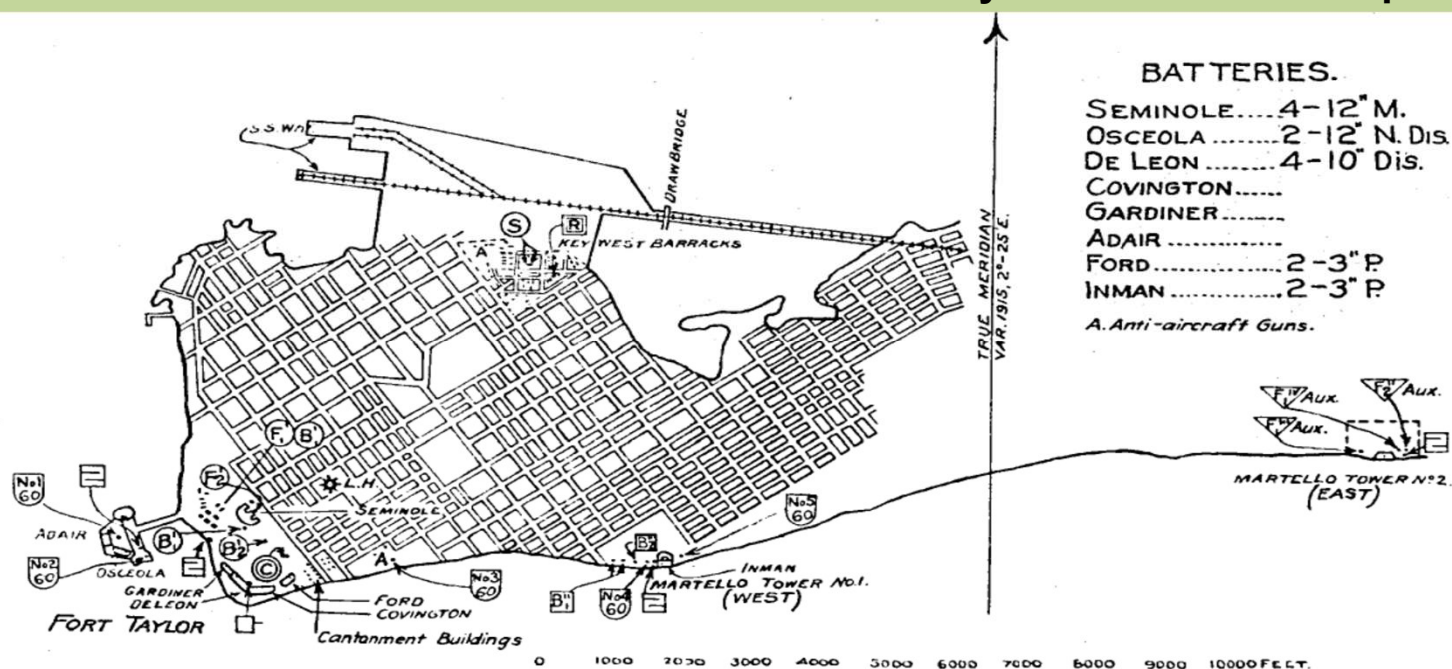


# Coast Defense Study Group

## 2024 Annual Conference to the Harbor Defenses of Key West & Tour to Tampa





**Coast Defense Study Group**  
**2024 Annual Conference to the Harbor Defenses of the Key West – Tampa Bay**  
**May 6 to May 12, 2024**  
**First Announcement – Nine Months Out**

Our 2024 CDSG conference will be held in Key West, Florida with add-on tour to harbor defenses of Tampa. This is the registration for the 42th Annual CDSG Conference to the former Harbor Defenses of Key West (HDKW) including Fort Jefferson in the Dry Tortugas National Park. The military has maintained an important presence in the Keys since America acquired Florida from Spain. A US Navy base was established at the same time the town of Key West was settled in the early 1820s. The Navy proceeded to rid the 100-mile-long Keys chain of pirates who were looting legitimate wreckers (the salvage of shipwrecks with cargos auctioned in town was Key West's first industry). Key West was recognized for its strategic location to patrol the shipping channels that led into the Gulf of Mexico. The U.S. Army built Fort Zachary Taylor to guard the entrance to Key West harbor just in time for the Civil War. The fort was taken by Union forces and Key West became home to the Union Blockading Squadron for the eastern Gulf of Mexico. Over 300 Confederate blockade running vessels were brought into the harbor where their cargos were put up for auction. Construction of Fort Jefferson in the Dry Tortugas began just after Fort Taylor but the huge structure (16 million bricks) was only partially complete by the Civil War. The importance of the HDKW led to the construction of extensive Endicott defenses, as well as World War II defenses. During WWI and WWII ships and planes patrolled the shipping lanes to keep German submarines at bay. The NAS Key West on Boca Chica Key played a critical role in the Cuban Missile crisis and continues to be an important training base to this day.

Unlike many of the large port cities that we have visited recently, Key West is a small city located a good distance from any major populations. Without major populations in the area, there is limited need for conference or convention space making our options for our meeting facilities restricted. Also, given the smaller size of the HDKW there are fewer forts and batteries for us to visit. With these limitations, our visit will be shorter than our other conferences. We will spend four nights in Key West for the conference and two nights in Tampa as a tour add on. Along with visiting the defenses, we plan on spending two afternoons visiting other attractions in Key West, making this an opportunity to bring our spouses or partners to enjoy the warmth of Key West with us. Our logistical plans involve have our CDSG members traveling to Key West via car or airplane independently. Our nightly meetings and banquet will be held at the VFW Post 3911 (2200 N. Roosevelt Blvd. 305-294-9968). **Please remember to arrange your flights and shared rental cars for the conference.**

We will not be booking a particular hotel for our conference because of the unfavorable cost and terms offered to the CDSG. Our members can find better pricing on their own compared to what we can get as a group rate in one of the few conference hotels. Here is a list of hotels that are all in the vicinity of each other at the less expensive end of the island: IBIS Bay Beach Resort – 305-296-1043; 24 North Hotel/Key West – 305-320-0940; Fairfield Inn & Suites/Key West – 305-320-0910; Double Tree Resort by Hilton – 305-293-1818. If you have access to a better price at another hotel, then book it. **You should make your own reservations for the four nights (May 6 in/May 10 out) and should do so as soon as possible to avoid the possibility of the hotels being filled.**

There is a sole NPS concessionaire ferry to **Fort Jefferson**. The people who operate the ferry for the Park Service are very independent. They offer no group rates and will not block seats for groups. All reservations must be paid well in advance for guarantee seating on our selected day. **The ferry books up fast and your reservation for May 7, 2024, should be made as soon as possible directly by you to guarantee seating on our selected day. Reservations can be made by calling the Yankee Freedom Dry Tortugas Ferry (305-294-7009).** Tickets can also be booked online. The boat ride out to the fort is about 3 hours. We will have 4 hours to explore the fort and then 3 hours back. The standard price is \$200 per person including breakfast snack and box lunch, discounts available for seniors or NPS pass holders. The ferry tickets are non-refundable except if the Freedom Ferry cancels the trip because of the weather.

The proposed Key West conference schedule is attached as part of this flyer. We have so far identified shared conference costs which include the hotel meeting room, an annual banquet, permits, daily handouts, and other miscellaneous costs. These costs will vary depending on the number of members attending this conference, so we have not yet arrived at a final cost. **Therefore, we request each member or guest attending to pay the current estimated cost of \$100.00 per person for these shared costs at this time to reserve a place at the conference.** We will then adjust the per attendee costs at the conference once we have final numbers, but we think the \$100 is very close to the final number. An additional \$36.00 will be needed for any additional dinner guests. We ask that you complete the registration form and return it with a check made payable to the "Charles Ruby".

The proposed Tampa tour schedule is attached as part of this flyer. We have so far identified shared tour costs which only involve the Egmont Key Ferry to take us to Fort Dade. You are responsible for driving or flying to and from Tampa, rental vehicle, all parking or admittance fees, fuel, and meals under the tour format. We are not blocking rooms in St Petersburg. The prices we have been quoted is more than members would pay for their individual reservations. We are recommending the Quality Inn and Suites Tropicana Field, 1400 34<sup>th</sup> St North, Saint Petersburg (727-323-3100), but you can select another hotel if you wish. **You should make your own reservations for the two nights (May 10 in/May 12 out).** Please remember to arrange your flights and shared rental cars for the Tampa tour. **Therefore, we request each member or guest attending to pay the current estimated cost of \$100.00 for the shared charter costs at this time to reserve a place at the tour.** We will then adjust the per attendee costs at the tour once we have final numbers, but we think the \$100 is very close to the final number. We ask that you complete the registration form and return it with a check made payable to the "Charles Ruby".

### **CDSG 2024 Annual Conference Registration Form**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Conference members wanting to tour the active military bases (such as NASKW Truman Annex) will be required to provide their driver's license details at least 30 days in advance of our visit so background checks can be performed. You will also need to show your driver's license upon entering these bases.

Presentations: Yes or No. If yes, the title(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Time & Equipment-needed: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of people who would like to join a group tour of Downtown Key West: \_\_\_\_\_

Number Attending Conference: \_\_\_\_\_ times \$100.00 (in US funds only) for a total of \_\_\_\_\_

Number of additional guests for dinner: \_\_\_\_\_ times \$36.00 (in US Funds only) for a total of \_\_\_\_\_

Number Attending Tampa Tour: \_\_\_\_\_ times \$100.00 (in US funds only) for a total of \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to "Charles Ruby" and send to Charles Ruby at 9650 S. Ocean Drive, Unit 110 Jensen Beach, FL 34957 USA. You can also register and pay online using your credit card at [www.cdsg.org/shop/](http://www.cdsg.org/shop/)

**Contact for questions at:** Charles Ruby 407-812-5464 [cruby1@att.net](mailto:cruby1@att.net)

**Harbor Defenses of Key West**  
**Proposed Schedule for CDSG 2024 Annual Conference**  
**(As of August 1, 2023)**

Monday, May 6

- 4-6pm Registration and CDSG Reception at VFW Post 3911 – Key West - 3820 N Roosevelt Blvd. – 305-294-9968.  
6-7 Independent Dinner  
7-10pm CDSG Orientation and Presentations at VFW Post 3911 – Key West - 3820 N Roosevelt Blvd. – 305-294-9968.

Tuesday, May 7

- 6:30-7 Drive to Yankee Freedom dock in downtown Key West at 100 Grinnell Street. - Attendees have their own rental cars. We recommend parking in the City Parking Garage on Grinnell Street, across the corner from the Ferry Terminal. The garage provides shaded parking for \$40/day. There is no free parking available in Key West.  
7:30 Boarding with Ferry departure at 8am for **Fort Jefferson**. Ferry will provide breakfast snack on-board.  
10:30 Arrive at Fort Jefferson – Self-Guided or 45-minute guided tour of the 3<sup>rd</sup> System Fort at 11am  
11-1pm Box Lunch (provided by ferry company).  
3 Depart from Fort Jefferson  
5:30 Return to Key West  
6-7 Independent Dinner – Annual CDSG Workers Dinner  
7-10pm CDSG Orientation and Presentations at VFW Post 3911 – Key West - 3820 N Roosevelt Blvd. – 305-294-9968.

Wednesday, May 8

- 7-8am Independent Breakfast.  
8-9 Drive to downtown Key West and Fort Zachery Taylor State Park - Attendees have their own rental cars  
9-12 **FORT TAYLOR** 1846-(1947) Currently State Park, Naval Reservation – Access Fee \$6.50  
Seminole 8/12"/M 1904-1943 Located within US Navy Truman Annex. Controlled Access  
Mine Casemate/Switchboard Room & WW2 HECF/HDCP built into Battery Seminole.  
Osceola 2/12"/BC 1900-1944  
Adair 4/ 3"/MP 1901-1920  
#231 2/ 6"/SBC 194? NA Located within US Navy Truman Annex. Controlled Access.  
AMTB #5 2-90mm/F 1943-1946 1 emplaced on Battery Adair.  
12-1 Independent Lunch  
1-2 **West Martello Tower** 1846-1947 Currently Garden Club.  
Inman 2-3"/ P 1906-1946 Inside West Martello Tower  
AMTB #6 2-90 mm/ F 1943-1946 On Beach near West Martello Tower  
unnamed 4-155mm/ PM 1942-1942 Outside West Martello Tower  
2-6 Open Time to visit Key West Sites USCG Cutter Museum nearby.  
6-8 Independent Dinner  
8-10pm No Presentation – Free Time at Mallory Square (at Sunset) and Duvall Street

Thursday, May 9

- 7-8am Independent Breakfast.  
8-8:30 Drive to Key West Airport - Attendees have their own rental cars  
8:30-10 **Salt Ponds Military Reservation** 1942-1970 Currently KW Airport and County Facility  
#232 2-6"/ SBC 1944-1946 Controlled Access.  
Hawk Missile Site Bravo Battery 1962-1979 Controlled Access.  
10-11 **East Martello Tower** 1846-1947 Currently Art and History Museum.  
unnamed 4-155mm/ PM 1943-1944 Outside East Martello Tower  
11-12 Independent Lunch  
12-6 Open Time to visit Key West Sites Two more Hawk Batteries – Boca Chica & Geiger Point – Control Access  
6-8 **CDSG Annual Group Dinner and CDSG Annual Business Meeting** at VFW Post 3911 – Key West  
3820 N Roosevelt Blvd.  
8-10pm Presentations at VFW Post 3911 – Key West - 3820 N Roosevelt Blvd **Conference Ends.**

Friday, May 10

- 7-8am Independent Breakfast and Check out of hotel.  
8 Drive to Tampa or Fly from Key West Airport to Tampa – 400 miles or 7 hours driving or 1.5 hours flight.  
11 Tour the HM69 Nike Missile Base in Homestead, Fl. Need approval from the NPS.  
4 Visit 8-inch Railway Gun memorial at Plant Park, 401 W. Kennedy Blvd. University of Tampa. – Independent visit.  
5pm Registration/Check-in at Quality Inn and Suites Tropicana Field, 1400 34<sup>th</sup> St North, Saint Petersburg.  
6-7 Independent Dinner

Saturday, May 11

7-8am Independent Breakfast.

8-9 Drive to Fort DeSoto on Mullet Key – 10.6 miles or 30 minutes - Attendees have their own rental cars.

9-11 **FORT DE SOTO** 1901-(1928) Currently a County Park (1963) Access Fee - \$5  
 Laidley 8/12" / M 1902-1921 4 mortars Still Emplaced, battery being restored.  
 Bigelow 2/ 3" / MP 1904-1920 Broken up in the gulf.  
 "on display" 2 – 6" / A Guns on display from Ft. Dade, Burchsted

11-12 Charter boat from Fort De Soto Park to Egmont Key – Drive to boat launch at North End of Park.  
 You need to bring your own lunch and water as there are no food or bathrooms on the key  
 Cruise around Egmont Key to see remains of Batteries Burchsted and Page in the water.

12-3 **FORT DADE** 1899-(1928) state park (1989) / MD, MC  
 unnamed 2/ 8" / Rod 1899-1900 guns to McIntosh, Mellon built over this battery  
 McIntosh 2/ 8" / DC 1900-1923 damaged by surf  
 Howard 2/ 6" / DC 190?-1926 damaged by surf erosion  
 Mellon 3/ 3" / MP 1904-1920  
 Mine Casemate, Guard House, Power Plant remain.

3-4 Charter boat from Egmont Key to Fort De Soto Park. **Tour Ends.**

4-5 Return to Quality Inn and Suites Tropicana Field, 1400 34<sup>th</sup> St North, Saint Petersburg or head home.

