



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Office of the Governor

Terrie L. Suit
Assistant to the Governor
for Commonwealth Preparedness

Welcome to Fort Monroe at Old Point Comfort.

Old Point Comfort is a barrier spit of land where the 1802 lighthouse marks the entrance to the magnificent Chesapeake Bay and the massive natural harbor of Hampton Roads in Virginia. The 565 acre site is surrounded by eight miles of waterfront views, making it one of the most strategic military locations in Virginia's history. John Smith declared it "fit for a castle" in 1607 before he and Captain Christopher Newport charted the waterways to establish the Jamestown settlement.

Beginning about 1609, fortifications were established at Old Point Comfort with Algernonne Fort, being the first in a series of forts before Fort Monroe was completed in 1834. For the period between 1861-1865, when most of Virginia became part of the Confederate States of America, Fort Monroe remained a Union stronghold, and became notable as a symbolic site of early freedom for former enslaved people under the provisions of contraband policies. The contraband policies lead to the Emancipation Proclamation giving Fort Monroe the nickname of "Freedom's Fortress."

Fort Monroe is North America's largest moat encircled stone fortification. It has been a National Historic Landmark District since 1966, and it is the aspiration of Governor Bob McDonnell of the Commonwealth of Virginia that the fort becomes a unit of the National Park Service. We are all aware of how important it is to ensure this rich history is told in a matter befitting the importance of the site in American history. The Fort Monroe Authority is committed to achieving this goal.

Fort Monroe is the only military installation in Virginia, selected by the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) to be closed by September 15, 2011. The BRAC process required agreement on reuse planning, environmental clean-up, protection of historic properties and many other issues involved in the transfer of the land back to the Commonwealth of Virginia. The land was loaned to the U.S. Army by Virginia in 1819 with reversionary rights.

The Fort Monroe Authority is established by state statute and is officially recognized by the Department of Defense as the local redevelopment authority who manages the BRAC process with the U.S. Army. It is my privilege to lead the Fort Monroe Authority, an eleven member board of elected officials, business and civic leaders, who work diligently with a committed staff to create the best outcome for the future of Fort Monroe.

Our desire is to protect what is already a "must see" historic site and to create an economically viable community of remarkable places where citizens can live, work and recreate amongst history.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Terrie L. Suit", written over a horizontal line.

Terrie L. Suit
Chair, Fort Monroe Authority