

Primary Battery File

National Archives, Washington D.C.

Record Group 77

Correspondence of the Chief of Engineers

Entry 103

File, Fort, Battery:

38670

Ft. Wool

Btly. Lee

ENGINEER OFFICE, U. S. ARMY,
166 GRANBY STREET,

Norfolk, Va., June 25, 1901.

Brig. Gen. George L. Gillespie,
Chief of Engineers, U. S. Army,
Washington, D. C.

General:

Pursuant to instructions in letter from your office, dated March 18, 1901, 38670, I have the honor to submit estimates, plans and drawings, covering the necessary items for the construction of emplacements for four 15-pdr. R. F. guns on balanced-pillar mounts at Fort Wool, Va., and structures and appliances for conducting the work.

The guns are intended to defend the channel between Fort Wool and Willoughby Spit, and are located as determined in the project of the Board of Engineers.

In preparing the plans, it has been the endeavor to resort as little as possible to demolition of the old work, and some slight modifications of the approved plan have, in consequence, resulted. As projected, the battery is subject to reverse fire from the main ship channel. It is believed, however, that a slight protection from machine-gun fire coming from this direction is all that can be established, owing to limited space.

It has been assumed that the foundation is stable, since no appreciable settlement has occurred for several years, and it is probable that the additional load will not affect the stability

much, if at all.

The level of the floors of the magazines is placed at 10 feet above mean low water, as determined by actual observation, making the elevation of the floors two feet higher than the floors of the old work, which were flooded in the storm of 1887.

The fort occupies an isolated position, and appliances of every kind will have to be supplied. A new wharf will have to be built, and a safe boat for messenger service between Fort Monroe and the site will have to be supplied, all of which will add very much to the cost of this work, but which will be necessary for further work, and might be considered as a separate charge, to be divided between the several constructions proposed for this place.

If a parapet of sand is adopted, a concrete receptacle will have to be provided, as shown on the plan, owing to the open character of the stone foundation, the waves washing through the cavities in the rock. When reduced to its minimum dimensions, this sand parapet would occupy nearly all the space between the old wall and the water's edge. Aside from the fact that it is desirable to have a passage-way around the outside of the fort, the exterior slope of this parapet would afford a ramp, up which a storming party, taking advantage of favorable conditions, might rush the work.

As an alternative proposition, a small drawing shows a concrete parapet, with a nearly vertical face, which would afford equivalent protection to the magazines, and, at the same time, leave a space between the battery and the water, which would not only permit a road-way, but, if protected by a slight wall at the water's edge, would afford a space where the garrison might assemble to oppose a

landing party. The cement parapet would be much more desirable, since it would not be liable to damage from storms, blast of the guns, wave action or neglect.

The wharf has been arranged so as to afford the necessary room and depth of water for the accommodation of the vessels which may be expected to land cargoes at this place. The old piers are in ruins and the shallow water about them renders a new situation necessary.

The estimated cost of the battery with sand parapet, including the wharf and boat, is \$38,986.08. If the sand parapet is replaced with concrete, as described, the total cost would be \$43,584.27. The electrical installation is left for consideration, in connection with other structures and search-lights.

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

James D. Quinn

Major, Corps of Engineers,

U. S. Army.

1554 P. M.

5 inclosures (4 traces in sep. pkge.)

Through

Colonel Peter C. Hains

Corps of Engineers

Division Engineer

Southwest Division

38640

PR

1st. Indorsement.
U.S. Engineer Office,
Baltimore, Md.

July 1, 1901.
Respectfully submitted to the
Chief of Engineers, U.S.A.

QUINN, Maj. James B.

In compliance with E.D. 38670 submits plans and estimates for construction of 4-15 pdr. R.F. gunemplacements on balcony pillar mounts at Fort Wool. - \$38,986.08 if built with sand parapet; \$43,584.27 if with concrete. These prices include wharf (\$6,181.48) and boat (500) for messenger service. Last two items might be considered as a separate charge to be divided between the several instructions proposed for this ce. The electrical installation left for consideration in connection with other structures and searchlights.

Respectfully returned to the Chief of Engineers, U.S.A. The plans submitted herewith are in accord with the approved project, the guns being intended to cover the channel between Fort Wool and Willoughby Spit. The Coast Survey chart shows a depth of 16 feet through this channel, consequently only vessels of very light draft can pass through it. The battery will therefore not be subjected to the close fire of very heavy guns. As stated by the district engineer, the battery is exposed to reverse fire from the main ship channel and a slight protection is proposed on that side, which owing to the limited space, is all that can be established. I do not think this kind of protection will be of any use and recommend that it be omitted. If a vessel gets as far as the main ship channel between Fort Wool and Fort Monroe, the battery will be practically ended. Moreover, it is proposed to put other guns on the channel front of the fort, and the parapet that protects them in front will also protect these in rear. Owing to the contracted space at Fort Wool, I recommend the adoption of the concrete parapet which the district engineer suggests. The plans otherwise are recommended for approval.

Office Chief of Engineers,
U. S. ARMY.

July 5, 1901.
Respectfully returned to Major Quinn, approved.

The concrete form of parapet is adopted. The omission of the paradox, as recommended by the Division Engineer, is for the present approved, and an allotment of \$40,000 is hereby made for the construction of the four emplacement, from the appropriation for "Gun and Mortar Batteries," for construction of gun batteries, Act of March 1, 1901.

Major Quinn is requested to exert every effort to reduce the cost of these emplacements; any saving that can be effected should be deposited to the credit of the appropriation, and this office so notified at as early a date as practicable, in order that the funds saved may be allotted elsewhere. Funds in hand will not be sufficient to emplace all the armament projected under present appropriations, unless all officers exercise most careful economy. These papers to be returned.

By command of Brig. Gen. Gillespie:

38670
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Incls. 2 accomp.
Incls. 3-6 in sep. roll.

Through Col. PETER C. HAINS,

Chief of Engineers,

3rd. Indorsement.
U.S. Engineer Office,
Baltimore, Md.

July 10, 1901.
Respectfully transmitted to Major James B. Quinn, Corps of Engineers, U.S.A., inviting attention to the preceding indorsements.

Col., Corps of Engineers, U.S.A.,
Div. Eng. S. E. Div.
4th Indorsement.
Engineer Office, U.S. Army,
Norfolk, Va., July 12, 1901

Respectfully returned to the Chief of Engineers, U. S. Army, as directed in the 2nd Indorsement hereon.

Major, Corps of Engineers,
U. S. Army
1554 F. W.

1 Incls. accomp.,
4 in sep. pkgs.

RECEIVED OFFICE CHIEF OF ENGRS. JUL 13 1901

ENGINEER OFFICE, U. S. ARMY,

ROOM 2, CUSTOM HOUSE.

Norfolk, Va., October 7, 1903.

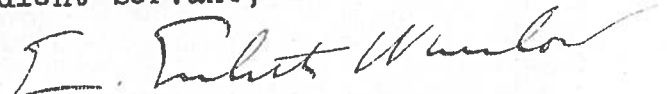
Brig. Gen. G. L. Gillespie,
Chief of Engineers, U. S. Army,
Washington, D. C.

General:

I have the honor to inform you that the emplacements in the battery of four 15-pdr. R. F. guns at Fort Wool, Va., constructed under allotment of \$40,000 made by the 2nd indorsement of your office dated July 5, 1901 (38670), are now ready for their armament. Although these emplacements are not wholly completed, the guns and carriages can be mounted at any time.

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,


Captain, Corps of Engineers,

U. S. Army.

$\frac{1554}{5}$ F. W.

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OFFICE CHIEF OF ENGINEERS
OFFICE CHIEF OF ORDNANCE

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WAR DEPARTMENT
WAR DEPARTMENT

Norfolk, Va., Oct. 7, 1903.

WINSLOW,

CAPT. E. E.

States that the emplacements in the battery of four 15-pdr. R.F. guns at Fort Wool, Va., constructed under allotment of July 5, 1901, are now ready for their armament. The guns and carriages can be mounted at any time.

File

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RECD. BACK OFFICE CHIEF OF ENGRS. OCT 23 1903

RECD. BACK OFFICE CHIEF OF ENGRS. OCT 30 1903

1st indorsement.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF ENGINEERS,
WASHINGTON.

October 12, 1903.

1. Respectfully referred to the Chief of Ordnance, U.S. Army, for his information, and with request for the probable date at which the carriages will be delivered to Captain Winslow.
2. The return of this paper is requested.

E. E. Winslow

Brig. Gen., Chief of Engineers,
U. S. Army.

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36315-9.

2nd Endorsement.

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF ORDNANCE,
Washington, October 14, 1903.

1. Respectfully returned to the Chief of Engineers, U.S.A., contents noted.
2. It is not believed that any 15-pdr mounts will be ready for mounting at Fort Wool, Va. before January 15, 1904.

William C. Brown

Brig. Gen., Chief of Ordnance.

RECD. OFFICE CHIEF OF ENGRS. OCT 16 1903

3d indorsement.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF ENGINEERS,
WASHINGTON.

October 19, 1903.

1. Respectfully returned to Captain Winslow, for his information.
2. Before proceeding to mount the guns after their receipt, further authority must be asked of this office.
3. To be returned.

By command of Brig. Gen. Gillespie:

Frederic V. Allen
Major, Corps of Engineers.

38670
29

4th indorsement.
Engineer Office, U.S. Army,
Norfolk, Va., Oct. 22, 1903.

Respectfully returned to the Chief of Engineers, U.S. Army, as directed in the preceding indorsement.

Frederic V. Allen

Captain, Corps of Engineers,
U. S. Army.
1554
13 RECD. OFFICE CHIEF OF ENGRS. OCT 23 1903