

The President John F. Kennedy Bunker

Written by Administrator

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During the Cuban Missile Crisis, the SeaBees secretly, and very quickly built a bunker for the President, who spent a great deal of time at the Kennedy Compound here in Palm Beach. Although it would have been a temporary command center for the nation in a time of crisis, it is still relatively small. It was constructed adjacent to the U.S. Coast Guard Station, about 100 yards away, concealed in the woods, underground, but above the water table. The bunker had fallen into complete disrepair, but was restored by the Palm Beach Maritime Museum ... with some difficulty, since it is at the water table and had been semi-flooded for a long period.

With the exception of a presidential seal, added as a modern enhancement, the declassified, decommissioned bunker is very close to the original. The structure is covered with earth and many layers of concrete and rebar. Entry is via a blast-hardened tunnel, with a 90 degree angle to minimize shock effects from a nuclear explosion. Entry is through a secure decontamination area, which was, however, and interestingly, made of plywood. This is a thought-provoking exhibit, especially in light of recent events in the United States. Below: Bunker door and entrance tunnel; Main room in the bunker, where President Kennedy might have run the U.S. during the first hours or days of a nuclear attack.

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