

Farragut STATE PARK



Visitors enjoy one of the many interpretive displays in the Museum at the Brig.

Farragut State Park is located on State Highway 54 just 4 miles east of Highway 95 between Coeur d'Alene and Sandpoint. The Park is at an elevation of 2,054 feet and includes 4,000 partially forested acres adjacent to Lake Pend Oreille. Offerings include individual and group picnic and camping areas, many with hot showers and flush toilets. Well-known as an outstanding place for recreational activities, the park is open year-round. The museum is open from Memorial Day to Labor Day.



# MUSEUM AT THE BRIG



## Capturing the History of Farragut Naval Training Station and World War II

### STILL STANDING

Made of concrete blocks, the Brig is square in design with an inner courtyard. It is one of a few structures that remain from the 776 buildings that made up the Farragut Naval Training Station during World War II. The Brig is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



### In honor of those who served...

A World War II sentinel... the Brig stands guard over the grounds of what was the world's second largest naval training facility. The Farragut Naval Training Station (FNTS) was a 4000+ acre land-locked seaman training facility. Built in response to the December 7, 1941 bombing of Pearl Harbor by the Japanese, the FNTS's buildings and infrastructure were hurriedly constructed in 11 months by 22,000

civilian workers at a cost of \$160 million. The Brig building served as a confinement facility for unruly naval recruits with its barred windows and gates, jail cells and support facilities. In use by the Navy from 1942 to 1946, the Brig is now owned by the State of Idaho. It houses a museum of boot camp, naval and war memorabilia dedicated to the 293,381 naval recruits who received their basic training here.

### MEMORIAL PLAZA

The Memorial Plaza contains artwork that is representative of the recruits that trained at Farragut. The centerpiece is a large bronze bust of a U.S. sailor. The face of the bust has the serious gaze of the sailor serving his country with pride while also containing smaller faces (like the relief image on a coin) of those recruits that made him. Some of the faces are handsome and bold; some are awkward and endearing. They portray the naivete and optimism of the young men who trained at FNTS.

The bust is positioned on a base that resembles a "whale" boat. "Whale" boats were rowboats made of steel and could hold up to 16 recruits. The recruits were trained to row the boats in unison, learning a valuable lesson in teamwork.

Surrounding the whale boat and facing the flags are 29 sets of footprints at attention, commemorating the numbers (in tens of thousands) of men who trained at Farragut.



2006 Memorial Plaza artwork dedication

# Boots

Arriving recruits disembarked from rail transport, often at night, in nearby Athol, Idaho. They were loaded in "cattle cars" and trucked to the brand new Naval Training Station. After a night in crowded barracks, the future seamen (average age of 17) spent their first full day being shorn of their locks, yanked out of their civilian clothes, examined by doctors, given innumerable injections and outfitted with U.S. Navy gear. The new recruits, officially in boot camp and conspicuous in their white leggings ("boots"), began a stay of 6 to 13 weeks. During their training, they were indoctrinated into the Navy way by lecturing commanders and by viewing Navy training films. The long process of becoming regimented was accomplished by marching on

the grinders (parade grounds) and by intensive classes in seamanship and warfare along with field-training sessions, all emphasizing teamwork. The goal was to ingrain the "boots" with the reaction to follow orders without exception. After promotion from the FNTS, the Apprentice Seamen were assigned to further training or immediately sent off to war.

*Training pays off as a group of seasoned recruits march on the parade ground to the salutes of their commanding officers.*



*Typical cell and bunk in the Brig used to confine unruly recruits*

# Prison Life

When an unruly boot was brought to the Brig by armed Marine guards, he was transported past 12-foot high steel gates into the Brig's central courtyard. From here the new prisoner was taken to the laundry room/barbershop for processing, given a short haircut and distinctive prison clothes. Depending on the severity of the offense, the prisoner was then placed in either a 4 or 6 man cell or solitary confinement to begin serving his sentence.

For exercise, he was forced to run the interior courtyard's perimeter 75 times each morning. During the day, prisoners were assigned "hard labor" - using sledgehammers to smash boulders into gravel or hand sawing firewood. Prisoners with severe offenses were placed in solitary confinement and then later transported to the federal penitentiary at Treasure Island, California.

# U.S. Naval Hospital

**The largest and most modern hospital in the northwest provided medical aid to the always changing population of FNTS and to those returning from combat with battle injuries. This extensive facility, located near the end of the peninsula, had 2300 beds and 7-1/2 miles of corridors.**

# Waves

**Although women were not trained at FNTS, many WAVES (Women Accepted for Voluntary Emergency Services) took part in the daily operation of the facility. Starting in June 1944 with 29 women, the WAVES took on many responsibilities in order to relieve sailors for overseas duty. WAVES proudly served as nurses and clerical staff, and provided transportation along with other assignments. In all, a total of 600 WAVES served at FNTS.**

# Decommissioning

The Farragut Naval Training Station was decommissioned on June 15, 1946. Many of the wooden buildings were relocated to surrounding communities. Others were dismantled and the wood recycled. Today, in exploring Farragut State Park, visitors can drive on some of the original FNTS roads and view the tallest of the landmarks that remain, two water towers that are still in use.

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# German POWs

Beginning in 1945, FNTS also housed Prisoners of War (POWs) in nearby Camp Farragut. The POWs were German soldiers captured by U.S. troops in Europe and Africa. The POWs were treated as soldiers and not criminals. At FNTS POWs did maintenance, landscaping and even served as cooks at the Brig.



# Museum

In the museum, some Brig cells have been left in their original configuration. Other cells have been converted to house interpretive displays with photos, equipment, letters, furniture personal items and more. The museum also offers an audio-visual theater and a gift shop. Two restored vehicles (1938 Ford flatbed and 1942 Pirsch fire engine) that were used on the base are now on display in the courtyard.



*1938 Ford flatbed truck once used at the naval station is on display at the Brig Museum.*

# Help Preserve the Past for the Future!

**Donations to the Museum at the Brig of FTNS memorabilia are greatly appreciated. The donation of funds to help with the expansion of the Museum at the Brig and development of the Memorial Plaza may be made to:**

**Farragut State Park  
Museum/Plaza Fund  
13350 East Highway 54  
Athol, ID 83801  
(208) 683-2425**