

**Update**  
**CDSG Annual Conference**  
**St. Babs XV - April 1997**

St. Babs Annual Conference and Tour, visiting the harbor defenses of New York, will be held in the spring of 1997, from Wednesday, April 2nd, through Sunday, April 6th. We chose this time of year because the heavy foliage in the fall precludes decent photographs of most batteries here, and the extra day was necessitated by the number of forts and the driving times between them. Our schedule:

April 2, Wednesday — Visit Fort Wood (The Statue of Liberty), Fort Gibson (Ellis Island), Castle Clinton (The Battery) on your own. There are tentative plans for a pre-conference tour to Fort Slocum in the morning. Check in at the Staten Island Hotel, the opening meeting will start at around 7 PM.

April 3, Thursday — Fort Hancock, Navesink Reservation, evening program

April 4, Friday — Fort Wadsworth, Fort Jay, evening presentations

April 5, Saturday — Fort Totten, Fort Schuyler, Fort Hamilton, annual dinner

April 6, Sunday — Fort Tilden

The Staten Island Hotel, not far from Wadsworth and the ferry to Manhattan, has arranged a group rate of \$84.00 + tax for a room with either 1 or 2 people in it. **You will need to contact the hotel to make individual reservations for your room: (718) 698-5000, fax (718) 370-1273.** This rate is fixed until December 1996 and includes any days before or after the actual conference time.

If you are planning on attending, please contact me immediately. Call me at (516) 754-6479 or write to: Leo Polaski, 221 Scudder Avenue, Northport, NY 11768-294.5.

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Attention authors! We now have the ability to scan photographic prints, negatives, and slides (either color or B&W) into a grayscale electronic format which can be used in our publications. Please submit all graphics with your articles. We will return originals if requested. Remember! Except for our covers, we reproduce our quarterly publications by photocopying! Scanned images will suffer a little in quality! An illustration of Battery Potter prepared from a scanned slide is on page 18 of the November *CDSG Journal*.

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The CDSG Fund is seeking donations for preservation projects around the United States. Currently the fund is helping the Fort MacArthur Museum obtain and restore a 90 mm fixed gun mount for display and a 25 kW GE generator for their power room.

Checks payable to: CDSG Fund  
 send to: 1560 Somerville Rd.  
 Bel Air, MD 21015-6026

**The CDSG 1996 Annual Conference**  
**St. Babs XIV**  
**The Harbor Defenses of the Delaware**  
 Mark Berhow

Fifty-seven people attended the fourteenth annual CDSG conference (affectionately named for St. Barbara, patron saint of artillerists) at the Shoney's Inn, south east of Newark, Del.

Thursday, September 26: The activities got off to an early start at 1:30 PM with a special session, chaired by Preservation Committee Chairman Nelson Lawry, which discussed preservation issues. Over twenty-five members attended. At 7:00 PM, conference organizers Bill Lewis and Elliot Deutsch welcomed the members and made some opening remarks before introducing the evening's presentations.

Friday, September 27: The day started with a drive some 18 miles to the state ferry dock in Delaware City for a 9:00 AM ride over to Fort Delaware State Park on Pea Patch Island, in the middle of the Delaware River. The ferry operates on a regular schedule from spring to fall to bring visitors to the park. The State of New Jersey is repairing the old military wharf at Fort Mott State Park on the New Jersey shore, opposite Delaware City, so that the Delaware state ferry or a private ferry operator can provide service between Delaware City, Pea Patch Island, and Fort Mott by 1997.

Our group's arrival at the Fort Delaware wharf was marked by a swiftly flowing tide and overcast skies. Four park staff members greeted us, and a tractor-drawn tram carried us along the 1/2-mile roadway to the Third System fort. Pea Patch Island, entirely owned by the state, is designated a historic site and nature preserve. Fort Delaware, an impressive granite pentagon with tower bastions, surrounded by a wet moat, was built between 1848 and 1859. During the Civil War, the post became infamous as a prisoner-of-war camp for Confederates. The post was modernized with five concrete batteries between 1890-1910, including Battery Torbert, a unique three-story battery for three 12-inch disappearing guns inside the Third System fort. Torbert was originally intended for gun-lift mounts, but the plans were changed to accommodate disappearing carriages instead. Four other batteries on the island protected the minefields: Alburtis and Allen, two-gun 3-inch batteries, flanked Torbert on the parapet of the Third System work; Hentig, a two-gun 3-inch battery, and Dodd, a two-gun 4.7-inch battery, were located outside the fort. Alburtis and Allen had unusual ammunition hoists, but the passages to them have been sealed up and were inaccessible. The fort was used as by the military up through World War II, before being turned over to the State of Delaware in the 1950s.

The park staff, including Becky Webb, assistant supervisor, and Robert Steves, interpreter, extended their hospitality during our visit. They opened most areas of

the fort to our group, including the normally off-limits upper and middle stories of the Endicott batteries inside the old fort. Ladders provided access to the second level of Battery Torbert. The state was in the midst of renovating and sandblasting the brickwork and buildings inside the Third System work, and it was great to see such evidence of care and concern. After our tour of Battery Torbert with the park staff, the members of our group struck out on their own to visit the rest of the casemates, walk around the exterior of the work, and visit the two exterior Endicott batteries. Also seen were an 1890s mining casemate and the few fire control structures that remain on the island. Overall, the State of Delaware and the non-profit Fort Delaware Society are doing a fine job with the resources they have to keep Fort Delaware attractive and accessible to the public. The absence of graffiti was especially gratifying. We returned on the ferry at noon and picked up our lunches in Delaware City before crossing the old channel of the Delaware and Chesapeake Canal to Fort DuPont.

In the 1870s, construction was started but never completed on emplacements and magazines for muzzleloaders at this location to cover the southern channel of the Delaware River. Concrete batteries and cantonment buildings were built between 1890-1910, and the reservation was named Fort DuPont. This fort has an early, "Abbot quad," mortar battery (Batteries Rodney and Best); a unique four-gun main battery with 8-inch disappearing guns in the middle two emplacements (Battery Gibson) and 12-inch barbette guns in the two flanking emplacements (Battery Read). A two-gun, 3-inch battery (Samuel Elder) and a two-gun, 5-inch battery (Ritchie, demolished between the world wars) protected the minefield. Fort DuPont was also the location for most of the mine facilities. All of the guns at Fort DuPont were inactivated by the mid-1920s, but the mine facilities and cantonment buildings remained in use through World War II. The fort's buildings have had a variety of state tenants since the 1950s, including the State Emergency Operations Center, located in the mortar battery. Some of the remaining post buildings are currently used as the Governor Bacon Health Center. Much of the rest of the reservation has recently been designated Fort DuPont State Park.

The group assembled in the parking lot near the Delaware State Emergency Operations Center for a thorough tour of the old mortar battery. Emergency Operations Center personnel allowed us into every nook and cranny of the refurbished interior, all four mortar pits, and the battery commanders station on top of the battery. With the gracious permission of the Emergency Operations Center, and the judicious application of a few hand tools, we were able to enter the pristine 1890s brick mine casemate built into the outer left flank of the mortar battery, possibly for the first time in decades. By the same means, and with the same permission, the switchboard room next door and the second mine case-

mate (later a mine plotting room) were opened. The Emergency Operations Center is due to move soon, at which time the mortar battery will be turned over to the state park. Afterwards, the 3-inch battery, the main gun battery, and the 1870s batteries were easily visited by following the nature trails mowed through the wooded preserve area. We also visited and climbed a rare and interesting single-story, steel fire control tower with an open central-lattice support. We returned to the hotel for the annual business meeting at 7:00 PM and more presentations.

Saturday, September 28: This day we toured the rest of the upper Delaware forts. We drove individually to Fort Mifflin, next to the Philadelphia International Airport. Fort Mifflin, originally begun by the British, was manned by colonists to guard the river approach to Philadelphia during the Revolutionary War. It withstood a major siege during October and November of 1777 before the colonists were forced to abandon it after a heroic resistance. After the war, it was rebuilt with a brick facing and some building and magazine improvements. The fort was manned but inactive during the War of 1812 and the Civil War. In the 1870s, brick and earthwork gun and mortar batteries were built just to the south of the old fort, but not completed. The army finally abandoned the fort as a military post in the early 1900s, though it remained in military hands through the 1950s. Now on the National Register, the fort is being maintained and restored by the Fort Mifflin Society. The condition of the fort was impressive, especially considering that it is being maintained by a non-profit volunteer organization. They are currently rebuilding the central structure which was partially destroyed by fire in the 1970s, and they are working on a master landscape plan for the exterior of the park, to include a nature trail around the site of the 1870s batteries. Some members trudged through the woods to find the gun platforms and magazines of the 1870s batteries between the moat and the river. Others assisted the staff in interpreting the fort's early mining casemate. Doretta (Dori) McMunn, executive director, and her staff let us have free reign to visit all parts of the park.

About 10:00 AM we crossed the Delaware River to New Jersey and stopped at the site of Fort Mercer, a Revolutionary War earthwork opposite Fort Mifflin, which was also heavily involved in the battles of 1777. While only the outline of about half of the earthworks remains (the other half was eroded by the river), one can walk around some of the earthworks and read the interpretive signs. We also viewed the decommissioned battleships USS *Iowa* and USS *Wisconsin* across the river in the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard. Just outside Fort Mercer, on the lawn of a VFW Post, some members examined a Hotchkiss type revolving cannon built for the navy by Pratt and Whitney.

After lunch and a one-hour drive, the group gathered at 1:00 PM at Fort Mott State Park, south of Salem,

N.J. Opposite Forts Delaware and DuPont, Finns Point was a burial ground for Confederate prisoners and Union soldiers who died at Fort Delaware. Later, in the 1870s, batteries were begun to complement those being built over on the Delaware side, but they also were halted short of completion. In the 1890s, a line of concrete batteries was built, including three 12-inch disappearing guns (Battery Arnold), three 10-inch disappearing guns (Battery Harker), two 5-inch guns on pedestal mounts (Gregg) to the east, two 3-inch guns in a unique, casemated battery (Edwards), and two 5-inch guns on balanced pillar mounts (Krayenbuhl) above the casemated work at the west of the main gun line. Fort Mott also features a long parados and moat, which protected the rear of the main gun line. After the military left in the 1950s, the reservation was turned over to the State of New Jersey, where it languished in benign neglect until recently.

Under the guidance of past Chief Ranger Bruce Mathews, a restoration and interpretation program was begun in the 1980s that has transformed the park into one of the best preserved and interpreted Endicott forts in the country. Mathews' good start is being continued by Scott Mauger, park supervisor, and Alicia Bjornson, park historian, with an attractive series of signs along an interpretive trail. The state has just stabilized and restored the concrete in Battery Gregg. In addition, the park retains two of the now rare early 1900s iron fire control towers. CDSG members Elliot Deutsch, Doug Gary, and Bob Zink examined the badly rusted bases of the west tower with Paul Taylor and Scott Mauger. They concluded that the "disastrous rusting" only affected the 3/16-inch steel tie plates of the joints and not the main, wrought-iron structural members. Since then, a work order has been issued for the fabrication and installation of new tie plates. The park is heavily used year round, with the picnic facilities and open fields located well away from the gun batteries, a very nice feature. Scott, Alicia, and Paul Taylor, New Jersey supervisor of historic sites, guided us around the park and opened for us nooks and crannies normally closed to the public. Particularly impressive were the relatively intact 1890s-era latrines located in the side of the parados and the three 25-KW General Electric motor-generator sets remaining in the power room of the main gun line. What the local visitors thought of crowds of people lining up to take multiple photos of toilets can only be imagined. From Fort Mott we returned to our hotel for another evening of presentations.

Sunday, September 29: We rose early to check out and make the two-hour drive south to Slaughter Beach, Del. Some left earlier so as to be able to stop by the fire control tower at big Stone Beach, north of Fort Saulsbury. Its steel construction contrasted sharply with the concrete towers of Fort Miles, although they were built at about the same time. We assembled about 10:00 AM at Fort Saulsbury, a small post which contained Batteries

Hall and Haslett, two-gun, 12-inch long-range barbette batteries built 1917-1920. The two batteries are in private hands, and we were hosted by Mr. Gerald Kendzierski, the son of the owner, who lives with his family in a house just behind one of the batteries. He generously opened the batteries, turned on the lights, and let the members of the group examine both batteries inside and out. Battery Hall had been cleared of vegetation for our visit, which was especially nice for viewing the battery commanders stations located on the top. These batteries were unusual because they were not casemated during the 1940s. I was struck by the similarity of the internal magazine layout to that of Batteries Osgood-Farley and Leary-Merriam, the batteries for 14-inch disappearing guns in the Harbor Defenses of Los Angeles, which were built just two years before Hall and Haslett. Saulsbury's batteries are currently used to store boats during the winter months, but the owner is seeking to sell the property. The asking price is reported to be in the neighborhood of \$800,000. A few miles from Fort Saulsbury the group stopped at a war surplus store which had on display a cut-away M4 ground mine similar to one we saw at Fort McKinley, Me.

The group then dispersed for the drive down to Cape Henlopen State Park. The park encompasses most of the old reservation of Fort Miles, site of temporary batteries during World War I and both temporary and permanent batteries built during the 1940s to defend the entrance to Delaware Bay. One 16-inch battery (Smith - BCN 118), one 12-inch battery (unnamed - BCN 519), two 6-inch batteries (Herring - BCN 221 and Hunter - BCN 222), and a 90 mm AMTB battery were built at Fort Miles, while a 6-inch battery (BCN 223) and a 90 mm AMTB battery were built across the bay at Cape May, N.J., in addition to 155 mm GPF batteries on both sides of the bay. After the deactivation of the defenses in the late 1940s, the land was used mostly by the navy. In the late 1970s, parcels were transferred to the state for use as a park. The last two parcels, those around Battery 519 and Battery Smith, were formally transferred in October of this year. These parcels will be used as conference and research centers.

We were met at the park nature center by Lee Jennings, historian of Forts Delaware and DuPont, and by Chris Bennett, nature center manager, our guides around the newly acquired areas. After introductory remarks by Lee, we drove to a parking lot for a short walk up to Battery 519. The 12-inch casemated battery was in good condition, though the casemate gun openings were sealed with concrete block. We then visited Battery Smith, which has been remodeled inside by the navy. One casemate was made into an indoor basketball court, the other into an automotive service bay. Battery Smith and the building behind it are now part of the Joseph Biden Center for Environmental Studies. Although access to the inside of the two casemated batteries was appreciated, the interiors of both have been so remodeled that the original layouts were difficult to discern.

We were able to visit one of the eight reserve magazines located on the reservation, and to visit two of the seven fire control towers in the park; one is a scenic view tower open to the public, the other now monitors the ship traffic in and out of Delaware Bay. The group split up to view the exteriors of Batteries Hunter and Herring, the four Panama mounts, the single 90 mm gun block, the railway gun sites, the other fire control towers in the park, and to look for some of the gun platforms now in the surf.

The conference ended with a gathering of about half the total attendees for an informal dinner followed by historic video tapes and reminiscing about the high points of the conference in the lobby of the Beacon Motel. Some attendees visited Cape May to look at Battery 223, which now stands fully exposed on its pilings out in the Atlantic Ocean, and a few more fire control towers on the New Jersey side of the bay. During the evening presentations, Bob Zink showed slides he had made in the 1970s of Battery 223, which showed the structure hundreds of feet from the surf.

We had an excellent meeting and things went smoothly. Although the weather was frequently threatening, the only significant rain was during Saturday night. Transportation was entirely by personal auto, of which there was no shortage. Convoy travel was generally unnecessary, as the directions were relatively simple and the sites were not difficult to locate. One of the nice things about visiting a smaller harbor defense area like the Delaware is that we had a slower pace and got to spend more time at each site. Many thanks must go to Conference Chairman Bill Lewis and his able assistant Elliot Deutsch for making the contacts, arranging the meeting details, and putting together the hefty handout. Special thanks go out to all the staffs of the parks we visited: Fort Delaware, Fort DuPont, and Cape Henlopen in Delaware, and Fort Mott State Park in New Jersey. Also thanks to the Fort Mifflin Historical Society for their tour of Fort Mifflin, to Mr. Kendzierski for welcoming us to his family's property at Fort Saulsbury, and to the staff at the Delaware State Emergency Operations Center at Fort DuPont for opening all their facilities.

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### **CDSG 1996 Annual Meeting Hosts**

Olde Fort Mifflin Historical Society, Inc.  
Fort Mifflin Road  
Philadelphia, PA 19153  
(215) 492-1881  
Dori McMunn, Executive Director

Fort Mott State Park  
RD #3, Box 543  
Salem, NJ 08079  
609-935-3218  
Scott Mauger, park supervisor  
Alicia Bjornson, historic preservation specialist

Paul Taylor, supervisor of historic sites  
State Park Service  
501 E. State Street CN 404  
Trenton, NJ 08625

Fort Delaware State Park  
Fort DuPont State Park  
P.O. Box 170  
Delaware City, DE 19706  
302-834-7941  
Bill Seyfert, park supervisor  
Becky Webb, assistant supervisor  
Lee Jennings, historian  
Robert Steves, interpreter

Fort Delaware Society  
P.O. Box 553  
Delaware City, DE 19706  
(302) 834-1630  
<http://www.del.net/org/fort>

Delaware Emergency Management Agency  
PO Box 527  
Delaware City, DE 19706  
(302) 834-4531  
(800) 292-9588  
John (Sean) P. Mulhern, Director  
Ron Gough, Public Information Officer  
Joseph E. Wessels, Senior Planner

Cape Henlopen State Park  
42 Cape Henlopen Drive  
Lewes, DE 19958  
302-645-8983  
Jim Graybeal, supervisor  
Chris Bennett, nature center manager

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### **Photos Needed!**

Submissions of photographs are urgently needed for the cover illustrations for next year's *CDSG Journals*. The covers for all four issues are printed in advance and will be prepared within the next two months. If you have any prints you would like to submit please contact the editor immediately.

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Elliot Deutsch offers narrated VHS videos of CDSG tours with detailed attention to arms, materiel, and structures of the coast defenses visited. See last issue of the the CDSG Newsletter for a complete catalog or contact Elliot.

### **Now Available!!**

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