



Oxford Battery for 9.2-inch guns, Sydney, NS
enough variety, to satisfy anyone with an interest in fortifications.

We are asking that all who are interested in attending fill out and return the registration sheet attached to this newsletter or on the CDSG website (www.cdsg.org/events/Halifaxinfo.htm) by January 30, 2010, so we can determine if there are a sufficient number of members interested in attending. A pre-registration fee of \$100 per person is required. Actual cost of the tour will be determined at a later date. If the tour is cancelled, all money will be returned.

This is an area filled with a number of excellent fortifications. Please consider attending.

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Special Tour to the Defenses of the Cape Fear River and Beaufort Inlet, North Carolina

Text and photos by Phil Payette

The North Carolina Special Tour was organized by Phil Payette with the help of Jim McKee. We stayed at the Wilmington Holiday Inn. The weather was awesome throughout, although the area had almost 30 inches of rain just one week before our visit.

Fort Fisher is a Confederate earthwork that was later the site of a World War II military airfield. At Fort Fisher State Historic Site we were given a tour by Ray Flowers, who led us to the top of the remaining earthworks where we could view what was left of the battleground in front of the fort. Over time, significant erosion has washed away more than half of the earthworks. The landing strip and main road cut right through the land-face earthworks. A battery of 155 mm guns were located on the beach at Fort Fisher during World War II, but the only remains are a couple of concrete tower footings. Also in the vicinity was anti-aircraft artillery, most likely located slightly south at the Fort Fisher State Recreation Area and NC Aquarium. There is a concrete bunker there but we were too pressed for time to make the ferry, so we did not make the long hike to go see the bunker.



Fort Fisher

Farther south we briefly visited the remains of Battery Buchanan before boarding the ferry to Southport, where we enjoyed lunch at the Cape Fear Restaurant right on the waterfront, with a great view of the Cape Fear River entrance and Fort Caswell. After lunch we walked a couple of short blocks to see the site of Fort Johnston. Although the fortifications are no longer present, the large multi-family building there was the former officer's quarters of Fort Johnston. It is currently housing for the nearby Sunny Point military base. We then returned to our cars and headed to Brunswick Town.



Fort Johnston

In addition to the ruins of the colonial port town, Brunswick Town State Historic Site also contains Fort Anderson, an impressive Confederate earthwork. We were given a tour by Jim McKee, the interpreter at Brunswick Town, who showed us the newly discovered remains of the old fort wharf. In addition, he proudly showed us the original Confederate garrison flag they had recently acquired and now display in the museum. This was the end of our first day and we returned to our hotel.



Fort Anderson

On our second day, we visited Fort Caswell on Oak Island. Fort Caswell has the only Endicott-era batteries in the state of North Carolina. Now operated by the North Carolina Baptist Assembly, the grounds and buildings are well-maintained. Our first inspection was the old fort itself, a Third-system masonry work occupied by the Confederates during the Civil War. Unfortunately, the structure was flooded due to heavy rains the week before, and we were unable to explore the corridors and rooms.



Fort Caswell

We gathered on the parapet for our group picture, followed by exploration of Battery Caswell (two 12-inch barbette guns) and Battery Madison (one pedestal-mounted 4.72-inch quick-firing rifle) built inside the masonry work, and nearby Batteries McDonough (two 3-inch guns on pedestal mounts) and McKavett (two 3-inch guns on balanced-pillar mounts). Then we migrated toward Battery Madison (two 6-inch disappearing guns). At Battery Swift (four 8-inch disappearing guns) we were again faced with high water inside the structure. Also located here is Battery McDonough (one 5-inch balanced-pillar-mounted rapid-fire rifle). Our next stop was Battery Bagley (eight 12-inch mortars, later reduced to four). There were no problems here exploring the interior. Some of us also struggled through the overgrowth



Battery Madison



Battery Bagley



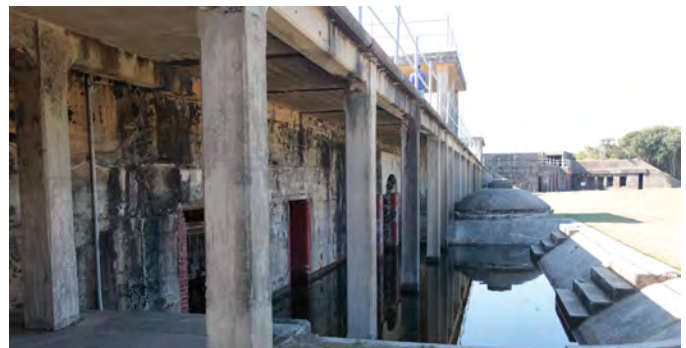
Observation Tower



Old Battery Madison and Battery Caswell



Battery Swift and Old Battery McDonough



Battery Swift



Battery Caswell

above, successfully locating the observation station on top. We briefly visited Battery Shipp (two 5-inch guns on balanced-pillar mounts) before heading out.

We ended our day at the battleship USS *North Carolina*, across from the downtown Wilmington waterfront. A self-guided tour of the ship takes you into the mighty 16-inch gun turrets, as well as below decks. Unfortunately, it is easy to get lost inside the ship, and not everyone was able to see everything.



USS North Carolina

On our third day, we drove north to Topsail Island, where we visited the Missiles and More Museum, which originally opened just for us - although waves of people came to visit, bringing some business to a place that was supposed to be closed for the day. The museum tells the story of Topsail, which largely includes the military. The US Navy used the area for missile testing during the late 1940s, and the museum itself was the missile assembly building. Along the island a series of concrete towers monitored the missiles during flight, and many of these towers were converted into beach homes. Also included in the museum's exhibits is a section on nearby Camp Davis, on the mainland near Topsail Island. Camp Davis was a major coast artillery antiaircraft training center, and although we did not visit it, remains of the camp can still be seen in and around the town of Holly Ridge. Most of it is now Marine Corps property and off-limits to the public. Everything was demolished long ago, but one can still see the paved roads and runway today. Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) flew aircraft that towed targets for the AAA gunners, whose firing ranges were at Topsail and Fort Fisher. Camp Davis was also used by the US Navy during its missile testing days at Topsail Beach.



Topsail Missile Museum

Finally, we finished our tour at Fort Macon State Park in Atlantic Beach. Fort Macon was a Third-system masonry work occupied by the Confederates. This popular and attractive state park offers a great view of the ocean and Beaufort Inlet, although once again, high water flooded some of the outer works. Fort Macon was also used during World War II, but the only remains of that period are the ruins of the concrete plotting room near the site of the 6-inch gun battery that protected a nearby navy base. Also of note, two ML mortars were emplaced at the old fort during the Spanish-American War and some evidence of this emplacement still remains.



Fort Macon



Fort Macon

In the distance was Cape Lookout, a World War II military reservation. Formerly the site of a 5-inch battery, there are no remains left of the installation and we did not visit there, as the tour came to an end.

tour attendees were Phil Payette, Doug Binau, Steven Combs, Elliot Deutsch, Dale Floyd, Dave Hancock, Alex Holder, Jim McKee, Gary Paliwoda, Bolling Smith, and John Weaver.



North Carolina Tour attendees at Fort Caswell



Lorraine France Tour attendees at GO Michelsberg