

The MONTEBELLO Voice

an independent gazette

if not now, when?

June 2, 2022



A brief note regarding Montebello's Emergency Reserves

By Rolf Dietrich

You may recall my March 2022 article in the *Times of Montebello*, "Montebello is Conducting our Triennial Reserve Study." In early May I submitted a follow-on article entitled, "Emergency Reserves Reflect Montebello's Management of Risk." The article was in the queue for the June issue, but the *Times* has decided to defer publishing it. Until they do, in the interest of transparency and keeping people informed, I thought I'd provide the main points of the article to the readers of the *Voice*. The executive summary is:

Our Repair and Replacement (R&R) Reserves and Purchaser Reserves serve two main purposes. Their principal purpose is to provide funding for planned projects that are outlined in our Reserve Schedule (developed as part of our triennial *Reserve Study*). The second main purpose is to mitigate the financial risks to our owners in the event of a costly unplanned event.

Since 2012, we have had a policy that the value of the sum of R&R and Purchaser Reserves would be kept

above \$4 million. That \$4 million is our "Emergency Reserves," which ensure we have the funds readily available to do the immediate actions necessary to deal with an unexpected event. That approach helps mitigate financial risk to our owners who might otherwise need to provide the funds needed for those immediate actions.

In September 2021 the Board evaluated the Emergency Reserve policy and renewed it when we combined 5 older Administrative Resolutions (ARs) into AR-174, *Reserve Planning and Execution*. Even though ten years had passed, we kept the \$4 million value for Emergency Reserves.

I agreed to do some research to find if \$4 million is the right value today. The best expert recommendation I found was from Facility Engineering Associates, the company that does our Reserve Studies. They recommend that we not allow our reserves to drop below 10% of our "Reserve Component Value," the total value of the common elements for which the reserves are used to conduct repairs and replacements. They calculate our Reserve Compo-

nent Value for 2022 at a bit over \$50 million, so the professionals recommend we keep at least \$5 million in reserves this year – and increase it in future years.

Interestingly, it turns out that \$4 million in 2012 dollars, adjusted for inflation, is also about \$5 million now.

Those are the facts. Now for my opinion. I believe that increasing the value of our Emergency Reserves to 10% of our Reserve Component Value is prudent and in the best financial interests of our owners – but probably should be done incrementally over the course of several years to avoid undue short-term impact on our owners.

If this brief note piqued your interest, I recommend you read the full article (with graphic) when it is published in the *Times*. 📖

Cover photos of Memorial Day Picnic by Dian McDonald

We lost our sweet Bonnie

We had to put our beautiful Westie, Bonnie (aka Bon O'Lani), to sleep on May 9. Born on September 11, 2005, she was 16 years, 8 months, and 4 days old. We are blessed to be able to help our loved pets "cross the rainbow bridge," but it is so very hard to do. Bonnie was a happy dog throughout her life, loved her neighbors and friends, but she let us know that she was ready. We both had a good cry while Bonnie was last in our arms.

We have so many joyful memories from all the phases of Bonnie's long life. The house is empty today...just not the same without our Bonnie. – Christine Blair & Angelo Cicolani 📖



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an independent gazette
Alexandria, Virginia

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Thousands of people across the country marched on May 14 in support of abortion rights. A few images from the Washington, D.C. event.

Photos by Sue Allen

TEEN TECH TUTORS

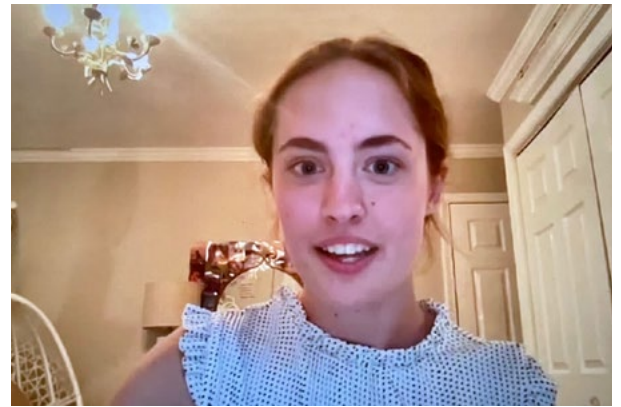


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Photos by Dian McDonald



2 MOST COMMON INTERNET SCAMS



SWEETHEART	FAKE CREDIT CARD ADVANCES	EMPLOYMENT	FREE VACATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scammers create online relationships Will later ask for money to "pay off debts" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scammers pose as credit card companies Will offer a new credit card with an upfront fee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scammers will post fake job listings online Use them to get personal information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scammers offer a free vacation Will often require an upfront fee or deposit Actual vacation is not as nice or not what was promised

2 MOST COMMON INTERNET SCAMS



MALWARE	WINNING THE LOTTERY	COUNTERFEIT PRESCRIPTIONS	FRADULENT ANTI-AGING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Software designed to harm a computer May be sent in email, text, pop up ad 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bright, loud advertisements Offering vacations or prizes Often have to pay a "down payment" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fake drugs Advertised as "cheaper" Used to get insurance or credit card info 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fake treatments available online Promise to enhance physical appearance May be fake or ineffective

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Megadrought

By Chester Taylor

We know about Ukraine and how the war there is creating food shortages in the rest of the world. But here in the United States we have a serious food problem being caused by a drought in the Southwest. It is the worst drought in four years, called a megadrought. Scientists say that the period from 2000 to 2021 was the driest in 1,200 years. Of course, then, a lot fewer people lived in the Southwest.

To compound the drought, extremely higher-than-normal temperatures are forecasted for this summer and fall. There will be electrical shortages (brownouts). The demand for electricity for air conditioning will skyrocket in Los Angeles, Phoenix, Las Vegas, and other highly populated cities in the Southwest. Finally, the conditions created by the drought, heat, and lack of moisture will increase the number of wildfires. Currently there are wildfires in all the states in the Southwest, chief among them are New Mexico with 72



fires burning 77,388 acres; Arizona with 90 fires burning 45,248 acres; and Texas with 107 fires burning 439,635 acres.

With the reservoirs at Lake Powell, Lake Oroville, and others running out of water that churn generators at the hydroelectric power stations, they will not be able to produce electricity. Lake Mead at Hoover Dam (photo of “tub ring” below), has dropped to its lowest level in history. These reservoirs supply

water for 60 million people who live in the Southwest.

The amount of water to irrigate fields will be severely cut back. Farmers will leave large portions of their fields unseeded. California alone supplies over 25 percent of our nation’s food. Expect the price of avocados, berries, broccoli, grapes, and lettuce to rise dramatically. Higher water temperatures will likely result in massive fish die-offs like happened in 2019 to chum salmon. Add this with Ukrainian’s reduced ability to grow and export grains this spring, expect the price of meat, including steaks, hot dogs, bacon, and chicken, to rise.

It may be wise to pick up a few extra food items you use routinely now. Buy dry goods like rice, lentils, beans, and flour that you can store in your pantry. Use your freezer to store all kinds of vegetables. Dairy products like butter, cheese, cottage cheese, egg whites, ice cream, whipped cream are freezer-friendly. Meat, poultry, and seafood like bacon, crab, hot dogs, lobster, salmon, shrimp, and pork are also great to store in a freezer. Plan now and be prepared.



A secret no more – right in our backyard

By Bob Shea

What do the following have in common?
FDR's Civilian Conservation Corps

*King George IV and Queen Elizabeth
 Captain Werner Henke of the German
 U-Boat U-515*

Alexandria's PO Box 1142

A now-closed local high school

*The National Archives storage of its nitrate
 film*

Three 8-inch rifles on disappearing carriages

No, this is not Final Jeopardy. The answer lies within 6 miles of Mon-

tion's capital from enemy ships that might have evaded the guns of Fort Monroe and Fort Wool at the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay in Hampton Roads. It was completed in 1899 with three 8-inch cannons, called rifles, on disappearing carriages augmented by two 5-inch rapid fire guns on pedestals. Named for Brigadier General Henry Jackson Hunt, who served as the Commander of Artillery in the Army of the Potomac, it was the home of the 47th Company, Coast Artillery Corps.

With World War I approaching, and water-borne attacks no longer deemed a threat, the guns were either moved to Europe to serve as railway guns or

called the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) as part of his multifaceted Depression-era programs. The CCC was designed to put unemployed young American males to work on varied public works projects all across the nation. The men were given clothing, meals, shelter and a small salary, most of which was supposed to be sent home to their suffering families. The CCC camp at Fort Hunt worked on many such projects in the local area.

During a visit to Mount Vernon in June 1939, Eleanor Roosevelt stopped at Fort Hunt with her guests, the King and Queen of Great Britain. The King and Queen inspected the camp and



tebello's front entrance. It is what we today call Fort Hunt Park. Fort Hunt has a complicated history with much of it a closely held secret until its World War II history was declassified, and the National Park Service began to do research, to conduct oral history interviews, and to document what actually happened in the green, leafy space that today hosts picnics and family gatherings.

Originally, what is now Fort Hunt Park was George Washington's River Farm, upriver from his storied Mount Vernon. In a series of real estate transactions over the years, it was finally purchased by the U.S. government as a coastal artillery fort in 1883. It was to provide the final defense of the na-

tion's capital from enemy ships that might have evaded the guns of Fort Monroe and Fort Wool at the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay in Hampton Roads. It was completed in 1899 with three 8-inch cannons, called rifles, on disappearing carriages augmented by two 5-inch rapid fire guns on pedestals. Named for Brigadier General Henry Jackson Hunt, who served as the Commander of Artillery in the Army of the Potomac, it was the home of the 47th Company, Coast Artillery Corps.

With World War I approaching, and water-borne attacks no longer deemed a threat, the guns were either moved to Europe to serve as railway guns or

scrapped. While the fort was still owned by the government, the land languished for decades. It was used for barracks for some soldiers stationed in Washington, D.C.; it was briefly the home of the Army's Finance School; Howard University's ROTC programs held summer camps there; it was the headquarters of the construction effort to build what we now know as the George Washington Memorial Parkway, and it was the location of a 300-bed hospital for members of the Bonus Army that marched on Washington and camped there in the early 1930s demanding World War I bonus payments promised but not paid by President Herbert Hoover.

With Hoover defeated by FDR, Roosevelt eventually started what he

met some of its workers. The camp newspaper, named *Happy Days*, had a banner headline that stated "King and Queen Get Chummy With Men at CCC Inspection."

The ammunition bunkers were then converted to store the National Archives highly flammable nitrate film in a facility away from the archive's main buildings in downtown Washington. The bunkers proved to be too damp to store and preserve the film, which was eventually moved to another location.

In 1942, the War Department established a Joint Interrogation Center at Fort Hunt "for the duration of World War II plus one year." It was given the code name P.O. Box 1142, its address at the Alexandria post office. It was a



small beginning, the oral history interviews began. With World War II veterans dying at an alarmingly rapid rate, it was imperative to rapidly gather as much information as possible by locating the men, interviewing them, and

designated temporary detention center, not a prisoner of war camp, to avoid complications with the Geneva Convention's complex standards of POW care and imprisonment.

Fort Hunt, or P.O. Box 1142, was staffed by Army personnel, interpreters and interrogators, who had been trained at the Military Intelligence Training Center at Fort Ritchie, Maryland in the Catoctin Mountains. For the most part, these young soldiers were Jewish or German-Austrian descent and recent immigrants from the Third Reich, most of whom had been born in Europe, and who, with or without families, had moved to the USA when being Jewish in Europe was increasingly dangerous.

They were picked due their language skills, intelligence, and comprehensive knowledge of the customs and nuances of German society. They were sworn to secrecy "for life" about P.O. Box 1142 and its activities. Not until 2006 did most learn that the history of P.O. Box 1142 had been declassified, and they were free to be part of the National Park Service's oral history program and research efforts exploring what had taken place at Fort Hunt.

An off-hand remark by a visitor in 2006 to a Park Ranger that he had a neighbor who had served at Fort Hunt keyed the Park Service to pursue that name, Fred Michel of Louisville, Kentucky. After learning that the P.O. Box 1142 program had been declassified, Mr. Michel shared the names of other former members of his unit. With this

transcribing their remembrances. Over 65 such oral history interviews were conducted.

P.O. Box 1142 was never intended to house large numbers of POWs, but instead was geared to high-value sources of military intelligence who spent just weeks at P.O. Box 1142. Prisoners included senior German officers and those with specialized skills such as captured U-Boat sailors. Torture or brutality were forbidden and never used.

Instead, the German-speaking soldiers talked and listened, using facts they knew or had gathered to encourage the prisoners to open up. A series of hidden microphones were used to eavesdrop on and record POW conversations. Regardless of the Americans' military rank, they wore uniforms and rank insignia comparable to the rank of the POW being interviewed. Captains questioned captains, etc., to avoid the class-conscious Germans from refusing to talk to others of an inferior rank. Die-hard Nazis were quickly identified as not being prone to share their knowledge and were shipped to other POW camps located throughout the USA.

Despite confronting members of the German military who had devastated their families and their lives, the interrogators also played chess, horseshoes, had "bull sessions," and generally cul-

tivated trust to pick up various bits of military intelligence which were pieced together over time like a gigantic mosaic. There were two Russian-speaking American soldiers who wore Soviet uniforms, and if a POW seemed reluctant to tell the truth, they would be introduced to the Russians and promised that they would soon be transferred to the Soviet Army. Many times this convinced the POW to share information rather than go to Russia as a POW.

The compound had barbed wire fences and guard towers. However, based on the unlikelihood of escape, the guard towers were usually not manned after 9 p.m. Staying at Fort Hunt was generally the best possible option for the captured Germans. Wandering through Fairfax County with a thick German accent or being transferred to the Russians were not viable or attractive options.

Only one POW died at Fort Hunt. Captured U-Boat commander and Knight's Cross recipient, Captain Werner Henke was shot by a guard while attempting to scale the barbed wire fence. His U-515 had sunk over 28 ships, mostly British, and he was convinced that he would soon be turned over to the British for trial as a war criminal. Allegedly, his poorly planned daylight attempted escape was a form of suicide





training. In some cases, these methods allowed escaped POWs to connect with local underground movements and eventually to be repatriated.

From 1943 to 1946, 4,351 German soldiers and sailors, including 15 Nazi generals, lived briefly on the banks of the Potomac River, just 12 miles from the Pentagon.

Fort Hunt or P.O. Box 1142 played a vital role in World War II intelligence. Its location allowed secrets discovered to be quickly shared at the highest levels of the Pentagon during the war, and after the war it was instrumental in convinc-

to avoid trial after the war.

Two distinct units were located at Fort Hunt with neither one knowing what the other's mission was. The Military Intelligence Section-Y, the interrogators, gathered information and compiled volumes on the Wehrmacht's Order of Battle, which units were where, future plans, level of training, new equipment, personalities of commanders, unit morale, manufacturing sites, technology advances, and all the varied bits of information that allowed the Allies to better understand and then defeat their enemy.

The other unit was the Military Intelligence Section-X, which focused on codes and equipment needed by Allied airmen in German POW camps – think the TV show Hogan's Heros and their Stalag. It devised radios, maps, compasses, and German currency that could be hidden in things like cribbage boards, ping pong paddles, decks of cards, and baseballs which were sent to the American POWs inside Red Cross parcels. Additionally, they developed codes that were used to communicate in innocent-appearing letters that some POWs were allowed to send to loved ones and friends in the States. Selected aircrews were trained in the letter-writing and codes before they deployed to Europe, “a just in case” twist to their

ing many high-level German scientists to cooperate with the United States. During the post-war years, to persuade the Germans to throw in their hand with the Americans, some high-ranking scientists were taken on shopping trips to local department stores and sailed on the Potomac. Whatever worked was tried and usually succeeded.

After the war ended, most of the Fort Hunt soldiers went back to their families and civilian pursuits, thinking

that their service would always remain classified. One, Silvio Bedini, eventually became historian emeritus at the Smithsonian Institution, and another, John Kluge, became a New York media magnate and was at one time the wealthiest person in the United States. They were the exceptions, for most in this small sample of the Greatest Generation lived their lives in quiet obscurity, knowing that they had done their part when they were needed.

In 1948, the land was returned to the National Park Service. Today, Fort Hunt is a sprawling park and picnic area where pavilions can be reserved by individuals and organizations. Access is still denied to the ammunition bunkers as asbestos that was installed in them in the early 1940s to protect the National Archives' nitrate film has never been removed.

The local high school was named Fort Hunt High School, the Federals, until it was closed in the 1980s by Fairfax County in a school consolidation. Now you know the rest of the story. 🏠

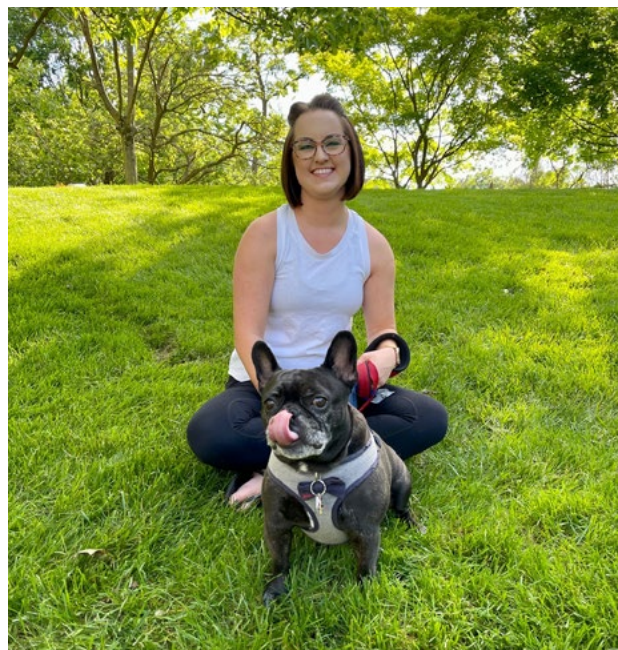
For a video tour of Fort Hunt, go to https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kJIF_cta78M



wags 'n whiskers



Photos by Dian McDonald



Memorial Day picnic



Photos by Dian McDonald

Memorial Day picnic



Memorial Day picnic



Memorial Day picnic



Memorial Day picnic



final glance

