



Officer's club (Rebecca McGovern 2011)



Former engineer depot (USCG station)
(Rebecca McGovern 2011)

company barracks constructed in 1894 and the hospital complex have been consigned to demolition by neglect and have been fenced off to let them collapse in place. See accompanying photographs. If uses for these buildings and quarters cannot be found then they will disappear. The former torpedo school and engineer depot (mine complex) buildings are used by the US Coast Guard for their small boat base. These structures continue to be used as does the ball fields over the former Battery King (8 x 12-inch mortars) which was buried in 1935. The US Army Reserve continue to maintain its area of Fort Totten but this part of the post has a large 1960's reserve center and supporting warehouses. A Friends of Fort Totten Parks group (www.fort-tottenparks.org) has been formed to support the development of the local park and related passive recreational experiences, cultural events, educational programs, and other community needs. The Fort Totten Officers' Club, known as "the Castle," is now the home to the Bayside Historical Society, which hosts events, historic exhibitions, and cultural programs. This iconic building is a replica of the Army Corps of Engineers symbol and it was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1986. The CDSG has no local representative or member for Fort Totten since Jack Fein passed away. It would be great if we could locate local members to support the interpretation and preservation of Fort Totten, especial to promote the value of historic coast artillery buildings and structures.

Growing Up on Long Island During WW-II

Notes received along with a donation to the CDSG Fund.

James J. Moore, Jamaica, N.Y.

"I grew up alongside Fort Tilden, Rockaway Point, L. I., N. Y., with 16" guns booming and 8" guns firing at German U-Boats at night along the coast.

(There were) huge mine fields to protect N.Y. Harbor. Destroyer *USS Turner* blew up when it hit a mine off shore our dummy lighthouse. (It) still stands – an artist's delight today. But I remember the secretive lads who manned during WW-II and extra Coast Artillery Regt. (were added) after German spies were captured at Amagansett, L.I. with deadly plans for N.Y.C.

There was so much heavy lube oil from sunken tankers we could rarely swim! Wreckage of ships came in on every tide! Bodies too – with sea gulls pecking away at them!

(There were) endless convoys & air patrols & blimps overhead. (There were) great moments when *Queen Mary* & *Queen Elizabeth* sailed with 14,000 troops aboard – Endless black-outs & dim-outs.

I became an air raid warden as a teenager (because) there were no men left to serve."



2011 CDSG Annual Conference Harbor Defenses of Narragansett Bay March 29-April 3, 2011

Chris Zeeman

Tuesday, March 29

The attendees checked into conference headquarters, the Best Western/Mainstay Inn, Newport, RI. After a briefing by the conference organizer, Karl Fritz presented a discussion on the 1883 sham battle in Newport Bay. Following the talk, everyone had a chance to socialize, renew old friendships, and create new ones.

Wednesday, March 30

At 0745 hrs., the group gathered on the wharf at Fort Getty for the short boat ride over to Fort Greble on Dutch Island. Fort Greble contains a number of Endicott batteries as well as some



Conference attendees in front of the entrance to Fort Adams (Alex Holder)



Landing at Dutch Island (Chris Zeeman)



Civil War warthworks on Dutch Island (Chris Zeeman)

unique elements, including "Lower Battery" (11 Rodman ML guns), "Middle Battery" (6 Rodman ML guns), and earthworks built by the 14th Rhode Island Heavy Artillery (Colored) in 1863. A typically brisk bay breeze helped cool us while we waited for Captain Doug and the Jamestown Ferry, which arrived on schedule and transported us over to the island in two trips. CDSG members fanning out over the island benefitted from the hard work of the conference organizer (myself), Jack McCormack (Fort

Adams Trust), and Andy Grant (Fort Mott State Park). The three of us spent about 5 hours the previous day clearing and marking trails on the island. Note that it was 30 degrees Fahrenheit when we pushed off too row/paddle over! The markings we put out were very effective in keeping people from getting disoriented on the heavily overgrown island.



Lower Battery, Dutch Island (Chris Zeeman)

After returning from Dutch Island, members toured Fort Getty, Prospect Hill, and Fort Burnside. At Fort Getty, Batteries Tousard (3 x 10"DC) and House (2 x 6 "P) have been buried up to the parapet level. At Battery Whiting (2 x 3"P), the CRF station has collapsed and is heavily overgrown. One bolt circle from the AMTB battery was visible, having been used as a fire pit.

At Prospect Hill, a walking path has been built and interpretive signs installed. Six in-ground fire control stations have been cleared off, but are well sealed. The path also loops by Conanicut Battery, a Revolutionary War earthwork, which has also been cleared.



Battery Tousard, Fort Getty (Mark Berhow)

At Fort Burnside, we were able to visit the magazines of Battery 213 (2 x 6" BC), but not the interior of the HECP structure. (New) Battery Whiting (2 x 3" BC) was cleared, but the magazine and BC station were well sealed.



HECP at Fort Burnside (Chris Zeeman)

Evening presentations commenced around 1945 hrs. John Weaver spoke on the land defenses of Fort Adams and also previewed the 2012 Great Lakes Conference. Subsequently, Dan Malone presented his photos of little known, hard-to-access sites in Panama.

Thursday, March 31

The morning started with a tour of Newport sites. Our first stop was the museum of the Newport Artillery Company. Our route from the hotel to the museum took us past Equality Park, site of a 4.7" Armstrong gun, complete with shield. This gun was originally in Battery Talbot at Fort Adams. In addition, members



4.7 inch Armstrong (Mark Berhow)



Newport Artillery Company Museum (Mark Berhow)

visited the Panama mount at Brenton Point State Park. At 0945 hrs. the group gathered at Fort Adams's parking lot. Once again we boarded the Jamestown Ferry for a brief boat ride over to Rose Island, home of partially completed, Second-System Fort Hamilton. Rose Island was subsequently used by the navy as part of the torpedo station. In addition, there are concrete emplacements and magazines for 3 x 5" AA, built during World War Two.

Returning from the island, participants broke for lunch and reconvened at 1300 hrs. at the main gate to the old fort. In addition to touring the main fort, tunnels, and outer works, we also visited the exterior barbette battery and Endicott Batteries Bankhead (3 x 6" Armstrong) and Talbot (2 x 4.7" Armstrong). Interspersed between the later Endicott batteries are four Rodman-era magazines from the barbette battery. Hard work by volunteers had uncovered the last remaining 15" Rodman position, No. 403, so we could view it.



Fort Adams (Mark Berhow)

From the main fort, we stopped by the combined mortar Batteries Edgerton/Greene, on our way to the Advanced Redoubt, part of the original Third-System works that anchored a system of defenses stretching back to the main fort. At the redoubt, we were able to view the newly stabilized double staircase and access the roof. The staircase project was a partnership between the CDSG Fund, individual CDSG members, and the Fort Adams Trust. In addition, ladders were provided so that participants could visit the outer ditch galleries, as well as the inner ditch, and the AA position atop the inner wall. By the time the group arrived at the redoubt, the weather had turned from a drizzle into a sleet/snow mix - giving everyone a small taste of New England! Sleet turned to all-out snow during the evening presentations, leaving a light covering on the ground.



Outerworks, Fort Adams (Mark Berhow)



Battery Reilly, Fort Adams (Mark Berhow)



Entering the Advance Redoubt (Mark Berhow)



The repaired stairs at the Advance Redoubt (Mark Berhow)

Friday, April 1

By morning, the snow had gone, but the damp weather continued, along with a stiff breeze. The day started with Fort Greene at Point Judith, RI. At Fisherman's Memorial Campground, the group visited Battery 109 (2 x 16" BC) and its once-disguised silo-style BC tower. On the south reservation, we visited Battery 211 (2 x 6" BC) as well as the last remaining FC cottage at nearby Camp Cronin. From Fort Greene, we proceeded to Camp Varnum, stopping for lunch along the way. Camp Varnum is still an active Rhode Island National Guard facility, and the buildings are in fairly good condition. The camp contains four separate cottage-style fire control stations, and the gun blocks for three gun batteries: House (2 x 6" BC), AMTB 921 (4 x 90 mm), and Armistead (2 x 3" BC).



Entering Battery 109 (Chris Zeeman)



Fire control structures at Camp Varnum (Chris Zeeman)

From Camp Varnum, we travelled north to Fort Kearny, now home to a branch campus of URI. Since the batteries were still in use, we could only view them from the outside. From Fort Kearny, we returned to Jamestown Island to visit Fort Wetherill, our last stop of the day. The submarine mine complex at the fort has been completely renovated as office space for DEM. The other parts of the fort, however, are fairing much worse. The main gun line is coated in graffiti and overgrown with brush.



Battery French emplacement, Fort Kearny (Mark Berhow)



Fort Wetherill (Chris Zeeman)

Saturday, April 2

Saturday started with a visit to Little Compton, RI. Fort Church is spread between three separate tracts of land (East, West, and South). We started with the West reservation, site of Battery Gray (2 x 16" BC), at the Sakonnet Golf Club. This was the first time the group had been permitted to visit and tour the interior of the battery. Next, we moved to Battery 212 (2 x 6" BC), now the beautiful home of Mr. David Haffenreffer. We were graciously invited to tour the magazine spaces which the owner has turned into a private museum. Finally we toured the sad remains of Battery Reilly (2 x 8" BC), now completely buried. In addition, a new home has been built over the PSR for Battery Reilly and its entrance is now completely sealed as well. From Battery Reilly, we traveled to Mishaum Point, MA, and Battery 210 (2 x 6" BC). A large, expensive vacation home has been built atop the battery, but the magazine spaces can still be accessed via Emplacement No. 1. The interior of the magazine



Overhead rails in Battery Gray (Chris Zeeman)



Switchboard in Battery 210 (Chris Zeeman)



The entrance to Battery 210 at Mishaum Point (Chris Zeeman)

has begun to collect a lot of water, but we were able to see the remains of original stenciling and switchboard equipment racks. In addition, the center of a Panama mount was visible on the lawn - painted white apparently as a decoration.

Leaving Battery 210, we travelled to Fort Rodman, in New Bedford, MA, where we toured the newly expanded museum at the park. In addition, the folks at Fort Rodman allowed us full access to the Third-System fort, which not normally open to the public. Members were then able to view the rest of the Endicott period structures at their own pace. After touring Fort Rodman, we returned to the hotel for the annual dinner banquet and business meeting. The end of the business meeting marked the end of the annual conference.



Fort Rodman (Chris Zeeman)

Sunday, April 3 (Add-on Day 1)

Our first add-on day visited the coastal defenses along the Connecticut/Rhode Island shoreline. Our first stop was Fort Trumbull in New London, CT. The fort has been the beneficiary of nearly \$25 million from the state, and is now a sparkling example of Third-System architecture. Superintendent Jonathan Lincoln was on hand to unlock areas of the fort not normally open to the public. He then accompanied us across the river to Groton, CT. Fort Griswold there is a Revolutionary War-era earthwork, with a later Civil War-era water battery as well. Mr. Lincoln was kind enough to open up the nearby, newly renovated Groton Monument and Museum. Many of the group braved the long, confined climb up the spiral staircase to get a bird's eye view of the works from the top of the monument.

After Fort Griswold, we travelled to our last site for the day, Fort Mansfield, at Watch Hill, RI. About 10 members made the trek out to the fort and visited Batteries Wooster (2 x 8" DC) and Crawford (2 x 5" BP). On the hike back, we were able to view the sad remains of Battery Connell (2 x 5" P) in the surf. Following our visit to Fort Mansfield, the group enjoyed refreshments in the hospitality of member Peter DeRose's home.



Fort Griswold (Chris Zeeman)



Battery Wooster, Fort Mansfield (Chris Zeeman)



Pete DeRose views the remains of Battery Connell (Chris Zeeman)

Monday, April 4 (Add-on Day 2)

Our destination for the second add-on day was Plum Island, NY, former site of Fort Terry. The island is now inhabited by an animal disease laboratory run by the Department of Homeland Security. The weather was overcast and gray, with drizzling showers. During this visit, we were not allowed to get within 10 feet of any concrete and were not permitted to walk under any concrete overhangs. This limited our ability to visit batteries such as Battery Stoneman, and we were not permitted to enter any structures, with the exception of the large combined fire control near the cantonment area. Our hosts provided us with lunch and drinks, as well as an informative briefing on the mission of the lab. They even went to the extent of clearing a path to one of the batteries

we wanted to visit with a tractor, while we were at lunch. Despite the restrictions, everyone had a good time. Despite some initial commotion, the excellent behavior of the group bolstered our good reputation. One clear lesson learned was that all future conference attendees must follow the directions of the event organizer and the directions of security personnel when visiting government facilities!

This closed the 2011 CDSG annual conference. Despite some challenges from the weather, both the history and the fellowship were excellent, and the response of the participants was overwhelmingly positive. We are grateful to all the individuals and organizations that contributed to the successful conference.



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George Island 6-inch Navy gun

Matthew Hunter

I recently made a trip to George Island with the US Forest Service to inspect the 6-inch gun that was emplaced there to defend the navy section base at an old cannery in Port Althorp. I am making a trip to Anchorage in a few weeks for training and will spend one day at the National Archives Alaska office when I am there to see what I can learn about this gun. The only document that I have that mentions it is the "Narrative History of Construction in Alaska: Fort Ray." It mentions that the navy obtained three of these guns to defend their installations in Sitka. Two were given to the army and emplaced at Shoals Point (I have located the emplacements: www.sikaww2.com/harbordefenses/Locations/shoalspt/shoalsptallen.html). The other gun was used to defend Port Althorp.

The gun is in decent shape, but its breech block has been removed and it is in an unnaturally depressed position. Faint red lettering on the barrel reads "Brigadier." The "igloo-type" ammunition magazine behind the gun is an iron half-cylinder, with no backfill over it.

Enjoy the photos. I included one of the lettering on the side of the gun and another of the bolt pattern. The emplacements at Shoals Point only have the outer ring of bolts.

There are two more of these guns on "Cannon Beach" in Yakutat. Those barrels were cut in half.



6-Inch Navy gun on George Island
(All photos by Matthew Hunter)





Attendees of the 2011 CDSG Conference at Naragansett Bay, RI in front of Fort Adams.



Rodman battery on Dutch Island, RI