

Boy Scouts of America Fort Monroe Historic Trail

- Adult leadership should utilize and follow the *Guide to Safe Scouting*.
- Appropriate trail manners should include practicing good *Outdoor Ethics*, and avoiding disturbing private residences (to include The Chamberlin).
- Wearing the BSA Field Uniform is appropriate, however the BSA Activity Uniform is acceptable at the Scout leaders discretion (summer/hot weather, etc...).
- Fort Monroe Historic Trail patches are available in the Casemate Museum Gift shop.
- Scouts must visit all 30 sites and complete the whole 5 mile trail to earn the patch.

Fort Monroe National Monument spans the American story through the 21st century: American Indian presence, Captain John Smith's journeys, a safe haven for freedom seekers during the Civil War, home of the US Army Artillery School, and a bastion of defense for the Chesapeake Bay. (National Park Service) During the initial exploration by the mission headed by Captain Christopher Newport in the earliest days of the Colony of Virginia, this site was identified as a strategic defensive location and a place of great comfort to the expedition giving rise to the name Point Comfort. Captain John Smith noted that Point Comfort was a "little isle fit for a castle." Beginning in 1609, a succession of defensive fortifications were built at Old Point Comfort during Virginia's first two centuries. The first was a wooden stockade named Fort Algernourne that would later be destroyed by fire. The next two fortifications built were made of brick, these would both be destroyed by hurricanes. Following lessons learned from the War of 1812 a new series of forts were authorized by Congress. This new system of 42 coastal forts was designated as the Third System Fortifications. Fort Monroe was the first and largest Third System fortification, still the largest stone fort in the nation, and was named, in honor of US President James Monroe. [6] A companion fortification was built across the channel on a shallow improved shoal. This fortification was named Fort Calhoun, and later changed to Fort Wool in honor of the first commander of Fort Monroe. The construction of planned second and third gun tiers was never completed due to settling in the foundations. Initial construction of Fort Monroe was completed in 1834, however, new construction phases were almost immediately begun and continued through the end of the American Civil War in 1865. Throughout the American Civil War (1861–1865), although most of the Commonwealth of Virginia became part of the Confederate States of America, Fort Monroe remained a Union stronghold throughout the war. It became notable as a historic and symbolic site of early freedom for enslaved people seeking freedom following the landmark 1861 "Contraband Decision." This decision was the first effort made by the federal government towards the ending slavery in the United States. For two years following the war, former Confederate President Jefferson Davis, was imprisoned at the fort. His first months of confinement were spent in a cell made from a casemate within the fort walls that is now part of its Casemate Museum. In the 20th century, Fort Monroe was home to the Coast Artillery Command and associated artillery school and later operational mission would change to the United States Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) until its deactivation in 2011.

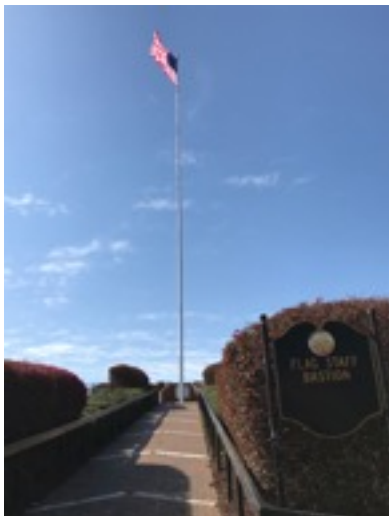
Fort Monroe was deactivated on September 15, 2011,[5] and many of its functions were transferred to nearby Fort Eustis. Re-use plans for Fort Monroe continue to evolve with input from the local community and partner groups. On November 1, 2011, President Barack Obama signed a proclamation establishing portions of the post as Fort Monroe National Monument. This was the first time that President Obama exercised his authority under the Antiquities Act, a 1906 law to protect sites deemed to have natural, historical, or scientific significance. (Wikipedia)



1. Casemate Museum: Tour the Casemate Museum first for a great overview of the history of the area and how Fort Monroe was involved. The overview will allow for a greater understanding of the sites that will be seen along the trail. The museum is self-guided and free of charge. Guided tours are available for groups of 10 or more by reservation with at least 2 weeks notice. Be sure and specify that you are a Scout group and that you will be walking this specific historic trail. Call 757-788-3391 or e-mail ddooley@fortmonroe.org. The museum is open daily 10:30AM-4:30PM from May-September, Tuesday-Saturday from October-April, closed Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day. Address: 20 Bernard Rd. Fort Monroe, VA 23651. As you leave the Casemate Museum you will see a stack of cannonballs. Directly across the street is Building #17.



2. Building #17/Lee's Quarters was constructed in 1823 as bachelor officers' quarters, but quickly re-designated as married officers' quarters. Its most famous occupants were Lt. Robert E. Lee and his wife, the former Mary Randolph Curtis, who lived there between 1831 and 1834. The Lee's first child, George Washington Custis Lee was born here on September 16, 1832. Various architectural changes have been made over the years, including the replacement of curved exterior staircase with straight stairs in 1907. Looking at Lee's Quarters proceed to your right down Bernard Rd.



3. Flagstaff Bastion: Home to the fort flagpole and the last point of defense for any fortification. The flag would signal the work day as well as who controls the fort. The present pole has been in place since 1900. Since proper lighting has been installed, a US flag is flown at all times. Military members and merchant marines tell us that the US flag at Fort Monroe is the first they see upon returning home. Enjoy the view of the Hampton Roads in front of you. To your right you may see ships going further up the James River. Looking to your left is the Chesapeake Bay. Directly across from you is the Navy Base in Norfolk. From this view you can understand why this is such an important location for this fort. Stay on top of the casemate. As you walk down the stairs from the lookout near the flagpole turn right and walk along the top of the casemate. As you walk to see the next site, look down on the ground on your left to see the gravestones of pets. Residents in the past were given permission to bury their beloved pets on the top of the casemate.



4. Jefferson Davis Memorial Park: was established in 1956 at the request of local United Daughters of the Confederacy chapters in recognition of Jefferson Davis who was incarcerated at Fort Monroe and his fondness of walking around the ramparts of the fort. In 1986, it was rededicated in a ceremony attended by a direct descendant of the Confederate leader. Continue walking on top of the casemate and past the park sign, when you see the white building go down the driveway back to Bernard Rd. Turn right when you reach the road.



5. Quarters 1. Constructed in 1819, this building is the oldest house inside the moat. At the beginning of the Civil War, Quarters 1 was the commanding headquarters for Major General Benjamin Butler. On May 24th, 1861, Butler declared three runaway slaves who escaped to Fort Monroe as “contraband of war,” refusing to return them to bondage. By the end of the war an estimated hundreds of thousands of freedom seekers came to Fort Monroe, earning it the name, “Freedom’s Fortress. Many famous visitors have stayed here including Abraham Lincoln. Look across the street at the battery.



6. Battery Gatewood: In 1891 Fort Monroe began constructing concrete batteries along its shoreline as part of the Endicott period of coastal defenses recommended by the advising board headed by Secretary of War, William C Endicott. These structures housed a variety of powerful weapon systems that no longer required the stone fortifications as a platform to operate. Battery Gatewood (1898) held four British Armstrong rapid-fire guns and is the only battery located inside the moat. Look back at Quarters 1 and take the path to the left of the building.



7. Building #50/Engineer's quarters (129 Bernard Rd.) was constructed in 1834 as quarters and offices for the engineers constructing the fort. It is now a three-family building in a T shape. It has been modified so many times that its original appearance has completely changed. Follow the path along the edge of the parade ground and veer to the left on your way to Ruckman Rd.



8. Chapel of the Centurion was the first permanent house of worship at Fort Monroe and was built with private donations. Lt. Julian McAllister began this campaign after surviving a terrible explosion at the Post Arsenal. The chapel was inaugurated and consecrated as an Episcopal Church in 1858. There are several priceless Tiffany stained glass windows in this church. Today, two congregations meet in the Chapel each week, conducting an Episcopalian service at 8:30AM and Non-Denominational service at 10:00AM. Walk down Ruckman Rd. to your right.



9. The Lincoln Gun was cast in 1860 and for President Lincoln on March 11, 1862 by order of Secretary of War Edwin Stanton. The gun was mounted above the Postern gate at Fort Monroe on 24 March 1862. It was the first 15-inch Rodman gun ever made.



10. The Parade Ground was where military drills, ceremonies, and athletic contests were customarily held. Walk across the Parade Ground to the next site.



11. Building #5 is the largest building within the confines of the moat. Constructed in 1879 as enlisted soldier barracks, it is one of 31 extant structures built during that period. In 1955, it was converted to office buildings. Much of the original design and character remain and can easily be identified as former barracks. Walk through the tunnel under the clock. Continue walking through the moat and then turn left onto Patch Rd. Continue walking down Patch Rd. until you reach the intersection with Ingalls Rd. and then turn left.



12. Fort Monroe Arsenal: Built on the eve of the American Civil War, the arsenal produced gun carriages and stored weapons and ammunition. Continue walking down Ingalls Rd. past the arsenal.



13. St. Mary Star of the Sea Catholic Church: In 1903, the original St Mary Star of the Sea church, built in 1860, was replaced with this structure, although the two steeples have been removed. Turn left at the church onto Ruckman Rd. You will see a small triangle park with several cannon.



14. Fort Monroe YMCA: The Fitness Center was completed in 1904 as an Army YMCA facility with funds donated by Helen Gould. Over the past century it has been used for film presentations, dances, gymnastics, classroom instruction, parties, and other activities. The facility was renovated in 1999, and reopened as the Fort Monroe Fitness Center when the YMCA reorganized their operating facilities. Since the deactivation of Fort Monore in 2011, the facility has come full circle, again reopening as a YMCA in 2015. While you are near the moat take a closer look at the East Gate. Fort Monroe is the only fort in the United States to be completely surrounded by a moat. Take a closer look to see if you can catch a glimpse of the infamous Moat Monster. He is the mascot for Boy Scout Troop 31 which has been meeting at the fort since 1918. Walk back down Ruckman Rd. and turn left onto Ingalls Rd.



15. Fort Algernourne: Near here Captain John Ratcliffe built Fort Algernourne, 1609. In 1614, it was a stockade containing 50 people and seven cannon. In 1632, the fort was rebuilt. It was discontinued after 1667. In 1727, a new fort, Fort George, was built here. This fort was destroyed by a hurricane in 1749.



16. Fort Monroe Authority Building: The Fort Monroe Authority oversees the preservation, conservation, protection, and maintenance of the Commonwealth's property interests at Fort Monroe and the renewal of Fort Monroe as a vibrant and thriving community. The Executive Director is Glenn Oder.



17. The Chamberlin (2nd Chamberlin Hotel): Constructed in 1928, after the first Chamberlin Hotel was destroyed in a fire on March 20th, 1920, the Chamberlin Hotel was one of a line of important hotels located on Fort Monroe. During World War II, the US Navy used the Chamberlin as temporary quarters for naval officers. Two cupolas located on the roof were removed to install anti-aircraft guns. While the guns were removed at the end of the war, the cupolas were lost and never replaced. The building is now operated as an independent living retirement community.



18. The Bandstand and Continental Park: Built in 1934 to replace a bandstand destroyed by a hurricane, it has been used continuously for military ceremonies, weddings, Easter sunrise services, and band concerts. This area was redesigned and named Continental Park. The Fort Monroe Authority hosts "Music by the Bay" an outdoor concert series on Thursday evenings during the summer, usually featuring various local and military bands. Continue by turning left to walk on the boardwalk along the Hampton Roads. The word roads is short for the word roadstead which is defined by Merriam-Webster, "as a place less enclosed than a harbor where ships may ride at anchor."



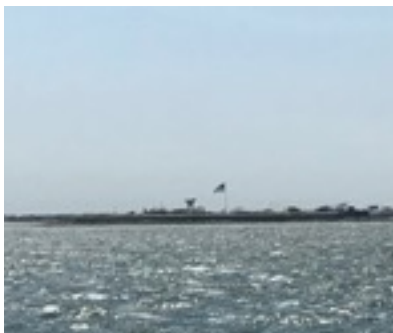
19. General's Row: The beautiful homes along the waterfront were primarily occupied by the General Officers assigned to Fort Monroe. Quarters 119 was built in 1907 and was primarily used as the commanding general's quarters. The imposing building was designed by Brigadier General Arthur Murray, who later served as the Chief of Coastal Artillery. Following the decommissioning of Fort Monroe, the homes are leased to private citizens.



20. Landing of the first Africans: The first documented Africans in Virginia arrived here August 1619 on the White Lion, an English privateer based in the Netherlands. Colonial officials traded food for these "20 and odd" Africans who had been captured from a Portuguese slave ship. Among present-day Hampton's earliest African residents were Antony and Isabella. Their son, William, was the first child of African ancestry known to have been born in Virginia (ca. 1624). Many of the earliest Africans were held as slaves, but some individuals became free. A legal framework for hereditary, lifelong slavery in Virginia evolved during the 1600s. The United States abolished slavery in 1865.



21. Engineer Wharf: The original pier was constructed in 1818 to receive construction materials for Fort Monroe. It is now used as a popular fishing pier. Go to the end of the pier and look across the water.



22. Fort Wool was one of more than forty forts started after the War of 1812 when British forces sailed the Chesapeake Bay to burn the Capital. Originally named Fort Calhoun, Fort Wool was built to maintain a crossfire with Fort Monroe, located directly across the channel, thereby protecting the entrance to the harbor. The fort was decommissioned by the military in 1953. It can only be reached by boat tours. Cross the street at the crosswalk here to go across Fenwick Rd. to get a better view of the next couple of sites.



23. Old Point Comfort Lighthouse: The lighthouse has been in continuous operation since 1802. It is the oldest structure on Fort Monroe and the oldest operating lighthouse on the entire Chesapeake Bay.



24. Battery Parrot Bay / Battery Irwin: Completed in 1905, Battery Parrot held two 12-inch disappearing guns until 1943, when they were replaced by two 90mm anti-motor torpedo boat guns. Both were removed in 1949. In 1976, the 90mm anti-aircraft gun was installed. From 1902-1920 Battery Irwin held four 3-inch rapid-fire guns. In 1946, two 3-inch guns were moved from Fort Wool and installed here as a salute battery.



Continue walking down Fenwick Rd. Stay on the left side of the road until you reach the moat again. Take a look at Battery Gatewood from the other side. If you look through you will see Quarters 1. Continue walking down Fenwick Rd. close to the moat.



25. Water Battery: Built in 1832, this series of casemates housed cannons that supplemented the fort's original defenses. Only the powder room remains standing. Cross the street to reach the boardwalk along the beach. Turn left and continue to walk on the boardwalk.



26. Outlook Beach. You have walked 2.5 miles and are at the halfway point. Outlook Beach has a nice area to have a snack or lunch and porta-potties. When you are ready, continue walking down the boardwalk.



27. Battery De Russy: This battery and the other two you will see were the most advanced defense systems of their day, and together with the sea wall they marked the peak of coastal fortification before long-range weaponry and air power outflanked traditional defense strategy. The construction of this series of fortifications was undertaken along the Chesapeake Bay to the east and north of the original fort following recommendations of the Board of William Endicott, Secretary of War under Grover Cleveland. Battery De Russy was constructed between 1897 and 1904. In July 1910 one of the battery's three 12 inch disappearing guns exploded, killing 11 artillerymen. In 1944 the battery was declared obsolete and its guns were removed.



28. Battery Church: Battery Church was constructed in 1897 to mount one 10 inch disappearing gun. Eventually a second gun was added. The battery was inactivated in 1944. Instead of walking on the boardwalk cross the parking lot to walk on Fenwick Rd. past Paradise Ocean Club.



29. Battery Anderson/Battery Ruggles: Along with the adjoining Batter Ruggles, Battery Anderson employed four twelve-inch breech loading mortars in each of its four bays. Less accurate than rifled cannon or Howitzers, mortars were normally used in groups of four. The desired result was for the heavy projectile, launched at a high trajectory from the mortar, to come down on the lightly-armored decks of enemy vessels. In 1942, the mortars from Batteries Anderson and Ruggles were the first of the post's armaments to be removed for scrap metal. Continue walking past the Colonial Campground down Fenwick Rd. Colonial Campground has a convenience store where you can purchase drinks. There are porta-potties near the picnic shelters.



30. Wildlife and Environmental Overlook: With Mill Creek in front of you (back to the ocean), to the right is a current land reclamation area in an area of a former landfill. To your left, the land between the moat and Mill Creek is man made, filling in a significant portion of the creek with fill dirt, greatly increasing the footprint of the former Fort Monroe Army Post from the old runway to the main gate. Many of the natural plants and animals which inhabit Fort Monroe can be examined on the displays here. How many can you find?



Return to the Casemate Museum by walking back by using the boardwalk along the water or on Fenwick Rd. Cross the moat and go into the Fort near Outlook Beach. After you pass through Battery Gatewood turn left on Bernard Rd.

Congratulations you completed the trail! Patches are for sale in the Casemate Museum gift shop.

