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## Saint Babs XXI, Harbor Defenses of Long Island Sound

Gary Paliwoda

*Wednesday, April 30, 2003*

St. Babs XXI, in the Harbor Defenses of Long Island Sound, opened at 7 PM on Wednesday, April 30, 2003, at the New London, CT, Holiday Inn. This was the 20<sup>th</sup> consecutive annual conference, 25 years since St. Babs I, and the 34<sup>th</sup> event sponsored by the Coast Defense Study Group.

After a welcome and introductions, the group divided into two groups for 7 AM and 9 AM departures to Great Gull Island and Fort Michie, the original boat being in the shipyard. Slides of period pictures of the Harbor Defenses of Long Island Sound were presented, followed by Alex Holder's presentation on a recent trip to Puerto Rico.

*Thursday, May 1, 2003*

The group gathered at 6:45 AM at the Sunbeam Fleet dock in Niantic for the trip out to Fort Michie. Our host, Helen Hays, greeted the group. The 20 plus people easily loaded Helen's supplies aboard the boat. Leaving Niantic, the rain started near Great Gull Island and lasted until shortly after the group began its walk around the island. At Great Gull Island, the dock had not completely washed away, but was missing a few supports, limiting us to one person on the weakened section. Bob, one of two skippers on board, nailed a few boards over the weakened section and we began to unload. The group formed a line on the stronger part of the dock and repeated the loading procedure in reverse, with the rain and the slippery dock requiring extra caution. Helen said this was the quickest unloading she ever had.

The group then headed to Battery Davis, one 16-inch M1919 gun on the only M1917 disappearing carriage, and scattered throughout and over the battery. Some members climbed to the BC position and departed via the hatch in the ceiling. Walking down the slope of the BC station, one attendee broke his ankle, requiring a 911 call to Suffolk County Police for a medical evacuation. Minerals seeping through the wall and ceiling and covering the board have damaged the tool board visible in 1986. The battery was one of the few major American batteries with all-around-fire capability, and its circular pit was the largest in any

American work. Most of the pit remains in good shape, despite considerable spalling on the west wall of the pit, most exposed to the elements.

We finished Davis and climbed atop the battery, to see the track for SL No. 7 along the south side of Davis, the 90 mm battery, and the north SL operating position. The south SL operating position is south of 90 mm gun block No. 1. The 90 mm battery is oriented north-south, with gun No. 1 to the right, or south, of Battery Davis. No. 2 was on the north side of Davis. No. 1 has a concrete parapet on the three southern sides; a mound of dirt surrounds the remaining sides. The No. 2 gun block is exposed to the sea on the north but protected by the island to the south. The block may have been recessed into the ground during construction. The BC station for Davis barely extends above the parapet, essentially just the slit and roof. Two additional fire control stations on the ridge west of Davis can be seen from the front of the BC. When we finished, we went downhill to the access path and over to Battery Benjamin and the searchlight tunnel through the ridge.

Just east of the searchlight tunnel is fire control station B6/12S6/12 for the never completed 16-inch battery at Wilderness Point on Fishers Island, BCN No. 111. The SL shelter is inside the ridge that runs west from Battery Davis behind Battery Benjamin. Some wood from the shelter remains and the concrete is in good shape. The two openings are on the north and south sides of the ridge. In front of the ridge and down is Battery Benjamin, two 6-inch pedestals. The later BC is atop the ridge, east of the battery. Earlier it was B1/9, but in WW2 it was BC7/B2/7S2/7. The seaward supports for this station have given way and the roof has collapsed onto the front sill. The shell hoists are in a covered way with a concrete roof and rear wall that protected the hoists from shellfire from the south. The earlier BC station, to the rear or south of this wall atop the rear of the traverse, is in good shape. One room below can be identified as a power room by the bases on the floor, and rack remains in one of the magazines.

Battery Pasco is to the west, two 3-inch guns on pedestal mounts. Just beyond Pasco on the way to the dock is the CRF station for Pasco, considerably worse for wear, very exposed on the north side of the island. Further west but still on the north side of the island is a considerable amount of debris and a number of cable galleries or sewer manholes with pipes sticking out of the concrete.

Soon a helicopter came to pick up the injured attendee from a marked concrete helo pad, about where the flagpole formerly stood.

Continuing west, the first fire control station was BC/1/8, several pipes sticking out of the ground under a wooden bird-watching tower. A water reservoir is just west of this base. The remains of the next station, P/F1/4, were a circular pad with about three feet of steel column sticking up, completely free of vegetation and easily located.

Further west, a second circular base with no steel remnants marks the third tower, B1/7-BC, which was cut down to ground level; one must be nearby to locate it. East of the base, looking west along the north shore, one can see remnants of the two emergency stations Bv7 Bv8 once located here. These were concrete boxes with a below-ground concrete box to house the



Battery J.M.K. Davis, Fort Michie (M Berhow)



Battery Pasco, Fort Michie (M. Berhow)

telephone. All that remains is the telephone box portion; the operator's portion of the box is gone.

Crossing the island, we passed the SCR-296 base with the adjacent foundation for the transformer building on the south. The two generator buildings were east and west of this base. This site is between the former sites of two officer's quarters. On the south side of the island is believed to be B"2, one of three temporaries, intact though filled with dirt. Two more eastern structures, B"7 B"8, are believed buried.

The searchlight base on the far-western end of the island is for SL 9. The brick shelter has collapsed but the concrete base remains, five feet above ground, four to five feet wide, and approximately 30-40 feet long. The brick searchlight shelter stood at one end of the concrete base, with tracks to the operating position at the opposite end. The collapsed WW2 fire control station, B2/13S2/13 for BCN 214 and B2/6S2/6 for Battery Maitland, halfway down the island on the south shore, has collapsed seaward and sits at about 60 degrees to the perpendicular. The base for SL 8 just beyond is similar to SL 9, but somewhat better for wear, not being as exposed.

Continuing eastward, we came to Battery Maitland, two-6-inch pedestals. On its west side the CRF base is between the No. 1 emplacement and SL 8, the BC is atop the central traverse. To the rear of emplacement No. 2 is the tunnel to Battery Palmer, with a trellis for decoration.

Through the tunnel, on the left is the tall tower behind Maitland, M1/2, later G3G4, and still later HEOP3/B3/5S3/5 BCN 217 R3 SS3. Despite the low clouds and fog, the tower provided good elevated all-around pictures of the island. Somewhat de-



Fire control tower (originally M1/2), Fort Michie (M Berhow)

layed, the second boatload arrived from Niantic towing a scow for landing at Gardiners Point.

Battery Palmer, two 12-inch disappearing guns in the center of the island, was the final stop. The battery's platforms were extended, and the BC station at the rear of the center traverse now serves as Helen's summer home. It is probably the sturdiest BC station seen in this type of battery. The upper ends of the hoists have a concrete roof over the entire area to the rear of the traverse, due to vulnerability to fire from all sides. The No. 2 emplacement of the 3-inch AA battery was atop the left traverse, which allowed elevated pictures of Battery Pasco. The No. 1 AA emplacement is on the right traverse.



Mine casemate and Battery Palmer, Fort Michie (M. Berhow)

The first group departed on the 20-minute ride from Fort Michie to Gardiners Point, the former site of Fort Tyler and Battery Edmund Smith, two 8-inch and two 5-inch guns. Now an island, it was once the end of a sand spit connected to Gardiners Island. Then 15 acres, today it is down to less than two. From the boat it now appears a mass of rocks on a sandy and rock-strewn island. The concrete of the fort has been heavily weathered and further damaged by use as a bombing target.

We landed the scow at the west end of the island, a short walk from a "Restricted Do Not Land" sign. The top of the fort's original sally port, or what is left of it, has collapsed, leaving just the lower sides intact. The outside ramp leading to the sally port is no longer discernible. At the water's edge to the right or east is the bolt ring for 5-inch gun No. 1, which had been higher during the 1994 visit. Subsequently, an ordnance disposal team cleared the island of unexploded ordnance by removing the ordnance to the casemates of the east wall and detonating it, leaving a large crater where the east wall stood and depositing the gun block in the water. The east wall had closed the gap between the 5-inch and 8-inch emplacements.

We turned left to view the casemates under the existing wall and 5-inch gun block No. 2. In one casemate three shafts exited under the wall to the outside. Venturing outside we were only able to partially make our way along the collapsed wall to the outside. Turning back, we examined the remnants of the north wall and northwest corner of the 8-inch emplacement. We entered the magazines and the room with the lower end of the hoist, stepping into daylight, as the entire seaward wall and roof have collapsed. A few more feet and one was in the water.

One can make ones way through the entire lower level, or at least what is left of it. Some locations required crawling, as sand



The ruins of Fort Tyler (M Berhow)

and rocks blocked the path, due to settling or the deposit of silt. About one quarter of the No. 2 gun block remains, with six bolts in place. The entire seaward concrete wall and front three quarters of the block no longer exist, broken up by the surf. The front wall of the center traverse, though still intact, has one large piece broken off, but less than a quarter of the mass that once existed. The rear portion of the center traverse remains intact so that one can discern its shape. The covering over the shell hoist remains, as does the hoist shaft.

At the No. 1 block, the front wall and front of the block is similar to that at No. 2, except some pieces do remain in the water at the magazine level. Standing atop the right traverse looking north along the front wall, one can view the interior of the magazine entrances, now opening to Long Island Sound in lieu of the magazines that once stood here. The crows nest remains, though partially collapsed. The battery has settled, and the loading platform level is now about five feet above the parade. Cutting across the parade and up the steps to 5-inch emplacement No. 2, no signs of the bolts were found, the area being covered with broken concrete from surrounding walls that have collapsed.

Reboarding the *Sunbeam VI* after 30 minutes, the first group then headed back to Niantic. The day that had started out cloudy and turned to rain now turned to hazy sunshine. We departed with the realization that chances were good that we would never again set foot on the island, due to its rapid erosion and the years before St. Babs would revisit Long Island Sound. The hour-long cruise passed quickly and soon we pulled to the dock and everyone pitched in to help load additional supplies for Helen before the 20 minute ride back to the Holiday Inn, as the skipper returned to Great Gull, picked up the second group, and took them to Gardiners Point and then back to Niantic.

After dinner we returned to the Holiday Inn just as the second boat-group arrived at 7 PM, so we pushed the meeting back until 8 PM to give everyone a chance to eat. The evening opened with instructions for the vanpool and ferry to Fishers Island the next morning, followed by John Weaver's presentation on Fort Adams, RI.

#### *Friday May 2, 2003*

On the Fishers Island Ferry, attendees on the bow grabbed pictures of Fort Trumbull with the morning sun on the fort as we passed on the river. At Fishers Island we vanpooled to Mount Prospect. We then walked along the fence to the path to the rear of the single-entrance PSR for BCN 111. Some folks took the briars and flat land, others the hill and no briars, but all make it inside.

The airlock contains the floor plate to activate the air blast; inside the next rooms were the remains of a boiler and an air compressor. The plotting room still had hanging lamps with bulbs. Off the right rear of the radio and switchboard room is the emergency escape trunk. What a treat to find non-rusted ladder rungs up to the top, and across the landing to the next ladder. On each side an I-beam rested on wooden blocks with beams up to the hatch. First thought to be a way to keep the hatch cover closed against vandals, we later found the lower I-beams once had counter weights. When they were pushed down, the wood pushed up on the beams standing on end and opened the hatch at the top. No one had seen this before in any other PSR.

Departing PSR 111, we drove up to BCN 111, two 16-inch guns on barbette carriages; the tubes arrived but not the carriages. A New London company scrapped the tubes in place after the war. After viewing the No. 2 casemate, the group used the power room entrance into the central traverse magazine, opened by our escort, Rocky. The room to the right of the entrance contained a modern ventilation unit; behind it looked to be a wartime one.

The steps from the engine-room floor to the upper level were along the wall rather than perpendicular to it. We turned into the main corridor of the casemate, now more like other 100-series casemates than it appeared during the 1982 tour when still in use by the navy. At the end we took more pictures of the No. 1 casemate before making our way back through the battery. The steps along one side of the casemate, so heavily overgrown as to be invisible, lead to the BC atop the No. 2 casemate. Several attendees made the climb. An easy path down was noted off the end of the casemate. The best route up is from the far east end; the brush clears a few feet from the fence. We swung south around the casemate for pictures of the front of BCN 111.

Driving down to Mount Prospect, we took pictures of the C station with its roof and one wall now collapsing, a small dug-in fire control, B3/13S3/13, and the HECF. The HECF was not supposed to be opened for us due to its present use, but we were allowed in, and were surprised to see the structure nearly cleaned out of everything. The escape hatch was a right turn from the entrance, down the hall to a half door and then a U-turn to the left and right at the end to the hatch ladder. The same counterweight system as in PSR 111 was along the wall, this time with the counterweight still attached. Now we understood the one in the PSR. Back around and through the long north-south corridor, the offices on each side still had furniture, though they were thoroughly cleaned of any material related to the operations that had existed there for so long. Stairs led to two spotting levels, both converted by the navy later and showing little if any sign of their army use. Then we gathered outside for a group picture.

The No. 2 AA mount was across the parking lot; a second fire control, G2, was southwest of the HECF. Two earlier stations have long since fallen down the hillside. The fifth station, B2/9S2/9, well to the southeast of the HECF, almost on the edge of a ridge sticking out of the hillside, was only reached by climbing over and through considerable brush. Below this station were SL Nos. 3 and 4. A map seemed to indicate the searchlights were removed as part of the BCN 111 construction.

We went back up to photograph the SCR-296 base and then drove to BCN 214. As we exited the grounds, the searchlight





2003 St. Babs Conference attendees, Mount Prospect, Fishers Island (A Holder)

power plant was to our right under the protection of Mount Prospect. We departed the reservation, turned right, and at the end of the fence turned right again to the end of the road and a left turn. A few lots up on the right is the driveway to BCN 214, two 6-inch guns. The battery was open for us to explore the inside of the magazine. Nothing special was within except some of the mechanisms around the fan in the muffler gallery.

We drove to the end of the island, East Point, former site of a 90 mm AMTB battery. Assured that the concrete blocks were never installed, we were able to determine the location of the mobile battery.

From here it was a short ride, although too far to walk, to Hill 90, where everyone was deposited at the bottom of the driveway at the homeowner's request. We walked uphill to see the sites of four fire control stations and the SCR-296. One station, B4/13S4/13, site 1B, is now buried off the lower fork of the driveway. Around and at the top of the hill is the second station, site 1D, B4/8S4/8, exposed within a stand of trees. We had been requested not to open the hatch since one of the hinges had broken.

A little back on the hilltop is the owners' patio. Under four planters are the pylons for the SCR-296-A radar tower, Site 1G. The story goes that the contractor wanted to blast the four concrete pylons out. The homeowner a very short distance away reportedly said, "I just spent \$500,000 remodeling the house." The pylons were buried in lieu of blasting.

To the right under the corners of the pool deck are the final two fire control stations, southwest corner, Site 1F, B8/12S8/12, and southeast corner, Site 1G, B4/3S4/3. The southeast station

was easily seen at the bottom of the stairs, the southwest one was difficult to see from the deck but could be seen by crawling through the brush.

At North Hill, everyone was deposited in a neighbor's yard at the bottom of the hill, since the driveway to the top of the hill was under reconstruction. We walked up to see Battery Hackelman, two 3-inch pedestals moved from Portsmouth, NH. The BC is a short distance down the hill; just west and a little further downhill is emplacement No. 2 and then to the east, the magazine with the battery name. The magazine is open and contains an instrument pedestal bench. The magazine was quite small and empty. Further east the site of the No. 1 gun is well covered by growth.

We then drove to the airport. The Ferry District manager gave me the okay to cross the runway in a group and we headed down the dirt road paralleling the runway. At the end of the runway, we crossed together and headed for the former site of the 15-inch pneumatic dynamite gun. Today it is just a circular concrete ring in the ground about 50 west of the No. 1 emplacement of BCN 215. Not much was found of the fire control and SL stations formerly on Race Point other than some broken concrete and bricks. We returned to BCN 215 for some quick pictures of the emplacements. BC-8 atop this magazine as recently as the late 1980s was removed as a hindrance to air traffic, despite the fact that the battery sits between two runways and does not hinder operations. A few individuals made it inside BCN 215 and reported the normal empty state. The plotting board here in 1982 has been gone since the early 1990s. We then crossed the runway back to the terminal.



BCN 215, Fort H.G. Wright (M Berhow)



Dynamite battery, Fort H.G. Wright (M. Berhow)

At the terminal everyone was turned loose. Those that wanted a ride to Battery Clinton were driven there, and we left the vans in line for the 4:45 PM ferry.

Inside the mine casemate, a woman working pointed out several fort pictures on the walls. Exiting, we turned east towards Battery Hoppock, two 3-inch guns. The battery is fairly open, though with numerous items stored about. There was no sign of the wooden M'M' station west of Hoppock. Walking back, we saw the interior of the bombproof switchboard. The interior building has largely collapsed; the floors and roof came down long ago; the brick walls remain standing. One small room to the east side has not yet suffered the collapse of the larger eastern portion. We walked around the structure and to the top of the stairs added on the south side after an earlier fire. A contractor has removed the dirt below the stairs exit, leaving a three-foot drop down to the hillside.

Exiting, we turned left (south) to view the two fire control stations atop the hill. The western station, originally F1/3, later F1/2, and still later BC13, sits exposed from the front or south due to removal of the hillside that supported its front parapet. This station is now encased in concrete but is quite similar to the station further east. The hillside is heavily overgrown and walking is difficult. Departing the first station, we ultimately reached BC Battery Clinton, eight 12-inch mortars, which seemed more overgrown than the first. This station is brick, with no concrete covering.

We stopped at the parapet for a look down into Battery Clinton's mortar pits, one of which is used to store aggregate. Further downhill are the pit entrance and access to the interior. The magazines have some items stored within but are fully acces-

sible. The A pit has been completely filled in with island debris and earth, some of which is coming into the magazines. To the west, the power plant is open for the first time in all of my visits here. An arched roof provided strength to cover what is today a workshop.



Battery Clinton, Fort H.G. Wright (M Berhow)

A walk seaward allowed front photos of the fire control station that has been exposed and on the way back to the main road we went in the theater, where the local kids are getting ready for a production. This was my first time inside a nice little theater.



Theater, Fort H.G. Wright (M Berhow)

We walked down the main road past the officers quarters on the north side until we could cut across country to Battery Marcy, two 6-inch disappearing guns, with a plotting room in the traverse and overhead BC station accessed via a hatch and ladder. This battery has been sunk into the ground to eliminate the mound often seen with the Endicott period batteries.

Walking uphill via the access road into the battery brought us back to where we had headed off to see the dynamite battery. In front was Battery Dutton, three 6-inch DC, long since buried. This is the battery where a gun fired while in the loading position, taking out part of the wall in front of the muzzle. The concrete structure here may be the CRF12 site.

Down to the main road and turning west brought us past the fire control tower, F'1, later G1, on the north side of the road. Now filled with television and telephone equipment, the interior is not accessible. Further east is the access road to the compost plant now within Battery Butterfield, two 12-inch DC. The lower level has been completely filled in, and dumpsters are filled on the upper level by trucks driving up onto the parapet to unload.



Seaward of Butterfield are various piles of compost and chips. We had hoped to find signs of the 90 mm AMTB battery but nothing could be seen.

To the north, Battery Butterfield, two 12-inch DC, is completely buried except for its parapet. The BC station stands behind the battery. Next in line is Battery Barlow, two 10-inch DC with a BC behind. Several of the group found a path down the hill to Batteries Hamilton and Hoffman. A CRF station for Battery Hoffman, two 3-inch guns, is off the north edge of Hamilton. Some members made it down to Hamilton. The group then took a path into Battery Hoffman from the beach. The battery remains in good shape but almost lost in the undergrowth.



Battery Butterfield, Fort H.G. Wright (M Berhow)

We returned along the beach, back up to Hamilton, and across the larger batteries to the road. Someone made the walk from Hoffman to the north and east with no problem; keep that in mind for later use, it may be quicker.

After the ferry ride back, we drove to the hotel and the annual banquet, followed by the annual business meeting. After a short break, a slide show on Vladivostok opened with comments on the tour and Vladimir Kalinin's, Terry McGovern's and Glen Williford's work to get us out there, followed by excellent slides. Partway through, an attendee collapsed and was taken to the hospital, apparently suffering from dehydration and heat.

#### *Saturday May 3, 2003*

At the marina in Saybrook, our host, Elsa Payne of the Plum Island lab, gave us a general chat about what would happen. The crew compared our ID's to their list of attendees Elsa had prepared. We passed through Plum Gut into Plum Island harbor. When we left the boat Elsa directed us to a bus and hopped into the drivers seat. We did not know she only learned how to drive a bus a week ago. She did all right.

We headed for East Point, leaving the bus near the entrance to Battery Stoneman to take the usual walking loop around East Point. Everyone tucked in pants legs and passed around the cans of OFF and Technu for tick and poison ivy prevention before we headed for Battery Greble, two 3-inch guns on pedestal mounts. A narrow road led down to the battery. Not too many made the climb atop the battery, which is heavily overgrown. The "Shinto shrine"-type BC station is behind the battery at magazine level. Back up on the road, an orange rope led to the replacement BC station atop the hill overlooking the battery.

We proceeded east past Greble's CRF station on the edge of a bluff; brush has overtaken the path that existed a few years ago and the site is once again unreachable. Further down the road was



Battery Campbell, Fort Terry (M Berhow)

SL No. 11 and the road into the back of Battery Bradford. At the searchlight position, the rails still led to the operating position across the road. A box thought to be part of the searchlight turned out to be some kind of storage box left by the military.

At the point, the CRF station for Battery Campbell, two 3-inch guns on pedestal mounts, was just to our right but, as with the previous one, its path has become overgrown, and no one seemed to want to try to reach the structure. On the hill behind could be seen the top of BCN 217, two 6-inch guns on barbette carriages.

As we moved around the point to the southwest corner, we saw the remains of Battery Campbell, long undermined by the surf and broken apart. The No. 1 gun block is down in the surf, and the center traverse has collapsed into and in front of itself. The No. 2 gun block remains in place but from our position we could not determine how undermined it was.

As we walked west, BCN 217 was on our right and a short trail led up to the No. 2 emplacement. An intricate design is etched into the off-pink concrete, which surrounds the gun block. Extensive brush surrounds the block, but the remainder of the point could be viewed from the two blocks.

Climbing the magazine to see the battery commander's station was a different story. The brush was extremely thick and it does not appear that anyone successfully made the attempt. The BC station could also be reached from the interior via a vertical ladder in a shaft to the rear of the plotting and switchboard rooms. However, the rungs on this ladder, where they existed, were very soft and sagged under the lightest weight. This BC station is unique in that there was no exterior access into the station, only this shaft. The remainder of the battery has been used by the USDA for storage and is cluttered with junk.

Across the road from BCN 217 a trail led down to Battery Dalliba, two 3-inch guns on pedestal mounts. The battery sits on the beach, its front earthen parapet removed by erosion. The structure remains intact, unlike Campbell. To the east of the battery are the remains of SL shelter No. 12. The maintenance forces had cleared some of the brush for our visit. Thank you Elsa and USDA!

We returned to the road and continuing west; to the right were the remains of the CRF station for Battery Dalliba. While the two previous batteries had concrete CRF stations, Dalliba's wooden station has collapsed. The road continued to climb west and to the right, where Maitland's SCR-296 was. Several years

ago this area had been completely cleared, but nature has completely reclaimed it.

When we arrived back at the bus, we turned right to descend into Battery Stoneman, eight 12-inch mortars. The path down into the battery is made up of closely placed bricks, which remain in excellent shape. At the bottom of the hill we entered the tunnel that forms the entrance into the battery. On the left was the power plant, composed of several rooms. To the right a staircase changes direction four times, making one complete turn as it climbs to the crows nest atop the right flank of the battery.

Further in, the A pit was followed by the magazines, which show signs of being a dumping ground for contractors who work on the island. Material brought onto the island cannot be removed; the magazines here are one of the final storage places. B pit was used as an animal pen for many years. The second magazine on the far side looked the same as the first. The stairs ascending to the left-flank crows nest are outside the battery structure and once again, heavily overgrown.

Reversing our descent into the battery, we climbed the road to the top and turned left to follow the road east, passing several fire control stations and Batteries Kelly, Dimick, and Bradford. This area, cleared back in the mid-nineties, has also been retaken by nature. Three fire control positions on the south side now completely hidden from view once served Batteries Stoneman, Maitland, Benjamin, and Kelly.

Battery Kelly, next in line, was accessible, though overtaken by nature. Emplacement No. 1 is more easily seen; the loading platform full of dirt which has fallen in. The crows nest has been cleaned out and the adjacent CRF station is partially visible. The site of the No. 2 emplacement is filled in by an expansion of the area to the front of the emplacement for the installation of the SCR-296 radar. If one chooses to knock down the brush, the concrete pylons for the SCR can be found.

Further east are the two 6-inch batteries, first Dimick and then Bradford. Dimick is the more open of the two, while Bradford has been used as a corral and the typical gates remain. Nature has overtaken Bradford more successfully than Dimick. Both batteries have BC stations atop their center traverses, with plotting rooms below accessible by ladder from the BC. Bradford's gun platforms are raised, with rooms underneath, while Dimick was a single-story battery, with all rooms inside the center traverse.

Beyond Bradford, it is possible to break through the brush to the road on the north side of the peninsula adjacent to SL No. 11. To the rear of Bradford's BC is F'6, later B2S2 217.

Returning to the bus, we moved down to the 36-inch disappearing searchlight and mine casemate. The searchlight is the only brick structure built for 36-inch searchlights. The mechanism to raise and lower the SL remains in the lowered position in the shelter. Across the road and down the west slope of the hill is the mine casemate. Similar to 1890s-type mine casemates with operating rooms at the end of long tunnels, this casemate was transferred in 1901 and is dry compared to the earlier casemates. The east side of the side road was the site of an AA battery, whose remains have never been found. While time permitted, most ate their lunch here.

Following lunch the bus moved the group west to Battery Steele, two 10-inch DC, a design very different from any other

10-inch battery. We walked into the battery past several animal loading pens and the transformer building of the SCR radar previously visited, which has been moved here after military use - its sides and roof remain intact. Down the path we arrived at the rear of emplacement No. 1. On the right a long staircase rose up to the right-flank crows nest. To the left of the staircase began the magazines for the No. 1 gun. Around to the left a staircase led down through the battery power plant to emplacement No. 2, much lower than No. 1.



Battery Steele, Fort Terry (M Berhow)

Ascending the stairs to the No. 1 loading platform, we noted the steel and concrete overhang extending from the walls over the gun pit. The No. 1 gun was felt to need increased protection while the lower gun was not, due to the terrain. To protect them, the hoists are not in their usual position relative to the gun, but are at the end of an L-shaped corridor off the right front of the loading platform. This corridor begins under the overhang on the side of the pit, extends into the right traverse, and then turns right. The hoists are on the right side of this latter corridor. The hoists were originally balanced platform, and the Taylor-Raymond hoist is in one of the old shafts. In the left wall of the back part of the corridor are the remains of the cylindrical powder hoist. The remaining portion of this powder hoist can be seen below near the powder rooms. The ceiling of this corridor is reinforced with steel bar on the lower side for additional protection.

To the south of emplacement No. 1 are four Panama mounts and to the rear of the battery is the now collapsed wooden F'7-BC station. We descended through the center traverse, through the power plant at the lower level. This area, later a corral, has several gates. Exiting the traverse, we stood below the No. 2 loading platform, the magazines to the right. At the rear of each loading platform is a booth for firing data.

Further west was the protected fire control switchboard. A short walk uphill from the road, the site could also be reached from Battery Steele No. 1 by turning right and following the road past the BC station. The FCSB is within an outer concrete structure. Later the structure was filled with discarded equipment.

Continuing west along the road brought us to the bottom of a hill, atop which was the two-story F station, with two raised portions on each end connected at ground level. The structure sits behind an earthen parapet high enough to block the lower



level from view from the sea. We descended the hill, stopping at the main remaining cluster of buildings of the cantonment area - the fire house to the left; motor pool, guard house, hospital, and chapel to the right. To the south are the large barracks and the parade ground.



Barracks, Fort Terry (M Berhow)

We now headed south. To the right was the site of Officers Row, now no longer standing, and behind it Reservoir Hill, with four fire control stations. To the left was South Hill. At the end of the parade ground we turned left to the site of the balloon hanger and continued to Pine Point, the southeastern corner of Plum Island, and AMTB Battery No. 1, two fixed and two mobile 90 mm guns. A fixed concrete mount remains on either side of the road, along with remains of the BC station, magazines, and power room to the west. Northwest, three emergency fire control stations, M"3 F"5, and F"7, were approximately six by ten feet and six feet deep. A concrete telephone box extends outwards from the bottom of these structures. Their tops are open and several azimuth posts remain.

To the west could be seen the ruins that were once Battery Hagner, two 3-inch guns. Because they are now in the water, we did not venture out to the site.



Battery Floyd, Fort Terry (M Berhow)

Turning north, the bus dropped us off at Battery Floyd, two 6-inch DC, with a BC station atop the rear of the traverse. Reasonably clean compared to others on the island, the No. 2 emplacement was roped off, with a nuclear-hazard sign. After a quick walk through the battery the group walked north to Battery Eldridge, two 3-inch pedestals, similar to the three-inch batteries on East Point, with the same shrine-style BC behind the



Battery Eldridge, Fort Terry (M Berhow)

battery. This battery is easily accessible, though a large portion of its earthen front parapet is gone. To the left of the battery is its CRF station, whose roof has now collapsed.

The large mine storehouse remains fenced, due to its use as the island lab until the early nineties. To the east are remnants of the mine wharf. All other buildings in this area have been removed. Further north the 1921 mine casemate sits under a post-war army Quonset hut. We entered through the garage door down the trail, as the previously used bridge to the upper level of the post-war structure has been removed. The actual casemate is full of stored USDA materials, including small-animal cages.

Further up the road on the left was the M'M' station. Once easily accessible, the path now is overgrown with briars, making entry difficult. The Sewell-type structure is also full of small cages. The wood has severely deteriorated over the years. Once it was easy to walk upstairs; today the slightest weight on the steps causes them to give way. The concrete instrument pedestals can be seen, including those on the lower level that extend through the floors to the ground.

Across the road further north is the path to the top of South Hill and SL shelters No. 13 and 14. Again, a once easy path is now covered with briars, though the going is easier once the patch at the bottom is passed. Two shelters remain on either side of the crest, the turntable for the north shelter fairly clear. The operating positions for both stations are now down on the beach due to erosion of the hill. Remains of machine-gun emplacements are atop the hill, though erosion will soon claim these sites. The Sewell-type power plant is at the bottom of the hill on the west side. Visible from the road, it is nearly totally collapsed.

As time began to become a concern, we barely had time to see Reservoir Hill. We stopped at the base of the hill and were told, "You have ten minutes." Four attendees ran up the hill to B1/13 and B1/8, BCN 213 and 215, and back. We arrived at the dock at 5:05 PM. Nothing edible can leave the island, so all consumables were discarded. The boat departed ten minutes later, and after a 45-minute ride we entered the Connecticut River and head for the dock.

The workers' dinner that night was at the nearby Panda Buffet. Slide shows afterward included Terry McGovern and Glen Wil-



liford, both on New Orleans, and Peter Williamson on articles about Fort H.G. Wright.

*Sunday May 4, 2003*

Sunday morning, Jon Lincoln, head ranger at Fort Trumbull State Park, led the group inside the visitors center for a short welcoming speech and then we headed to the second floor for the movie. Afterwards we toured the museum before entering the fort, where we marveled at the way the State of Connecticut had developed this fort as a tourist site. It was clean and looked much like a just-built fort. All 20<sup>th</sup> century structures have been removed, gravel covers the parade, the casemates have been cleaned and painted, and a replica gun, carriage and crew have been placed in one casemate. The rooms in the landward casemates have been restored to their original colors, though lacking furniture.



Fort Trumbull

Upstairs, the parapet provided more wonderful views of the fort and the surrounding area. Outside the fort, North and South Batteries have been restored. South Battery contains two 10-inch smoothbore Rodman guns converted into 8-inch rifles. North Battery has one original and two rebuilt emplacements. Two more emplacements were outlined on the ground to show the layout.

It is a short ride over to Fort Griswold and some attendees chose to visit. The earthwork fort atop a high hill overlooking the Thames River was taken during the Revolution and the garrison was massacred by the British. Below the main earthwork is a later water battery and hot shot furnace. Today unarmed, some of Griswold's weapons grace parks and a military reservation in Connecticut. So ended another St. Babs conference. Thanks to all for attending.

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### Abbott Papers in Harvard Library

Henry L. Abbot (1831-1927) was the engineer officer who played a key role in the development of both American submarine mines and seacoast mortars. He was arguably the most important single influence on American seacoast defense after the Civil War. His papers reside in the Houghton Library at Harvard University (BMS AM 1447-1447).

As described in <http://oasis.harvard.edu/hou.html>, there are 20 boxes (10 linear ft.); the first 16 boxes relate to Henry Abbot. The papers include diaries, 1856-1919 (1896 lacking), correspondence, reports, essays, maps, and photographs relating to survey work in Oregon in the 1850's, flood control work on the Mississippi River, Civil War service as an engineer and head of the 1<sup>st</sup> Connecticut Heavy Artillery, torpedo experiments, and work on coastal defenses. In addition, there are several boxes of family papers not directly related to Henry Abbot.

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### San Francisco Harbor Defenses Website

A new web site on the Harbor Defenses just went on-line at [http://www.nps.gov/prsf/coast\\_defense](http://www.nps.gov/prsf/coast_defense).

After much delay and anticipation, a major set of web pages on the Coastal Defenses of San Francisco Bay are now online. These pages cover the coastal defenses for the entire Bay Area for the Spanish/Mexican, Third System, and Nike periods. The Endicott to World War II batteries are only covered for the Presidio. The next installment is forthcoming.

Will Elder  
Presidio Interpretation  
[Will\\_Elder@nps.gov](mailto:Will_Elder@nps.gov)

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Mark Howells ([markhow@oz.net](mailto:markhow@oz.net)) would like to receive an image of the gun from the Infanta Maria Teresa located across the street from the main entrance to Fort Griswold. Mark's website, Pre-Dreadnought Preservation ([www.oz.net/~markhow/pre-dred/](http://www.oz.net/~markhow/pre-dred/)), contains a page on that ship.

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### CAMP Calls for Papers

The Council on America's Military Past (CAMP) has called for 20-minute papers to be presented at their 2004 annual conference, May 5-9, 2004, to be held at the Eastland Park Hotel in Portland, ME. The emphasis will be on "the early military history of the early New England area and eastern Canada and other military in the west in the 19<sup>th</sup> century plus the entire run of United States military history from the earliest days to the French and Indian War, the Revolution, the Mexican, Civil, Spanish American and the World Wars through to the Korean, Vietnam, Grenada, Panama, Gulf Wars, and the Cold War up to today."

Send topics to: CAMP '04, Conference Papers, P.O. Box 1151, Fort Myer, VA 22211, 703 912-6124, or [camphart1@aol.com](mailto:camphart1@aol.com), by December 15, 2003.

Visit CAMP's website at <http://www.campjump.org/>.

