


**Photographic Record
of the
Historical Remains of
Vancouver and Yorke Island
Coast Artillery Fortifications
1914-1950**

**15th Field Artillery Regiment Museum and Archives
Bessborough Armoury
Vancouver, BC**

Summer 2004

PACIFIC COAST DEFENCES

SHOWING LOCATIONS OF CANADIAN COAST
ARTILLERY BATTERIES
AND ANTI-AIRCRAFT DEFENCES

Fortress 

Other Defended Places 

Main Railways 

A.A. DEFENCES INDICATED BY A CROSS
DRAWN THROUGH SYMBOL

NOTE: All places where artillery was used in a coast artillery role indicated by outlining name thus: YORKE I. Total number of battery sites occupied at any time during period 1939-45 is indicated. Alliford Bay, Bella Bella, Coal Harbour and Ucluelet were protected for a time by 75-mm. guns in a coast-defence role.



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Description of Yorke Island Fort

Site Plan

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INTRODUCTION

Until Britain's declaration of war against Germany on 4 August 1914, British Columbia was ill-prepared for attack from the Pacific Coast. Before the outbreak of war, coastal defences and naval forces in BC consisted of batteries at Victoria-Esquimalt equipped with breech loading 6-inch guns and quick firing twelve-pounders, a partially completed long-range, 9.2-inch battery on Signal Hill, a Canadian light cruiser, *The Rainbow*, stationed at Esquimalt, as well as two Royal Navy sloops, *Algerine* and *Shearwater*, stationed off the coast of Mexico. Articulating citizens' concerns regarding these minimal defence measures, a *Vancouver Daily Province* reporter remarked in July 1914,

If Great Britain and Germany are drawn into a European war... what is going to happen to British Columbia? How will this defenseless province protect herself?... Vancouver has no fortifications. There are no batteries which could be used for defence... A hostile warship would not need to pass through the narrows, which could be mined. She could ride out in the gulf and shell the port without any risk to herself... Infantry ashore are hopelessly out of action against a naval force with long-range guns.¹

Fear of naval attack led the government to take measures to defend the coast with artillery fortifications. In August and September of 1914, two batteries were established in Vancouver—Siwash Rock and Point Grey. However, as the threat of attack faded, so too did the military presence on Vancouver's coast. By the end of 1915, both of these batteries were no longer in existence.²

As the British Columbia's security appeared uncertain once again in 1936, the Department of National Defence attempted to remedy the inadequate state of Vancouver's coast defences. In October, Major B.C.D. Treatt of the Royal Artillery from the Coast Artillery School in Shoeburyness England wrote a report that recommended the construction of a number of forts. In 1937, Parliament approved the construction of forts at Ferguson Point, Point Grey, Narrows North, and Yorke Island.³ Later, fortifications at Steveston, Siwash Rock, and Point Atkinson were also constructed.

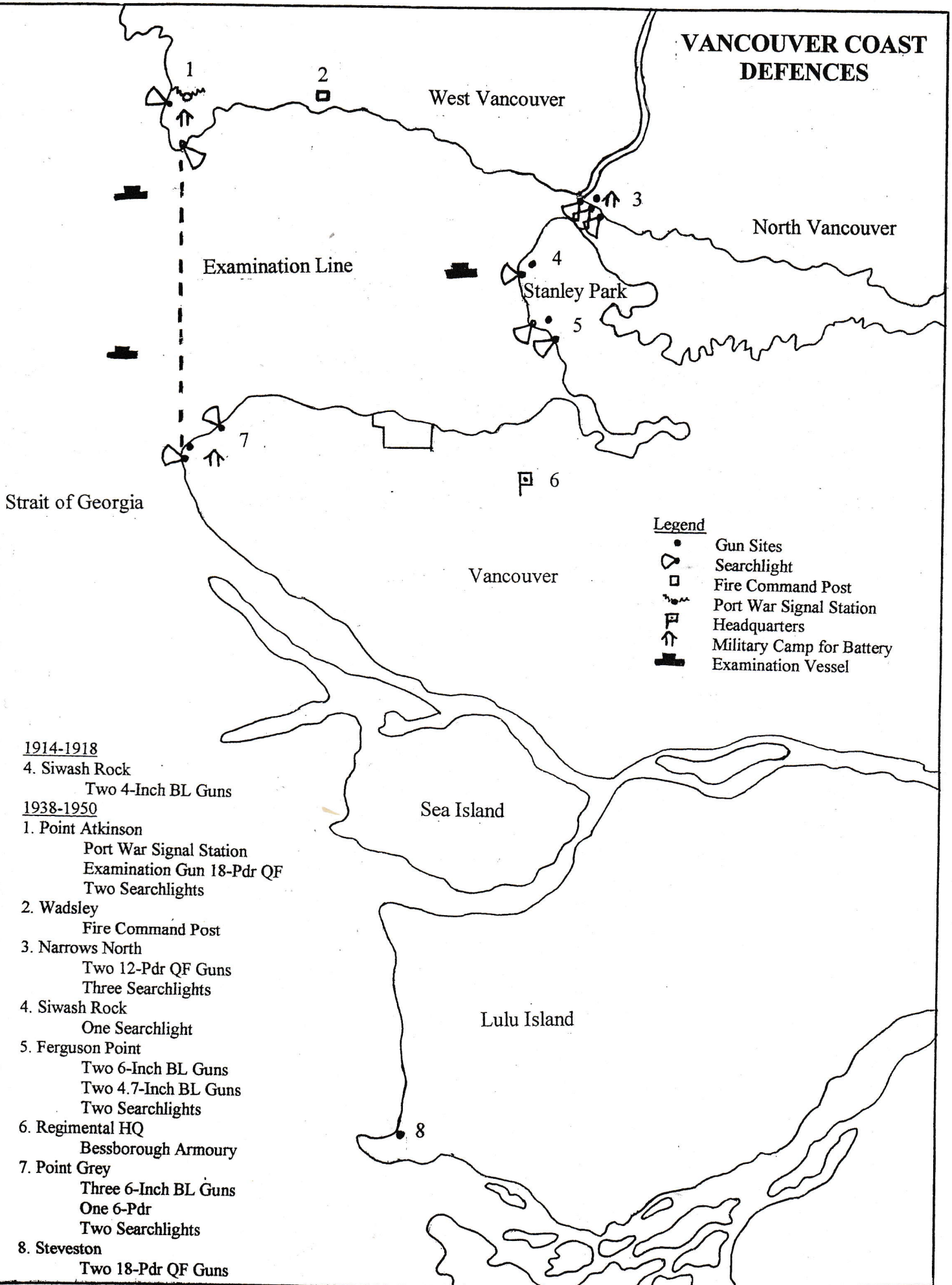
Between 1939 and 1945, these forts were home to personnel from the 15th Coast Brigade and the 1st Searchlight Regiment of the Royal Canadian Artillery. The regimental headquarters, the Bessborough Armoury became the hub of artillery defence initiatives—serving as the center of recruiting, training, outfitting, mobilizing, and sometimes even quartering the men of the 15th Coast Brigade. The Armoury stands today as an important reminder of these gunners' essential role in the defence of the Pacific Coast.

Little remains, however, of the forts that these men served. As the war progressed and the threat of hostilities in the Pacific diminished, one by one the forts were left to maintenance personnel and subsequently abandoned. Although restoration has been carried out at Point Grey, the other sites are quickly becoming unacknowledged parts of the local landscape.

This booklet seeks to highlight the importance of these historic sites and provides a general overview of the Vancouver Coast and Yorke Island Defences past and present. A short description begins each section, highlighting the unique history and uses of each site. The site plans illustrate the basic layout of each fort during the Second and, in the case of the Siwash Rock site, the First World War, and the photographic survey depicts the physical evidence that remains on the landscape. The interaction of

these components allows readers, wherever their locale, to develop a vivid understanding of the rich history of these often forgotten places as well as an appreciation of the past's unavoidable footprint on the world around them.

VANCOUVER COAST DEFENCES



1914-1918

4. Siwash Rock
Two 4-Inch BL Guns

1938-1950

1. Point Atkinson
Port War Signal Station
Examination Gun 18-Pdr QF
Two Searchlights

2. Wadsley
Fire Command Post

3. Narrows North
Two 12-Pdr QF Guns
Three Searchlights

4. Siwash Rock
One Searchlight

5. Ferguson Point
Two 6-Inch BL Guns
Two 4.7-Inch BL Guns
Two Searchlights

6. Regimental HQ
Bessborough Armoury

7. Point Grey
Three 6-Inch BL Guns
One 6-Pdr
Two Searchlights

8. Steveston
Two 18-Pdr QF Guns

POINT ATKINSON

Port War Signal Station and Examination Battery

The function of the Port War Signal Station and Examination Battery was to control all marine traffic in and out of the Port of Vancouver. The signal station was located on the west side of the lighthouse. Royal Canadian Navy personnel stationed at Point Atkinson were typically notified in advance by radio of major ships' movements in and out of the harbour. The "Examination Line," guarded by station personnel, ran from the Point Atkinson lighthouse to the tip of Point Grey. When a ship approached this area, it was required to reduce its speed and use signal pennants to identify itself to nearby examination vessels known as X-Vics.⁴ Two of these X-Vics were stationed approximately half a mile to the west of the Examination Line. Navy personnel would escort all suspicious vessels to the examination anchorage located "under the guns of Stanley Park" for closer inspection.⁵ Smaller and less-threatening vessels encountered less rigid regulations. Boats that frequently used the port had identification numbers which Point Atkinson personnel used to identify them from the Signal Station and clear them for passage.⁶

If a ship did not comply with these regulations, it risked being fired upon by the Mark I 18-pounder gun mounted on a pivot with a concrete base that was located on the tip of the point in front of the lighthouse.⁷ The signal was a series of '2's by aldis lamp, sound, or radio.⁸ Gunners from the 31st Coast Battery of the 15th Coast Brigade manned the artillery at Point Atkinson.

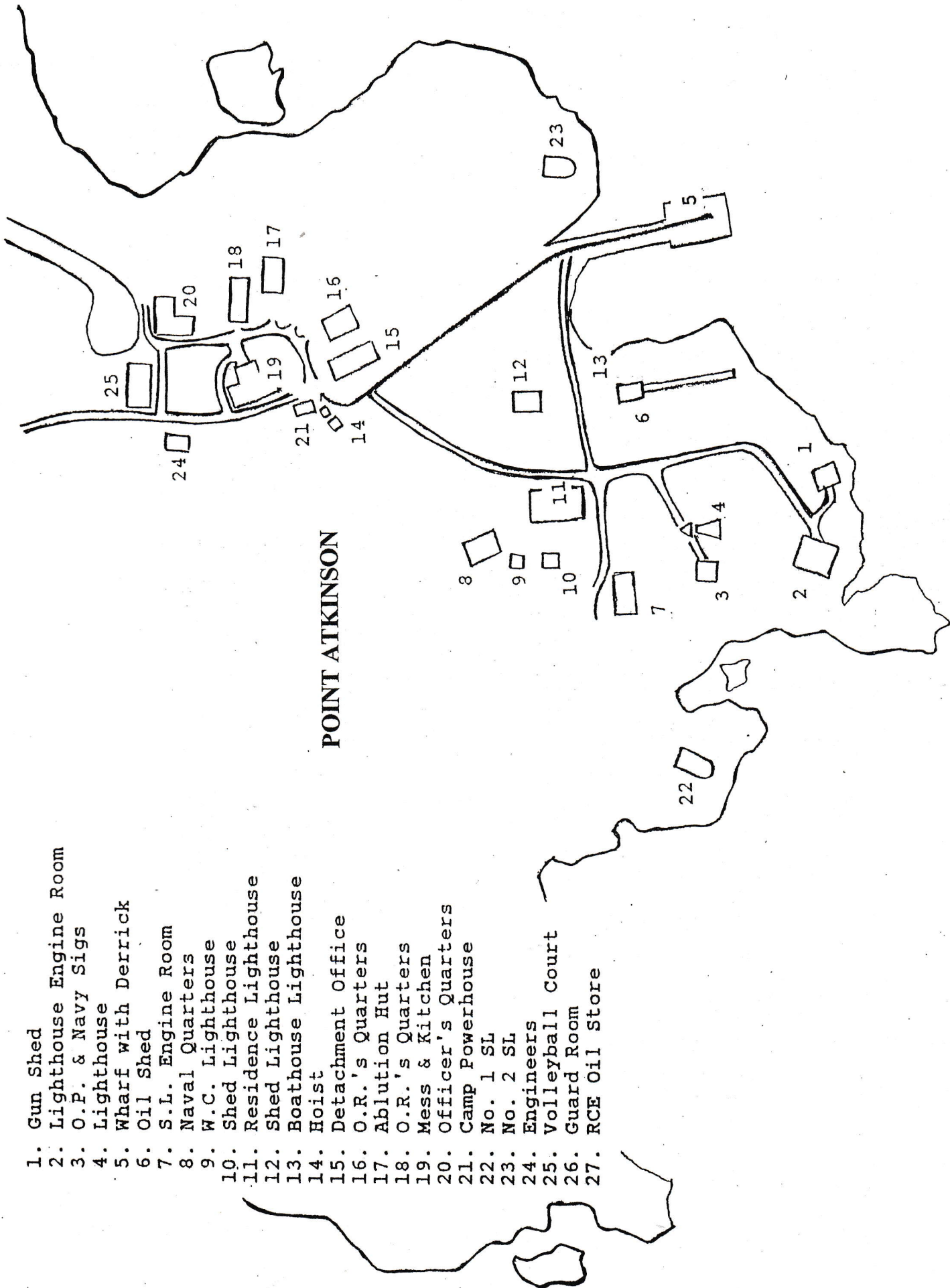
There were also two 60-inch, General Electric, carbon-arc, concentrated beam searchlights which were normally employed as sentry beams to detect vessels entering the harbour during night hours. These searchlights were mounted on the shore in line with the water level so their beams on the water's surface could identify even the smallest object, such as a submarine's periscope, penetrating the water's surface.⁹ They also allowed gunners to fire stopping rounds at unauthorized vessels during the night. Diesel generators kept in the engine room to the northwest of the lighthouse powered the searchlights.¹⁰ The 3rd Searchlight Battery of the 1st Searchlight Regiment, RCA manned the lights until the unit was absorbed with the 31st Coast Battery, RCA in 1942.

The battery also included an observation post and a military camp. The camp was located in the forest behind the light station. It included an officers' quarters, kitchen, guard house, ablution hut, men's barracks, orderly room, camp powerhouse, and engineers' building.¹¹

After the threat of attack diminished, the signal station and battery were abandoned. Point Atkinson, however, was not immediately demolished. It was used as a forest warden training institution for many years.¹² One of the searchlight emplacements, the platform for the 18-pounder, the pedestal for a depression rangefinder, the searchlight engine room, and four camp buildings remain standing today.

1. Gun Shed
2. Lighthouse Engine Room
3. O.P. & Navy Sigs
4. Lighthouse
5. Wharf with Derrick
6. Oil Shed
7. S.L. Engine Room
8. Naval Quarters
9. W.C. Lighthouse
10. Shed Lighthouse
11. Residence Lighthouse
12. Shed Lighthouse
13. Boathouse Lighthouse
14. Hoist
15. Detachment Office
16. O.R.'s Quarters
17. Ablution Hut
18. O.R.'s Quarters
19. Mess & Kitchen
20. Officer's Quarters
21. Camp Powerhouse
22. No. 1 SL
23. No. 2 SL
24. Engineers
25. Volleyball Court
26. Guard Room
27. RCE Oil Store

POINT ATKINSON



WADSLEY-WEST VANCOUVER

Fire Command Post

In January 1942, the Wadsley site became the Fire Command Post that would oversee the guns and searchlights of Vancouver's coast defences. Located on a West Vancouver hilltop, Wadsley had a 180° view of Vancouver's harbour from Point Grey to Point Atkinson. Wadsley's first CO was Lt.Col. A.O. Hood. Hood and deputy officers from the 15th Coast Headquarters controlled operations at Point Atkinson Fort, Narrows North Fort, Stanley Park Fort, Point Grey Fort, and Steveston Fort, while Yorke Island was an independent battery. The Wadsley Fire Command Post was responsible for the Port of Vancouver from First Narrows west to the examination line as well as the approaches to the line including Howe Sound and the Strait of Georgia.¹³

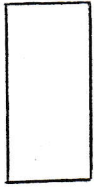
The Fire Command Post transmitted information via a BC Telephone command line to Battery Commanders and designated targets against which batteries were to take action.¹⁴ The post also controlled a hand-operated alarm bell system that was connected to all of the Vancouver forts and was equipped with a depression rangefinder.¹⁵

The Fire Command Post was located in a one story concrete building. Behind it stood a house that had been taken over to provide living quarters for the fire commander. Another building housed sergeants and other ranks. All of these buildings are still standing today in West Vancouver across from McKechnie Park. The post has been adapted slightly from its original design and now serves as a guesthouse. The house and barracks have had some renovations and are both used as private residences.

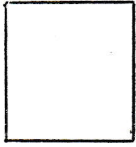
**WADSLY FIRE
COMMAND POST**

McKechnie Park

McKechnie Road



Sergeants' and
O.R.s' Quarters



Fire Commanders'
Quarters



Fire Command Post

Marine Drive

West Bay

NARROWS NORTH

Narrows North Fort

The role of Narrows North Battery under the Lions Gate Bridge, according to the local Fire Commander's Order in October 1942, was "close defence against Destroyers, M.T.B.'s (motor torpedo boats) or small craft."¹⁶ This site was initially erected in August 1939 when two Quick Firing 12-hundredweight Mk 4 12-pounder guns were moved from their provisional placement at the mouth of the Capilano River. The guns were mounted on temporary emplacements on the gravel in front of the fort but were later moved to the roof of the "gantry."¹⁷

Personnel from the 31st Coast Battery of the 15th Coast Brigade manned the guns, which were kept loaded. Narrows North firmly adhered to their orders to fire on all ships and small vessels that did not conform to the new restrictions regarding entry into Vancouver's Port.¹⁸ On 13 September 1942, the 31st Coast Battery became the first and only unit of Vancouver's defences to sink a ship. When a "fish-packer" failed to identify itself to the signal station, the Battery fired a stopping round just in front of the boat. Typically, this type of non-explosive shell would simply create a large splash and then sink. However, in this particular case, the shell hit a wave and was thrown across the water and shot through the hold of a 9,600 ton freighter in English Bay called the Fort Rae. The Fort Rae had to be beached on the banks of the Narrows.¹⁹

Though not a direct effect of this infamous and embarrassing incident, with the reduced examination service in the latter years of the war, the personnel at Narrows North was only authorized to challenge larger vessels that entered to Port, while restrictions on smaller vessels were removed.²⁰

Eight 18-inch reflector searchlights controlled by the 3rd Searchlight Battery patrolled the Narrows continuously at night until they were replaced by three 60-inch diameter, dispersed-beam searchlights in February and March 1941. These 800 million candlepower lights illuminated the entire passage. They were located in buildings that resembled boat huts.²¹

In August and September of 1944, gunners manning Narrows North, as well as Stanley Park and Point Grey, were needed in Europe. Thus, these batteries fell to the care of a twenty-person maintenance detachment. Immediately after Japan's surrender in 1945, Narrows North was abandoned. The area was levelled, with the exception of the concrete gantry which remained intact on what is now the site of the West Vancouver works yard until the late 1970s.

SIWASH ROCK-STANLEY PARK

Four-Inch Battery (1914-1915)

The first Coast Defence site established in the Vancouver area, Siwash Rock's Battery of two 4-inch calibre guns was erected in August 1914 in response to "local initiative."²² Because Siwash Rock towered over one hundred feet above the water it provided an ideal vantage point from which to protect English Bay. After the removal of a number of trees from the line of fire, the battery was also able to control the First Narrows.

The guns were delivered from Esquimalt aboard the H.M.S. Shearwater to Siwash Point in Stanley Park. They were mounted 100 feet above sea level on two sunken 12 inch by 12 inch platforms made of timber and covered with steel plates, about 300 feet south of Siwash Rock.²³ The steel pins of that outlined these platforms are still visible today. There was also a tree-top lookout platform, the remnants of which are visible, dangling from the tree branches.²⁴ Construction of the battery was completed on August 15th and, three days later, the guns were test-fired. Though the guns have since been moved, the bolts from these guns' mountings protrude from the ground in a circular formation today. Because there was no artillery militia established in Vancouver at this time, the battery was manned by members of the Royal Canadian Volunteer Naval Reserve. The officers and men slept in two tents and remained in these makeshift barracks until the threat of German attack in the Pacific had subsided toward the end of 1914.²⁵ By June, 1915, the Siwash Rock guns were no longer operational.²⁶

Searchlight (1939-1945)


During the Second World War, one concentrated beam searchlight operated by the 3rd Searchlight Battery of the 1st Searchlight Regiment, RCA was placed above Siwash Rock.²⁷ This searchlight was unique in that it was not located on the shore, in line with the water but on a cliff above Siwash Rock. Furthermore, its role, unlike the other searchlights in the Vancouver Defences was not to assist in the firing of artillery but to illuminate ships in the examination anchorage in the bay below.

The men who manned the Siwash Point searchlight were quartered at nearby Ferguson Point.

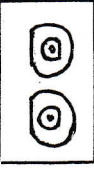
The searchlight and underground concrete engine room are still visible today—the only remnants of the three searchlights at Stanley Park.

SIWASH ROCK BATTERY AND SEARCHLIGHT

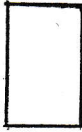
Lookout



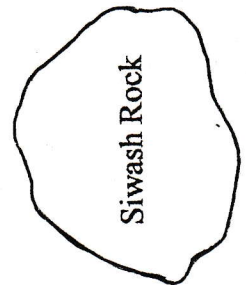
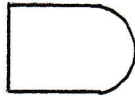
4" Gun Site



Searchlight Engine Room



No. 6 Searchlight



Siwash Rock

FERGUSON POINT-STANLEY PARK

Stanley Park Fort

The Stanley Park Battery was one of the most controversial defence sites in the Vancouver area. It was the first site to be planned in February 1938 after Parliament's approval of the revamping of Vancouver's coast defences in early 1937. The Town Planning Commission did not approve of the site selected for the battery, noting that it was "a favorite beauty spot in the park."²⁸ *The Vancouver Sun* supported this point of view, reporting that a battery at Ferguson point could become "a permanent blot on the scenic beauty of the area."²⁹ However, because the Park's Board had approved the project, the land was actually owned by the federal government, and the site was deemed "essential" for strategic reasons, the construction of the battery commenced in mid-February 1938.³⁰

Men of the 31st Battery were mobilized to the site on 27 August 1939.³¹ According to the Fire Commander's Orders of October 1942, the role of the Stanley Park Battery was to guard "English Bay and the First Narrows entrance to Burrard Inlet"³² and also to function as a detaining battery for ships that were not authorized to enter the Port of Vancouver. Like the battery at Narrows North, the Stanley Park battery was authorized to take action against ships which had not complied with Examination Service regulations. An examination vessel (X-Vic) was stationed a mile off of Ferguson Point. After the Point Atkinson signal station had identified smaller boats, these boats would proceed to the X-Vic to be cleared before they could pass the First Narrows.³³

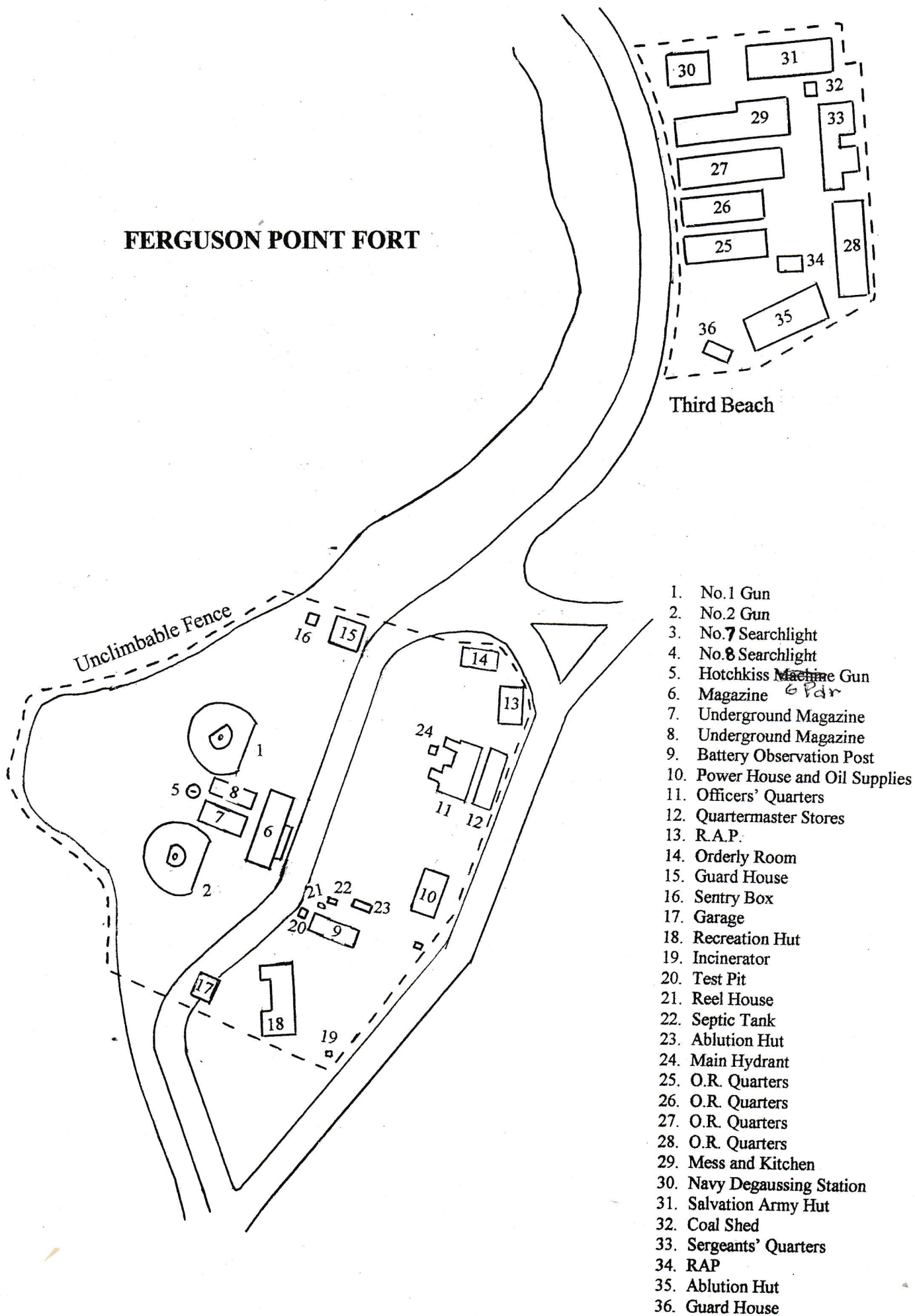
The Stanley Park Battery originally consisted of two Ordnance Breach Loading (BL) 6-inch Mk 7 guns on 15° BL 6-inch Mk 2 mountings. They were mounted 50 yards from the edge of the cliff. These guns were 'secretly' exchanged in return for Yorke Island's 4.7-inch Mk 4 guns on 20° Quick Firing 4.7-inch Mk 3 mountings in summer 1942.³⁴ The fort was also equipped with a Depression Rangefinder Mk 2. All of its buildings were camouflaged, some more creatively than others. For instance, the observation post was covered with a painting of an evergreen tree.³⁵

Ferguson Point also had two 60-inch concentrated beam C.A.S.L. Type A2 General Electric searchlights manned by the 3rd Searchlight Battery of the 1st Searchlight Regiment, RCA. The purpose of these lights was to supplement the guns in guarding the vessels in the examination anchorage.³⁶

The guns and most of the buildings were removed from the site in September 1945 and the guns and equipment were sent to the ordnance officer in Vancouver. The district commander, however, remained stationed at Stanley Park, refusing to vacate the officer's mess. The Vancouver Parks Board, however, implored for the area's immediate restoration to parkland. In April 1948, the Parks Board won this battle of wills. The gun emplacements were destroyed and buried, and the officers' mess was converted into a tearoom now known as the Sequoia Grill.³⁷

Ferguson SP

FERGUSON POINT FORT



1. No.1 Gun
2. No.2 Gun
3. No.7 Searchlight
4. No.8 Searchlight
5. Hotchkiss Machine Gun
6. Magazine *6 Par*
7. Underground Magazine
8. Underground Magazine
9. Battery Observation Post
10. Power House and Oil Supplies
11. Officers' Quarters
12. Quartermaster Stores
13. R.A.P.
14. Orderly Room
15. Guard House
16. Sentry Box
17. Garage
18. Recreation Hut
19. Incinerator
20. Test Pit
21. Reel House
22. Septic Tank
23. Ablution Hut
24. Main Hydrant
25. O.R. Quarters
26. O.R. Quarters
27. O.R. Quarters
28. O.R. Quarters
29. Mess and Kitchen
30. Navy Degaussing Station
31. Salvation Army Hut
32. Coal Shed
33. Sergeants' Quarters
34. RAP
35. Ablution Hut
36. Guard House

POINT GREY

Point Grey Fort

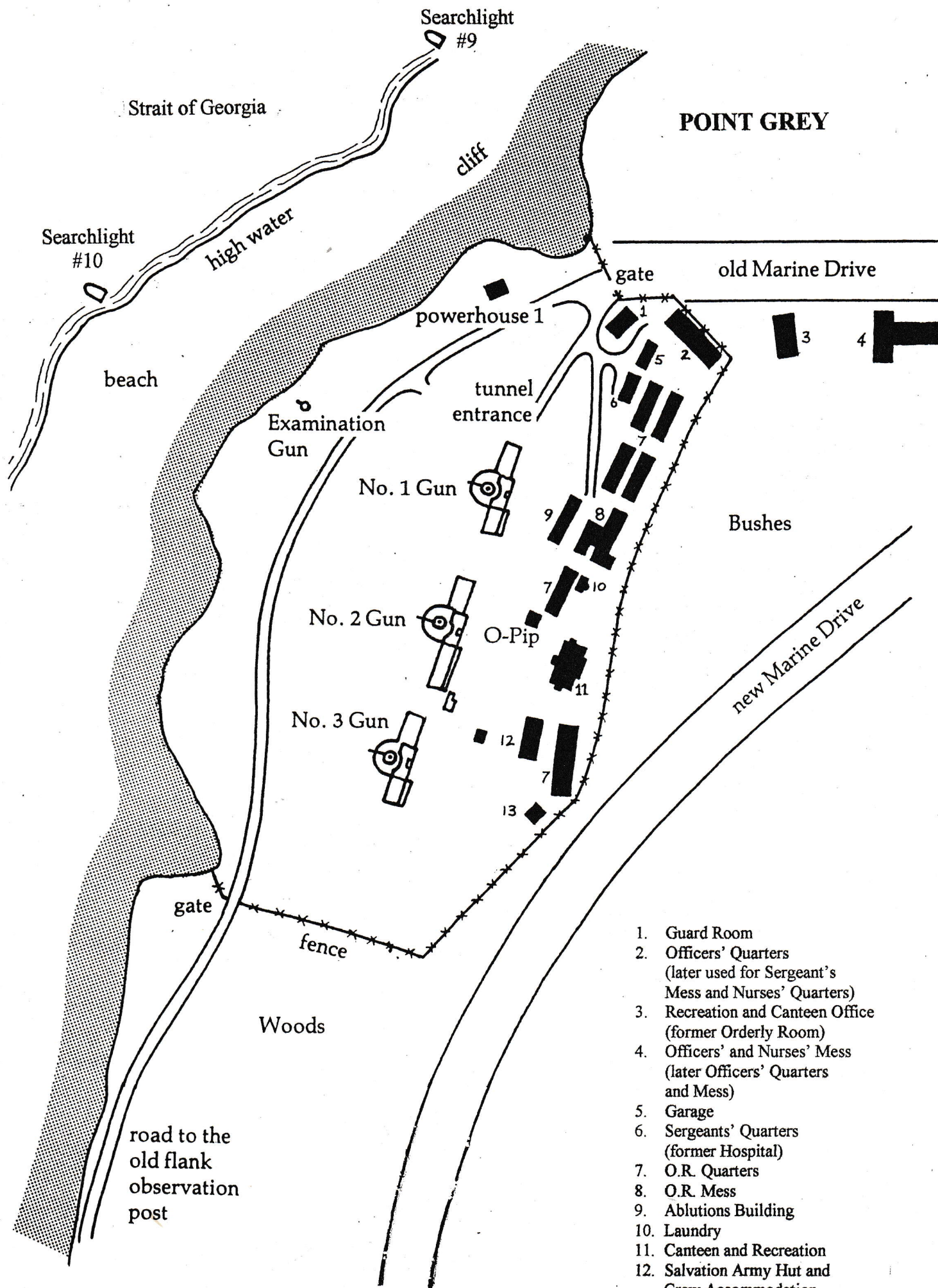
The Point Grey Fort was "Vancouver's largest and longest-used coastal fort."³⁸ It was originally established in early September 1914. Later in the month, 60-pounder field guns belonging to Ontario's Coburg Heavy Battery, the unit that would be stationed at the new Point Grey battery, were transported to the site by rail and dragged by trucks to their positions on the point. Within less than a year, the threat of attack on the West Coast had diminished. The Coburg Heavy Battery returned home and the guns were given to the British Army.

In the latter half of the 1930s it became apparent, once again, that the Vancouver area was in need of a system of defence. In 1936, Major B.C.D. Treatt, Royal Artillery, from the Coast Artillery School in Shoeburyness, England, recommended a number of defence sites, including Point Grey.³⁹ In late August 1939, men of the 58th Battery were mobilized to complete construction of the Point Grey Battery. Rain poured down on the men as they laboured day and night to build the huts that would soon become their homes.⁴⁰ Until construction was completed on September 3rd, they were housed at the Bessborough Armoury.

The battery was soon equipped with two 6-inch calibre coast guns that arrived by barge. Makeshift emplacements for these guns were built on top of the cliffs using quick-drying cement to construct supporting aprons for the guns' mountings. Two-tiered platforms made of wood surrounded the aprons complete with cupboards for ammunition in the rear.⁴¹ In August 1940, the permanent emplacements were finally completed and the guns were moved.⁴² These emplacements included detachment shelters as well as underground magazines protected by a "blanket of earth and one yard thick concrete busters to explode any shell that penetrated the ground."⁴³ An underground tunnel linked the magazines to a concrete command post.⁴⁴ Another 6-inch gun arrived in April 1941 from the Bessborough Armoury where it had been used in training exercises. Forged in 1902, it was in poor condition and was not to be fired unless in action.⁴⁵ A quick firing 6-pounder 8-hundredweight was placed approximately "200 feet in front of the 6-inch guns for examination purposes."⁴⁶ In May and June 1941, two electric concentrated beam searchlights to be operated by the 3rd Searchlight Battery were installed "in front of and to the right of the battery."⁴⁷ Point Grey was also equipped with two Bofors 40mm anti-aircraft guns for a short period between September 1942 and October 1943. An examination ship (X-Vic) was stationed half a mile north of the point.⁴⁸

In the last two years of the war, "the burden of Vancouver's defence fell increasingly on the Point Grey fort."⁴⁹ The Steveston fort's 25-pounder howitzers were moved to Point Grey in 1944. Fire Command was transferred to Point Grey in the same year. When hostilities ended, the 58th Coast was demobilized and men from the 77th Coast Battery, RCA maintained the Point Grey battery.⁵⁰ The camp area was given to the University of British Columbia to use as lecture space and housing for students. The 15th Coast Regiment (Reserve), RCA continued to use the guns for training exercises until the unit reverted to field artillery in 1948 and the guns were subsequently removed.⁵¹

The Department of National Defence abandoned the site in 1968 and the No.1 gun emplacement has since been restored. Remains of searchlight towers, gun emplacements, and a powerhouse are still visible today. The only restored coast artillery site, the Point Grey battery serves as a memorial to Vancouver's military history and the men who defended the harbour during the Second World War.⁵²



1. Guard Room
2. Officers' Quarters
(later used for Sergeant's Mess and Nurses' Quarters)
3. Recreation and Canteen Office
(former Orderly Room)
4. Officers' and Nurses' Mess
(later Officers' Quarters and Mess)
5. Garage
6. Sergeants' Quarters
(former Hospital)
7. O.R. Quarters
8. O.R. Mess
9. Ablutions Building
10. Laundry
11. Canteen and Recreation
12. Salvation Army Hut and Crew Accommodation
13. Engineers' Workshop

STEVESTON

Steveston Fort

The Steveston Fort was located in northwest Steveston. Its role was close defence of the south arm of the Fraser River. It also functioned as an examination battery to prevent unfriendly vessels proceeding upriver to the port of New Westminster 11 miles away.⁵³ The 58th Battery was mobilized to Steveston on 13 October 1939. It immediately mounted two 18-pounder guns on turntables on the Fraser River dike and built a protective barbed-wire fence surrounding the armaments.⁵⁴ One of these guns was replaced by two 25-pounder howitzers in 1943. These modern guns gave "mobile protection to the Sea Island Airport and the rest of the Fraser Delta."⁵⁵ The fort also possessed two Vickers Machine Guns, which flanked the battery and fired toward both land and sea, as well as an Anti-Aircraft Bren Light Machine Gun and a Thompson Carbine.⁵⁶ The 58th Battery's camp was 250 yards to the east of the dike along the Steveston highway.⁵⁷ A naval post with four officers and four signallers of the Royal Canadian Navy and an examination vessel was located 1200 yards south of the fort.⁵⁸ The Battery also made use of the private home of the Steves family located within the Fort's boundaries. The house was used as a decontamination center.

Particularly after the bombing of Pearl Harbour, the military was cautious with regards to the Steveston site because the local community was largely made up of people of Asian ancestry. A 1942 Defence Reconnaissance Report notes, "defence is necessary owing to the lack population being almost alien and numerous enough to constitute a serious menace, also, owing to the distance of this post from supporting troops."⁵⁹ Furthermore, even after the Japanese were evacuated in 1942, the 58th Coast Battery's Standing Orders cautioned, "as some of the Local Residents were quite friendly with [the evacuated] Japs, there probably exists a few sympathizers who would be assistance to the enemy."⁶⁰ These concerns proved unfounded.

In August 1943, active service operations at Steveston Battery were discontinued but it remained a training camp until January 1944. At this time, it was abandoned with the exception of four O.R.s who remained as caretakers and gardeners. Its guns were moved to Point Grey. By September 1944, there was no personnel at Steveston.⁶¹

There is little physical evidence of Steveston's military history. The buildings have all been demolished and only the Steves' house remains on the old fort site. An interpretive sign erected by the City of Richmond reminds visitors of Steveston's defence role in the Second World War.

YORKE ISLAND FORT

Yorke Island lies approximately 150 miles northwest of Vancouver in Johnstone Strait. In September 1937, the Department of National Defence reserved the right to use the island for military purposes. By the end of the year, construction of the fort was underway. The Department of National Defence, however, paid little attention to the fort in the year leading up to the Second World War, their efforts being concentrated on the East Coast where there was a greater threat of German attack. At this time, the 5th Heavy Battery at Esquimalt provided security and maintenance to the newly constructed fort.

In preparation of Canada's declaration of war on Germany, the 85th Battery of the 15th (Vancouver) Coast Brigade, RCA was mobilized to man the guns at Yorke Island on August 26th, 1939. The men were responsible for the operation of two quick firing 4.7-Inch guns that had been transported from Halifax and mounted atop a bluff that was located 180 feet above the shore on the west side of the island. These outdated guns had not been calibrated since April 1914. After the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbour, these guns were traded for the two 6-inch guns at Ferguson Point which were more powerful and had a much longer range. A detachment of twenty-five men of the 30th Battery of the 6th Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment arrived with two Bofors 40mm guns on June 25th, and the following day, a 6-inch gun was also delivered. A second 6-inch arrived on July 28th. These guns were tested on 3 July and deemed ready for action.

Like Point Atkinson, Yorke Island was also the site of an examination service controlled by the Royal Canadian Navy. The Island's Battery Observation Post as well as an old minesweeper for an examination vessel (X-Vic), called the H.M.C.S. Armentieres, which was later replaced by several smaller examination vessels, commanded marine movement and identified all vessels. The gunners at Yorke Island did not hesitate to fire upon boats that disregarded the examination system.

Three 60-inch General Electric searchlights manned by the 3rd Searchlight Battery sat on the shore below the bluff and patrolled the western passage between York and Vancouver Island. These searchlights, however, did not arrive until 1941. The island fort was also home to men in other divisions of the military including the Royal Canadian Army Service Corps, the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps, Royal Canadian Engineers, the Royal Canadian Signal Corps, and the Infantry.

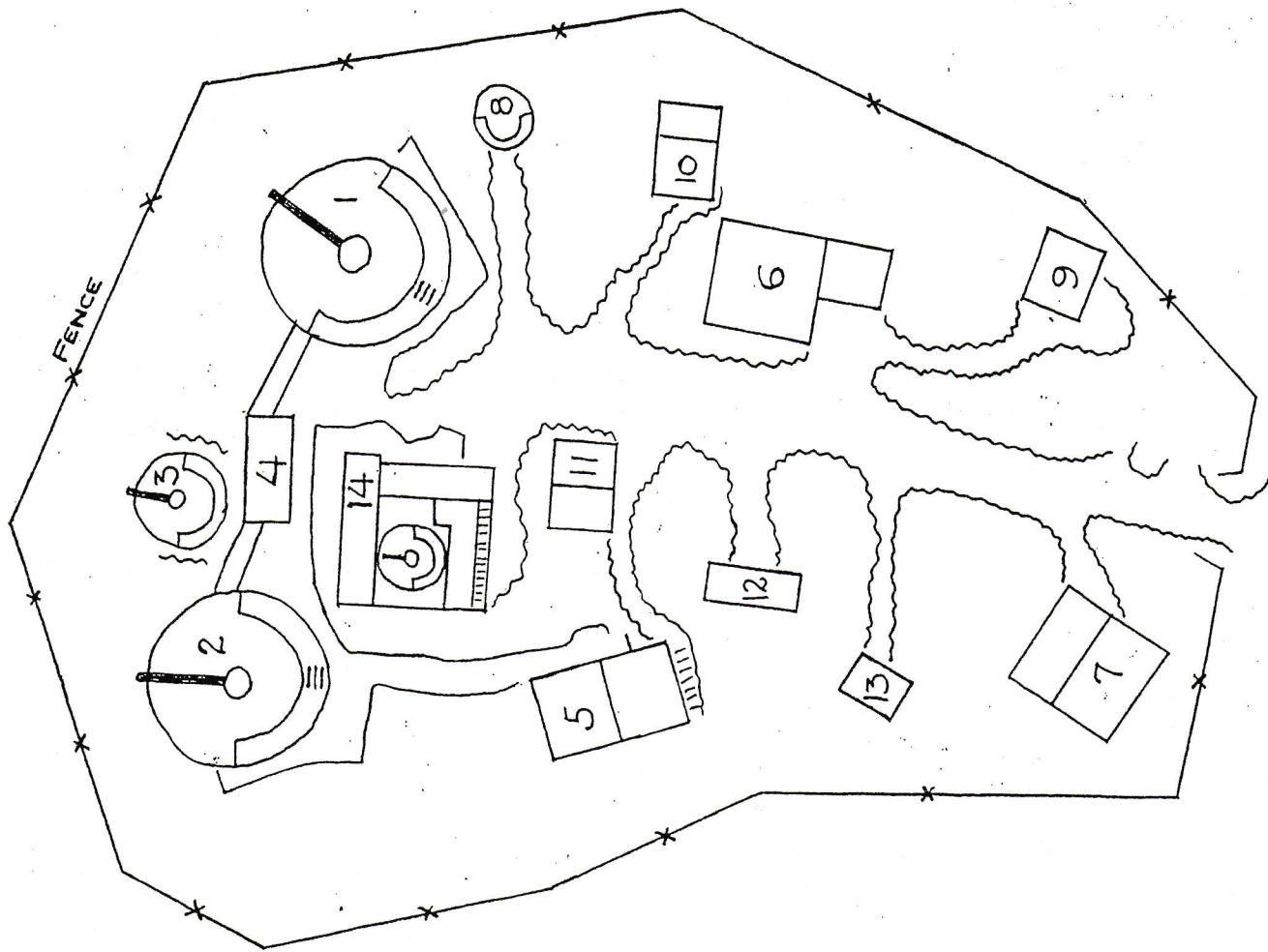
The men stationed at Yorke Island occupied their time with labourious daily tasks, such as transporting drinking water from nearby Hardwicke Island and working on the construction of a number of new buildings and improving old buildings on the island.⁶² They also enjoyed occasional entertainment and leisure activities often organized by YMCA supervisors. However, due to the "isolation, boredom of routine duties, lack of recreation, and ...inhospitable nature of the weather," "morale was...difficult to maintain."⁶³ Oftentimes, men stationed on the remote island would "go yorkey"—become overcome with the mental and emotional imbalance that most laymen would refer to as "cabin fever."

On 22 August 1945, the Examination Service's operations ceased, and the next day, the gunners were finally relieved of their duties though they did not vacate the island until 17 October 1945.⁶⁴

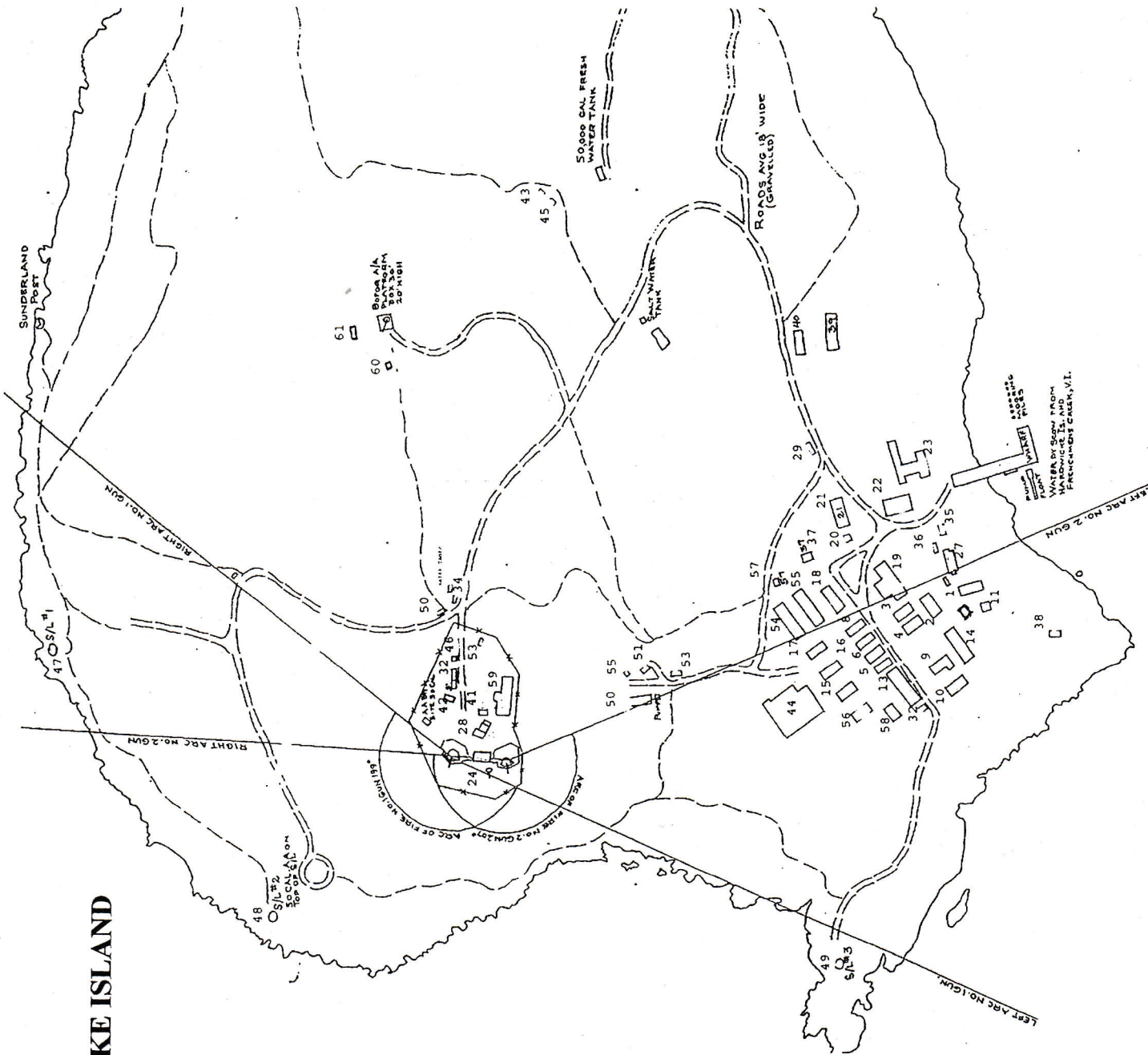
The physical remains of the military presence at Yorke Island are extensive. All of the concrete buildings are still in place as well as a decaying wooden structure that was the Warrant Officers and Sergeants Quarters.

YORKE ISLAND - FORT AREA

1. No.1 Gun 6"
 2. No.2 Gun 6"
 3. 6-Pounder 8-Hundredweight
 4. War Shelter
 5. Magazine
 6. N.C.O.'s Quarters and Battery Observation Post Sleeping Quarters
 7. Machine Gun Stores
 8. Emplacement for .50 Calibre Browning
 9. Ablution Hut
 10. Old Magazine Used for Grenades
 11. Gun Stores and Workshops
 12. Fort Fire Extinguisher
 13. Oil Stores
 14. Battery Observation Post Cell
- Signal Cell
Bofors
Searchlight Directing Station



YORKE ISLAND



1. Q. M. STORES
2. ORDERLY ROOM STAFF
3. H. Q. HUT, KITCHEN & PIONEERS
4. WET CANTEEN GUNNERS
5. SPARE HUT
6. SPARE HUT
7. SPARE HUT
8. SPARE HUT
9. SGT'S MESS & KITCHEN
10. VISITING SGT'S QUARTERS & STOREROOM
11. P. A. D. HQ STORES
12. RCCS SLEEPING QUARTERS
13. ABLUTION
14. RCE WORKSHOP
15. SGT'S QUARTERS
16. LEFT SECTION SEARCHLIGHT
17. RIGHT SECTION SEARCHLIGHT
18. LIBRARY, RECREATION AND CANTEEN
19. MESS HALL, KITCHEN AND STOREROOM
20. CXO OFFICE AND STATION
21. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
22. WO'S QUARTERS
23. OFFICERS' QUARTERS
24. CREW SHELTER
25. GUARD HOUSE
26. QM STORES (CLOTHING)
27. QM STORES
28. OFFICERS SHELTER AND BOP
29. OIL STORES
30. LECTURE HUT
31. NCO'S SHELTER
32. SGT'S ABLUTION
33. GUN STORES (FORT)
34. NAVY QUARTERS
35. NIGHT QUARTERS
36. OIL STORES
37. RCE WORKSHOP
38. CXO HUT
39. HOSPITAL
40. HOSPITAL STAFF QUARTERS
41. DIST. GUNNERS STORES
42. OLD MAGAZINE (FORT)
43. RADIO STATION
44. GYMNASIUM
45. RCCS POWER HOUSE
46. ABLUTION HUT (FORT)
47. NO. 1 SEARCHLIGHT
48. NO. 2 SEARCHLIGHT
49. NO. 3 SEARCHLIGHT
50. S/L AND CAMP POWER PLANT
51. RCE WORKSHOP
52. A/A CREW SHELTER
53. OIL STORES
54. RIGHT SECTION HUT
55. LEFT SECTION HUT
56. RCE HUT
57. TRACTOR SHED
58. DRYING ROOM
59. NEW MAGAZINE (LAUNDRY)
60. STORES (GUN)
61. STORES (SHELL)
62. SAA STORES

- ¹ "Will Rainbow Stay As Coast's Sole Defence?," *The Vancouver Daily Province*, 30 July 1914. As cited in Moogk, 32.
- ² Moogk with Stevenson, 31, 32, 52.
- ³ Moogk with Stevenson, 59.
- ⁴ In December 1943, the examination service was reduced to just one vessel. In March 1944, Vancouver's examination service ended and all equipment and personnel were removed from the site.
- ⁵ Peter N. Moogk with Major R.V. Stevenson, *Vancouver Defended* (Vancouver: Antonson Publishing, 1978), 96.
- ⁶ Moogk with Stevenson, 96.
- ⁷ This gun was not mounted until August 1942. Before this time, the men housed at Point Atkinson's only source of arms was from their own personal supply of rifles and bayonets. See
- ⁸ Moogk with Stevenson, 96.
- ⁹ Moogk with Stevenson, 62.
- ¹⁰ LCol R.V. Stevenson, *Point Atkinson: A Military Site, 1939-1945* (Vancouver: Privately Printed).
- ¹¹ Stevenson, *Point Atkinson: A Military Site, 1939-1945*.
- ¹² Moogk with Stevenson, 111.
- ¹³ Steveston Fort Record Book. 15th Field Artillery Regiment Museum and Archives.
- ¹⁴ Point Atkinson Fort Record Book. 15th Field Artillery Regiment Museum and Archives.
- ¹⁵ Stanley Park Fort Record Book. 15th Field Artillery Regiment Museum and Archives.
- ¹⁶ Fire Commander's Orders, October 1942, as cited in Moogk with Stevenson, 63.
- ¹⁷ Moogk with Stevenson, 62.
- ¹⁸ Moogk with Stevenson, 98-99.
- ¹⁹ Moogk with Stevenson, 99.
- ²⁰ Moogk with Stevenson, 106.
- ²¹ Moogk with Stevenson, 62.
- ²² Moogk with Stevenson, 51.
- ²³ Arthur M. Saul to Senior Naval Officer at Esquimalt, 20 August 1914. NAC: Record Group 24, File E 26-7-44, Volume 11, Folio 907.
- ²⁴ Sub-Lieutenant Eddie A. Lucas, as cited in Moogk, 51; and Moogk, 51.
- ²⁵ Moogk with Stevenson, 51.
- ²⁶ Moogk with Stevenson, 51-52.
- ²⁷ Stanley Park Fort Record Book. 15th Field Artillery Regiment Museum and Archives.
- ²⁸ "Beauty Takes the Count," *Vancouver Daily Province*, 9 February 1938 as cited in Moogk, 59.
- ²⁹ "Town Planners Don't Like Guns in Stanley Park," *The Vancouver Sun*, 9 February 1938.
- ³⁰ "Town Planners Don't Like Guns," 9 February 1938; and "Start on Road for gun Emplacements," *The Vancouver Daily Province*, 12 February 1938.
- ³¹ Steveston Fort Record Book. 15th Field Artillery Regiment Museum and Archives.
- ³² Fire Commander's Orders, October 1942, as cited in Moogk with Stevenson, 63.
- ³³ Moogk with Stevenson, 98.
- ³⁴ Nicholson, *The Gunners of Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1972), 472; and Stanley Park Fort Record Book. Whether or not this secret was kept is questionable as Moogk cites a letter from one gunner stationed at Yorke Island to his wife discussing the plan for the exchange. See Moogk with Stevenson, 64.
- ³⁵ Moogk with Stevenson, 83.
- ³⁶ Stanley Park Fort Record Book. 15th Field Artillery Regiment Museum and Archives.
- ³⁷ Moogk with Stevenson, 111.
- ³⁸ Moogk with Stevenson, 111.
- ³⁹ Moogk with Stevenson, 59.
- ⁴⁰ At intervals the 58th Battery would relieve the 85th Battery at Yorke Island. The 85th would take over at Point Grey during these periods.
- ⁴¹ Moogk with Stevenson, 61.
- ⁴² Point Grey Fort Record Book. 15th Field Artillery Regiment Museum and Archives.
- ⁴³ Moogk with Stevenson, 62.
- ⁴⁴ Moogk with Stevenson, 62.
- ⁴⁵ Nicholson, 472; and Steveston Fort Record Book. 15th Field Artillery Regiment Museum and Archives.
- ⁴⁶ Introduction, Point Grey Battery, 1. 15th Field Artillery Regiment Museum and Archives.

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- ⁴⁷ Point Grey Fort Record Book. 15th Field Artillery Regiment Museum and Archives.
- ⁴⁸ point Grey Fort Record Book. 15th Field Artillery Regiment Museum and Archives.
- ⁴⁹ Moogk with Stevenson, 106.
- ⁵⁰ The 77th Coast Battery was a regular army unit created after the Second World War. Later its name changed to No.1 Coast Artillery Maintenance Unit.
- ⁵¹ Moogk with Stevenson, 111.
- ⁵² Point Grey Battery Brochure.
- ⁵³ Steveston Fort Record Book. 15th Field Artillery Regiment Museum and Archives; and Fire Commander's Orders, October 1942, as cited in Moogk, 63.
- ⁵⁴ Steveston Fort Record Book. 15th Field Artillery Regiment Museum and Archives.
- ⁵⁵ Steveston Fort Record Book. 15th Field Artillery Regiment Museum and Archives; and Moogk with Stevenson, 106.
- ⁵⁶ Steveston Detachment, Standing Orders, 1 December 1942. 15th Field Artillery Regiment Museum and Archives.
- ⁵⁷ Steveston Fort Record Book. 15th Field Artillery Regiment Museum and Archives.
- ⁵⁸ Steveston Fort Record Book. 15th Field Artillery Regiment Museum and Archives.
- ⁵⁹ Defence Reconnaissance Report. 15th Field Artillery Regiment Museum and Archives.
- ⁶⁰ Steveston Detachment, Standing Orders, Section - Fighting and Manning, 1 December 1942. 15th Field Artillery Regiment Museum and Archives.
- ⁶¹ Steveston Fort Record Book. 15th Field Artillery Regiment Museum and Archives.
- ⁶² Between 1938 and 1945, over 62 buildings were constructed on the island.
- ⁶³ Moogk with Stevenson, 90 and 92.
- ⁶⁴ The source for this section is Moogk with Steveson, 85-93.