

# Historic Context Recommendation Five Year Report

Main Entrance mid-1940s *(from the Gateway NRA Photographic Collection)*



Main Entrance early-1930s *(from the Gateway NRA Photographic Collection)*



# Historic Context

The purpose of this document is to:

- a) Outline the historic context recommendation as it should be applied to day
- b) Outline the actions already taken by NPS regarding implementing the recommendation(s)
- c) Outline recommended actions required to meet the spirit and intent of the recommendation

TWO Reasons this matters:

## Lease Requirements:

Potential lease holders are being held to the Secretary's Standards for Historic Preservation. This becomes problematic if at the same time the NPS position to the public is essentially silent on the landmark status of the peninsula and the properties available for lease.



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
THE U.S. ARMY CENTER OF MILITARY HISTORY  
102 4TH AVENUE  
FORT LESLEY J. McNAIR, DC 20319-5060

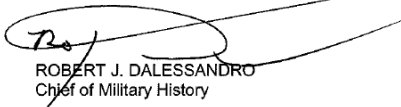
APR 10 2013

Chief of Military History

MEMORANDUM FOR Fort Hancock 21st Century Federal Advisory Committee and the Superintendent, Gateway National Recreation Area, ATTN: Linda Canzanelli, 210 New York Avenue, Staten Island, New York 10305

SUBJECT: Fort Hancock and Sandy Hook, New Jersey Naming Convention

1. The Sandy Hook Unit of Gateway National Recreational Area includes property and structures that are significant to the history of the United States Army. The entire unit while under Army control was officially designated "Fort Hancock". I encourage the Federal Advisory Committee to include a recommendation to the National Park Service to add Fort Hancock to the Sandy Hook unit's name, i.e., Fort Hancock-Sandy Hook. Given the changes brought on by Super-Storm Sandy, the timing for making this name change is most appropriate.
2. The U.S. Army had a presence within the current park's boundaries from the earliest days of the republic, and continuously from the Civil War through the late-Cold War. Extant structures provide evidence of the Army's role in defending the nation's seacoast with Third System and Endicott System fortifications and in protecting our airspace with anti-aircraft guns and Nike missiles. The installation was also a cradle for Army technological development as the location of the Ordnance Proving Ground from 1874 to 1919. Finally, the extant cultural resources of the main post cantonment provide a glimpse of life in a garrison community during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.
3. Reflecting the many connections between the Army's historical community and the National Park Service, including our mutual interest in preserving historical resources and educating the public about our nation's past, I request your favorable consideration to recommend to the National Park Service to use the actual Army name for the installation, "Fort Hancock", in the naming of the Sandy Hook unit.

  
ROBERT J. DALESSANDRO  
Chief of Military History

# Historic Context Recommendation

The Committee recommendation was sent to NPS via email on 14 August 2013.

The recommendation essentially outlined the following regarding documents, maps and signage:

## Establish the theme:

- 1) Sandy Hook Peninsula is the Fort Hancock and Sandy Hook Proving Ground National Historic Landmark.
- 2) Nest the post area as a subset of the larger Fort Hancock and Landmark (the entire peninsula).

## Apply the theme:

- 1) Documents (including fliers, advertisements, handouts, interpretive and operational documents)
- 2) Maps
- 3) Signs

The one major change from the recommendation was substituting the term "Historic Post" for "Historic District". The later term was overwritten by the 1982 landmark designation.

The recommendation did address other issues (such as the post museum), however they are beyond the focus of this review.

# Summary of Selected NPS Updates

Gateway Web Page updates began in 2015 with most major updates completed by 2018. Two websites remain to be fully updated; (a) Sandy Hook Chapel; (b) film and photography permitting.

The Historic Post tear sheet map updated in 2015 with NHL designation and placed on the Gateway web site. It should be printed hard copy once existing stocks are exhausted which is expected to be around 2020.

The Historic Post and Sandy Hook "Base Maps" were updated with NHL designation and a statement that the NHL included the entire peninsula and have been available on the Gateway web site since mid-2016. Recently NPS changed from PDF format to JPG format. While JPG may be a new requirement, the JPG formats are difficult to zoom or print in large format.

The following historic handouts were updated in early to mid 2018 with the NHL designation prominently in the black header and the Sandy Hook Unit & GATE designations significantly subordinated.

- A) Defenses of Sandy Hook
- B) Fort Hancock: A Small Army Town
- C) Woman's Army Corps at Sandy Hook
- D) Lifesavers of Sandy Hook
- E) The Sandy Hook Light House

There are only a few brochures that require digital updating at this point. It will be a few years before the supply of hard copy versions are exhausted and replaced.

The digital versions of the special use permit application and the special use permit have been updated but are not yet on the web.



# Selected Updates - Fliers

Beginning in June 2018, event advertisement fliers began distribution electronically and in hard copy with the recommended black header as shown below.

The “Going Bunkers” flier was published on Facebook around 15 July using the black header with NHL designation. The hard copy flier was the old header.

The “Founders Day” flier was published on Facebook the week of 15 August and the hard copy in the Kiosk matched the digital flier. The header has been updated to add the term “Unit” to Sandy Hook.



**Sandy Hook**  
Fort Hancock and Sandy Hook Proving Ground National Historic Landmark

Gateway National Recreation Area  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

# GOING BUNKERS

## Battery Mills!

Summer 2018

Sunday, 6/24  
Sunday, 7/15  
6pm - 7:30pm

Explore and tour one of two of Fort Hancock's long range and well-hidden gun batteries that went into use shortly after WWI through WWII.

Meet park staff at the old Visitor Center Parking Lot between Parking Lot D and Lot E, then car caravan to Battery Mills. Please wear comfortable walking shoes, and bring a flashlight and insect repellent.

*Free, call (732) 872-5970 to make reservations.*



**Sandy Hook Unit**  
Fort Hancock and Sandy Hook Proving Ground National Historic Landmark

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
Gateway National Recreation Area

# FOUNDER'S DAY

Saturday,  
August 25th

Sandy Hook  
Visitor Center

10:00 am - 3:00 pm

- fun games and activities
- prizes
- light refreshments

# Sandy Hook Main Entrance Sign

In 2016 the NPS updated the primary signs for the main entrance to the park and for the Historic Post. These signs are directly in alignment with the committee recommendation.

## Old Entrance Sign



## New Entrance Sign





## Post Area Sign

This sign is near Guardian Park as one enters the post area. It is in a very effective location as most all visitors other than those arriving at the pier will arrive passing this location. The sign is prominent and easy to read.

### Old Post Sign



### New Post Sign



# New Information Signs

## *The Basic Sign*

Beginning in 2017, approximately ten new informational signs were installed across Sandy Hook beginning with a large sign just before the entrance sign. Each sign has the same map on the left side. On the right side of the sign is a narrative description of the subject area of the sign.

### KEY POINTS ON ALIGNMENT WITH COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS:

- A) The map on each sign applies the “Fort Hancock Historic Post” designation as recommended by the committee in 2013.
- B) All signs lack mention of the Fort Hancock and Sandy Hook Proving Ground National Historic Landmark District.
- C) All signs lack mention that the NHL encompasses the entire peninsula.
- D) The “Black Header” used is different from the recommended header construct that is used in most all other documents, maps and materials published by the Sandy Hook Unit.

**Gateway National Recreation Area**

**Explore Gateway National Recreation Area**

*Experience all that Gateway has to offer.*

**Welcome to Gateway National Recreation Area**

Welcome to Gateway National Recreation Area. Sandy Hook is a barrier beach peninsula at the northern end of the New Jersey Shore. Its location at the entrance to New York Harbor assured Sandy Hook's importance for coastal and harbor defense. For more than 200 years most of the peninsula has been a federal reservation. This military presence shaped both Sandy Hook's history and assured its preservation as open space. During the summer months, visitors enjoy swimming and sunbathing on the beach. Sandy Hook is open throughout the year, offering opportunities for birding, fishing, hiking, or discovering the park's natural resources and historic sites, including America's oldest lighthouse.



# RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE ALIGNMENT

- A) Continue to update all web pages and working documents to conform to the Committee recommendations within the next eight months.
- B) Develop and install several Information Signs at the entrance to the park, the historic post area and major beach parking areas that outline the Landmark, clearly state that it encompasses the entire peninsula (including USCG property), and identifies several "Fundamental Resources". The signs should be in locations that are heavily visited and enable the bulk of visitors to see this information. Apply the recommended header construct.
- C) Develop an internal procedure to ensure alignment with the 2013 recommendations.
- D) Develop a handout that addresses the following as a minimum:
  - 1) The entire Sandy Hook Peninsula (including USCG Station Sandy Hook) was designated the Fort Hancock and Sandy Hook Proving Ground National Historic Landmark District in 1982.
  - 2) Clearly states that the Sandy Hook Light House and Fort Hancock and Sandy Hook Proving Ground National Historic Landmark are the only National Historic Landmarks in Gateway.
  - 3) The Fort Hancock Historic Post is a subset of the greater Fort Hancock and is similar to the former "historic district". It encompasses three posts (Engineer, Proving Ground, and Coast Artillery). There were a total of 7 posts within Fort Hancock - all but the historic post area being temporary posts.
  - 4) The Sandy Hook Proving Ground operated from 1874 to 1919 within the boundaries of Fort Hancock. Though it was a separate installation with a separate national level mission, it depended upon Fort Hancock for essential services. This type of relationship continues with USCG Station Sandy Hook.
  - 5) The USCG Station was transferred to the Secretary of the Treasury in 1950. Current landholder is Secretary of Homeland Security.
  - 6) Fort Hancock in its entirety was closed and transferred from Secretary of the Army to the Secretary of Interior in 1975.

# BACKUP INFORMATION

# 2013 Historic Context Recommendation

## Historic Context Working Group Recommendations as submitted on 14 August 2013

The Committee and NPS should emphasize the Fort Hancock National Historic Landmark with the Sandy Hook Unit in common NPS public documentation and maps for clarity

Apply the Fort Hancock National Historic Landmark designation to frame the greater Sandy Hook Unit

Apply the Historic District designation to frame the “main post” section of Fort Hancock as a subset of the greater “Fort Hancock National Landmark and Sandy Hook Unit of Gateway National Recreation Area”

Emphasize Fort Hancock Historic District (FHHD) specifically as a “small town” that supported the overall installation (the “Landmark”) and that it offers the same “life support, education, cultural and recreation opportunities” to a renewed public presence as it did during its service to the Army

2. The Committee should reflect the Historic Landmark and Historic District designations in all future products (such as the REFI) to highlight the high significance (**Top 3% of Historic Register Sites**) and importance of preservation and reuse, highlighting how the “District” is a subset of and supports the larger “Landmark” and garners its importance from the overall “Landmark” designation.

3. NPS should ensure both the National Historic District and the National Historic Landmark designations are correctly nested and identified on all maps, documents and signs describing Sandy Hook.

NPS create a brochure to synthesize the history of Sandy Hook and the Historic Landmark (Fort Hancock) and develop a plan for a broad dissemination to inform the public of the rich history so contained and legal protection mandates

4. NPS should ensure the General Management Plan (GMP) fully describes and ascribes the Fort Hancock and Sandy Hook Proving Ground National Landmark status to the entirety of the Sandy Hook Unit.

5. The NPS should identify the significance of the Historic Landmark status when building and presenting President’s Budget justification material for congress for one time capital investment in restoration of historic structures within the Committee’s purview.

6. NPS should reinstate an appropriate museum within the Fort Hancock Historic District (FHHD) that supports the original intent of the enabling legislation (interpretation of Sandy Hook’s history) and the intent of the former Army/NPS facility on main post Fort Hancock (i.e., FHHD).

**(subparagraphs eliminated)**