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Announcement: FORTECA

The illustrated Polish magazine FORTECA, is available overseas through subscriptions. We are looking for articles on fortifications from Ancient History through the 20th Century.

FORTECA is a quarterly publication consisting of approximately 64 pages. Most pages have one or more drawings, photos or plans in B&W. Those on the front and back covers are in color. At the end of each article is a summary in English. Each illustration caption is in Polish and English. Beginning in 1999 one article, for overseas subscribers only, will be entirely in English.

1). To subscribe to the magazine for those of you living in the United States, send \$25 to:

J.E. Kaufmann
PO Box 680-484
San Antonio, Texas 78268
email: <joe@txdirect.net>

For this reduction in price from the regular overseas subscription rate you will receive your four issues in two mailings (two issues will be mailed together every 6 months). Other foreign subscribers need to contact: Jaroslaw Chorzepa by e-mail at forteca@btsnet.com.pl or

Jaroslaw Chorzepa
ul. Sadowa 6/66
06-300 Przasnysz
Poland

Price for 40 DM or 25 USD or equivalent

2). For those interested in contributing articles written in English send your proposals by regular mail to the above address, or by e-mail to: joe@txdirect.net

In your proposals, in addition to a brief description, include the following information: proposed length of article and the number and type of illustrations to be used.

The following table of contents from Issue 1/98 is an example of what will be found in an issue of FORTECA:

1. An Outline of the Glogow Fortifications
2. The Chocim Fortress during the Russo-Turkish War 1768-1774
3. Russian Fortress Brest Litovsk - Fort V
4. Armoured Turret for 8 cm. Cannon M 94 for Austro-Hungarian Fortifications
5. Major-General Wacław I. Żhigalkovsky, Military Engineer (one of the main engineers of the Vladivostok Fortress)
6. The Fortified Group "Berghöhe" (Hurka) - (Czech fortified group of the Bene's Line)
7. German Patent Protection in Poland of Anti-aircraft Shelters
8. Czechoslovakian Fortifications on the Former Hungarian Border (reprint from 1939)

We presently seek articles on ancient and medieval fortifications, but will consider articles covering any fortifications of any era.

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Coast Defense Study Group- Fortress Study Group Tour of Bermuda, May 9-15, 1998

Bolling W. Smith

On Saturday, May 9, 1998, CDSG members flew to Bermuda for a joint CDSG-Fortress Study Group tour of Bermuda, organized by Dr. Edward Harris, director of the Bermuda Maritime Museum, and Lance Furbert, curator of forts for the Bermuda Parks Department. The meeting began with registration and the distribution of copies of Dr. Harris' excellent book on the defenses of Bermuda. The bulk of the FSG members arrived during the afternoon, and we were quartered in the Bermuda Regiment barracks at Warwick Camp, under the care of the Regimental Quartermaster, Major Brangman.

The following summarizes our tour. For more details on the forts and batteries visited, see Robert Zink's report of the 1989 trip, in the August 1989 *CDSG News*.

Sunday, May 10: The tour began with a visit to Fort St. Catherine, which commands the key point opposite the approach channel. Much modified over the years, the fort today mounts a 6-inch gun and several rifled muzzle loaders (RMLs).

Alexandra Battery once mounted 5 RMLs, but 4 of these emplacements were destroyed around the turn of the century, when two BL 6-inch guns, now gone, were emplaced. The right RML position has been dug out, and a 9-inch RML on its upper carriage is mounted behind an armored "Gibraltar Shield."

We briefly visited the small, stone Town Cut Battery, with its two 24-pounder guns on replica iron carriages. The battery dates from around 1700.

Fort George, a square fort with a very deep ditch and two surviving 11-inch RMLs, is currently the site of the harbor radio station. Lance Furbert is preparing to move his offices from Fort St. Catherine to Fort George.

After Fort George, we drove up to Fort Victoria, where a 9.2-inch BL gun remains outside the Victorian fort. The older fort also survives, although considerably modified, to include a swimming pool. A large hotel, currently vacant, shares the site, and owns both Fort Victoria and Albert.

During WW2, an American 200 series 6-inch battery, BCN 284, was constructed adjacent to Fort Victoria. We were able to enter the battery through the rear entrance, but both gun positions have been destroyed or buried. The interior of the battery itself was disheartening. The rebar has rusted and swelled, causing much of the concrete ceiling and walls to spall off. Rumor has it that sea water was used in the construction, possibly explaining the rapid disintegration of the rebar.

From Victoria, we walked downhill to Fort Albert, passing where two American 8-inch railway guns were sited early in WW2. Albert is a small Victorian fort which mounted 4 RML guns and two ML howitzers. Most

impressive was the deep ditch, the keep, and the extensive underground magazines. The fort is generally well maintained and attractive.

After Fort Albert, we were driven to St. George's, and then up to Fort William for lunch. Fort Williams resembled Fort George, but the keep and ditch were roofed over to serve as a large powder magazine. It once housed a restaurant, but is currently vacant. There was concern about the safety of the wooden floors inside the keep.

After lunch, we visited St. George's, and some returned to revisit Forts Victoria and Albert, where we were caught in a sharp downpour.

Monday, May 11: We drove to the small, stone, Burnt Point and Ferry Island Forts. We walked to the nearby Martello Tower, which was open and in good repair, and then past an old lime kiln to a small military cemetery.

One of the high points of the tour was the visit to St. David's Battery, with its two 6-inch and two 9.2-inch guns remaining. Some of the more adventurous walked down to the searchlight position at the base of the cliff. Afterward, we walked in a light rain to nearby stone, 18th century Fort Popple.

Tuesday, May 12: We drove to the dock at the Marriott Hotel, where we were met by a boat from the Ministry of Youth, Parks, and Recreation, large enough to carry all of us easily. Using a small boat, we managed a precarious landing on Castle Island, with only one person ending up in the water. This small island has three stone forts: King's Castle, Devonshire Redoubt, and Landward Fort.

The high point of the day was the visit to Fort Cunningham, on Paget Island. Fort Cunningham is remarkable. It once mounted several large RMLs in casemates protected by two full iron-armored faces. Much of these faces were subsequently buried, but they have now been dug out, recovering seven RMLs buried in the old ditch. Around the turn of the century, two 6-inch guns were mounted on top of the fort, served by some of the same magazines which served the earlier RMLs. After leaving Fort Cunningham, we made our way through choppy water around the north side of Bermuda to the Great Sound. From there, taxis took us to the sole remaining U.S. 155 mm Panama mount at Turtle Hill, on the grounds of the luxurious Southampton Princess hotel. A small magazine was found nearby. We also briefly visited the site of the WW2 U.S. Navy anti-aircraft training facility, near Warwick Camp.

Wednesday, May 13: The morning was devoted to the Prospect Hill Position, which defended the Spanish Point peninsula, from which the dockyard could be bombarded. Prospect Fort, built in the 1860s, contained emplacements for twelve 64-pounder RMLs on Moncrieff disappearing carriages. It still stands, converted into a water catchment. The works have largely been whitewashed, and a number of structures have been built within the fort and the ditch.

Fort Hamilton, built in the late 1870s, is now a Hamilton city park. Overlooking the city, the fort once housed seven 64-pounder RMLs on Moncrieff disappearing carriages. The three RMLs there now, mounted on concrete, are 10-inch guns from Fort Langton. The fort is now a garden, and as such is carefully maintained and very attractive. Here representatives of the FSG and the CDSG were interviewed and photographed by the local press.

Fort Langton, the third fort of the land defenses, was destroyed in the 1980s.

Thursday, May 14: Despite rain, the day went reasonably well. Behind the old stone Whale Bay Fort, we visited Whale Bay Battery, originally constructed for three RMLs and later converted for 4.7-inch breechloading guns. Somewhat isolated, the battery is surrounded by a curtain wall for all around defense.

At Tudor Hill, we went through the American 6-inch battery, BCN 283. It is generally in good shape, and plans are being discussed for preserving it.

Next we went to Scaur Hill Fort. This fort, mounting three 64-pounder RMLs on Moncrieff disappearing carriages, defended the land approaches to the dockyard, along with a deep ditch dug entirely across Somerset Island. During WW2, two U.S. 8-inch railway guns were here.

The final stop of the tour was the most impressive, the dockyard and its keep. The dockyard, long an important facility for the Royal Navy, was the principal reason for the fortification of Bermuda. The dockyard keep had a multi-bastioned trace with numerous RMLs, some of which were replaced by 4.7 and 6-inch BL guns. Examples of both gun types were on hand, as well as a rare 40-pounder Armstrong breechloader. Crowning the keep was the Commissioner's House, where the Dockyard Museum continues their long and expensive restoration effort. After leaving the dockyard, we adjourned to Dr. Harris' lovingly restored home, where we enjoyed drinks and snacks.

Friday, May 15: We flew out, headed either to the New York visit arranged for the FSG, or home.

The administrative details in general were smoothly coordinated. We stayed in Spartan but inexpensive barracks at Warwick Camp, with all the pleasures and aggravations of barracks living. Eventually, the married couples were reunited in separate quarters on post. We slept on bunk beds, and wash facilities were in a nearby building.

Across the street was the dining hall, where we had our breakfasts and suppers. The meals were excellent, and the quantities apparently limitless. The friendliness and courtesy of the Warwick support staff was deeply appreciated. Bag lunches were prepared for our meals on the road. The total cost for room and board was \$45 per person per day, a true bargain on Bermuda.

We travelled in a fleet of hired, 6-passenger taxi vans. The cost totalled \$175 per person, including gratuity.

The boat to Castle Island and Fort Cunningham was supplied gratis, courtesy of the Ministry of Youth, Parks, and Recreation.

It was a very pleasant visit to a lovely place, full of forts of many different eras. Our sincere thanks go out to Lance Furbert and Dr. Edward Harris, as well as the staff of Warwick Camp. For those unable to attend, Dr. Harris' book, *Bermuda Forts, 1612-1957*, offers an excellent view of the many delights Bermuda offers those interested in forts. It can be ordered from the Bermuda Maritime Museum Press, the Keep, The Old Dockyard, Bermuda.

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**The Fortress Study Group,
the Harbor Defenses of New York,
and the Yellow School Bus**

Leo Polaski

After touring Bermuda, thirty-seven members of the Fortress Study Group decided to stay over in New York for a short visit to some of that city's former harbor fortifications, and four CDSG members volunteered as their hosts and guides. One of the CDSGers, in the spirit of economy, chartered one of those ubiquitous school buses for transportation. [Note to future St. Babs organizers: there's not enough room on yellow buses for passengers and their overseas luggage.

Anyway, after a late airplane arrival, the group (Leo Polaski with his favorite bus and 37 hot UK visitors, and Terry McGovern, Dale Floyd, and Karl Schmidt, in Terry's comfortable Range Rover) headed for Fort Tilden. Historian John Gallagher and Ranger Nancy Corona showed us casemated Battery Harris and the bombproof magazine. On, then, to Fort Hamilton, to look over the old fort and the two fire control stations on its roof. We had dinner in one of the casemates of the Officers Club. Our night's lodgings were at the Staten Island Hotel, familiar to many from last year's St. Babs visit.

On Saturday, we drove down to Fort Hancock at Sandy Hook, New Jersey, where Historian Tom Hoffman showed us the nine gun battery line, the gun-lift gun battery, the mortar batteries, Battery Gunnison-Peck, and long range Batteries Kingman and Mills. Because of time limitations, we were not able to visit the Coast Guard area and its Dynamite Battery. But our faithful yellow friend did manage to chug up the highlands and bring us to Navesink Reservation, the location of WWII 16-inch Battery Lewis and 6-inch Battery 219. Monmouth County Park Manager Lee Homoyock had opened the batteries for us, as well as Lewis' PSR, and the park had cleared brush down to the two fire controls dug into the hill below 219. Both had the double observation slits seemingly peculiar to New York, and one had a lower level which none of us ventured into because of the depth of water on its floor.

Sunday found the group, except Terry and his wise crew, packed with our luggage - which seemed to have grown - back onto our much-maligned school bus and headed for Fort Wadsworth. There, Curator Felice Ciccone and Ranger Phil Melfi opened Battery Weed and Fort Tompkins for us. Some of the FSG members, who had been quietly grouching about the inordinate amount of concrete they had been shown until then, became simply enraptured when surrounded by so much granite, or maybe they just had a lot of film to use up before they left the Colonies. In any case, we spent all the time we wanted in these structures, saw uniformed Civil War reenactors load and fire off their restored brass cannon, which simultaneously set off nearby car alarms, and then walked to Battery Dix and the rapid fire batteries north and south of Weed. The gift shop at Wadsworth was our final stop, FSG luggage grew again, and we headed for JFK and their departure that evening.

Strangely, nobody waved good-bye to that yellow bus.

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**Ordnance Publications in the
National Archives**

Glen Williford and B.W. Smith

Recently, Glen heard of a lode of Ordnance Department publications in the National Archives, filed, not under Record Group 156, records of the chief of ordnance, but under RG 287, public documents. During a recent visit to the downtown Washington, D.C., NARA location, we found over twenty boxes of Ordnance Department publications filed under RG 287, W 34.5, A through Z. We scanned these boxes, noting the most interesting ones and copying as much as time allowed. Many of the publications dealt with ordnance in general, or specific equipment used by branches other than the Coast Artillery Corps, and so are not listed here. The numbers after the colons (:) indicate the year or years they were published.

NARA, Washington, D.C., RG 287, W 34.5
A through Z

Box 873

1922/ *Report on the Characteristics, Scope, and
Utility of Railway Artillery* (book).

Box 874

1467/ List of Blanks, Pamphlets, etc.
- / Miscellaneous Pamphlets of Ballistic Tables

Box 875

- / Reports of Experiments on the Strengths and
Other Properties of Metals for Cannon, 1856
- / Reports of Experiments on the Properties of
Metals for Cannon and the Quality of
Cannon Powder by Captain Rodman