

The CDSG Newsletter



The Coast Defense Study Group, Inc. – Summer 2026



Chairman's Message

Ned Libby

Members – As I write this, I'm sure I join many of you in a period of recovery from the demanding 2026 Annual Conference, held for the first time on the Hawaiian island of Oahu. Reflecting on the history of the unique sites we saw during the Conference and the add-on day, we can bring into focus the extraordinary developments on Oahu as the Hawaiian Islands joined the US, defenses were prepared, and the US defeated the Japanese Empire. We owe our conference experience completely to Terry McGovern's detailed coordination over at least two years, overcoming all of the many difficulties presented by government organizational protocols and emergency weather conditions. We must also note the excellent logistics support provided by Terry's wife Meg and their three daughters. In the end, the US Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and the State of Hawaii came to our support, furnishing not only access but on-site leadership, medical, safety, transportation, and site preparation support, and making new friends, even members, for the CDSG. Glen Williford's presentation to government personnel demonstrating the depth of CDSG background on Oahu fortifications significantly contributed to energizing our government support. The conference also enjoyed Glen's presentation, as well as several other presentations by Conference attendees, including the first presentation in recent memory by a serving government military historian, new CDSG member Dr. Jenna Scholz of the U.S. Army Museum of Hawaii at Fort DeRussy, where we also visited. Looking back at the events of December 1941, the conference illuminated how the Coast Artillery branch fulfilled its deterrent mission to protect the Navy's forward-most fleet anchorage -- while the Japanese Navy was able to attack with new naval air and submarine technology, it is clear that they dared not bring their powerful surface fleet within range of Coast Artillery guns. We saw also the innovative spirit of Coast Artillery personnel during conflict, significantly expanding defenses, including by adapting available naval turrets to serve island defense needs. In sum, Oahu is a special place to consider the historic role and accomplishments of the Coast Artillery Corps, and the CDSG made the most of this opportunity.

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Coast Defense Study Group Annual Business Meeting – 9 May 2026

Ned Libby and Paul Prentiss

A debt of gratitude is owed to Terry McGovern and his family for organizing and running this conference by the membership of the CDSG. It was a long arduous process of juggling military, municipal, state and private contacts who would have liked nothing better than not to have us visit their site. Thanks to his diligence the conference was a success and I think enjoyed by all.

CDSG Meeting and Tour Calendar
Please advise Terry McGovern of any additions or changes at tcmcgovern@att.net

2027 CDSG Conference

Last week of April - First week of May
Narragansett Bay, Rhode Island
Chris Zeeman, c_zeeman@hotmail.com

2028 CDSG Special Tour

May
Bermuda
Terry McGovern, tcmcgovern@att.net

2028 CDSG Conference

San Francisco, California
Mark Berhow, berhowma@comcast.net

2029 CDSG Conference

To Be Determined

Other Meetings and Tours

August 22 - 31, 2026
ECCOFORT Study Tour
Silesia
Hans-Rudolf Neumann hrv.neumann@t-online.de

September 17 - 22, 2026
Association Saint-Maurice d' Etudes Militaries Study Tour
Brittany France
Col. EMG Schalbetter, president@www.asmem.ch

September 18 - 21, 2026
Fortress Study Group Study Tour
NW Ireland
David Clarke, chair@fortressstudygroup.org

September 2026
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Festungsforschung Annual Meeting
Andreas Kupka, AKupka@Juelich.de

September 2026
Association Vauban Study Tour
Alain MONFERRAND contact@association-vauban.org

October 2026
Fortress Study Group Annual Conference
David Clarke, chair@fortressstudygroup.org

October 2026
International Fortress Council Annual Meeting
Jeroen van der Werf,
secretariat@internationalfortresscouncil.org

October 14 - 17, 2026
Forte Cultura Symposium
Malta
Fliippo Cailotto, mireille.stubbings@um.edu.mt

June 2 -5, 2027
Association Vauban Annual Conference
Belfort, France
Alan Monferrand, contact@association-vauban.org

Remembering Departed Active Members... Joel Eastman, John D. P. Bennett, and Quentin W. Schillare, LTC (USA, Ret'd).

Membership Glen Milam

As of Sunday, April 26, we have:

- 356 members that have paid for 2026.
- 60 Individual Members are not current with their membership dues for 2026.
- We have 13 New members since Dec. 1, 2025.

Last Year we had 416 Active Members (paid thru 12/31/2025) (including 18 Organizations).

CDSG Publications Mark Berhow

With the passing of Quentin Schillare, we have lost another active author. We have enough material to get us through 2026 and into 2027, but we need more authors to submit articles for publication in the Journal and the Newsletter. A few brave souls have volunteered to start writing.

CDSG Press Terry McGovern

The Press continues to sell its books and wearables. The CDSG Press has completed a companion to "American Seacoast Defenses: A Reference Guide" (ASD3). This publication is titled "**American Seacoast Forts: A Directory with Period Military Maps 1890 - 1950**". This work (ASF) focuses on the history, key features, location, and the current status/access of each American coast defense fort (using site maps and old & current aerial photos). The books also include an introduction, battery histories, and many period military maps, filling over 1,200 pages -- issued in four geographic volumes, both as POD hard cover books and a digital edition available as a download.

CDSG ePress: Terry McGovern

We have reached a milestone of 40 years of CDSG Publications!

We have added "Volume 39" (2025) of the *Coast Defense Journal* and *CDSG Newsletter* to our list of back issues.

This volume is only available via a USB drive or by download which contains our entire *Journal/News* collection, which represents over 17,500 pages of coast defense articles for only \$50.

Once you purchase this USB/download, CDSG Publications 1985-2025, you can receive free yearly updates via request to info@cdsg.org.

Our coast defense document collections, known collectively as "Harbor Defense Document" (such as Reports of Completed Works, Engineer Notes, Quartermaster, and Annexes) is also avail-

able under our CDSG ePress label in PDF format (see references page at our web site at cdsg.org).

These USB/download files are a digital collection of the key National Archives coast defense documents.

These are great reference items and can help you write articles for our *Coast Defense Journal*.

The complete collection of these digital files is available for \$250.

Single harbor defenses collection of these documents is also available at the cost of \$50 on a USB drive or download.

A companion digital product is our "CDSG Documents" USB/Dropbox with a great collection of key coast artillery reports and manuals as well as the CDSG organizational documents for only \$50.

OUTREACH & REPRESENTATIVES Norm Scarpulla

CDSG promotes education, preservation, and interpretation of seacoast fortifications. Local interest makes things happen, CDSG site representatives are links to owners, managers, & locals See the Site Representative list on the CDSG website and below.

New England Region: Norm Scarpulla Coordinator

Casco Bay Maine: Chip Woodman & Erno Bonebakker;

Ben Mackey (Fort McKinley)

Portsmouth: Incl Kennebuckport south to Rockport, MA:

Norm Scarpulla; Julian Malcolm (Fort Stark)

Boston: Gordon Bliss (Boston Harbor),

Norm Scarpulla (East Point & Fort Ruckman, Nahant),

Bill Ricker (Fourth Cliff, Scituate)

New Bedford: David Larsen

Narragansett Bay: Chris Zeeman

Long Island Sound: Chris Zeeman

New York Region: Shawn Welch

Mid-Atlantic Region: Terry McGovern, Coordinator

Delaware River: Everett Bennett (Fort Saulsbury),

Andy Grant (Fort Mott & Fort Mifflin)

Baltimore: Scott Logan

Potomac River: Terry McGovern

Chesapeake Bay Entrance: Terry McGovern

South Atlantic Region: Gary Alexander, Coordinator

Cape Fear River: Gary Alexander

Charleston: Gary Alexander

Port Royal Sound: Ted Panayotoff

Savannah: Gary Alexander

Jacksonville: Gary Alexander
 Newfoundland / Iceland: Terry McGovern
Bermuda: Terry McGovern

Gulf Region: Chuck Ruby, Coordinator

Key West:
 Tampa:
 Pensacola:
 Mobile Bay:
 New Orleans:
 Galveston: Ralph Stenzel

Pacific District: Mark Berhow, Coordinator

San Diego: Marvin Heinze (Fort Emory)
 Ken Glaze (Fort Rosecrans)
 Los Angeles: Roy Hatanaka
 San Francisco: John Prince, Sam Stokes (Fort Cronkhite)
 Columbia River: Aaron Buda
 Puget Sound: Steve Kobylk (Forts Casey & Ebey)
 Greg Hagge (Fort Worden)
 Mike Fiorini (Camp Hayden), Doug Crist (Fort Ward)

Alaska Region:

Matt Hunter (Sitka), Jim Touza (Dutch Harbor)

Philippines Region:

Anthony Feredo

Hawaii Region:

Panama Region:

Dolores de Mena; Alvaro Visuetti

There is always an opportunity to volunteer where we do not have a rep listed or to help for the current reps.

CDSG members please use your member directory.
 Non-members: please email outreach@CDSG.org and note who you want to contact.

OUTREACH & REPRESENTATIVES

Site Representatives engage to...
 Stay in touch with owners, managers, interested groups...
 Communicate both directions...
 CDSG supports preservation & interpretation.
 CDSG assists with funding projects.
 Provide news for Newsletter.
 Contact Norm Scarpulla
 Posters on CDSG website - download & print.

Preservation Committee Gordon Bliss

An update to the status of Plum Island/Fort Terry, New York: We have learned the pathogens have been moved off the island, forecasting the end of the Plum Island Animal Disease Center's mission. There may still be some work being done at the lab until later this year. The decommissioning process will then continue, likely for at least a couple of years.

There are bills in Congress to preserve the island, but given the current political climate, I don't expect any progress to be made on that front. However, Suffolk County has expressed interest in acquiring the island and that may prove to be a more

positive path. It is uncertain that we will know anything more definitive this year.

At Fisher's Island, New York (the former Fort H.G. Wright), the clean up of the two Endicott batteries closest to the ferry landing (Hoffman & Hamilton) has not progressed further since my last update. However, from what I've heard, work on them will resume in the spring and the intention is still to create a trail from the ferry landing out to Race Point and to provide some form of interpretive signage for the batteries.

No significant news on the situation of Fort Wool in Hampton, VA. An artificial island is planned to act as a seabird nesting area which would enable the clean up of Fort Wool (see following charts). However, no preservation has occurred on Fort Wool -- the steel fire control tower is still in danger of collapse, the dock needs replacement, and a tour boat must be procured.

Sadly, the fire control tower and attached barracks at Coolidge Point, Manchester MA, formerly owned by member Craig Lentz, has been demolished. We understand that the new owner desired to build a new house on that spot.

Other sites that had issues endangering them and except for one, which we visited during the Boston conference this past year, I haven't heard any more details or status updates. These are:

- The HECF at Fort Stark,
- Fort Preble shoreline erosion and scarp collapse,
- Fort Gaines beach erosion issues,
- Fort DuPont destruction of buildings,
- Fort Clinch beach erosion issues,
- Fort Jackson and Fort St. Philip abandonment and structural issues,
- Fort Armistead impact of bridge collapse,
- Fort Howard and Fort Carroll abandonment,
- Fort Hancock demolish by neglect,
- Fort Totten demolish by neglect,
- Fort Michie WW2 fire control tower and
- Abandonment and erosion at Castle Pinkney

The plans for a new bird nest island near Fort Wool was further discussed and implications for Fort Wool also discussed.

If you have a Preservation issue or question, or for further information on any site, contact the Preservation Committee Chair, Gordon Bliss, at preservation@cdsg.org.

Projects and Website Mark Berhow

The CDSG website is slated for updating and renovation by Hook Associated for \$6500 to bring it up to the current PHP standards. New member Brandon Kovaly volunteered to help look at the site and recommend future updates.

2027 CDSG Conference

Narraganset Bay, RI – Spring, Chris Zeeman, Chair
 Things are progressing with the planning. It will be held either the last week of April or early in May.

2028 CDSG Conference

San Francisco, CA -- Spring, Mark Berhow, Chair

We do not have the cooperation we need with the National Park Service to gain access to closed/locked sites. This, and a strong speaker program is essential to make this conference a worthwhile effort. Mark is planning a trip to San Francisco to see if a personal visit can help break the ice. Otherwise, we may have to consider a different location for 2028.

CDSG Fund

Terry McGovern, Mark Berhow & Glen Milam

The CDSG Fund supports the efforts of the Coast Defense Study Group by raising funds for preservation and interpretation of American seacoast defenses. The CDSG Fund seeks donations for projects supporting its goals.

The trustees for the CDSG Fund are Terry McGovern, Mark Berhow and Glen Milam.

CDSG is a 501(c)(3) organization, so donations are tax-deductible for federal tax purposes. 100% of your gift will go to project grants. Major contributions are acknowledged annually.

Donations to the Coast Defense Study Group Fund or the CDSG Fund can be made by check or money order to the Trustees or by credit card through the CDSG website at www.cdsg.org.

The Fund is always seeking proposals for the monetary support of preservation and interpretation projects at former coast defense sites and museums. A one-page proposal is required briefly describing the site, the organization doing the work, and the proposed work or outcome. Successful proposals are usually distinct projects rather than general requests for donations. Ideally, we desire to fund several \$1,500 to \$5,000 grants per year. The trustees review such requests and pass their recommendation onto the CDSG Board of Directors for approval.

Finance and Audit Committees

Terry McGovern and Ned Libby, respectively

The Year 2025 Records Review and Audit will be conducted after the Conference.

As of March 31 2026, the CDSG checking and savings accounts include approximately \$112,000.

Approximately \$30,000 will be spent on the CDSG Annual Conference to Oahu in the next 30 days. We spent approximately \$45k in 2025, including the CDSG Fund projects.

Receipts in 2025:

Annual dues: approx. \$21k

CDSG Press: approx. \$5k

CDSG Fund: approx. \$20k

Review and audit results will be published in the Summer Newsletter in the standard accounting format

Nominating Committee Norm Scarpulla

CDSG Board of Directors, Three directors, three-year terms. Each year senior director leaves, newly elected director replaces them. Nominating Committee consists of three most recent previous directors. Current committee: Gordon Bliss, Norm Scarpulla, Steve Waldron.

Process: January-April - select two willing candidates. Board approves names at April meeting.

Nominees as of 26 April Nigel Cunningham and Bob Walk. Ballot to members with May Newsletter; return by July 31. Winner replaces senior director October 1.

An Open Discussion was held with further discussion on the CDSG website updating process and ideas for updating Fort Wiki.

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Fortress Study Group Publications Update

FSG continues to put out quality articles in their full color publications. They have an option for less expensive electronic subscription membership and are looking into ways to reduce mailing costs to the US and Canada.

The latest issue of *Fort, the International Journal of Fortifications and Military Architecture* is 2024's Volume 52. Articles includes, along with an editorial and books reviews:

- Paul Ivey, c1546-1604: Author, Intelligencer, and Military Engineer by Charles Stevenson
- The Restoration of the Portuguese Monarchy: Modern Fortifications by Margarida Valla
- Mon Plaisir: the French Siege Fortress at Boulogne
- The Concrete Battleship – Fort Drum by Terry McGovern
- A Second World War Heavy Anti-Aircraft Gun Site at Welwick, near Hull by Oliver Cooper
- A Munich Crisis Diary by J.P. Saunders with an introduction by David Clarke

The latest issue of *Casemate* is January 2026's No. 135 and includes along with the usual comments events and reviews:

- Scotland's Defensible Barracks
- Wrights Hill Battery
- Rare Japanese Images of Fort Drum
- Compact Late Summer Tour in Portugal
- The Fortress Study Group 50 Years
- A Grand Tour (of the North Atlantic Islands Iceland to the Hebrides)

They also offer a bi-weekly webinar program that features great talks from around the world on fortification topics. The webinars are open to CDSG members. Contact Mark Berhow at berhowma@cdsg.org for details.

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Fort Monroe Use Survey

Dear CDSG Members,

The CEO of the Fort Monroe Authority would like our group to respond to a survey about the future of Fort Monroe. Many folks are highlight recreation and housing for the fort, so it is important that we respond about the importance of Fort Monroe's military history and seacoast fortifications.

Please use the QR code attached to take the survey by June 30th.

It can't be overstated how important it is that we give everyone a chance to be heard in shaping Fort Monroe's future.

And whilst our initial engagement sessions last week were well attended, and we heard from residents and our neighbors, I'm keenly aware that we need to continue to push out of our bubble and reach as many folks as possible who care about the future of this incredible place.

So, any help you can give to get this survey distributed would be greatly appreciated. The portal is open until the end of June, and the QR code takes folks there. Or Survey link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/GS5KZSC>

Sharing across the CDSG would be wonderful. Thanks for any help advancing this engagement effort. More voices, better design, greater stewardship.

Scott Martin, Chief Executive Officer
Fort Monroe Authority
20 Ingalls Road | Fort Monroe, VA 23651
757-251-2757 Direct | 757-755-1062 Mobile
Email: smartin@fortmonroe.org Web: <https://fortmonroe.org>



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Coast Defense Returns to the Philippines

Charles H. Bogart

In a joint endeavor by the Republic of China, the Republic of the Philippines and the United States an effort is being undertaken in 2026 to deny the Peoples Republic of China free maritime access to the Pacific Ocean through the Luzon Strait. The Republic of China has deployed long range anti shipping surface to surface missiles to the southern edge of the island of Formosa. The United States in cooperation with the Republic of the Philippines has deployed to Batan Island anti-ship missile launchers of the Navy Marine Expeditionary Ship Interdiction System. This land based surface to surface anti-ship missile is built around the Typhoon Missile Launcher firing the Standard Missile-6 and the Tomahawk Land Attack Missile. The Block IV Tomahawk (TLAM-C) has a range of 1,000 miles and is armed with a BGM-109C/E: WDU-36/B 690 pounds warhead containing 265 pounds of PBXN-107 high explosive. The Block IV Tomahawk is able to attack moving sea targets by using passive

electromagnetic search equipment to pick up the electromagnetic signature of a ship. Once the active electromagnetic signature of a ship is acquired the Block IV Tomahawk turns on its fire control radar to pin point the target. Upon the target ship being acquired by Block IV Tomahawk fire control radar the missile flies a path to intercept the ship.



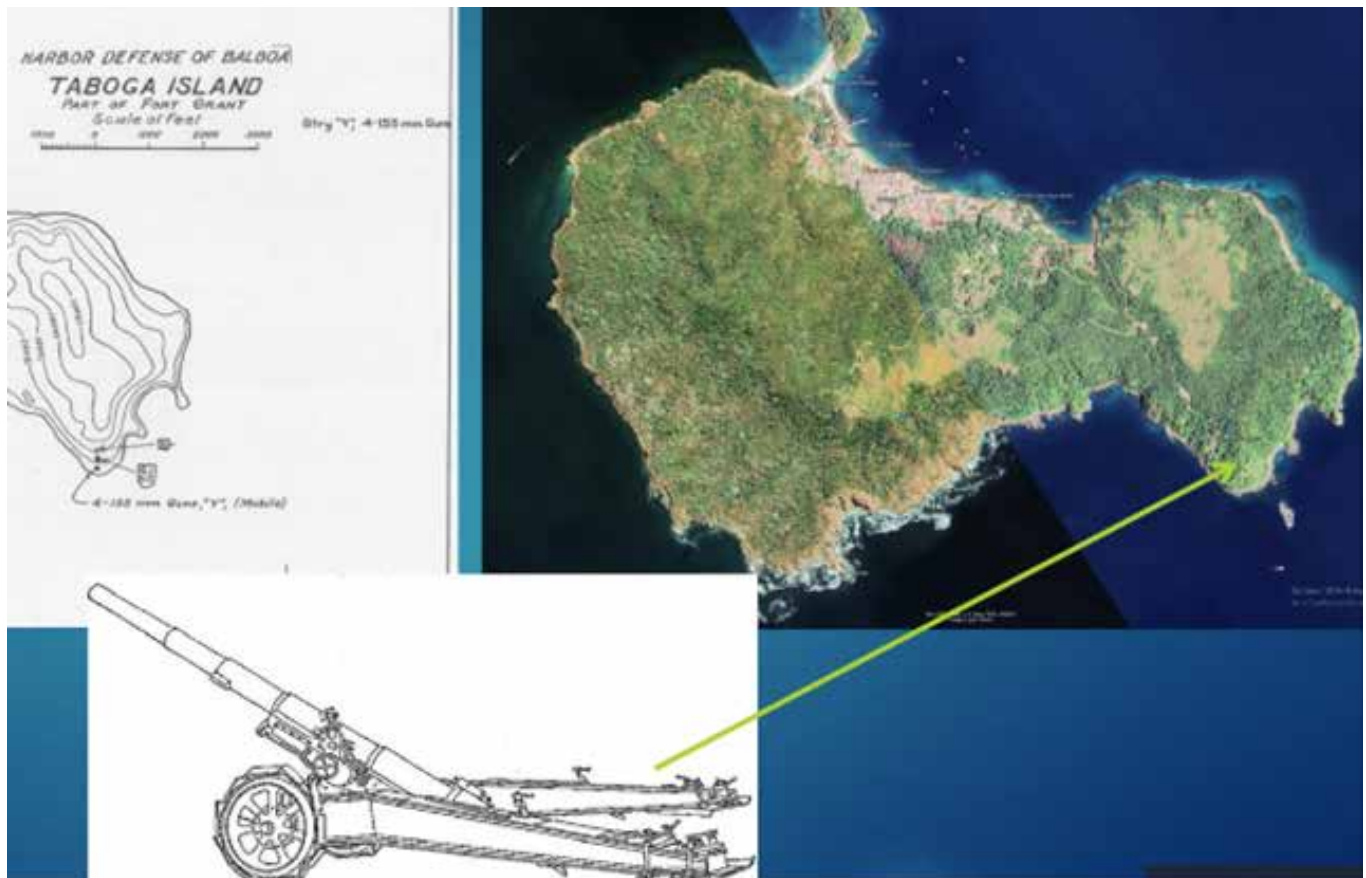
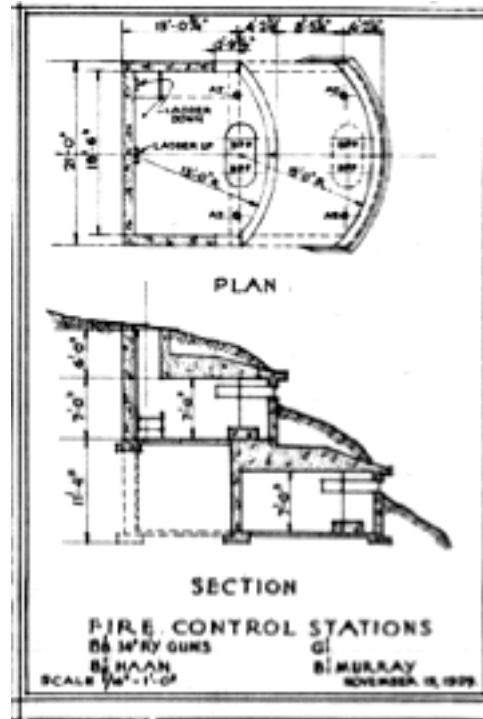
New!!
CDSG Shop Item
Oozlefinch Pin \$5
cdsg.org/shop

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Taboga Island (Panama) 155mm GPF

By Terry McGovern and AI

Recently, our CDSG Representative, Alvaro Visuetti, and his team in Panama visited Taboga Island to find the remains of the WW2 harbor defenses on the island. Taboga had a 155mm GPF battery, fire control stations, anti-aircraft guns, switchboards rooms, radar stations, searchlights positions and garrison area. During his surveying of island, they found two 155mm barrels that were recently dug out the ground for movement to the Cerro El Vigía Summit Command Post (actually a converted fire control station for Batteries Haan and Murphy). The Tourism Authority of Panama (ATP) is restoring the command post into a tourist destination. The ATP wanted the most visually striking artifacts—the 2-ton steel barrels—to be placed where the maximum number of tourists could see them. Moving the two spiked barrels directly outside this high-altitude bunker creates a unified, compelling main museum display for visitors completing the island’s steep summit hike. At the Battery Y (also known as Position 1A.) site (lower down the hillside), four Panama mount remain along with the buried carriages for four 155mm GPF guns. The U.S. Army instead of removing the 155mm GPF’s at the end of the war they blew up the gun in place by placing explosives in each breech and abandoned the damaged guns in place. Alvaro has sent us several photographs from his island survey which we have included in this article.



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 REVISIONS MAY 1930
 JUNE 1930, DEC 1930
 MAY 1931, 1932
 NOV. 1934

SERIAL NUMBER [Redacted]

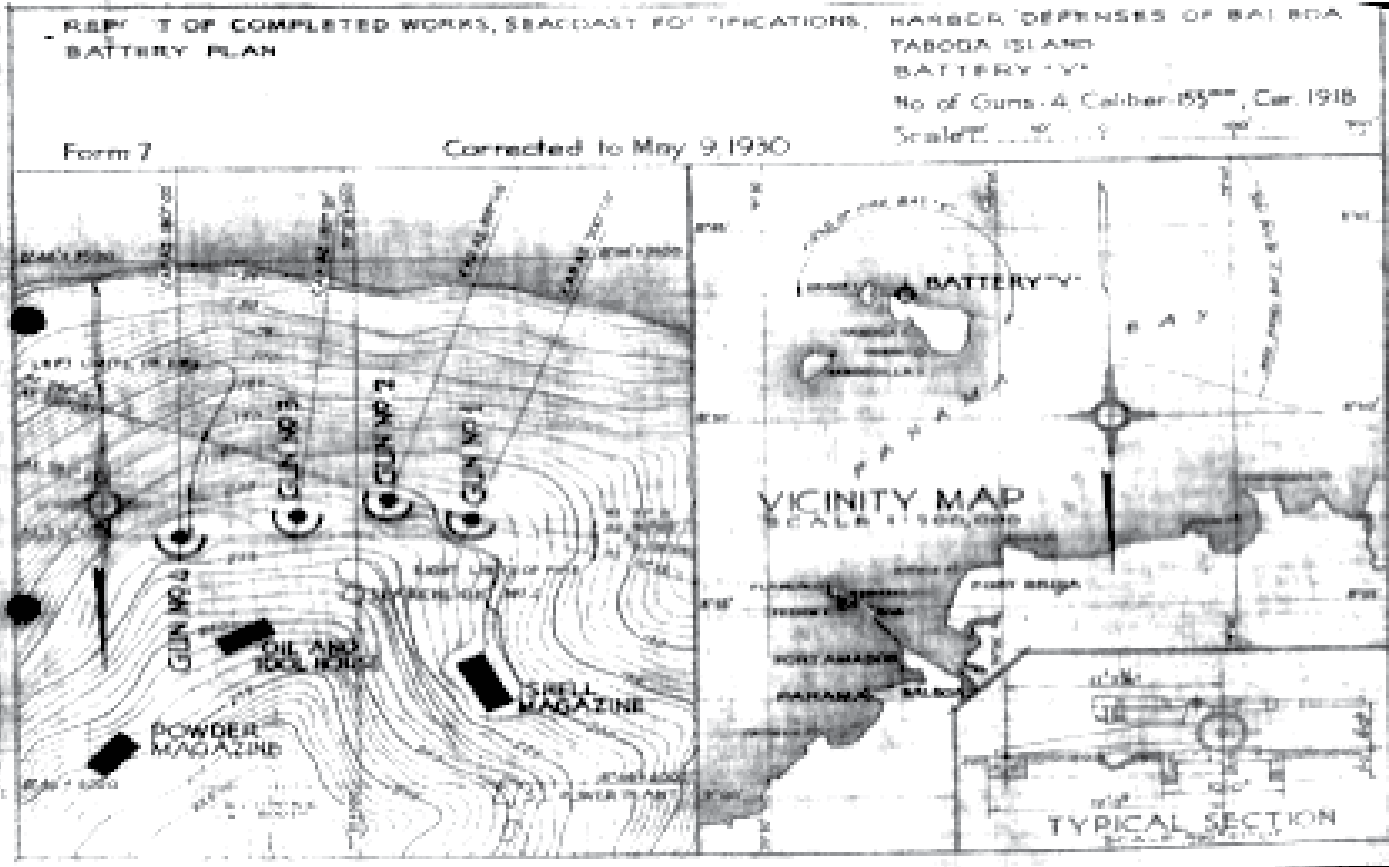
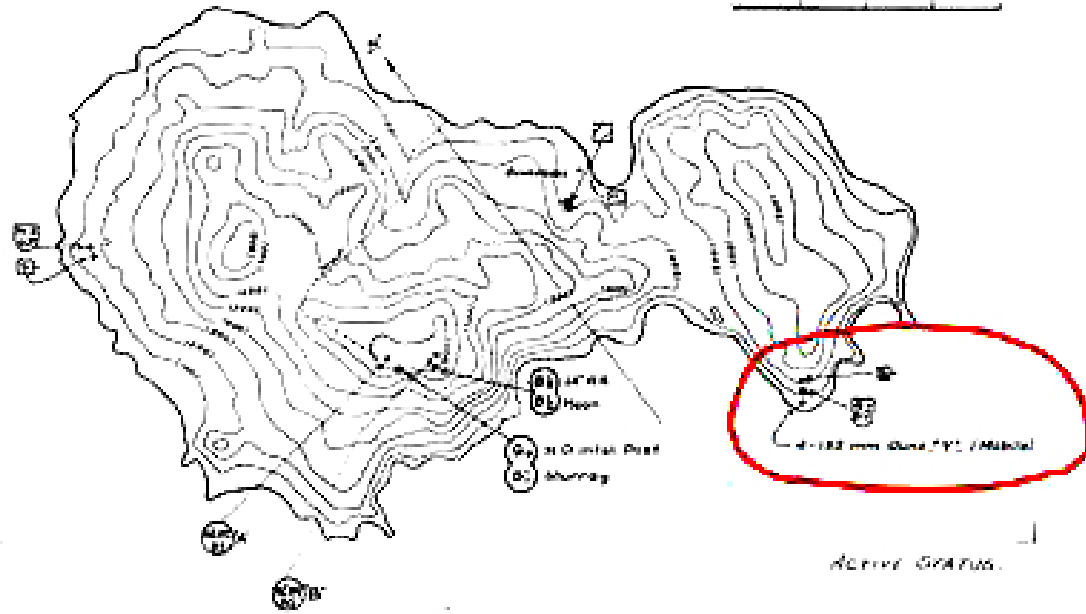
HARBOR DEFENSE OF BALBOA

TABOGA ISLAND

Part of Fort Drake

Scale of Feet

Orig. 7 1/2" 4100 mm Ga





Fire Control Station



Buried 155mm GPF



155mm GPF Barrels

History of the Taboga Island 's 155mm GPF Battery as told by AI

The CDSG Newsletter is experimenting with the use of AI, by letting AI write the history of Battery X and the other harbor defenses on Taboga Island. Please let us know how you think AI did telling the story of Battery X (see below).

Chapter I: The Gatekeepers of the Isthmus

The salt air of the Gulf of Panama carried a heavy, suffocating humidity in the early months of 1942. Deep within the dense tropical dry forests of Taboga Island, the rhythmic, violent thud of machetes clearing ancient canopy filled the air. Only weeks had passed since the devastating surprise attack on Pearl Harbor,



155mm GPF barrel with damaged breech

and the U.S. Army was gripped by an icy certainty: the Panama Canal—the vital artery linking the Atlantic and Pacific oceans—was the ultimate prize for the Japanese Empire. If the canal's locks were destroyed, the Allied global supply chain would crack in half.

On the rugged ridge of Santa Catalina, overlooking the pristine blue waters of the bay, the men of the 4th Coast Artillery Regiment were transforming a tropical paradise into an island fortress. Engineers arrived with heavy earth-moving equipment and concrete mixers, quickly pouring foundation layouts that defied standard military blueprints. On paper, older peacetime registries in Washington cataloged the site as a modest, two-gun tactical unit named Battery Y. But the military commanders on the ground knew that a two-gun line left dangerous blind spots in the channel.

Defying the dusty archives, engineers laid out four massive, circular concrete Panama mounts. They built a formidable four-gun footprint. Each mount was an engineering marvel: a thick concrete slab featuring a central pivot point and a perfectly level, 360-degree outer steel traverse rail. The weapons assigned to hold this ridge were the legendary 155mm GPF (Grande Puissance Filloux) guns. Developed by the French during World War I, these long-barreled artillery pieces were heavy, terrifyingly accurate, and threw a 95-pound high-explosive shell over ten miles into the ocean. Getting them up the steep, unpaved mountain trails of Taboga was a logistical nightmare. Heavy tactical tractors groaned and sputtered, their tracks churning up mud as they hauled the multi-ton weapons up the slopes.

The troops drove the integrated wheeled carriages directly onto the concrete platforms. The gun's massive wheels rested on the inner ring, while the ends of the long, split-trail structural arms were clamped securely onto the outer steel rails. This configuration allowed a small, well-drilled gun crew to rapidly swing the massive barrel in a full circle, covering any approach vector in the Gulf of Panama.

Chapter II: The Eye on the Mountain

Life at Battery Y quickly settled into a tense, sweating rhythm of absolute readiness. The four guns did not operate in isolation; they were the muscle of a highly complex, interconnected defensive grid that spanned the entire island.

High above the gun line, perched on the highest peak of the island at 307 meters above sea level, stood the Cerro El Vigía Command Post. This heavily reinforced, gas-proof concrete bunker served as the central nerve center. Inside its cool, dark interior, observers peered through narrow observation slits, tracking the horizon with powerful optical rangefinders. Every ship entering the outer bay was logged, its speed and bearing calculated on physical plotting boards. If a target appeared, data was flashed down to subterranean plotting bunkers near the mounts via buried telephone cables. For night operations, the island transformed into a surreal landscape of light and shadow. Cut into the steep cliff edges were specialized Coast Artillery Searchlight (CASL) positions. These concrete shelters housed massive, 60-inch Sperry carbon-arc searchlights.

Because the salt spray and intense tropical humidity would quickly ruin the searchlight mirrors, the military built the shelters over narrow-gauge steel tracks. If the radar arrays manned by the 517th Coast Artillery (Anti-Aircraft) Battalion picked up a midnight contact, the crew would slide the heavy concrete doors open and roll the massive lamps out onto the exposed cliff pads. With a blinding hiss, the carbon arcs ignited, stabbing an 800-million-candlepower beam miles into the black ocean, silhouetting any vessel foolish enough to approach.

For two long years, the island shook to the thunder of live-fire calibration drills. Gun crews sprinted to their stations during frantic air-raid alarms, loading heavy powder bags and slamming the massive breech blocks shut. Thunderous test rounds boomed across the bay, sending giant geysers of water skyward in the target sectors. Yet, for all the sweat, tension, and black smoke, the guns of Battery Y never fired a single shot in anger.

Their mission was one of pure, unadulterated deterrence. Axis planners knew that running the gauntlet of Taboga's overlapping 155mm guns, flanked by the massive 16-inch mainland super-guns at Fort Kobbe, was an act of suicide. Battery Y won its war without drawing blood.

Chapter III: The Orders of Sabotage

By late 1944, the tide of World War II had shifted completely. The United States Navy had pushed the Japanese fleet deep into the western Pacific, and the threat of an Axis raid on the Panama Canal dissolved into history. The radar screens on Cerro El Vigía grew quiet, the searchlight crews cooled their lamps, and the garrison at Battery Y was drastically downscaled.

When the war officially ended in 1945, a frantic, chaotic demobilization swept through the Panama Canal Zone. The military needed to vacate its temporary island outposts immediately. However, the army faced a daunting engineering problem: the four 155mm GPF guns were incredibly heavy, dead-weight masses of steel and iron. Hauling four multi-ton barrels and their massive wheeled carriages back down the steep, eroded, and muddy jungle trails to the island's docks was deemed a costly, logistically impractical nightmare.

Orders came down from the mainland command at Fort Amador: the guns were to be abandoned, but they could not be left intact. The military could not risk leaving operational, long-range artillery pieces unguarded on a foreign island where they might someday be salvaged by hostile actors or rebel factions.

An ordnance demolition team climbed the ridge of Battery Y with crates of high explosives. They executed a brutal, time-honored military directive: they spiked the guns. The demolition crews packed heavy explosive charges directly into the breech chambers of the 155mm guns. They closed the massive, swinging steel breech blocks, locking them tight. Running detonation cords to a safe distance behind the concrete blast walls, the teams blew the weapons in place.

Without an open barrel to vent the explosive force safely forward, the immense internal blast pressure had nowhere to go. The steel screamed under the stress. The explosions shattered the heavy internal threading of the breech rings, warped the main tubes, and cracked the heavy metal frames of the carriages. In a series of sharp, deafening cracks, the firing mechanisms of Battery Y were permanently frozen in time. The soldiers packed up their personal gear, marched down the mountain, and left the shattered ruins behind.

Chapter IV: The Jungle Reclaims and Relinquishes

For nearly eighty years, a heavy silence returned to the ridge of Santa Catalina. The tropical dry forest aggressively reclaimed Battery Y. Thick, woody vines wrapped around the steel carriage trails, and decades of tropical rainstorms washed layers of thick mud over the positions. The massive solid-rubber tires sank deep into the earth, completely buried.

As the decades rolled by, the physical reality of the site faded into obscurity. Official historical registries and digital archives routinely mislabeled Battery Y as a minor, short-lived "two-gun battery," completely missing the true scale of what had actually been built on the ridge.

The silence was finally broken when the Autoridad de Turismo de Panamá (ATP) launched an ambitious infrastructure initiative to clear the island's historic trail networks. Expecting to find little more than a couple of empty concrete rings, clearing crews hacked away the dense undergrowth and began digging into the mud.

What they uncovered stunned historians. Emerging from nearly eight decades of dirt were four perfectly intact concrete Panama mounts and four complete 155mm GPF field carriages. Nestled beside them lay two massive steel barrels—one entirely stripped bare, and the other still resting heavily inside its original recoil sleigh and cradle assembly.

As historians brushed away the decades of packed soil from the breech ends of the weapons, the violent story of their final moments became clear. The jagged, fractured steel threads of the blown-out breeches bore the undeniable signature of the retreating American ordnance teams.

Today, these newly excavated relics have been integrated into a comprehensive military history route. Hikers can scale the ridge to touch the shattered steel of the 155mm guns, walk the concrete platforms of Battery Y, explore the fully restored command bunker atop Cerro El Vigía, and hike down to the adjacent islet of El Morro to view ancient Spanish muzzleloading cannons. The island has finally relinquished its secrets, transforming the scars of a forgotten wartime sabotage into a living monument to the defense of the canal.

Visiting the 155mm GPF's and WW2 defenses on Taboga Island

To locate the Old Bunker of Cerro El Vigía and the nearby WWII Panama mounts, you will need to hike to the highest point of Taboga Island, which stands at roughly 940–1,200 feet above sea level.



The route details and navigation steps include:

- Distance: Approximately 3.5 to 4.2 miles round-trip from the main ferry pier.
- Time: Roughly 1.5 to 2 hours of steady uphill hiking.
- Difficulty: Moderate. It is quite steep, and the tropical heat makes it physically demanding.



Step-by-Step Hiking Directions

The Starting Point: After arriving by ferry at the main pier, walk through the main town heading southwest toward the interior hills.

Choose Your Path: You have two primary ways to reach the summit:

The Easy/Paved Option (Main Road): Follow the wide, winding concrete/dirt road up the hillside. This is the easiest way to navigate because it is impossible to get lost, though it offers very little shade from the sun.

The Jungle Option (Las Tres Cruces Trail): Look for the trail-head off the main path. This Los Tres Cruceros/Tres Cruces Trail cuts through the forest. It is a much shorter, steeper, and more challenging climb over large rocks, but it keeps you under dense jungle shade for 75% of the trek.

The Summit (Cerro El Vigía): Both paths converge at the flat crest of the hill near a large monument cross.

Locating the Ruins: At the summit, you will find the concrete Old Bunker of Cerro El Vigía. Spread out in the clearing adjacent to the bunker are the circular concrete foundation rings (Panama mounts) where the 155mm GPF guns used to pivot 360 degrees.

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Collected Table of Contents Available for the Journal of U.S. Artillery and the Coast Artillery Journal 1892-1954

Mark Berhow has recently completed assembling a collated set of tables of contents for the *Journal of the United States Artillery* (1892-1922), *The Coast Artillery Journal* (1922-1948) and the *Antiaircraft Journal* (1948-1954). He ran the images through an optical character recognition program. The process was not perfect, but one can try to do a text search in the PDFs. The TOC files have been posted at CDSG.org/download. As noted these journals are available for download from various online sources such as Google Books or Hathaway Trust. The CDSG has a nearly complete PDF collection of all three journals plus *Liaison* (1919-1921) that is available by request from info@cdsg.org.

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New Hawaii Map and Blueprint Collection Available

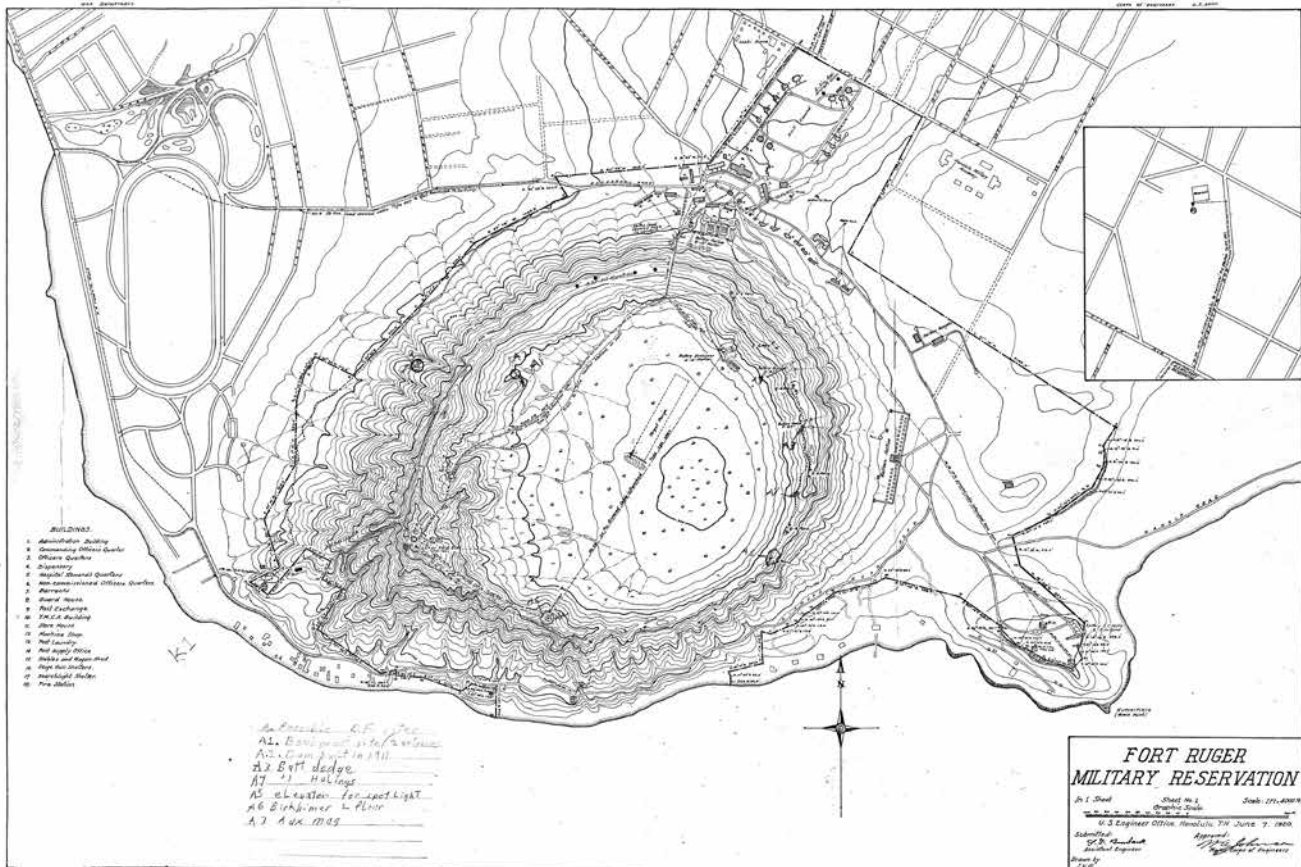
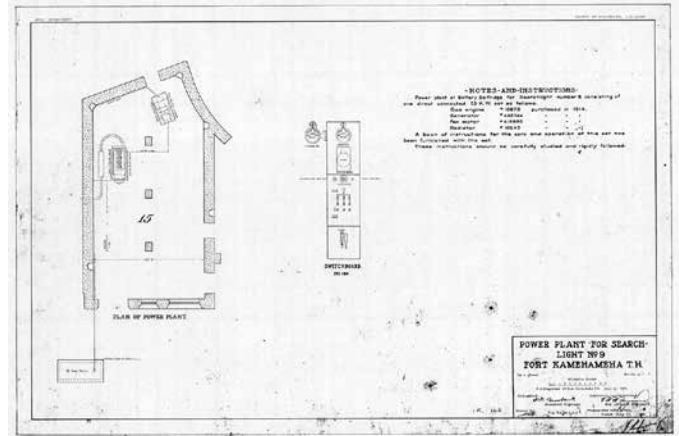
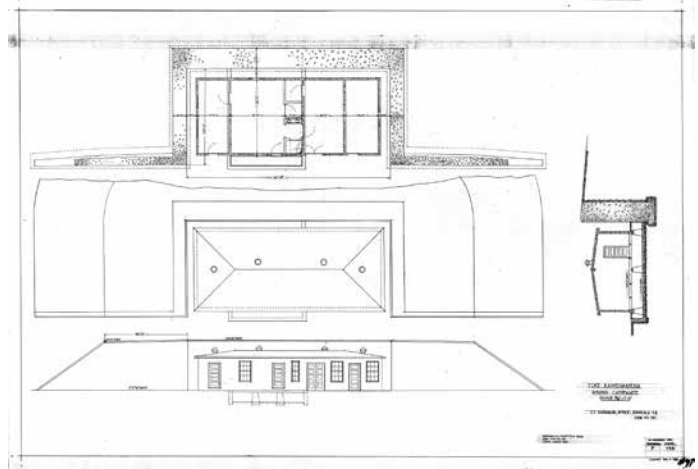
The U.S. Army Museum of Hawaii has been working with the University of Hawaii-Manoa Library to digitize its blueprints/maps. The new collection can be accessed by the following links:

<https://evols.library.manoa.hawaii.edu/collections/bb4a0112-53a9-4960-9571-e4621078720f>

or

<https://hdl.handle.net/10524/84112>

Dr. Jenna Scholz
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Hawaii Army Museums
2131 Kalia Rd.
Honolulu, HI 96815
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(808) 787-3943



110-20-44.



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CDSG Fund

The CDSG Fund supports the efforts of the Coast Defense Study Group by raising funds for preservation and interpretation of American seacoast defenses. The CDSG Fund is seeking donations for projects supporting its goals.

Visit the CDSG.ORG website for more details.

The goals of the CDSG and CDSG Fund are the following:

- * Educational study of coast defenses
- * Technical research and documentation of coast defenses
- * Preservation of coast defense sites, equipment, and records for current and future generations
- * Accurate coast defense site interpretations
- * Assistance to groups interested in preservation and interpretation of coast defense sites

Donations are tax-deductible for federal tax purposes as the CDSG is a 501(c)(3) organization, and 100% of your gift will go to project grants. Major contributions are acknowledged annually. Make checks or money orders payable in US funds to: Coast Defense Study Group Fund or the CDSG Fund. Donations can also be made by credit card through the CDSG website at www.cdsg.org.

The Fund is always seeking proposals for the monetary support of preservation and interpretation projects at former coast defense sites and museums. A one-page proposal briefly describing the site, the organization doing the work, and the proposed work or outcome should be sent to the address below. Successful proposals are usually distinct projects rather than general requests for donations. Ideally, we desire to fund several \$1,500 to \$5,000 grants per year. Upon conclusion of a project a short report suitable for publication in the CDSG *Newsletter* is requested. The trustees shall review such requests and pass their recommendation onto the CDSG Board of Directors for approval. The trustees for the CDSG Fund are Terry McGovern, Mark Berhow and Glen Milam.

Send donations to (and made out to):
 CDSG Fund c/o Glen Milam
 22150 Pondsville Road, Smithsburg, MD 21783
 Or use your credit card via PayPal on the www.cdsg.org website.

Send Fund Project requests to:
 CDSG Fund c/o Terry McGovern
 1700 Oak Lane, McLean, VA 22101-3326 USA

Please prepare a written request of your need and how your request relates to the goals of the CDSG.



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CDSG Logo Hats, Shirts & Patches

The CDSG is pleased to offer custom-made hats, T-shirts and patches to our membership. Wearing these hats, T-shirts and patches are a great way to make others aware of the CDSG and its goals. It is also an excellent way to promote joining the CDSG.

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To order your hat, T-shirt or patch, please complete the order form below and send it along with your check (made out to CDSG, Inc.) to Terry McGovern at 1700 Oak Lane, McLean, VA 22101-3326 USA (e-mail: tcmcgovern@att.net).

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Company of Military Historians

This organization is dedicated to the study and preservation of military history in the Americas. Its objectives are to promote and advance the research of military history and traditions through publications, exhibits, and meetings. Members include anyone interested in military history, such as historians, collectors, writers, artists, and those involved in living history.

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For membership information contact:

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P.O. Box 910, Rutland, MA 01543-0910

Phone: 508-845-9229

E-mail: cmhhq@aol.com

<http://www.military-historians.org>.

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The Fortress Study Group

www.fortressstudygroup.org

The Fortress Study Group is a charity registered in the UK with an international membership. Its purpose is advancing the study of post-medieval artillery fortifications throughout the World.

The benefits of Fortress Study Group membership include:

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The Coast Defense Study Group
<https://cdsg.org>

The *CDSG Newsletter* is published quarterly by the Coast Defense Study Group, Inc. along with the *Coast Defense Journal*. Submissions for the newsletter should be sent to the editor or publisher below.

Submission deadlines are the first of the month in February, May, August, and November of each calendar year. All rights are reserved. Comments on business matters should be addressed directly to the Chairman of the Board of Directors.

CDSG Publications
 Mark Berhow, Publisher
 PO Box 6124, Peoria, IL 61601
berhowma@cdsg.org

The CDSG is a non-profit corporation formed to promote the study of coast defenses and fortifications, their history, architecture, technology, and strategic and tactical employment. The purposes of the group include educational research and documentation, preservation of historic sites, site interpretation, and assistance to other organizations interested in the preservation and interpretation of coast defense sites. Membership in the CDSG is open to any person interested in the study of the coast defenses and fortifications of the United States.

Annual dues are \$50 domestic printed and foreign electronic, \$60 for Canada printed, and \$100 for international printed. Join/renew online at cdsg.org.

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 Send to:

Glen Milam, Membership Chairman
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Both items:	\$45
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<i>Permanent Fortifications and Sea-Coast Defenses</i> , Congressional Report No. 62, U.S. House of Rep. (1862), hardcover reprint	\$30
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