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## Restored Coast Artillery Sites!

Mark Berhow

You can see what a coast artillery battery or a fire control station was like back in the heyday of coast artillery at these 17 locations around the country. Over the past few years several batteries, stations, and rooms have had significant sections restored. While you can visit all these park locations during regular open hours, often the restored rooms and corridors are secured from general entry and open only during arranged tours. Be sure to check the schedules at the individual parks for tour days and times!

- **Battery Gunnison/New Peck, Fort Hancock Gateway National Recreation Area, Sandy Hook Unit, New Jersey.** A restored 6-inch pedestal mount battery with two original guns and carriages, featuring a restored interior plotting room, communications room, shell hoist, and magazines. Park open daily, admission fee required, the battery is open on select weekends and for special events. <http://www.armygroundforces.org/new-events.htm>
- **Battery Lewis, Navesink Military Reservation, Hartshorne Woods County Park, Monmouth County, Highlands, New Jersey.** This completely renovated 1940s-era 16-inch casemated battery, Battery Construction Number 116, has displays and a 16-inch gun tube. The park is open daily, the battery is open afternoon hours on weekends and for special events. <https://monmouthcountyparks.com/page.aspx?Id=2524>
- **Fort Mott State Park, Pennsville, New Jersey.** An extensive renovation program has been carried out by New Jersey State parks to stabilize and restore historic fabric of the remaining defensive fortifications at Fort Mott. Restoration and interpretive efforts include Battery Harker, which has been extensively renovated, a restored fire control tower, a restored administration building and a restored peace magazine. Open daily, some restorations are only open for special events. <https://www.fortmott.org/>  
<https://www.state.nj.us/dep/parksandforests/parks/fortmott.html>,
- **The Fort Miles Museum in Battery 512, Cape Henlopen State Park, Lewes, Delaware.** The museum is housed in a renovated 1940s casemated battery for 12-inch guns. The battery has been partially restored with a 12-inch barrel in one casemate, with museum displays and event space. The location also features an artillery park with displays of a number of artillery pieces, an accessible fire control tower, along with a number of other coast artillery fortifications. The park is open daily, admission fee required, the battery museum is open for regularly scheduled tours. <http://fortmiles.org>, <https://destateparks.com/FortMiles>
- **The Casemate Museum and Battery Irwin, Fort Monroe National Monument, Hampton, Virginia.** The army's ex-military museum in the casemates of old Fort Monroe has an extensive collection of artifacts and displays on the history of Fort Monroe and coast artillery. It is operated by the Fort Monroe Authority, which manages a large part of the old Fort Monroe military reservation in cooperation with the National Park Service. Outside the

moat of the large and impressive Third-System stone fort is Battery Irwin, which retains two 3-inch guns on pedestal mounts, and Battery Parrot, which features a 90 mm gun on a fixed mount. Open daily except certain holidays. <https://fortmonroe.org/visit/casemate-museum/>

- **Fort Moultrie, Fort Sumter, and Fort Moultrie National Historical Park, Sullivan's Island, South Carolina.** Two batteries within the old pre-Civil War brick fort retain a 4.7-inch gun and mount and a 3-inch gun and mount. The entire fort has been set up to display the comprehensive history of American seacoast defense. Open daily with a visitor center and tours. [https://www.nps.gov/fosu/learn/historyculture/fort\\_moultrie.htm](https://www.nps.gov/fosu/learn/historyculture/fort_moultrie.htm)
- **Battery Laidley, Fort DeSoto, Fort DeSoto County Park, Pinellas County, Tierra Verde, Florida.** While not fully restored, this mortar battery retains four of its original 12-inch mortars. Open daily, parking fee required, with self-guided tours. As a bonus, the two 6-inch Armstrong guns and carriages originally located at Battery Burchstead, Fort Dade, are on display on concrete pads behind Battery Laidley. [https://www.pinellascounty.org/park/05\\_ft\\_desoto.htm#general](https://www.pinellascounty.org/park/05_ft_desoto.htm#general)
- **The Fort Pickens Unit, Gulf Islands National Seashore, Gulf Breeze, Florida.** This National Park Service unit features a 6-inch gun on a disappearing mount in Battery Cooper and two 6-inch guns in shielded mounts at Battery 234, along with the large pre-Civil War fort with a 15-inch Rodman smoothbore, a visitor's center and book store. Nearby are the pre-Civil War Fort Barrancas and the Barrancas Advanced Redoubt. Outstanding location for seeing fortifications of all eras. Fort Pickens and Fort Barrancas are open daily, the Advanced Redoubt is open for scheduled tours. <https://www.nps.gov/guis/planyourvisit/fort-pickens-area.htm>, <https://www.nps.gov/guis/learn/historyculture/fort-barrancas.htm>
- **Battery Commander's Station/Base End Station and Radio Station, Fort Rosecrans, Cabrillo National Monument, San Diego, California.** The park features a restored battery commanders' station and observation complex. Park and visitors center open daily, restored station open for special events only. <https://www.nps.gov/cabr/learn/historyculture/military-history-and-coastal-defense.htm>,
- **Battery Osgood-Farley, Fort MacArthur, Angels Gate City Park, San Pedro, California.** The Fort MacArthur Museum is housed in an intact 14-inch disappearing gun battery which features a restored power room, a plotting room, and a battery commanders' station. The museum features a fine collection of vintage military vehicles. The park is open daily, museum is open Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, Sunday & Holidays from 12 PM to 5 PM, donation requested.
- **Battery Chamberlin, Fort Winfield Scott, Presidio Unit, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, San Francisco, California.** A 6-inch disappearing gun battery with a single gun and carriage that was replaced in 1976. The gun and carriage were restored in 2018. Part of the large Presidio of San Francisco complex with lots to see and do! Visitors centers and park

open daily, Battery Chamberlin is open the first full weekend of every month.  
<https://www.nps.gov/goga/index.htm>, <https://www.presidio.gov/>

- **Battery Townsley, Marin Headlands Unit, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Sausalito, California.** A group of dedicated volunteers have been working on the restoration of Battery Townsley, one of the original 16-inch casemated batteries located on a Marin Headlands bluff. The battery features a 16-inch naval gun tube and a number of restored rooms. It is close to the World War II-era buildings of Fort Cronkhite, as well as the Endicott-era buildings and batteries of Fort Barry, with its fully restored Nike Missile site, SF-88. Well worth the trip! Battery Townsley is open the first Sunday of the month from 1 to 4 PM. The Nike missile site is open Fridays and Saturdays from 12:30 to 3:30 with 3 scheduled tours. <https://www.nps.gov/goga/learn/historyculture/battery-townsley.htm>; <https://www.nps.gov/goga/nike-missile-site.htm>
- **Battery Pratt, Fort Stevens State Park, Hammond, Oregon.** A full-scale replica of one of Battery Pratt's 6-inch guns on a disappearing carriage was built and installed in one of gun pits. Restoration work continues on the rest of the battery. The park and visitor center are open daily, admission fee required. <http://visitftstevens.com/>
- **Fort Columbia State Park, Chinook, Washington.** The park features a nearly complete set of garrison buildings, three Endicott-era batteries, and a 6-inch WW II-era battery. The State brought in two 6-inch guns on shielded barbette mounts for Battery 246 in 1991. The park and grounds are open daily, parking pass required. The Fort Columbia Interpretive Center, a restored coast artillery barracks, is open daily from July 1 to Sept. 5, from 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. And you can rent out two of the historic buildings for an overnight stay. <https://parks.state.wa.us/506/Fort-Columbia>
- **Fort Casey Gun Batteries, Fort Casey State Park, Whidbey Island, Coupeville, Washington.** Two 10-inch guns on disappearing carriages and two 3-inch guns on pedestal mounts were reinstalled in Battery Worth and Battery Trevor respectively. Battery Worth has been extensively renovated with a restored shell hoists, a magazine, a plotting room, a barracks room, and a battery commander's station. Guided tours of the gun batteries at Fort Casey State Park are offered from May 25 to Sept. 3 on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. The 45-minute tours are led by the Fort Casey Volunteer Battalion. At nearby Fort Ebey State Park, work is beginning on the restoration of the plotting room and other sections of Battery 248, a 1940s-era 6-inch gun battery. The park is open daily, parking pass required, the battery is open for special tours only. <https://parks.state.wa.us/505/Fort-Casey>.
- **The Puget Sound Coast Artillery Museum, Fort Worden State Park, Port Townsend, Washington.** The museum features a number of exhibits on coast artillery history and artifacts. The park retains a nearly complete set of garrison buildings that are now being used for a variety of functions. A self-guided tour will take you to the 14 concrete batteries around the park, as well as variety of fire control and searchlight facilities. The park is open daily, parking pass required. The museum is located in one of the original 1904 barracks and is

open 365 days a year, 11 a.m.–4 p.m, donation requested. <http://coastartillery.org/>,  
<https://parks.state.wa.us/511/Fort-Worden>, <http://fortworden.org/>

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Stay at a Coast Artillery Post!

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Immerse yourself in a total fort experience by staying in one of the old barracks or quarters at a coast artillery fort at these six locations! These buildings have been updated with the modern amenities, in many cases very nicely so. These places book up fast, so you may have to plan your adventure pretty far in advance!

- **Fort McKinley** on Great Diamond Island, is a ferry ride away from Portland, Maine. The **Inn at Diamond Cove** is situated within the former double barracks of Fort McKinley. The 44 guestrooms and suites feature a fireplace, balcony and dining area. Many of the rooms also feature a kitchenette. Guests will love the outdoor pool and there is a cabana bar and fireplace nearby. The onsite restaurant serves breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Guests travel around by foot, golf cart, and bicycle. Open May through September.  
<https://www.innatdiamondcove.com/>
- **Fort Baker** across the Golden Gate Bridge from San Francisco, California is now home to the **Cavallo Point Lodge** at the Golden Gate. Cavallo Point features a conference center, a spa, lodging, dining, and activities as a part of a consortium that is dedicated to the preservation of Fort Baker. There are a wide range of suites and rooms in the Officers and NCO quarters as well as contemporary lodging. A restaurant and a bar are located in one of the old barracks buildings. <https://www.cavallopoint.com/>
- The **Presidio of San Francisco** currently features two boutique hotels, the **Inn at the Presidio** and the **Lodge at the Presidio**, both in former barracks buildings around the main parade ground. Several restaurants are also located around the main parade ground.  
<https://www.presidio.gov/>; <https://www.presidio.gov/places/inn-at-the-presidio>;  
<https://www.presidio.gov/places/lodge-at-the-presidio>
- **Fort Columbia State Park**, Washington, across the bridge from Astoria, Oregon, rents out two buildings for extended stays. The post hospital will accommodate up to twelve people, the hospital steward's quarters has two bedrooms. There are no onsite dining facilities.  
<https://parks.state.wa.us/382/Fort-Columbia>
- The **Fort Casey Inn** on Whidbey Island, Washington, features 10 units in the old officers and NCO quarters, just north of Fort Casey State Park. <https://fortcaseyinn.com/>
- The **Fort Worden Conference Center** in Port Townsend, Washington, features a wide range of rooms and accommodations including the officers' quarters, NCO quarters and cottages

and rooms. Food is available at the Reveille at the Commons restaurant and Taps at the Guardhouse bar and pub. <http://fortworden.org/>

I speculate that future lodging possibilities may include historic buildings at Fort Monroe, Fort Hancock (Sandy Hook), and Fort Winfield Scott (Presidio of San Francisco). If you go to any of these places, let us know how your trip was!