

tion with the Smithsonian Institution, two others are on display, in excellent condition. A battery control tower erected behind Battery 234 is in dangerous condition and vehicle access to the loop where Batteries 234 and Cooper are located is closed. You can however visit the batteries on foot.

Battery Cooper mounted two M1903 6-inch guns on M1903 disappearing carriages. The original guns were removed but again with the cooperation of the Smithsonian Institution, another 6-inch gun is mounted there now. The gun is in very good condition and has obviously been very well maintained.

Battery Worth was the only mortar battery at Fort Pickens. It contained two pits with four M1890 12-inch mortars on M1896 carriages in each pit. The mortars are gone but the pits are in good condition. Between the pits was the battery commander's position and the HECP/HDCP, with an observation tower. The tower has some of the nicest views of the Gulf of Mexico and Pensacola Bay. Across Pensacola Bay is the large Naval Air Station Pensacola, and navy aircraft, including the Blue Angels, can often be seen flying over Fort Pickens.

Battery Loomis Langdon, built in 1917-1921 and transferred in 1923, contained two 12-inch M1895 cannon on BCLR carriages, protected by 10 to 17 feet of concrete. The battery was built with sand protection for the front of the battery and during WW2, the rear of the battery also covered with sand. The battery is not open to the public and is used for storage.

Fort Pickens has a very nice campground a short distance from the fort, near Battery Worth. The bathrooms are new and the site is very well maintained.

While touring the fort and reading the literature, some questions came to mind about the Civil War. At the outbreak of the war, the commanding officer of the Union forces in Pensacola, Lieutenant Slemmer, transferred all his men from Fort Barrancas to Fort Pickens. The Confederates demanded the surrender of Fort Pickens, but Lt. Slemmer refused. Four months later reinforcements arrived and after a battle on Santa Rosa Island, Fort Pickens remained under Union control for the remainder of the war, denying the Confederacy the use of the port and dockyards.

A few questions came to mind:

Did the Confederacy not realize the Union would be able to blockade the south as well as they did, so the loss of a single port was not significant?

How did the reinforcements arrive at Fort Pickens? Did they sail into the harbor under the guns of Forts Barrancas and McRee? If not did they land the supplies along the coast through the surf?

If the supplies arrived along the coast, why did not the confederates have men and weapons in place to repel them?

If Fort Pickens had been captured by the Confederates, they would have had an excellent dockyard and port that were well fortified, even better than Mobile Bay. Could this have changed the outcome of the war?

All of the information contained in this article were obtained through the plaques at the fort and publications of the National Park Service, along with my own observations.

## A Brief Visit to Fort Drum, Manila Bay – February 2, 2020

Terry McGovern

I had the opportunity to briefly visit Fort Drum, the “concrete battleship,” on El Fraile Island in Manila Bay on February 2, 2020. It had been 14 years since I last visited this very special fort, so I was anxious to learn its current condition. I had heard stories that the fort was wasting away due to continuing exposure to the ocean environment and possible attacks by scrappers. I was able take the direct approach to this abandoned fort via helicopter, so sea conditions were not a factor. We (helicopter pilot and Rolf Thoendel) were able to spend about 30 minutes on the fort.



We first visited the upper deck of the fort where the two 14-inch turrets are the dominant feature. The primary change on these turrets since my last visit was the deterioration of the steel. Advanced rusting has turned the steel very brittle and patches of spalling were evident, resulting in piles of rust on the deck. A very sad development on the upper turret (Battery Wilson) was the collapse of the interior mantel along with the two 14-inch barrels; they are now vertical inside the turret well (all the interior turret decks had been scrapped years ago). The lower turret (Battery Marshall) showed the same rust problems as the upper turret, while the barrels are showing more deterioration as the wire-wound barrels are breaking down. The concrete deck appears to have more rubble and the concrete seems more brittle than during my visit in 2006.





Moving to the large hole in the deck caused by the explosion of Battery McCrea's magazines (two casemated 6-inch guns), we climbed down into the remains of the casemate. The deterioration of the steel is most evident as rust penetrates and corrodes the metal. The two-level casemate now has little steel flooring remaining, with only the heavy steel pieces, such as the armored shields and base sections of the mounts, still intact. Passing through the concrete wall onto the main deck where the barracks area was located, the scene has not changed much, though it felt like the floor has more distortions than before.



Access to the sally port remains the same, though the concrete seems more weathered. Walking down the stairs to the lower dorm area allowed us to access the turret wells to view the fallen 14-inch barrels of Battery Wilson. The floor as you approach the

turret well for the forward battery (Battery Marshall) has fallen a bit further onto the magazine deck below, limiting the floor area which you can explore. Walking down to the magazine and mess deck, we were able to look into the engine room, which is still full of water. The lack of strong flashlights limited our view of these spaces. Standing water at the storage tank and engine room deck stopped us from exploring this level.



Returning to the barracks deck, we visited the 6-inch casemate for Battery Roberts. The remaining 6-inch barrel is still lodged in the upper casemate, but the delamination and fragmentation of that barrel is well advanced. The deterioration of both the concrete and steel is apparent from comparing my 2020 photographs to the ones I took in 2006. We did not see any recent scraping of steel at Fort Drum, but the damage from the past has severely



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## An Afternoon Visit to Fort Wint, Grande Island, Subic Bay – February 2, 2020

Terry McGovern

I had the opportunity to spend an afternoon visiting the former Fort Wint on Grande Island in Subic Bay on February 2, 2020. It had been 14 years since I last visited this island fort so I was anxious to learn its current condition. The US Navy had returned this property to the Philippine Government in 1991 and since that time the bulk of the island has been operating as a resort (with long periods of closure). The Grande Island Resort had just reopened and we were invited to visit. We traveled to the island fort by car, boat, and helicopter from Manila, so it was a complex operation to reach the island. We (Rolf Thoendel, Mariusz Jachimowicz, and our driver, Rex) were able to spend about 4 hours visiting the former fort.

We gathered at the main dock area on the island to meet our host, Ruth Daguyos Roque, the Sales and Marketing Manager for the Grande Island Resort. Ruth and her team were wonderful hosts that put up with our requests to visit as many coast defense structures as we could in the short time we had on the island. Ruth hosted us to an excellent lunch served family style. The food was great and combined with the refreshments we almost did not want to explore the remains of Fort Wint. Ruth provided a jeepney with driver to take us to each site so very

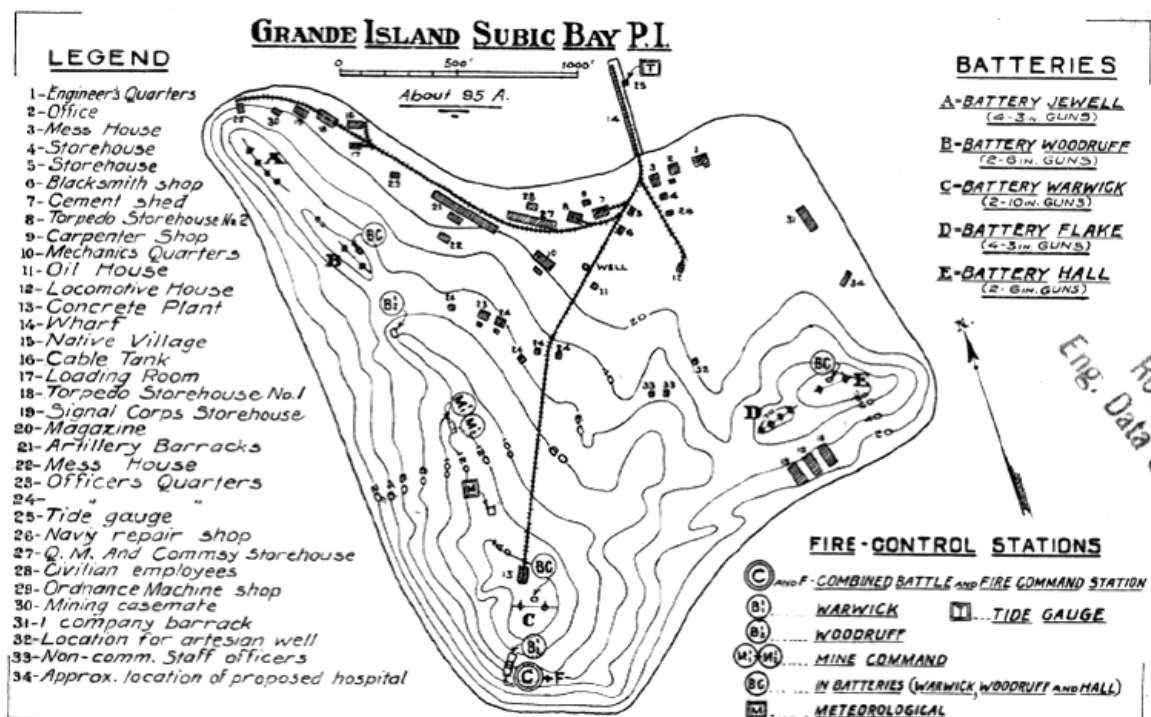


compromised the entire interior structure. We climbed up to the upper deck by tracing our steps back to Battery McCrea's casemate. With one last look around the upper deck, we climbed into our helicopter to return to Manila. It was sad to leave Fort Drum abandoned and deteriorating, without knowing when we would have the opportunity to visit this wonderful fort again.



Mine Casemate





little hiking was required during our tour. Our first stop was the former mine casemate on the very north end of the island. The large protected structure had been clean-out since I was last on the island. The cinder blocks covering the main door had been removed and interior lighting had been installed. The resort plans for this structure to become a museum of the island's history. The casemate is near the water and located next to several beach villas. Our next stop was Battery Jewell (4-3 in PM) on the ridge line above the mine casemate. Ruth had arranged for the resort's staff to clear half of the battery so we could easily walk around the emplacement. The battery once contained four 3-inch M1903 guns, but today the battery is abandoned with several magazines containing machinery from the post-war US Navy.

The jeepney took us down the dirt road to the next battery in line (Battery Woodruff) but we ended up at Battery Hall (2-6 in DC). The Grande Island resort folks only knew of one 6-inch battery on the island. Battery Hall retains its two 6-inch M1905 guns on M1905 disappearing carriages, making this location the

highlight of our visit to the island fort. The battery's transverse magazine had exploded in 1945 due to American bombing of the island, though the Japanese made no effort to use these guns in defending Subic Bay. Luckily, the two guns received limited



Battery Jewell



Battery Hall



damage so we could photograph and climb on them. I asked Ruth if we could take one of the guns with us back to the States and she told me I need to talk with the leadership of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority as they owned the island. Given the 6-inch gun size and weight I doubted it would fit in my overhead bin on the return trip. The guns themselves looked much the same at my last visit, though with no care, you could tell rusting was slowly eating into the steel. Adjacent to the 6-inch battery is the former Battery Flake (4-3 in PM). The battery was abandoned, without armament, and cleared of brush, but several large trees were impacting the battery's concrete. We posed for a group photo at Battery Flake with Ruth and her team.



Battery Flake



Our next target was Battery Warwick (2-10 in DC), although the Grande Island Resort folks were unfamiliar with such a place. We describe the big concrete structure painted white so they took us around the island again. They took us to a trail to Battery Warwick (according to our hosts). We tried this trail which took us to the remains of the fort commander's station and Battery Warwick's primary fire control station. The lower station was missing so we climbed up to the upper station to explore. Repeating our search of Battery Warwick, I directed the



Battery Warwick

jeepney to the rear of the battery this time. The rear entrance had a locked gate, so we sought out the guards (a doppler VOR ground station covers the top of the emplacement) to see if they would open the gate for us to visit the former battery. The guards declined to let us visit and take photographs the battery without permission from the Subic Bay International Airport authorities. Back onboard our jeepney, we continued our battery hunt for the last-named battery on the island, Battery Woodruff (2-6 in DC). As our host had no idea where this battery was located, I gave them direction. The road to battery was not often used, so it had become overgrown. The battery itself was only a fragment of its original construction due to a post war explosion of its magazine. A couple of sailors thought it was a good location for a smoke, instead it was a deadly experience for them and tragic one for the battery. The battery site was also used by the US Navy for a post-war service structure so only the battery's parapet wall remains today. The site is the resort's dump, so even seeing the parapet wall was difficult. Our hosts had no idea this was the location of a former 6-inch battery.



Battery Woodruff

We had now used up all the time we had for our tour as we needed to return to Manila to join the main CDSG tour to Corregidor. Our wonderful host took us to the main dock where their speedboat was waiting to take us back to the former Subic Bay Naval Station. The 20-minute boat ride brought us to Rex's car. Rex now undertook the four-hour drive to our hotel in the heart of Manila. We arrived back just as the main tour group was checking into the hotel after arriving from Los Angeles. It was great to see Fort Wint again and it was reassuring that the surviving coast defenses were stable since my last visit. The operators of the Grande Island Resort show great interest in the history of the island and they wanted to interpret these defenses to generate more business for their island resort. They would welcome more CDSG members visiting the island fort in the future.





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## 2020 CDSG Special Tour to Corregidor

Andy Grant

On February 2, 2020, a dedicated and determined group from the Coast Defense Study Group met at the Sun Cruises terminal in Manila - destination: Corregidor. With the threat of continued eruptions from the Taal Volcano and the beginning of what would become the COVID19 pandemic, 24 fortification enthusiasts boarded the *MV Sun Cruiser II* and our adventure began in earnest.

Upon arrival on Corregidor, we started our tour at Middleside, first stopping at the water reservoir and then Middleside Barracks. Middleside Barracks's deterioration seems to be accelerating. The metal support frames added to stabilize the structure do not seem to have worked as well as planned, only slightly delaying the inevitable. Grass around the barracks and in many places around the island is no longer maintained, other than what can be eaten by a small herd of goats. The once grand Middleside Parade Ground where the 60th Coast Artillery drilled is now an impenetrable meadow of tall grass, and the YMCA is almost completely obscured. From Middleside we traveled to Battery Way and it's four 12-inch mortars, offering the group its first sight of the big guns remaining on Corregidor. After lunch at a new dining facility adjacent to the lighthouse, we concluded the day touring the remains of Battery Ramsey and roadside machine gun positions.

After this introduction to the island, we checked into our rooms at the Corregidor Inn. In the past 18 months, the Corregidor Inn underwent a massive renovation. The revamped floor plan of the lobby and dining area resulted in better use of the space, including the addition of a meeting room, which we used for evening presentations. The individual rooms were outfitted with new beds and furniture, and the old, noisy, in-wall air conditioners

were replaced with quiet split units. Dinner and breakfast were served in the Inn's dining room or on the scenic lanai. In all, the renovations are a vast improvement over what we experienced on previous trips.

Over the next few days, the group visited all the major batteries and some of the ancillary sites on the island. From Topside to the "Tail" we saw every named battery and major point of interest. On Thursday, the plan had been to visit Fort Hughes on Caballo Island, but although we made multiple attempts to gain permission to land and tour the island, the Philippine Navy denied access. While on Corregidor, local news outlets reported that Caballo Island would be accepting quarantined individuals returning from China. Instead of traveling to Caballo, the group took a scenic banca trip across Manila Bay. After an early-morning departure, we circled El Fraile Island (Fort Drum) and Carabao Island (Fort Frank). Fort Frank had little to offer in views of the historic fortifications as the jungle has overtaken most of what the scrappers left behind. Fort Drum, on the other hand, provided the group an outstanding subject to be photographed, especially as the cloud cover gave way to brilliant sunshine as we passed the "Concrete Battleship" on our way back to Corregidor. The final leg of the banca trip brought us by Caballo Island to see what we could of Fort Hughes before enjoying a boxed lunch while anchored off of Searchlight Point.

All in all, the CDSG tour of Corregidor was a great success even as it turned to a race against the clock when COVID19 travel restrictions began to mount. Some members had to depart early to ensure they would be able to make connections home. When travel restrictions ease, and if an opportunity to travel to Corregidor presents itself to you, I strongly encourage you to take it. The island's jungle is taking back the once mighty fortress and returning it to nature. The fortifications and historic structures may not be accessible or standing for much longer.