



The Bay Run



Newsletter of
The Delaware Bay
Lighthouse Keepers
and Friends Association, Inc.

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"Our mission is to preserve the history of the
Delaware Bay and River Lighthouses, Lightships and their Keepers"

General George Gordon Meade

George Gordon Meade was born in 1815 in Cadiz, Spain, the 8th of 10 children. The Meade family was living in the United States when his father passed away; George was 12. Attending various schools in the Philadelphia area, Meade graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1835 in the top third of his class. He became a well-known figure in the military, taking part and in charge of several battles during his lifetime.

In 1843 he was assigned to work designing and overseeing the construction of various lighthouses. One of his first assignments was the lighthouse on Brandywine Shoal located in the Delaware Bay. In 1852 the Topographical Corps established the United States Lighthouse Board. Meade was appointed to the 7th District engineers with responsibilities in Florida where he led the construction of Sand Key Light in Key West, Jupiter Inlet Light in the Jupiter locale and Sombrero Key Light in the Florida Keys. He was then reassigned to the 4th District in New Jersey and Delaware, where he supervised the design and construction of Barnegat, Absecon and Cape May Lights. He also designed a hydraulic lamp used in several American lighthouses. Meade was next assigned to the Great Lakes Survey where he served until the outbreak of the Civil War.

During the Civil War, General Meade led the Union troops in battles during the Maryland Campaign, and the battles of Fredericksburg, Richmond, Petersburg and Chancellorsville in Virginia to name a few. President Lincoln appointed him to assume command of the Grand Union Army of the Potomac. General Meade is best known for defeating General Robert E. Lee and the



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Angelo S. Rigazio, Jr.



Greetings from the President’s Desk. As we move through 2026, I find myself reflecting on the journey that has brought me here. It is truly remarkable to realize that fifty-two years have gone by since I was discharged from the United States Coast Guard. Reaching this milestone fills me with immense gratitude and pride for the experiences and memories I carry from my years of service.

I often think back to my shipmates and the various duty stations where I served during my four years in the Coast Guard. Of all those assignments, serving as a lighthouse keeper on Harbor of Refuge in 1972 and 1973 remains the most memorable. My time at this station ended when the lighthouse became fully automated in 1973. Today, every lighthouse in the Delaware Bay operates automatically, signaling the closure of an era for lighthouse keepers.

Looking ahead in 2026, we are organizing two lighthouse cruises to the Delaware Bay Lights. The dates arranged with Captain Mike Rothman of the Bonanza II are July 25 and August 22. “Cruise News” will share additional details (see Page 6).

The winter weather in our hometown has certainly been noteworthy over the past few months. We experienced a blizzard that brought twenty inches of snow, followed by temperatures reaching eighty degrees, and then more snow. It feels as though the wind here never takes a break.

Our next meeting scheduled for May 16 at Fort Mott State Park in Pennsville, New Jersey promises to be both educational and enjoyable for all. Come out, join us; we hope to see you there.

Until next time, keep the lights shining! *Angelo*

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*The Delaware Bay Lighthouse Keepers and Friends Association, Inc. (DBLHKFA)
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SPRING MEETING TO BE HELD AT FORT MOTT STATE PARK

by Rodney W. Mulligan, Interim Vice President

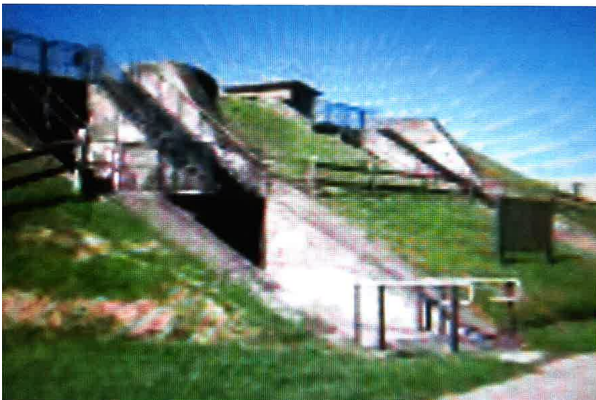
Our spring meeting will be held at Fort Mott State Park, 454 Fort Mott Road, Pennsville, NJ 08070 (856-935-3218) on Saturday, May 16. A private pavilion (#2) has been reserved. Nearby is a recreation area including a playground for children, parking and restrooms. Located in the shadow of the Fort Mott rear-range light, you are welcome to visit the light at your own discretion, but it is not open for climbing at this time. A Fort Mott Family Fun Day has been scheduled for visitors. Our meeting will begin at 11 AM, lunch (brown bag) at Noon and the guest speaker at 1 PM. Our speaker will be Kate Wyatt from the Cape May Historical Association; her topic, "Why History Matters". Member Mark Allen will be giving a background on the history of Fort Mott.

Fort Mott is located along the Delaware River in Pennsville, NJ. The Fort was the key to the Harbor Defense of the Delaware, a three-fort defense system designed for the Delaware River. Making up the three-fort defense system are Fort Delaware on Pea Patch Island, Fort DuPont in Delaware City and Fort Mott in Pennsville, NJ. Fort Mott, was active during the Spanish-American War and World War I. Troops were stationed there from 1897 – 1922.

Adjacent to Fort Mott is historic Finn's Point where one can tour a US National Civil War cemetery. There are 2,436 Confederate soldiers buried in a common grave near the large monument commemorating the war. 135 Union soldiers are also buried there. The area covers 4.6 acres and was placed on the National Registry of Historic Places in 1978. In 1997, Andrew Cunnann, the killer of the fashion designer, Gianni Versace, killed the groundskeeper at Finn's Point and stole his truck.

Visit the historic battery guns and check out the prison cells built into the surrounding hills of Fort Mott. There is also a seasonal ferry that takes passengers from Fort Mott to historic Fort Delaware for a fee.

Come join us for an interesting and informative afternoon. Meeting at 11 PM, lunch at picnic grounds at Noon (brown bag), guest speaker at 1. You are free to wander around and enjoy these historic grounds.



FEATURED ARTICLE

continued

southern troops at the battle in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

General George Gordon Meade was married and the father of seven children. He died November 6, 1872. During his lifetime, he received many awards and honors, one of which was an honorary Doctorate of Law degree from Harvard University. General Meade has been memorialized with statues erected in several states including one honoring him at Gettysburg and another in Philadelphia.



SPRING MEETING

continued



AMERICA'S 250TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

This year our country is celebrating the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Celebrations will be held at Mount Vernon and Monticello in Virginia, the Smithsonian in Washington, DC, in the historic city of Philadelphia, PA; several celebrations will be held in other cities throughout the United States. Philadelphia's WAWA "Welcome to America" encourages all Americans to reflect on our country's journey. Philadelphia is also offering "52 weeks of 'firsts'" – the events that took place first in our nation; events such as inventions, traditions and historical events that began in Philadelphia. Among these events are the Mummers Parade, the Thanksgiving Parade, the opening of the first zoo, the first volunteer fire company, the first post office, and the first free public library (Thanks to Ben Franklin), to mention a few. Monies have been allocated to various neighborhoods throughout Philadelphia enabling the neighborhoods to be decorated for the celebration. Check all of this on the Philafirst web site.

The main celebrations begin on July 4, 2026. During the Maritime Celebration Sail250, tall ships will be visiting cities on the East Coast. There will be celebrations and educational programs in Independence Hall in Philadelphia where the Declaration of Independence was signed plus other celebrations in Washington, DC and in Disney Parks. A national volunteer initiative is planned and is aiming to make 2026 the largest year of service in American history. Philadelphia is the country's first World Heritage City where our Forefathers met, discussed, debated and formed a new country and its "law of the land" – our Constitution.

The US Mint is releasing new designs for the dime, quarter and half dollars to commemorate the anniversary.

The USS New Jersey, the most decorated battleship in the history of the Navy, will be part of this celebration. The battleship participated in battles in WWII, Korea, Vietnam and was part of the Cold War and the conflicts in the Middle East. The New Jersey was launched on the first anniversary of the bombing of Pearl Harbor. It is currently docked in Camden, NJ and is available for tours, so, if you are in the area, stop by and tour this historic ship.

AMERICA'S SYMBOLS

THE FLAG: The Continental Congress adopted the first "Stars and Strips" on June 14, 1777. The first flag featured 13 stars and 13 stripes honoring the 13 original colonies. With each state admitted, another star was added resulting in the current 50-star version. The flag colors are designated red for valor, white for purity and blue for vigilance. Stars symbolize the number of states. Legend states that Betsy Ross of Philadelphia sewed the first flag in 1776. Francis Hopkins, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, is often credited for the flag's design. "Old Glory," to which the flag is often referred, was a nickname given to the flag by Capt. William Driver. The current 50-star flag was adopted by Congress on July 4, 1960.

THE EAGLE: The eagle was designated as a national symbol in 1782. It is symbolic of strength, freedom and independence.

THE NATIONAL ANTHYM: The Star-Spangled Banner was adopted by Congress in 1931.

THE STATUE OF LIBERTY was created in France and delivered to the United States in 1886. The statue, a female, depicts Libertus, the Roman Goddess of Freedom. The tablet she is holding is inscribed with the date of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. The Statue of Liberty is often the first thing seen by immigrants coming to America. The inscription on the pedestal was written by Emma Lazarus.

THE LIBERTY BELL: Cast in 1752, the Bell is famous for the crack developed in the early 19th Century. It proclaims, "liberty throughout all the land and unto all the inhabitants thereof". The Liberty Bell is housed in the Liberty Bell Center in Philadelphia. (NOTE: The Liberty Bell is struck on Martin Luther King, Jr's birthday each year as requested by his wife, Coretta Scott King.)

INDEPENDENCE HALL is known as the birthplace of the United States. This is where the Declaration of Independence was adopted in 1776 and the US Constitution drafted and signed in 1787. It is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site and part of the Independence National Historic Park symbolizing America's democracy and freedom. The Declaration of Independence was adopted signed by members of the 2nd Continental Congress and symbolized self-government.

CARPENTER'S HALL is known as the "Birthplace of Liberty" the meeting place for the 1st Continental Congress in 1774. It is named after the Carpenter Corporation, the oldest Craft Guild Corporation Company in the country.

CRUISE NEWS 2026

Cruises to the Lighthouses of the Delaware Bay have been scheduled for Saturday, July 25 and Saturday, August 22 both leaving the dock at 3 PM. The 4 hour SUNSET CRUISE (July 25), cruises to Ship John Shoal Light returning from north in the bay. The cruise scheduled for Saturday, August 22, will be going south in the bay to Brandywine Light. These narrated cruises take place aboard the USCG approved Bonanza II out of the NJ State Marina (Higbee's –slip #5), Fortescue, NJ, 08321. RESERVE SOON – BRING A RELATIVE, FRIEND, AND/OR NEIGHBOR. THESE CRUISES FILL UP QUICKLY!! (NOTE: Fortescue is “The Weakfish Capital of the World”.) Check out this quaint fishing village on the Delaware Bay. PLEASE NOTE..WE LEAVE THE DOCK AT 3 PM. (We must have 30 people sign up for the cruise in order to pay for the fuel.)

The cost for the cruises is \$55 for adults and \$25 for children 5 - 12 years of age. Passengers must be at the dock at least one half hour before departure time. Lighthouses visited are: Miah Maull, Cross Ledge, Elbow of Cross Ledge, Fourteen Foot Bank and either Brandywine or Ship John. You are asked to bring bug spray (just in case), a jacket and a box lunch if you wish. Soda and water are provided on board. Delaware Bay merchandise will be on sale; cash or checks are accepted.

For reservations please contact: Theresa or Steve Rhoades (cell) 609-364-8747 landline 856-697-4144 e-mail: terri289@hotmail.com Checks (payable to DBLHKFA) are NOT deposited until after the cruise; if the cruise is cancelled due to inclement weather, your check will be returned. We must have a home & cell phone number for you in case of a cancellation OR you can call the number listed above. Refunds WILL NOT be made if you DO NOT let us know you WILL NOT be there. Payment is due 2 weeks BEFORE the cruise, checks can be mailed to: Maxine Mulligan, Treasurer, 1049 Simca Terrace, Vineland, NJ 08360.











The cruise is narrated by our President, Angelo Rigazio, a former member of the coast guard and the last keeper on Harbor of Refuge Light. There are also other members of our organization and members of the crew aboard to answer your questions. Background information on the Delaware Bay and the history of each lighthouse will be given. Spend some time on the historic Delaware Bay viewing the lighthouses...excellent “photo ops”. Come join us for a relaxing, enjoyable time and watch the beautiful sunset on the Bay. These lighthouses will NOT be there forever. CHECK THEM OUT NOW!!!

THE DELAWARE BAY LIGHTHOUSE KEEPERS & FRIENDS ASSOCIATION, INC.



HONORING OUR VETERANS ON MEMORIAL DAY 2026

Things you never knew about the Viet Nam Wall:

-  There are 58,390 names now listed on that polished black wall, including those added in 2010. (Note: There may be more as of the current date.)
-  The names are arranged in the order in which they were taken from us by date and within each date, the names are alphabetized.
-  The first known casualty was Richard B. Fitzgibbon of North Weymouth, Mass., listed by the US Department of Defense as having been killed on June 8, 1956. His name is listed on the Wall with that of his son, Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Richard B. Fitzgibbon III, who was killed on September 7, 1965.
-  There are three sets of fathers and sons on the Wall. 31 sets of brothers are listed.
-  39,996 on the Wall were just 22 or younger. 8,283 were just 19 years old. The largest age group, 33,103 were 18 years old. 12 soldiers on the Wall were 17 years old; 8 soldiers were 16. One soldier, PFC Dan Bullock was 15.
-  997 soldiers were killed on their first day in Vietnam. 1,448 soldiers were killed on the last day in Vietnam.
-  54 soldiers attended Thomas Edison High School in Philadelphia.
-  8 women are on the Wall. They were nurses.
-  West Virginia had the highest casualty rate per capita in the nation. There are 711 West Virginians' names on the Wall.
-  The most casualty deaths for a single day were on January 31, 1966 when there were 245 deaths. The most casualty deaths for a single month were in May of 1968 – 2,415.

For most Americans who read this they will only see the numbers that the Vietnam Wall created. To those of us who survived the war, and to the families of those who did not, we see the faces, we feel the pain that these numbers created. We are, until we too pass away, haunted with these numbers, because they were our friends, fathers, husbands, wives, sons and daughters. There are no noble wars, just noble warriors.



Former President Ronald Reagan stated: “Some people live an entire lifetime and wonder if they have ever made a difference in the world. A veteran does not have that problem.”

(Note: The information for the Vietnam Wall was taken from the Internet.)

To those families who lost family members in any military altercation including the current Iran war, we extend our sincere condolences on this Memorial Day.

WINTER WONDERLAND IN SOUTH JERSEY

