

Media Clips October-December 2014

<http://www.dailypress.com/news/hampton/dp-nws-fort-monroe-conservancy-tour-20141011-story.html>

## **National preservation group interested in Fort Monroe**

By Robert Brauchle,

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OCTOBER 11, 2014

HAMPTON — The bricks and mortar of Fort Monroe's stone citadel can ooze with water after rainy days, forcing Casemate Museum staff to monitor and track the humidity around the their exhibits.

Other areas within the stone fort simply aren't safe enough to open to the public yet.

Fort Monroe's status as a national monument has garnered attention from national and regional groups that want to help conserve the property as a living landmark for future generations.

That includes the National Trust for Historic Preservation, whose chief executive officer, Stephanie Meeks, toured the property Friday afternoon with Fort Monroe Authority Executive Director Glenn Oder acting as a guide.

Fort Monroe could be susceptible to preventable wear and tear if enough resources aren't put into the property to preserve the historic features. The National Trust wants to help the historic property where President Abraham Lincoln guided the attack on Norfolk remain a "special place that demonstrates the valuable history that took place here," Meeks said.

The National Trust is helping guide research being performed by the National Park Service on the stone citadel. The park service is creating a foundational document from that research that will guide the fort's maintenance and future uses.

Meeks said the National Trust is particularly interested in the fort's role in the emancipation of African-Americans during the Civil War.

In May 1861, Union Army Maj. Gen. Benjamin Butler identified three escaped slaves as "contraband of war" and refused to return them to Confederate Col. Charles Mallory. The men were instead confiscated like any other war material.

The decision is credited with putting pressure on Lincoln to issue the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863, which declared slaves in the Confederacy free.

Oder, Meeks and their respective staff members walked through the museum, past the inner moat Parade Grounds, into the former Army YMCA building, and into a casemate that once held the fort's officers' club.

The National Trust is also pushing to:

- Preserve historic structures by securing productive new uses for each building.
- Conserve open space and ensure public accessibility.
- Strictly limit new construction to protect the historic character and natural beauty of Fort Monroe.
- Establish a vibrant and economically self-sustaining new community where people are welcomed to live, work, and visit.

The National Trust's interest "really demonstrates the national profile Fort Monroe has," Oder said. "And it's going to take a lot of work and commitment to restore and preserve this place as a place to live, work, play and learn."

Oder said the residential units offered by the Fort Monroe Authority are now 100 percent full. The more than one million square feet of commercial space on the property is less than 30 percent occupied.

"We're excited about all of the interest in Fort Monroe," Oder said.

Brauchle can be reached by phone at 757-247-2827.

National Trust for Historic Preservation

Fort Monroe site: <http://bit.ly/fortmonroeconserv>

<http://www.dailypress.com/features/history/dp-nws-fort-monroe-archaeology-20141029-story.html>

Secrets in the dirt

By **Mark St. John Erickson**, [merickson@dailypress.com](mailto:merickson@dailypress.com) **contact the reporter**

ArchaeologyConservationHistory

When Fort Monroe's Directorate of Public Works conducted the first archaeological assessment of the historic Army post in 1978, it didn't see much potential for uncovering subterranean secrets.

Every sign of prehistoric habitation was believed to have washed into the Chesapeake Bay long ago, archaeologist Rebecca Calonico said Tuesday, addressing an audience assembled at the fort for the 2014 Virginia Preservation Conference.

And almost everything else that had happened at Old Point Comfort over the following 400 years was deemed to be so well-documented that archaeologists had little, if any, chance of carrying out excavations that could add to the historic record.

Just six years later, however, that conclusion was challenged by the discovery of a giant iron hinge from the fort's landmark Water Battery — an immense 40-gun structure that had all but vanished from the landscape after its stone and brick casemates were torn down in the early 1900s.

And that was merely the first in a long series of discoveries that has continued through this year. A new campaign to upgrade 88 fire hydrants unearthed deposits that could be related to the razing of the first Hygeia Hotel during the Civil War and the destruction of the first Chamberlin Hotel by fire in 1920.

Then there was the large if still unidentified brick vault recently discovered a few feet below the surface after a sewer pipe broke near the Chamberlin's successor.

"In all these cases, we went in thinking that we were only going to disturb previously disturbed areas. But at Fort Monroe, projects like this are never simple," said Fort Monroe Authority archaeologist Samantha J. Henderson.

"We never really know exactly what's in the ground until we start digging — and in these cases that digging led to some pretty significant discoveries."

Organized by Richmond-based Preservation Virginia in association with the state Department of Historic Resources, the conference moved to historic Fort Monroe on Tuesday morning after spending the previous day in South Hampton Roads.

Three morning sessions focused on various historic preservation initiatives at the post, with Henderson and Calonico joining Ethel Eaton, the Department of Historic Resource's senior policy analyst and archaeologist, in reviewing the changes that have shaped the management of the fort's archaeological resources since the first efforts took place in 1978.

In the years following the start of a new comprehensive survey in 1996, archaeologists have turned up more than 20 potential sites at Fort Monroe — with nearly a dozen boasting features that made them eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, Eaton said.

Among them is a prehistoric site found some 7 feet below today's surface, while another trash deposit from the first Hygeia Hotel didn't crop up until the very end of a long trail of clues that led excavators 5 feet beneath ground level.

"The problem with Fort Monroe is that things are very complicated below the surface," Eaton said, describing the difficulties of probing a landscape that was continuously raised and expanded by Army engineers over the course of nearly 200 years.

"It's always going to be a challenge here because of all that fill."

Still, as the Army discovered a few years back while building a new parking lot for the post commander at historic Quarters #1, some features like old brick-lined drains can lie hidden for years just a few inches below the surface.

And as Calonico learned after starting work at the fort as a contract archaeologist in 2009, some of those deposits from Monroe's long history can provide dramatic windows into its past.

In 2012, she helped excavate a "fantastic" cache of 140 well-preserved glass bottles hidden beneath the backyard of a house near the Chamberlin.

That same year archaeologists discovered the concrete platforms and wooden timbers of a lost gun battery originally built in 1897 — plus an array of 900 related artifacts that did not include a single munition.

"Prior to 1996, there was this idea that there were no unknown resources at Fort Monroe. But that idea was flawed," Calonico said.

"We're still finding all kinds of stuff — quite a bit, actually — and that made 2012 a very busy year."

*Erickson can be reached at 757-247-4783. Find more Hampton Roads history stories at [dailypress.com/history](http://dailypress.com/history) and [Facebook.com/hrhistory](https://www.facebook.com/hrhistory).*

<http://www.dailypress.com/news/politics/shad-plank-blog/dp-virginia-politics-beach-gives-key-support-to-cox-veterans-center-proposal-20141028-post.html>

Beach gives key support to Cox's veterans center proposal

**By Dave Ress, [dress@dailypress.com](mailto:dress@dailypress.com), 757-247-4535 Daily Press**

House of Delegates Majority Leader Kirk Cox's effort to fund two long term care facilities for veterans got a thumbs up from Virginia Beach's City Council, which voted to reserve 15 to 25 acres of city land for a Hampton Roads facility.

Cox wants the state to fund a 240 bed facility in Hampton Roads and another in Northern Virginia. Although both far from his home turf in Colonial Heights, he said the centers are a top priority for the 2015 session.

Cox has proposed dedicated \$28.5 million for a Hampton Roads facility.

“Securing a potential site for the construction of the Hampton Roads area veterans care center is a milestone step in our efforts to complete this project,” he said.

The state had been looking at a site on Fort Monroe and at the former Virginia School for the Deaf, Blind and Multi-Disabled in Hampton for the center.

House Republican caucus spokesman Matt Moran said that while the Virginia Beach move is an important signal of support, there's been no decision on where the facility would be located.

The facility is needed to treat the state's increasing population of aging and infirm veterans.

## **Holiday concerts in Hampton Roads**

By [Mike Holtzclaw](mailto:mholtzclaw@dailypress.com), [mholtzclaw@dailypress.com](mailto:mholtzclaw@dailypress.com)

**November 30, 2014**

Sunday, Dec. 7. Holly Days Concert and Tree Lighting. Fort Monroe Theatre, 42 Tidball Road. Featuring the Hampton Roads Philharmonic Orchestra and the First Presbyterian Church Choir of Hampton. The lighting of the largest holly tree on the post, located in Cannon Park, will begin at 5:30 p.m. Free.

<http://www.dailypress.com/news/opinion/editorials/dp-edt-dp-buzz-monroe-1129-20141128-story.html>

DP Buzz: Fort Monroe  
November 28, 2014

Editor's note: "DP Buzz" is an interactive feature of the Daily Press Opinion Page. We email weekly questions on issues and topics affecting Peninsula-area citizens. Each week, subscribers can choose whether to weigh in or not with a short answer. Here is a sampling; all responses are posted at [dailypress.com/opinion](http://dailypress.com/opinion). To receive DP Buzz questions, email [mholtzclaw@dailypress.com](mailto:mholtzclaw@dailypress.com) with the subject "DP Buzz."

**This week's question: Do you agree with Gov. McAuliffe's suggestion that the Fort Monroe national monument be connected between the North Beach and Inner Moat? And how should the balance be struck between preservation and development?**

Not mere "balance." Instead, create an integrated, spirit-of-place-respecting Grand Public Place —financially, historically, recreationally and environmentally enriching — with compatible redevelopment on the bridge-tunnel side and, on the bay side, with the preposterously split national monument made whole, as depicted at [FortMonroeNationalPark.org](http://FortMonroeNationalPark.org).

*Steve Corneliussen*

cComments

*Poquoson*

Yes, I agree with the governor. Develop the lower area around the Chamberlin and toward the Mercury/Mellen Street bridges.

*Robert Neely*

*Newport News*

There should be no residential development anywhere in the Fort Monroe National Monument. It can and should be a stand-alone attraction for millions of citizens interested in America's history, from its founding, to the Civil War, to the present.

*Ed Prior*

*Poquoson*

Best use, not balance, is the real issue. In addition to its cultural benefits, an expanded, unified national park will be an economic boon to the region, drawing tourists and businesses. The Fort Monroe Authority's main task, both culturally and economically speaking, is adaptive reuse of the many historic buildings.

*H. Scott Butler*

*Newport News*

The governor should focus on issues of importance, such as economic growth and all that includes. Development around the area would be a draw for home buyers and visitors if good retail was available. Monuments have purpose, but they don't usually make money.

*Dawn Dale*

*Hayes*

The Fort Monroe National Monument should encompass a contiguous area of land. Mixing national monument pieces with residential pieces would be confusing to visitors without providing any legitimate benefit to outweigh the confusion.

*Michael Holloway*

*York County*

Keep it *all* for a National Monument. Too often we've allowed our precious shorelines to be sectioned and developed for the privileged few to own and enjoy (and deny access or transit across to the next slice of beach allocated for the public). We have the opportunity now to keep it all available for the public use and enjoyment without constant battles about "trespassing on private property." Once it's privately developed, it will be gone forever from the general public use, all promises to the contrary.

*Jim Granger*

*Poquoson*

I can see the benefit of making the monument one contiguous area. As for balance, it's fine to develop some of the property for retail and residential use. There needs to be a way to make money; if we preserve the monument and it doesn't sustain itself financially, that is cutting off your nose to spite your face.

*Erin McCarthy*

*Newport News*

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<http://www.dailypress.com/features/history/dp-nws-civil-war-raider-sinks-20141127-story.html#page=1>

### **Civil War raider sinks off Newport News**

By Mark St. John Erickson, [merickson@dailypress.com](mailto:merickson@dailypress.com)

November 27, 2014

When Union sailors steamed into Hampton Roads with the captured CSS Florida in mid-November 1864, many of their countrymen on the East Coast embraced news of the unexpected trophy as if they had been delivered.

For two years, the fast, well-armed cruiser had savaged American merchant shipping, seizing and often burning dozens of vessels in a relentless campaign that — when combined with the predatory voyages of its fellow commerce raiders — had terrorized the U.S. fleet into reducing its trips by two-thirds.

So the sense of reprieve sparked by its surrender in Brazil only grew when — nine days after being rammed by an errant Federal transport off Fort Monroe — the Florida sank under mysterious circumstances 400 yards off Newport News Point on Nov. 28, 1864.

No one worried about the angry protests from Rio de Janeiro, which had been joined by England and France in denouncing the U.S. Navy's violation of its waters, Hampton Roads Naval Museum curator Joe Judge says.

All they cared about was the watery end of one of the Confederacy's most feared and hated naval weapons.

"As far as the North was concerned, the CSS Florida had been built in a foreign country under the shadiest of circumstances — skirting international law and a full diplomatic outcry — then unchivalrously preyed upon the weakest of vessels while never standing up to a Union warship in a fair fight," Judge explains.

"So it was tremendously frustrating for the American public and the Navy. It was embarrassing — and it was having an increasingly costly effect. That's why — once the Florida had been captured and brought into Hampton Roads — there was no way it was going to be returned."

### **Deceit and daring**

Like the Confederacy's pioneering ironclads, the commerce raiders were the anchors of an aggressive naval strategy in which the South hoped to blunt its adversary's superior size and strength through a combination of innovative weapons and a deliberate war against relatively defenseless merchant shipping.

The Florida was the first of its foreign-built cruisers, and — like the slightly larger and later CSS Alabama — it was designed from the beginning to be fast, powerful and elusive.

"It's sleek. It's well-made. It's state of the art," Hampton Roads Naval Museum historian M. Clay Farrington says, describing its long, fast hull, its robust steam engines and its deadly rifled Blakely guns.

"The Florida was meant to be a force-multiplier — and for what the Confederacy invested, it had an enormous impact."

Deception added to the threat, enabling the raider to hide its speed and intentions through telescoping smokestacks and a disappearing screw.

But as the 700-ton steamer took shape in a Liverpool shipyard, few observers were fooled by the elaborate show designed to pass it off as an Italian vessel.

"There is much secrecy about the Oreto, but my impressions are strong that she is intended for the Southern Confederacy," the U.S. Consul there reported, using the false name filed by the machinations of the South's purchasing agent.

"No pains or expense have been spared in her construction, and when fully armed she will be a formidable and dangerous craft."

Despite denials by the Italian authorities and the consul's written protests, the Florida steamed away from Liverpool on March 22, 1862, and headed toward the British Virgin Islands.

There it was seized and examined by the governor twice, escaping each time because it had not yet been armed.

Not until its commander and crew arrived in August were the lethal Blakely guns transferred to the ship at a secret rendezvous about 60 miles from Nassau.

But even then some of the most crucial gunnery components were missing, forcing Lt. John Newland Maffitt — a one-time occupant of Cedar Hall in Warwick County — to steam toward Mobile Bay and the Union blockade virtually unarmed.

Yellow fever made that journey still longer and more difficult, killing or sickening most of the crew. Maffitt himself was nearly given up for dead — yet recovered in time to command his ship on a daring dash through the barrage laid down by three Union cruisers.

"Everybody was sick, but he runs through the blockade anyway," historian John V. Quarstein says, describing a desperate two-hour chase in which the unarmed Florida lost much of its rigging and spars as well as one man dead and seven wounded.

"That made Maffitt and the Florida famous."

### **Elusive menace**

Repaired, refitted and rearmed, the raider emerged from Mobile Bay early on the morning of Jan. 16, 1863 to challenge the blockade again.

Putting on both canvas and steam, Maffitt reached nearly 15 knots and outran all but two of his 12 pursuers.

"That night, by changing course, the two that held their way with us were eluded," he reported.

Over the following eight months, the Florida seized nearly two dozen vessels in the West Indies and along the Atlantic Coast — all the while baffling the Federal warships charged with hunting it down.

Insurance rates skyrocketed as the raider doubled down on the success of the CSS Alabama, capturing and often burning ship after ship from the principal Union ports of New York and Boston, including the China clipper Jacob Bell with a \$1.5 million cargo.

Even after Maffitt's broken health forced him to give up command, the Florida continued its predatory ways, seizing 13 more vessels in the destructive second voyage that followed.

Among its prizes was the U.S. Mail Steamer Electric Spark, which it took off Cape Henry on July 10, 1864 with a cargo of stamps, shoes and liquor worth \$600,000.

"The Union blockading squadron was headquartered only a few miles away in Hampton Roads — but that didn't matter," Quarstein says.

"The waters off the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay were a hot hunting ground — and the Florida could slip in, do what it had to do and then slip away because it was so fast and so elusive."

Compounding the Florida's disruptive impact were the exploits of two of its prizes.

Converted into commerce raiders, they went on to capture another 23 American ships, adding to the increasingly harsh sting inflicted upon Northern ports and shippers.

"The long-range effect was disastrous for the U.S. merchant fleet," Judge says.

"And that's exactly what the Florida was supposed to do."

### **Illegally snared**

Despite a career based on deception, it was faithful adherence to international rules that finally did the Florida in.

Steaming into the Brazilian port of Bahia on Oct. 4, 1864, the raider disabled its powerful guns and anchored as the authorities directed.

That combined with the absence of half its crew to make the ship a sitting duck when — early in the morning three days later — it was rammed and captured in an illegal attack by the USS Wachusett.

Had the Florida sailed out to meet the challenge made by Cmdr. Napoleon Collins the day before, the outcome might have been different.

But confronting Union warships toe to toe was not part of the commerce raider's job description.

"Compared to the Wachusett, the Florida was faster. It was lighter and more maneuverable. It had more accurate and longer-range guns," Farrington says.

"So it had a very good chance to prevail."

Still, the sneak attack intended to send the Florida to the bottom went awry when the Wachusett's bull charge was slowed by a dragging anchor.

That's when the quick-thinking Collins changed his plans, tied a towline to his damaged adversary's bow and began dodging the Brazilian guns as he headed from the harbor into international waters.

What erupted during the month-long journey back to Hampton Roads was a diplomatic firestorm in which the Lincoln administration was besieged by angry protests from the Empire of Brazil and denunciations from England and France.

Northern newspapers, however, published the news with glee, reflecting the relief felt by both shipping interests and the frustrated American public.

"This was a long-standing directive. They were to sink or capture any Confederate ship they found in that port," Farrington says.

"And that's what the Wachusett did."

Nine days after Union sailors moored it off Old Point Comfort, the Florida was rammed by an errant Union transport in high winds and seas, striking its already damaged hull so severely that it worsened an earlier leak.

Towed to Newport News Point, it sank early on Nov. 28, settling into the James River mud nine fathoms below the surface.

Numerous Navy reports suggest that every normal measure was taken to keep the vessel afloat — including loading sufficient coal to keep its boilers and pumps running — but that the water continued to rise and finally put the fires out.

So rapidly did the Florida begin to sink after the pumps failed that a dangerous last-minute attempt to tow it closer to shore had to be abruptly aborted.

Still, despite a court of inquiry that found no wrongdoing, suspicions about the Florida's demise continue to this day, with Rear Adm. David Dixon Porter often fingered as the primary culprit.

The famed commander of the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron also was implicated in a 1906 book by Maffitt's widow, who reported that he admitted his role in a conversation with her husband after the war.

"Porter said he'd ordered an engineer to open the ship's sea cocks — and not to leave the engine room until the water was up to his chin," Quarstein says.

"He wanted that damn rebel ship sent to the bottom.

"It was no accident."

*Erickson can be reached at 757-247-4783.*

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<http://www.dailypress.com/news/opinion/letters/dp-nws-edt-letsmon-1124-20141123-story.html>

**Nov. 24 Letters**

I was greatly pleased to read Robert Brauchle's Nov. 6 report ("Gov. Terry McAuliffe wants to expand Fort Monroe monument area") that Gov. Terry McAuliffe supports an expanded national monument at Fort Monroe that will connect the two existing National Park Service properties on the Peninsula.

Like the governor, I believe that further preserved land at Fort Monroe "would be an enormous historical and economic asset to Hampton Roads and the commonwealth as a whole."

For many years, I have been privileged to serve as president of the Civil War Trust, the nation's largest nonprofit battlefield preservation organization. The trust, which has saved more than 21,500 acres of Civil War battlefields in Virginia, has long supported a National Park Service presence at Fort Monroe. Given both the importance of "Freedom's Fortress" throughout the Civil War, as well as its enduring impact on our country, the fate of this storied site matters deeply to thousands of preservationists in Virginia and across the United States.

The historic significance of Fort Monroe is beyond dispute. It sustained a continuous military presence for more than four centuries. During the Civil War, the fort was the staging point for Union military operations in tidewater Virginia, and was the location of a wartime contraband camp that enabled thousands of African Americans to ultimately achieve their freedom from slavery. Given this historic pedigree, is there any question that we owe it to our children and our grandchildren to ensure preservation and interpretation of Fort Monroe?

I commend Gov. McAuliffe and all others who are striving to make a unified and economically vibrant Fort Monroe a reality.

O. James Lighthizer  
President  
Civil War Trust

<http://www.dailypress.com/features/home-garden/dp-fea-garden-briefs-1204-20141203-story.html>

## **Home and garden briefs for Dec. 4: Christmas is the time for decorated home tours**

By Felicia L. Mason, felicia.mason@dailypress.com

December 3, 2014

The historic plantations along the James River aren't the only homes decorated and open for holiday touring. Here's a list of some Christmas home tours that are within an easy drive from the Peninsula.

Reservations are required for some of the tours, so be sure to check availability for the ones in which you have an interest.

•**Fort Monroe Mistletoe Tour.** Saturday, Dec. 13. 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Four of Fort Monroe's private and historic homes will be open for tours in Hampton. Also on display will be the Casemate Museum where a new exhibit "Christmas Between the Wars" is on display, the Chamberlin and

YMCA. Other historic locations will be dressed in traditional holiday splendor. House tour tickets: \$20 in advance; \$25 day of event. [fmauthority.com](http://fmauthority.com).

<http://www.dailypress.com/news/hampton/dp-nws-mcauliffe-buckroe-coastal-management-20141202-story.html>

## **Gov. McAuliffe: Fort Monroe monument should be expanded**

By [Robert Brauchle](mailto:rbrauchle@dailypress.com), [rbrauchle@dailypress.com](mailto:rbrauchle@dailypress.com)

December 2, 2014

Gov. Terry McAuliffe's administration is working with the federal government to expand the Fort Monroe national monument to include a roughly 90-acre area owned by the state, the governor said during a Tuesday morning press conference at Buckroe Beach.

McAuliffe's appearance was intended to announce a three-year extension of the state's Coastal Zone Management Program. Instead, his sport-utility vehicles were met at the pier by park advocates holding signs urging the monument's expansion.

"I have never felt that we've done what we needed to do to take Fort Monroe to a level that it should be at," the governor said. "We shouldn't be cutting up Fort Monroe — it should be a continuous park, so people can enjoy it."

In November, the governor's office confirmed with the Daily Press that McAuliffe is lobbying for an expanded national monument that connects the North Beach, Inner Moat and casemates.

The existing monument created by President Barack Obama in 2011 does not include an area between the casemate and North Beach known as the Wherry Quarter. Groups that advocate for creating a park-like atmosphere have feared that state ownership could lead to future development in the Wherry Quarter.

The Fort Monroe Authority — the state entity overseeing the property's management — must make its operations economically self-sustaining in the coming years, leaving an option open to further develop state-owned areas that do not include historically sensitive structures. The master plan points to the Wherry Quarter as an area available for future development.

A series of one-story Butler buildings built in the mid-1900s now sit in the Wherry Quarter. Authority officials have said those buildings will be leased for the remainder of their useful life, then decisions will be made about what happens with the land.

"We're making some great progress and hopefully we'll have some very important news, but we're pushing everybody as hard as we can including the federal government to get some resolution on this and we're pushing full speed ahead and I will not rest until we get it done at Fort Monroe," McAuliffe said before transitioning to the Coastal Zone Management program.

In the past 30 years, the state program has received \$61 million in federal money matched by more than \$51 million in state and local dollars for environmentally friendly projects designed to aid the environment and localities that touch tidal waters.

"Our bay we're looking at is home to such an intricate but we say fragile ecosystem that is such a tremendous economic resource," the governor said. "When you have a great asset, you do everything you can to protect that asset, folks, and that's what we're here today to talk about."

The last extension was signed in 2010 by then-Gov. Bob McDonnell.

*Brauchle can be contacted by phone at 757-846-4361*

<http://www.dailypress.com/news/hampton/dp-pictures-gov-mcauliffe-speaks-at-buckroe-be-002-photo.html>



Gov. Terry McAuliffe greets supporters of the expansion of the Fort Monroe national monument after arriving at Buckroe Beach on Tuesday morning. (Kaitlin McKeown / Daily Press)

<http://www.dailypress.com/news/hampton/dp-nws-fort-monroe-historic-homes-20141208-story.html>

Fort Monroe residents open doors for Mistletoe Tour



Judith Lowery / Daily Press

Patricia O'Connell and her husband live at 67 Fenwick, the Lighthouse Keeper's Quarters.

By Robert Brauchle,

[rbrauchle@dailypress.com](mailto:rbrauchle@dailypress.com)

DECEMBER 8, 2014, 8:27 PM

In an earlier era, Patricia O'Connell would have worked in gusty storms and through foggy days to ensure ships didn't veer out of the nearby Hampton Roads shipping channel. O'Connell lives in the lighthouse keeper's quarters on Fort Monroe, which was once used as a residence for Coast Guard personnel to operate and maintain the nearby navigational aid.

The Fort Monroe Authority is opening four such homes on Dec. 13 for guided Mistletoe Tours that will highlight the history of the buildings and the holiday spirit of their current residents.

The tours will include live music and vendors and give paid patrons a chance to tour the interiors of the former post commander's residence and coast artillery officer housing in addition to the lighthouse keeper's quarters.

"It's just a great place to be in," O'Connell said. "I wanted to do everything I could to maintain that lighthouse keeper's feel in here."

O'Connell, like many of the other residents, has decorated her home for the Yuletide season using nativity scenes, evergreens, wreaths and Christmas trees.

The stately homes include pocket doors, hardwood floors, butler's kitchens and priceless views of Hampton Roads.

Fort Monroe Authority Executive Director Glenn Oder's home is included on the tour. It includes 4,500 square feet of living space, four bedrooms and three bathrooms. Oder's wife, Mary, decorated eight trees that are placed throughout the home, which doubles as a reception space for consultants, visiting groups and donors.

Amanda and Charlie Graham live in a home that once housed a three-star general. The couple have placed family-made decorations throughout the home— some of which are themed after Charles Dickens because Amanda's mother is English.

John and Kathy Hutcheson live at 75 Ingalls Road, a residence the Fort Monroe post commander once called home.

The house's signature semicircular driveway leads to the two-story porch and nearby carriage house. Kathy has placed 31 nativity scenes from around the world throughout the house.

Attendees will also tour the Casemate Museum and the Chamberlin.

Oder said the tours are being offered as a way to let people know the property is open to the public.

"We're trying to find ways to use the assets we have," he said. "We think tours on this historic property are a perfect opportunity to talk about the history here and to generate some revenue."

Oder said the authority's staff visited historic properties last year during Christmastime and noted the best features of those tours. "We took those ideas and added a few of our own," he said.

Anyone who doesn't want to pay for tickets can still walk around the property. Carolers will be outside, as will food vendors.

Brauchle can be reached by phone at 757-247-2827.

#### Mistletoe Tour

What: Guided tours of four historic homes, the Chamberlin and Casemate Museum will be offered.

Where: Fort Monroe

When: 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 12

How much: \$20 in advance, \$25 on-site. Tickets can be purchased in person, online at [www.fmauthority.com](http://www.fmauthority.com) or by calling 757-570-5174



Judith Lowery / Daily Press  
Patricia O'Connell and her husband live at 67 Fenwick, the Lighthouse Keeper's Quarters. here, O'Connell adjusts the lights on the stairs; she has tried to maintain the look of the lighthouse keepers house, especially in this room.





Judith Lowery / Daily Press  
The Fort Monroe Authority is having a Fort Monroe Mistletoe Homes Tour. Here is 75 Ingalls Road, the home of John and Kathy Hutcheson.







Judith Lowery / Daily Press

The Fort Monroe Authority is having a Fort Monroe Mistletoe Homes Tour. Here is 29 Fenwick Road; the home of Charlie and Amanda Graham.





Judith Lowery / Daily Press  
Glenn and Mary Oder live at 51 Fenwick Road.



