



Photo credit: Michal Venera

Hidden Gem at the Golden Gate

Fort Baker covers approximately 335 acres set in and around a cove at the north side of the Golden Gate. This beautiful historic area includes a core zone of 91 acres surrounding a parade ground, protecting a collection of over two dozen historic military buildings from the early 1900s. Partners have added new eco-friendly and architecturally compatible buildings amongst the historic buildings to create program space and lodging. The main post is fronted by Horseshoe Cove, and over a mile of rocky bay shoreline. The surrounding open space and hillsides, which contain habitat for the endangered mission blue butterfly, contribute to the site's significance. An extensive trail system invites exploration. With less fog and warmer temperatures than other coastal sites, Fort Baker offers quiet solitude in a spectacular setting.

Fort Baker's Early History

The Coast Miwok tribe inhabited this area prior to exploration and settlement by Europeans. Wetlands, marshes and streams provided the Indigenous peoples resources for daily life. The adjacent land often served as seasonal encampments or villages. The area's recorded history

began in 1775, when the Spanish vessel *San Carlos*, under the command of Juan Manuel de Ayala, entered San Francisco Bay. At the end of the Mexican War in 1848, this area—part of William Antonio Richardson's vast Rancho Sausalito—began to be sold to real estate speculators.

The Military Years

In 1866, the United States government acquired this site and created a military reservation along the Marin Headlands to safeguard San Francisco Bay. Relatively simple earthwork gun batteries were constructed in the 1870s. One of these, Battery Cavallo, is a fine example of seacoast fortifications of that period.

In the 1890's, Fort Baker was formally established and massive concrete batteries with the latest in long range guns were built along the bluffs. By 1910, the post was essentially completed. The fort included eleven Colonial Revival-style officer's homes, barracks, and community buildings for the troops, laid out in a curve around a grassy parade ground with plantings of pepper, elm and eucalyptus trees to reduce wind and dust.

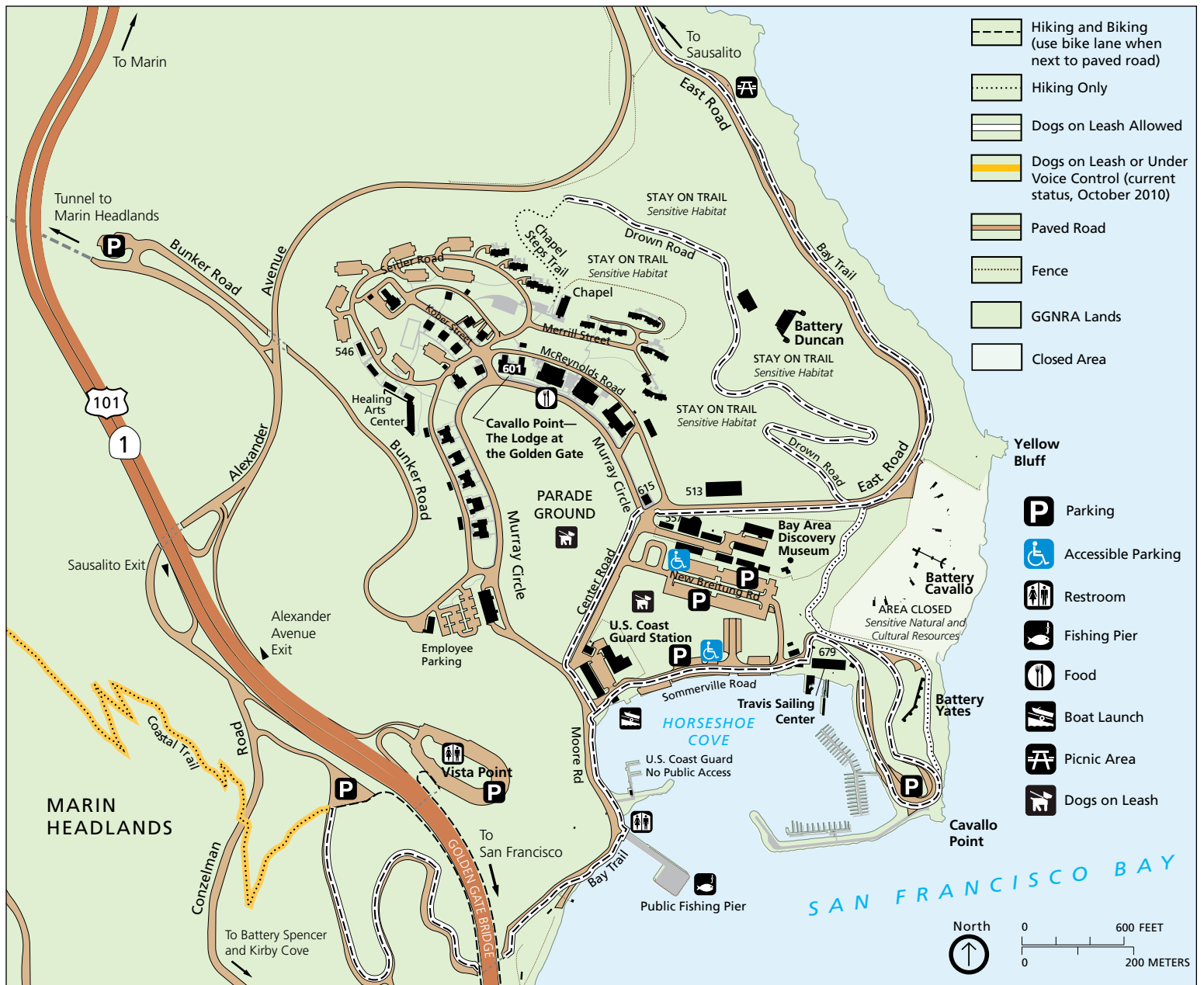
After World War I, most of the long-range guns were removed, and the post became inactive. But as world tensions increased in the 1930s, Fort Baker was reactivated as a underwater mine depot. Over three hundred mines guarded the bay entrance during World War II, tended by the Army's "navy" of mine vessels berthed

at Fort Baker. The guns of Battery Yates were manned against surprise raids.

In the Cold War years, Fort Baker was used to train Army Reserve troops, and served as headquarters for the anti-aircraft missile units that defended the Bay Area. With the end of the Cold War in the 1970s, the Army's presence at the historic post was significantly reduced.



Fort Baker is named for Edward Dickenson Baker, a former U.S. Senator from Oregon active in California politics in the 1850s. Baker lost his life while leading a regiment of Union troops in the Civil War. He and his wife are buried in the San Francisco National Cemetery at the Presidio.



Fort Baker Today

This former Army site has been reborn as part of a national park; the last of the dramatic “post to park” conversions that have created the Golden Gate National Parks. Hiking, fishing, wildlife viewing, and spectacular vistas of the Golden Gate and the Marin Headlands await visitors to Fort Baker.

Several partners also provide recreational and educational opportunities, and visitor amenities at Fort Baker.

A self-guided cell phone tour and walking tours of the historic parade ground and Horseshoe Cove are available at the Marin Headlands Visitor Center, the Bay Area Discovery Museum, and at Cavallo Point—the Lodge at the Golden Gate. They are also available online at:

www.nps.gov/goga/planyourvisit/fort-baker.htm

■ Since 1991, the **Bay Area Discovery Museum** has provided outstanding educational programs and activities for children 6 months to 8 years old.

Information 415-339-3900
www.badm.org

■ The **Travis Sailing Center** located on the east side of Horseshoe Cove, offers sailing instruction and boat rentals.

Information 415-332-2319

■ The most dramatic recent change is evident in the historic and contemporary buildings surrounding and overlooking Murray Circle and the historic parade ground. **Cavallo Point—The Lodge at the Golden Gate**, the newest lodge in the National Park System, welcomes visitors for a unique overnight stay in one of 68 historic and 74 contemporary guest rooms. The Lodge also has a restaurant, bar, meeting rooms and Healing Arts Center. The Lodge was constructed to the highest standards of environmental sustainability.

Information 415-339-4700
www.cavallopoint.com



Download the NPS mobile app. Take a tour of Fort Baker or learn about the park.

www.nps.gov/goga/gogaapp.htm