the landscape swelled with newly constructed housing and — because there was still not enough room — plot after plot of tent cities.

Long before Japanese bombs and torpedoes rained down on our ships at Pearl Harbor, there were new aircraft carriers, battleships and cruisers rising from the shipways in Hampton Roads.

Swarms of new planes thundered above Langley and Norfolk, while at Fort Monroe and Fort Story the coastal defense guns were on alert, the mines primed and tested and the submarine net across Hampton Roads ready.

So far ahead were the war preparations here that — when it finally came on Dec. 7 — a Langley officer told the Daily Press that we "seem to be two jumps ahead of all the orders we have received thus far."

"This really gets to the core of what it means to live in Hampton Roads — where there's a different rhythm to life because of the military — and where we're affected by world events in a way that the rest of the country is not," Hampton Roads Naval Museum Historian Clay Farrington says.

"We knew war was coming. We were already at war. All we needed was a declaration."

Booming shipyards

Much of the increasingly urgent focus on Hampton Roads stemmed from its standout role 25 years earlier as a port, shipbuilder and military bastion during World War I.

Starting when Newport News became the primary North American depot for shipping horses to British forces in Europe in 1915, the region was transformed, says former Virginia War Museum head John V. Quarstein, describing not only the epic output of the Norfolk and Newport News yards but also the opening of the nation's second-largest military Port of Embarkation at Newport News and the founding of Langley Field, Fort Eustis, Yorktown Mine Depot and Norfolk Naval and Naval Air Stations.

Still, the War and Navy Departments' investments here in late 1939, '40 and '41 approached that of WWI quickly, then began to surpass it long before Dec. 7 and a formal declaration of war.

Just 12 weeks after Germany attacked Poland on Sept. 1, 1939, Newport News shipbuilders laid down the keel for the USS Indiana, the first new American battleship since 1923.

Three months later, the builders at Norfolk Navy Yard laid down the USS Alabama, the first battleship to rise from the newly expanded and improved Portsmouth yard since the 1890s.

Both yards grew quickly as the prewar naval building program revved up, with the number of workers in Portsmouth rising from about 7,000 to more than 12,000 in the less than a year, during which their workload swelled to include major repairs of the battle-damaged British carrier HMS Illustrious and other Royal Navy ships as well as constructing and repairing American vessels, Farrington says.

At Newport News, the carrier Hornet was rising from the shipways, too, part of an explosion in Navy work that pushed employment from 6,500 in 1935 to more than 10,000 by mid-1940 — with thousands of more hires planned after the Navy awarded contracts from three more carriers and two cruisers in early July.

"The yard was getting a lot of orders and hiring a lot of workers," says William A. Fox, author of "Always Good Ships: Histories of Newport News Ships."

"We were definitely getting ready for war."

Expanding bases

As early as 1939, tens of millions of defense dollars began streaming into the region's military bases, too, paying for massive enlargements and improvements at Norfolk Naval and Naval Air Stations.

Among the most telling projects in South Hampton Roads was a \$4 million expansion of the Naval Training Center, the beginning of construction on a six-story, 8 million-square-foot supply warehouse and the addition of more piers, all of which were soon followed by a \$1 million, 1,141-acre extension of NAS and its runways in early 1940, Farrington says.

At Langley Field, the number of airmen grew enormously, surging from 3,300 in 1939 to 5,849 by February 1940 because of a flood of new recruits.

"The increased population outstripped available quarters and the number of aircraft surpassed hangar space to accommodate them," the Inspector General reported.

"It was not uncommon to see a detachment of recruits at drill wearing a mixture of coveralls, blue denim, khaki, woolen olive drab and civilian clothing, some with and some without overcoats."

At Fort Monroe, builders began work on a new submarine mine depot in March 1940 — about the same time coastal artillery gunners started live firing drills both there and at Fort Story overlooking the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay.

Anti-aircraft batteries went into action north of the old fort, training the new recruits arriving in such overwhelming numbers that tent cities filled the historic parade ground and other open spaces long after scores of new barracks had been completed.

"Every single square inch of earth here was being utilized," Casemate Museum historian Robert Kelly says.

"And when they started training with those anti-aircraft guns, it was something that everybody in Phoebus and that part of Hampton would have noticed.

"They were firing at night. They were using those big searchlights. It must have been a pretty noisy sight."

Piling on

So spectacular were Fort Monroe's rapid-fire 37-mm guns that — when President Franklin D. Roosevelt came to inspect the military build-up in Hampton Roads on July 29, 1940 — he made a special stop to watch them blast away at their targets.

He also visited the Norfolk yard, where he took in not only the looming hull of the Alabama but also three huge new dry docks and what was then the world's largest machine shop — all built in the previous six months at a cost of \$50 million.

At the Naval Station — which had surged in population to 40,000 officers and men — column after column of white-jacketed sailors passed in review as Roosevelt looked on from his open car, followed by a display of hundreds of aircraft at the Air Station.

Hundreds of additional warplanes greeted his admiring gaze at Langley Field, where airmen planned a spectacular series of bombing and gunnery demonstrations at Plumtree Island.

But with the temperature in the low 90s and time running short, Roosevelt left soon after his tour of Langley Memorial Aeronautical Laboratory's landmark wind tunnels ended — and his motorcade reached speeds of up to 55 mph as it flew down Kecoughtan Road through Hampton to the Newport News shipyard, the Daily Press reported.

There, the president inspected the Indiana and Hornet from his open car before stopping for an impromptu chat with a crowd of shipbuilders and reporters.

That's when he impulsively announced contracts for four more carriers and two more cruisers.

"No housie, no shippie," quipped Executive Vice-President Capt. Roger Williams, prompting a laugh from the president as he reminded him about promises to address the region's growing housing shortage.

"This is just the beginning," Roosevelt replied.

"We're going to see a lot more before we get through."

Before Dec. 7

Just how much Roosevelt knew about the build-up still to come is uncertain.

But within a month Fort Eustis was reactivated nearly a decade after its garrison had departed.

A month after that Langley began an immense construction project designed to replace its turf and asphalt runways with concrete — and Fort Monroe embarked upon a huge modernization program.

Not long after the start of 1941, Langley expanded dramatically, too, adding 770 acres and launching a \$1.4 million construction campaign that erected 96 structures on the already sprawling airfield.

Soon, more than 2,000 new recruits filled those buildings, pushing the population past 8,000 in the months before Dec. 7.

"One of the things that was unique here was the arrival of the 21st Engineer (Aviation) Regiment. The expansion at Shellbanks was for them," Air Combat Command Historian William M. Butler says.

"They were a key element in building the new airfields we needed when the campaign went overseas, starting in 1942 with the invasion of North Africa. We needed those airfields — and these were the guys we needed to do it."

As 1941 wore on, Army and Air Corps planners began laying out the path for a new military highway — now Mercury Boulevard — designed to cut travel time between Langley, Fort Monroe and the James River Bridge.

Navy surveyors went to work carving out a new training installation named Camp Peary near Williamsburg — and by fall they had staked out two more new bases at Little Creek and Dam Neck in Virginia Beach.

At Newport News, shipbuilders completed the Hornet's sea trials in September, and it was commissioned at Norfolk a month later.

The Indiana slid down the ways on Nov. 21 — giving the yard little chance to catch its breath before Dec. 7 — and the still more urgent demand for the seven carriers and four cruisers Roosevelt and the Navy had ordered.

"We think of ourselves today as living in a period when change happens with astonishing speed. But we can't hold candle to what was taking place in Hampton Roads in the days before Dec. 7," Farrington says.

"And that was just the beginning."

Erickson can be reached by phone at 757-247-4783.

Go to dailypress.com/history to see archival images of the pre-Pearl Harbor defense build-up in Hampton Roads.
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