



## Vancouver Artillery Association

Bessborough Armoury  
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### Point Grey Fort Docent Package

This Docent Package is a resource for those volunteering to lead a tour at the Point Grey Fort in the UBC Endowment lands. This is a key role for passing on the history of the 15<sup>th</sup> (Vancouver) Coast Brigade, RCA to current serving Gunners and other interested visitors.

#### Location

The Point Grey Fort is located next to and under the Museum of Anthropology. Facing seaward, Number 1 gun emplacement is to the right of the museum. It has been partially restored and the ready ammunition lockers, gun crew shelter, workshop, and ammunition hoist are identified. The central pivot mount for the 6-inch calibre gun is now buried under gravel. The circular mount for the No.2 gun is now occupied by Bill Reid's wood carving "Raven and the First Men" inside the museum. No.3 gun emplacement, at the far, southwest end of the museum, has been left unrestored. The concrete towers for searchlights 9 and 10 which illuminated the harbour's entrance at night can be seen on Wreck Beach below the gun battery's site.

Point Grey Fort was located on the traditional land of the x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm (Musqueam), a Salishan people who formerly used the point as a lookout. When approaching canoes were sighted, they might be friendly visitors or hostile raiders. A runner would carry the news of them through the woods to Musqueam Village, giving the residents time to prepare for their defence or to receive the newcomers.

#### Safety

The stairs leading down to Wreck Beach where the searchlight towers are located are lengthy. The stairway down Washout Gully, to the northeast, has 394 steps and will take you past a surviving battery powerhouse on the right hand side near the bottom. The trail from the Totem Park residences, to the southwest, has 410 steps. Both staircases are well built and have spaces for you to stop and take a breather.

#### Short History

Major BDC Treatt, an instructor at the British Coast Artillery School, was sent to Canada in 1936 at the request of National Defence Headquarters to review the defence needs on the east and west coasts. The Treatt Report recommended an *Ultimate Plan* of coast defences. However, the weapons manufacturing in England was severely overburdened and an *Interim Plan* was adopted in 1937 using guns already available in Canada. The report noted that Vancouver was less vulnerable to attack than the more exposed Victoria-Esquimalt target. However, defences were still needed for Canada's major West Coast port, which was the terminus of two trans-continental railways and the centre of B.C.'s wartime industries.

Construction was commenced in 1937. However, the outbreak of war found the installation far from complete. Two of the 6 inch guns were unloaded from barges at the foot of the cliff and placed on

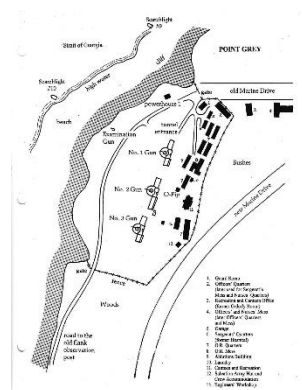
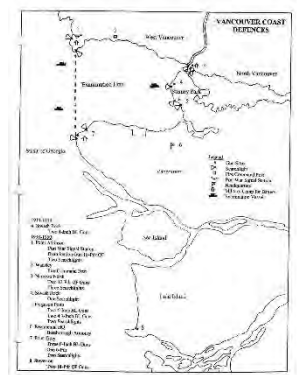
temporary cement aprons that had been poured with quick-drying cement brought from Seattle. The concrete emplacements can be seen today were not completed until August 1940. Number 3 gun was deemed unsafe and not installed until April 1941.

Of the more than thirty structures that were constructed at Point Grey between 1939 and 1945, only eight remain today. These are the three gun emplacements, the war shelters of guns 1 and 3, the two searchlight towers, and an auxiliary powerhouse. There is also an underground tunnel under the emplacements lined with ammunition magazines and administrative rooms. The brass fittings in the ammunition magazines were stolen after the war, but the benches where gunners replaced their boots with felt boots are still in place. A few heaters and ventilation pipes which kept the munitions in a stable condition are still in the tunnels. Behind the No.1 gun emplacement is an escape hatch, should there be a fire in the magazines.



**1A – Pacific Coast Defences.** Identifies the coastal defences at Victoria-Esquimalt, Steveston, Vancouver, Yorke Island and Prince Rupert. Shows the northern and southern approaches to Vancouver. *ArmySurveyEstablishmentRCE*

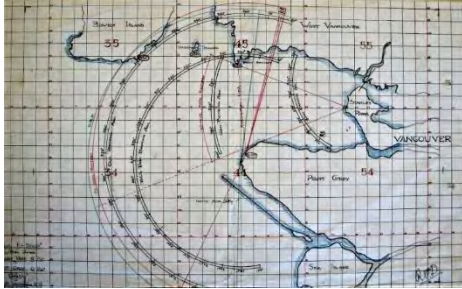
**1B – Map of Vancouver Coast Defences.** Highlights the installations from both World Wars including Siwash Rock - two 4-Inch BL Guns, Point Atkinson – one 18-Pdr QF examination gun, Narrows North - two 12-Pdr QF Guns, Ferguson Point - two 4.7-Inch BL Guns (replaced by two 6 inch BL Guns), Point Grey - three 6-Inch BL Guns, one 6 Pdr examination gun, Steveston - two 18-Pdr QF Guns (increased later to one 18-Pdr QF Guns and two 25 Pdrs)



**1C – Point Grey Fort.** The layout of the Fort shows the location of gun emplacements, searchlights and buildings from later in the war.

**1D - Point Grey Fort.** Another layout of the Fort shows the location of gun emplacements, searchlights and buildings from February 1945. *RCESurveyMap*

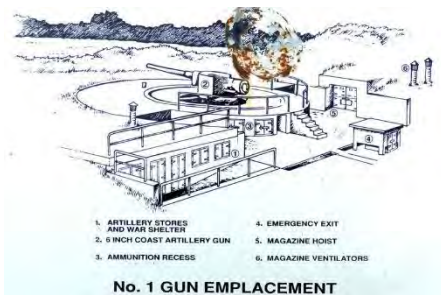




**1E – Point Grey Fort.** This map provides a view of the interlocking arcs of fire between Ferguson Point and Point Grey. Maximum ranges are also plotted. *Fort Record Book*



**1F – Roads Shoals and Landing Places.** 15 March 1944. This map provides a listing of major city roads with potential enemy landing sites. *Fort Record Book*



**1G – No 1 Gun Emplacement.** A photo of the existing sign provides a view of the gun emplacement.



**2A – Aerial View.** Remnants of the original two gun emplacements can be seen close to the cliff.



**2B – Aerial View.** A good view of the camp layout. It appears that the concrete work on the permanent emplacements has just recently been completed as no backfill has taken place yet.

**2C – Aerial View.** A similar view to 2B. *15FDMuseum000.15.10*





**3A – 6 inch Mark VII B.L. Guns on Mk. 2 Mountings.** Temporary installation September 1939. *15FDMuseum985.13.2*

**3B – 6 inch Mark VII B.L. Guns on Mk. 2 Mountings.** Permanent installation. *15FDMuseum990.546.01B*



**3C – 6 inch Mark VII B.L. Guns on Mk. 2 Mountings.** Permanent installation. *15FDMuseum000.15.11B*

**3D – 6 inch Mark VII B.L. Guns on Mk. 2 Mountings.** Permanent installation. *15FDMuseum 994.29.01*



**3E– 6 inch Mark VII B.L. Guns on Mk. 2 Mountings.** Camouflage preparation No. 2 Gun May 1943. *Fort Record Book*

**3F – 6 inch Mark VII B.L. Guns on Mk. 2 Mountings.** Detachment in action. Note steel wool camouflage. May 1943. *Fort Record Book*

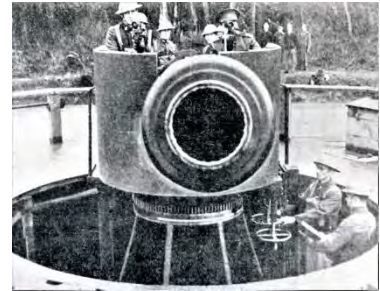






**3G – 6 inch Mark VII B.L. Guns on Mk. 2 Mountings.** Steel wool camouflage completed. May 1943. *Fort Record Book*

**3H – 6 inch Mark VII B.L. Guns on Mk. 2 Mountings.** 1940 press photo. “Gunnery Want to See Action”. The men in the pit are operating the traversing mechanism on the pivot mounting. This was converted to an electrical system later.



**4A – 6 inch Mark VII B.L. Guns on Mk. 2 Mountings.** Firing sub-calibre rounds 1947. *15FdMuseum985.101.01*

**4B – 6 inch Mark VII B.L. Guns on Mk. 2 Mountings.** Firing sub-calibre rounds 1947. *15FdMuseum985.101.02*



**4C – 6 inch Mark VII B.L. Guns on Mk. 2 Mountings.** Firing sub-calibre rounds 1947. *15FdMuseum985.101.04*

**4D – 6 inch Mark VII B.L. Guns on Mk. 2 Mountings.** Firing sub-calibre rounds 1947. *15FdMuseum985.101.05*





**4D – 6 inch Mark VII B.L. Guns on Mk. 2 Mountings.** Firing sub-calibre rounds 1947. *15FdMuseum985.101.03*

**4D – 6 inch Mark VII B.L. Guns on Mk. 2 Mountings.** 1947/48. Group photo after firing sub-calibre rounds. Rear: Captain Gordon Platt, Captain Bill Jackson, Lieutenant Ken Bonnett. *15FdMuseum985.82.08*



**4D – 6 inch Mark VII B.L. Guns on Mk. 2 Mountings.** 1947/48. Cleaning after firing sub-calibre rounds. Captain Francis (Bud) Garrett, Major Ed Royce, Captain Bill Jackson, Lieutenant-Colonel Theo Dumoulin. *15FdMuseum985.82.7*

**4C – Museum Construction.** 1974. The No. 1 Gun emplacement is filled with gravel as part of the construction for the Museum of Anthropology. *15FdMuseum*



**4D – Museum Construction.** 1974. The No. 1 Gun emplacement is exposed as part of the construction for the Museum of Anthropology. *15FdMuseum*

**5A – Battery Observation Post.** The Battery Observation Post was also referred to as the Fire Command Post or Searchlight Directing and Battery Observation Post or simply as the BOP. *15FdMuseum 85.100.07*





**5B – Battery Observation Post.** A temporary BOP had been built at a point of land 640 yards left and 100 yards in front of gun #1. It was 30 feet lower and provided a good field of view. It was abandoned in August 1942 when the new BOP, shown in the photo, was built due to the erosion of the soil. The new BOP was built 35 yards right rear of #2 gun. *Fort Record Book*

**5C – Battery Observation Post.** The new BOP was equipped with a Depression Range Finder (DRF) Mark V and Magslip Transmission. Photo shows the DRF. *Fort Record Book*



**5D – Battery Observation Post.** May 1943. Interior of the BOP showing Depression Range Finder Mark V and other BOP equipment. *Fort Record Book*

**5E – Battery Observation Post.** Searchlight D.E.C. control instruments used to control direction of #9 and #10 searchlights. *Fort Record Book*



**5F - Battery Observation Post.** Interior of original, temporary BOP. *Fort Record Book*

**5G - Battery Observation Post.** 1948. Captain Mervyn Gordon and unidentified officer gain entrance into the BOP. *15FdMuseum982.718.6*

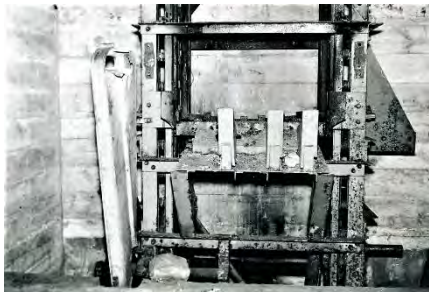






**6A – Ammunition Magazine.** May 1943. Ammunition stored in magazine. *Fort Record Book*

**6B – Ammunition Magazine.** May 1943. 6" shells stored in shell magazine. *Fort Record Book*



**6C – Ammunition Magazine.** 1974. The remains of the ammunition hoist in the shell magazine. *15FdMuseum*



**7A - 6 Pounder, 8 hundredweight Hotchkiss Gun.** This gun was the standard examination service enforcer in the Coast Artillery Forts. It could fire 25 rounds per minute with a muzzle velocity of 1,818 feet per second (554 m/s) and an effective firing range of 4,000 yards (3,700 m). *15FdMuseum000.15.12*



**8A - Bofors 40 mm Anti-Aircraft Gun.** May 1943. The Swedish designed 40mm Bofors was in Canadian service from 1941-1959. It had a range of 10,800 yards (9900 meters) with a 5,000 feet (1500 meter) effective ceiling. The projectiles weighed 2 lbs (.9 kg). It is shown here in its emplacement forward of the 6" guns with a spare barrel ready. *Fort Record Book.*

**8B - Bofors 40 mm Anti-Aircraft Gun.** May 1943. The Swedish designed 40mm Bofors was in Canadian service from 1941-1959. It had a range of 10,800 yards (9900 meters) with a 5,000 feet (1500 meter) effective ceiling. The projectiles weighed 2 lbs (.9 kg). It is shown here in its emplacement forward of the 6" guns. *Fort Record Book.*

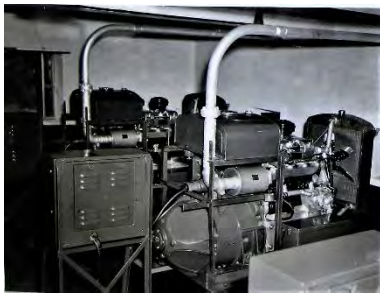






**9A – Ammunition Magazine entrance.** War shelter and gun stores room access. *15FdMuseum985.88.154*

**9B – Ammunition Magazine entrance.** 1974. This door is located to the right of #1 gun emplacement and provides access to the lengthy tunnel that runs to #3 gun emplacement. *15FdMuseum*



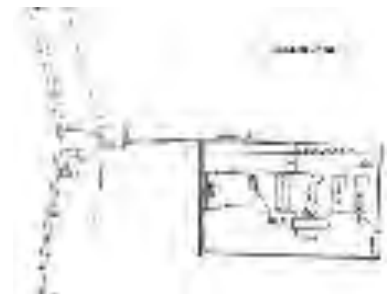
**10A – Gardner Diesel Engines.** May 1943. Engine Room. *Fort Record Book*

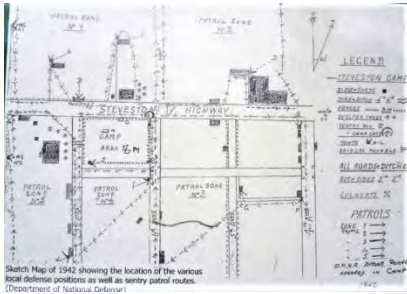
**11A – 2 Pdr Naval Ordnance.** May 1943. The Point Grey Fort was also used for the testing of ordnance manufactured in local factories. This 2 pdr is mounted between #2 and #3 Guns. *Fort Record Book*



**11A – 2 Pdr Naval Ordnance.** May 1943. Checking a stoppage in test firing. *Fort Record Book*

**12A – Steveston Fort.** Manned by individuals from 58<sup>th</sup> Battery at Point Grey Fort. Originally equipped with two 18 Pdrs; one of which was later exchanged for two 25 pounders. *15FdMuseum*





**12B – Steveston Fort.** Another map of the area outlines the various patrol responsibilities. *15FdMuseum*

**12C – Steveston Fort.** One of 18 Pdrs kept at Steveston for use as an examination service. *15FdMuseum*



**12D – Steveston Fort.** Harold Steves was made an honorary member of the 58<sup>th</sup> Battery and was issued Battle Dress tailored to his size.

**12E – Steveston Fort.** Harold Steves was made an honorary member of the 58<sup>th</sup> Battery and was issued Battle Dress tailored to his size.



**Photo Collection**

The laminated photo collection is a work in progress. The intent is to provide a guide to lead tours through the battery gun position and to provide an opportunity to see the site as it looked to the soldiers who served there in the past. Each photo page has a short description on the reverse with room for additional notes as required.

**Conclusion**

Effective 29 December 1943, the examination service was assumed by Point Atkinson and in March it was discontinued. On 1 March 1944, the Headquarters 15<sup>th</sup> (Vancouver) Coast Regiment RCA was disbanded and 58<sup>th</sup> Battery became responsible for Narrows North and Point Atkinson. Its operational role was ceased 24 July 1944.

The Point Grey Fort is valued for its natural, historical, engineering and social/cultural values, in particular for its role in national defence prior to and during World War II. The conservation work performed by the 15<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Museum ensured that it was not forgotten and buried during the construction of the Museum of Anthropology. It needs to be used more often by the Regiment in order

to increase the historical knowledge of those who currently serve, and also as a reminder to other visitors of the role that the members of the unit performed during the war. Many of those members volunteered for overseas service and never returned.

The work is far from complete but major advances have been made to date in the provision of heritage conservation and interpretation.

**Would you like to support our team?**

Contact the Vancouver Artillery Association president – Leon Jensen [president.vcrgunners@gmail.com](mailto:president.vcrgunners@gmail.com)