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## COASTAL FORTIFICATIONS OF TOWNSVILLE

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The pre-federation fixed coastal defence installation at Kissing Point, Townsville, constitutes a place of significant historic value to the people of Townsville and Queensland. The Kissing Point installation is the only remaining coastal defence battery from the 1890s in the city. It has retained its inherent historic value despite use as an artillery battery during the Second World War, the demolition of the wartime structures, partial burial during the 1960s, and the subsequent restoration of features in the 1970s. It was the first coastal battery constructed in Townsville. A second colonial era fortification at Magazine Island was demolished in the 1980s. The processes of construction, and the subsequent demolition, are noted and described. Following this demolition the Kissing Point installation has assumed even more historical importance. It is linked, both in terms of construction style and history, to the other extant pre-federation batteries in Queensland at Lytton, Brisbane and Green Hill, Thursday Island. Coastal defence installations were also built during the Second World War at Cape Pallarenda and on Magnetic Island. These were constructed by local labour and are material evidence of a close and continuing link between the armed services and the civilian population in Townsville. These installations are historically significant to the Townsville region; particularly in regard to the years of great uncertainty following the decisive Battle of the Coral Sea in 1942. As the Magnetic Island 'Forts' are a major site for tourism, it is important that the history of the area be fully understood and that the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, as the managers of the site, be supported in their efforts to conserve the area. □ *Kissing Point, Magazine Island, Cape Pallarenda, fortification, coastal defences, World War II.*

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ABBREVIATIONS. AA, National Archives of Australia (Canberra); AA Vic, National Archives of Australia (Victoria); AA Townsville, National Archives of Australia (Townsville); AWM, Australian War Memorial (Canberra); JOL, John Oxley Library (Brisbane); KPA, Kissing Point Archives (Townsville); QGG, Queensland Government Gazette; QSA, Queensland State Archives (Brisbane); QV&P, Queensland Parliament Votes and Proceedings.

### DEFENCE OF COLONIAL QUEENSLAND

Prior to Federation in 1901, the early schemes for the defence of the Australian colonies reflected the values and attitudes of the wider British Empire under the reign of Queen Victoria. These conservative values were well illustrated in The Federal Defence of Australia written in 1897 by George Catheart Craig, who pressed for the formation of a single Federal defence force that would be suitable to the safety of the soon to be formed Commonwealth and the requirements of the Australian people. His opinion was that the rapid expansion of colonial progress was linked closely to European civilisation in the southern

hemisphere and this would blend with commerce to enhance the prosperity and progress of the British Empire (Craig 1897: 1). These Anglo-Australian values would remain ingrained in the national identity for the major part of the early 20th century.

At Federation, Australia viewed itself as an appendage of Britain, as the supplier of raw materials and wool for the manufacturing industries of Britain and a provider of foodstuffs for the British people. The role of the British Navy as the protector of shipping and commerce within the Empire was well illustrated by the writer Rudyard Kipling in his poem *Big Steamers*:

For the bread that you eat and the biscuit you nibble,  
The sweet that you suck and the joints that you carve,  
They are brought to you daily by all us Big Steamers  
And if anyone hinders our coming you'll starve!

As long as the small Australian colonies held a belief in the supremacy of the British Navy, the development of colonial defence forces was clearly not a priority (Bach, 1983). This was also reflected in the Navy's higher status as the Senior

Service. With the expansion of the Australian colonies and their growing economic foundations, the funding of local volunteer forces gradually passed from the British Government to the small colonial governments. The Indian Mutiny in 1857 and 1858, followed by the devastating American Civil War from 1861 to 1865 and then the rise of Russia and Japan as Pacific powers were only some of the security anxieties felt by the colonists. Specifically, the development of the Russian fleet at Vladivostok clearly alarmed the isolated, Eurocentric colonies of Australia. During and after the Crimean War of 1853-1856, the colonies in Australia were justifiably nervous, for the ports and coastal shipping lanes were inadequately defended. The prize in Australia was gold: the colonies were isolated and telegraph links to Britain were only established in 1872 (Kitson, 2001: 1). Behind the image of imperial solidarity, the late 19th century was a time of nervousness, rebellion and challenge to the established social order.

In the light of these developments, coastal defence of Australian ports such as King George Sound, Thursday Island, Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Hobart and Newcastle, as well as Townsville, and the New Zealand ports of Otago, Westport and Auckland, were considered as part of a 'chain of ocean defence' (Craig, 1897: 5). This chain linked the colonies through Singapore, Hong Kong, Colombo, Malta, and Gibraltar back to the imperial heartland, Britain (see Dennis, 1995: 243-244 for a full list of Australian coastal fortifications as at 1901). The most energetic period of planning followed presentation of a survey of defences of the various Australian colonies by Sir William Jervois and Lt Col Peter Scratchley in 1877. The survey was part of wider imperial defence planning that followed when Britain came close to declaring war on Russia, first in 1877 and again in 1885, following Russian expansionism into the eastern Mediterranean and to the Sea of Japan (Kitson, 2001: 1). Construction was then spaced out over the 1880s and 1890s. Jervois, a fine military engineer, became director-general for fortifications in England in 1862 and was responsible for the design and construction of a series of important coastal defences such as those at the entrance to Portsmouth Harbour (Palmerston Forts Society, 1997: [1]). He also had an interesting career. During the American Civil War, disguised as an artist and using a rowing boat, he sketched the fortifications of Portland and Boston for the British military

command (Australian Dictionary of Biography 1966-, vol. 4, 1851-1890, D-J: 479-80). Scratchley was also an engineer who had trained at the Royal Military Academy-Woolwich in London. He served in the Crimea and in India during the uprising in 1858. Both men would have further career associations with Australia and the Pacific (Dictionary of National Biography 1964, 1: 1171).

Plans for the defence of Queensland, following separation from New South Wales in 1859, were instigated by the first Governor of Queensland, Sir George Bowen. In 1860 Bowen pressed the imperial government to establish volunteer military forces in the colony. Bowen noted, to his dismay, that Brisbane and Ipswich, the principal commercial and population centres in south-eastern Queensland, were entirely defenceless following withdrawal of the British military detachments in 1869. Furthermore, the fledgling colony was defended by 20 unarmed and ill-disciplined police constables (Pixley, 1949: 253).

The colonial legislature in Brisbane responded to the Governor's call by formally approving the establishment of volunteer cavalry troops and infantry units. These volunteer defence forces were rapidly formed in the enthusiasm that followed separation from New South Wales. The imperial government, in a despatch to Governor Bowen dated 23 June 1863, advised that the financing of the local volunteer defence forces was placed squarely on the colonial government's shoulders. The imperial government in London stated that the obligations of Britain to colonial defence were discharged, in the main, by the imperial navy 'which must form, in both peace and war, a true Imperial contribution to the security and protection of Australia' (Pixley 1949: 256; Pixley, 1959). Any local military protection was now the responsibility of the small isolated communities of Queensland spread over large tracts of land linked by few roads, with poor communication and even more limited financial resources.

In other words, local defence, including the establishment of coastal defence fortifications, floating batteries and barracks, as well as the maintenance of defence units between separation in 1859 and Federation in 1901 gradually became the responsibility of the Queensland colonial government. The one-sided attitudes of British officials such as Craig (1897) calling for the patriotic defence of King and Mother Country

seemed at odds with the reality of the internal mechanisms of imperial-colonial relations. Only a small detachment of imperial troops, the 50th Queen's Own Regiment of Foot, remained in Brisbane until 1869 (Hopkins-Weise, 2002). Their role, apart from valuable support to the Queensland Volunteer Rifles, was to guard the prisoners on St Helena Island in Moreton Bay (Hopkins-Weise & Pratt, 2001). The planned replacement by the Royal Irish Regiment was refused by the Queensland Government on political and financial grounds: the Irish Regiment being then sent to fight in the Maori Wars in New Zealand (Hopkins-Weise, 2003). Queensland was left poorly defended by regular troops between 1860 and 1866. Little wonder that a review of Queensland's defences called for radical reorganisation.

In 1866, a select committee of the colonial legislature suggested a reorganisation of the Queensland defence forces. However, the legislature as a whole chose to reject the committee's recommendations. The standard of the troops had rapidly declined: the country units being little more than rifle clubs. When the British regular army was withdrawn, the colonies were left unprotected, hindered by their own internal politics and the general lack of resources. The poor state of the Queensland military defences in 1874 was noted by the then Governor in a report to the British Home Office:

Nothing can be more unsatisfactory than the state of the defences of this colony, in the event of any external aggression, nor do I see any means at present by which they can be improved ... Until some effective measure is passed and an adequate sum of money voted for this purpose it would be utterly hopeless to expect that even the limited number of volunteers now enrolled would become really efficient. (Johnson, 1974: 63-64)

The only real incentive to remaining in the volunteer forces was to accrue credits for qualifications for Land Order Certificates that were issued to men based on years of service. The prevailing attitudes of professional British military officers possibly contributed to the poor state of the defence forces, as they considered that volunteer detachments, particularly Australian colonial forces, were little more than rabble. This was another attitude that would continue well into the 20th century.

In 1876, New South Wales, along with Victoria, South Australia and Queensland, sought advice from the imperial military experts for the establishment of a proper, professional scheme of defence. Jervois and Scratchley arrived in Brisbane on 4 August 1877 to assess

the state of colonial defences in Queensland (Johnson 1974: 66) and Jervois presented his report to the government at the end of August (QV&P 1877, 1: 1273-1295). In the report he stated that Brisbane, with a population of 27,000 people, could be easily approached through Moreton Bay. As the main town in the colony this was the most vulnerable target. By comparison, Townsville with a population of only 3,000 (Johnson, 1974: 67) was of limited strategic importance.

The report criticised the poor quality of defence preparedness in the colony. It recommended that an earthwork battery, rendered secure by a ditch and stockade, be considered at Lytton near the mouth of the Brisbane River to protect the main shipping route to the city. The fort was to be manned by a detachment of Volunteer Garrison Artillery. Fort Lytton (Fig. 1), built between 1881 and 1885, was to be the first fixed coastal defence installation constructed in Queensland and remains a tangible link to our colonial heritage. The fort record book for Lytton (AWM 1/184) describes the fort as being constructed in the shape of a five-sided lunette, or crescent moon, surrounded by a moat, crossed by a bridge. The lunette would be the basic framework behind the construction of most coastal defence installations of that period. It was a conservative defence construction that would be built without regard for climate or technological change. Further details of construction changes to Lytton are contained in the records of the Queensland State Archives (QSA COL/A 613 3757 1890). The battery remains extant near the mouth of the Brisbane River and has been carefully restored.

The construction of fixed coastal defences, following Britain's rise as a great seafaring and colonial power, had become a standard means for the protection of important harbours, cities and other strategic points on exposed coastlines. The theory behind coastal fortification construction was clear: these fixed installations relieved the navy of purely defensive functions and gave it greater freedom for movement and aggressive offshore action. The aim was to fortify the coastal defences with guns equal to, or a match for, naval attacks. Other methods of defence, such as nets, mines, and torpedo boats, were also utilised in conjunction with fixed defences. The broad purpose of fixed coastal defence was to prevent enemy attack from sea to shore, to repel successful landings and to establish a stable beachhead from which blockades of ports and

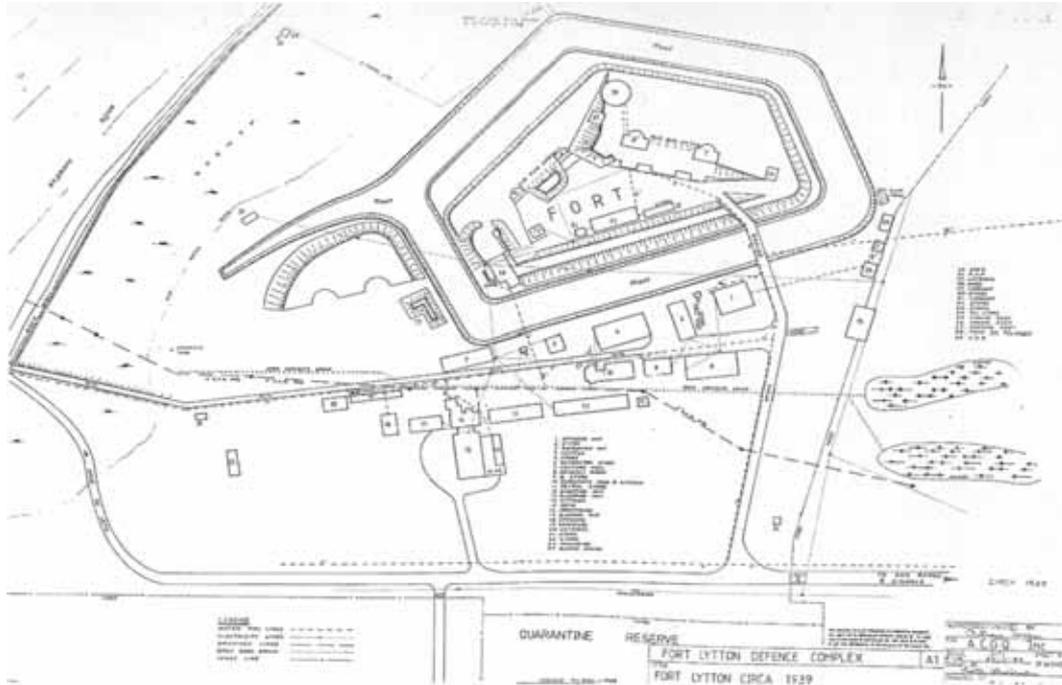


FIG. 1. Plan of Fort Lytton (circa 1939), the first coastal defence installation in Queensland, constructed between 1881 and 1885. (Arms Collector Guild of Queensland)

harbour entrances could be prevented. In areas of naval concentration they also served as a means of protection for navy ports, armament stores and supply depots.

These were the strategic considerations with which Jervois and Scratchley were familiar at that time. Following the investigation of colonial defences in Australia, Jervois was promoted to vice-regal status and appointed Governor of South Australia. This was a promotion out of harm's way. He had sided with the Chinese against the Malays in his previous appointment as Governor of the Straits Settlements. He also openly supported Chinese immigration to Australia and New Zealand. These practices had put both the Malays and advocates of the White Australia policy off-side (Australian Dictionary of Biography 1966-, vol. 4, 1851-1890, D-J: 479-80). Scratchley was less politically motivated and retained as a consulting military engineer by several colonial governments, including Queensland, and placed in the difficult position of trying to implement the proposals for reform at a time of political inertia and economic restraint. In a time of relative peace in the British

Empire, the Queensland Government was slow to respond to the perceived need for strategic forward defence.

Fortunately for the defence planners, war hysteria swept London in 1878 when Russian forces advanced on Constantinople, the capital of Turkey, then an ally of Britain. The threat of war galvanised colonial governments in far away Australia. While the threat lasted, and it was inevitably short-lived, the volunteer engineer corps reached its greatest strength (McNicoll, 1977 1: 82).

New regulations concerning the establishment, regulation and reorganisation of the Queensland defence forces were formulated during this crisis period. Scratchley presented a series of progress reports from 1878 and eventually, in 1882, a final report to the Queensland government detailing the steps necessary to complete the defence organisation of Queensland (QV&P 1878, 1: 525-534 and QV&P 1882, 1: 581-587). This final report was the first to recommend measures for the protection of Townsville: recommendations had been omitted from Jervois' report. Scratchley suggested that:

(1) For the present it will suffice to send to Townsville the two 64-pounder rifled Guns which are available, and mount them in a convenient position so as to fire to seaward; a small magazine being built for the ammunition, and the site enclosed. On the outbreak of war, a sandbag battery could be constructed to protect the guns from the fire of hostile ships.

(2) Two Guns of position (say 20-pounder B.L. guns), on travelling carriages, to be also provided.

(3) The Artillery Corps to be increased to a strength of eighty officers and men, under the new organization as a Volunteer Artillery Battery. The increase of this corps has been provided for in the number of men recommended by the Military Committee for the unpaid Volunteer Force.

(4) One or more extemporized Torpedo Boats, as already suggested for Brisbane. Any new Government vessels ordered for general harbour work to be designed and fitted for use as spar[c] torpedo boats. Private steam launches, if available, to be fitted in the same manner (QV&P 1882, 1: 586).

A small detachment of 40 men from the Queensland Volunteer Artillery Brigade, known as No.4 Battery, had been established in Townsville on 12 June 1878 following representation to the government by A.F. Low, a local resident. However, Lieutenant-Colonel Blaxland, the Commandant of the Queensland defence forces, was only able to make his first inspection in 1880. He then selected a site for the battery on 'an elevation about 2 miles north of Ross Creek known as Kissing Point and the butts for rifle practice are to be just at the rear of the battery' (Gibson-Wilde 1984: 154-157). In a subsequent report, Blaxland reported that the 'corps at Townsville could not be encamped as it had only been recently formed, and there were no means of encamping the battery without considerable expense which would not have been counter-balanced by any equivalent good result' (QV&P 1882, 1: 589-594). It would appear that in its short life No.4 Battery had not thrived. This would be a regular problem for volunteer forces. Enlistment during a period of high interest or crisis was relatively easy; retaining the vigour and function of the units during long periods of peace and calm was difficult.

Scratchley could only find justification for basing a maximum of 50 volunteer artillery personnel at Townsville out of a total of 604 unpaid militia (QV&P 1882, 1: 581-587). The larger force, based at Brisbane, consisted of 520 men with a permanent paid officer corps and paid attendance fees for other recruits. Scratchley also calculated that the cost of mounting two 64-pounder guns in Townsville would be £250 but that the cost of equipment and ammunition for these 'guns of position' would be in the order of £1600. This was the time of the Russian scare of 1882, and Scratchley recommended the

purchase of a coastal 'gun vessel' that would be capable of patrolling the eastern seaboard. The colonial government eventually purchased two vessels, the *Gayundah* and the *Paluma*, from Armstrong Mitchell in the United Kingdom (Pixley, 1960/61). These were built in 1884 at a cost of £30,000 each. Each 360-ton warship had one 8-inch breach loading (B.L.) gun placed forwards, one 6-inch B.L. gun aft, two light broadside guns on the starboard and port sides and two machine guns on each side.

The Queensland Navy had a short but colourful life (Jones 1986). The *Gayundah* was eventually remodelled in the 1890s. It remained in service until it was scuttled as a breakwater at Woody Point near Brisbane in 1958. Her 6-inch gun is now on display at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. The *Paluma*, after ignominiously being left high and dry in the Botanic Gardens in Brisbane during the great floods of 1893, was sold for scrap in 1950 (Jones, 1986: 61, 105-6).

When Scratchley left the colony in 1883, the condition of the forces had improved substantially. By then Major G.A. French had been appointed as the new commander of the Queensland defence forces. French was also a graduate of the Royal Military Academy-Woolwich but served his early years as an officer of the artillery in Canada. He became the first commissioner of the North West Mounted Police, now the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and was instrumental in establishing the high reputation of the mounted police service. However, he fell out with the Canadian government and was transferred to Queensland, no doubt a considerable demotion at that time. He set about reordering the colonial militia by first downgrading the volunteer force to the status of mere rifle clubs. At that time a militia was a force recruited by public ballot of men of a certain age from a regional area. Although they were paid a nominal attendance allowance they could not see service outside their area of recruitment. A volunteer detachment was quite different. Not only did the volunteers provide their own uniforms, they elected their own officers, framed their own regulations of service and largely operated independently from each other. While they were unpaid, the advantage of being in the volunteers was that one was then exempt from being called for service in the militia.

Undoubtedly French still felt his loyalties were to the established order for he deployed about 1,400 troops to break a shearer's strike in western

Queensland in 1891. In fact, he personally led an advance with fixed bayonets against the marchers (Australian Dictionary of Biography 1966-, vol 8, 1891-1939, Cl -Gib: 586-7). The use of troops as strike-breakers was an issue of some controversy. Following Federation, the Commonwealth Parliament would pass the Defence Act 1903 to prevent the future use of citizen armies in industrial disputes.

The colonial legislature, under the guidance of the then Premier and Chief Secretary, Sir Samuel Griffith, then passed the Queensland Defence Act 1884 that established a partially paid militia, a small permanent military force and new orders of battle and establishments (Johnson, 1974: 92). This legislation was framed by French and modelled on the Canadian military system. This placed the colonial forces on a more professional basis. The Defence Act 1884 and the regional rifle clubs legally permitted under the legislation were again in part a reaction to Russian war rumours. However, by the turn of the century the threat of Russian attack had moderated. Now, the Committee of Imperial Defence which supervised the construction of fixed coastal defence installations criticised the colonial developments for being excessive, over-gunned and over-elaborate (Kitson, pers. comm. 1987; Kitson, 2001: 13 endnote 10).

The principles of Australian defence, as enunciated by Jervois, remained basically unchanged until the slow loss of British naval supremacy after the First World War. Australia remained comfortably under the umbrella of British support: an ingrained feeling of security that was removed finally and harshly with the loss of Singapore to the Japanese in February 1942. However, that future was unimaginable at the turn of the twentieth century with federation in the air. Local fixed fortifications were seen as practical defensive measures that could be undertaken by the small financially constrained regional communities.

#### THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NORTHERN MILITARY DISTRICT

Townsville in 1891 was not yet 30 years old. The aim of the establishment of a settlement on the banks of Ross Creek was purely commercial. In 1864, John Melton Black, a prominent cattle property manager based at Fanning Downs Station, sent two of his employees from Woodstock Station, in the upper Ross River valley, to investigate the possibility of establishing a port at Cleveland Bay. Woodstock

and Fanning Downs Stations had been stocked with cattle driven inland from Bowen, the closest port at the time. If a port were established at Cleveland Bay it would enable the quality of the cattle to be maintained as the animals would not lose condition during a long overland drive. Townsville port would also provide a valuable trans-shipment centre for other supplies. The expansion of pastoralism in the Burdekin was financed by Robert Towns, a wealthy Sydney businessman who had married the sister of the explorer W.C. Wentworth (Doherty, 1919: 30).

The Cleveland Bay site, originally called Castleton, was subsequently approved as a suitable location for a boiling-down works and wharf (Doherty, 1919: 27). It appears that the name Castleton was an association between Castle Hill and a rocky tor near Dublin, the hometown of Andrew Ball, one of the men sent to explore the coastal country for Melton Black (Doherty, 1919: 27). Other suggestions are that it was called Castletown after a town on the Isle of Man (Lawson, 1977: 6, 9). The settlement was renamed Townsville to acknowledge the close business association between Towns and Melton Black. Towns was obviously the senior partner. The port was declared on 30 September 1865 and later a flagstaff was erected at Pilot Hill from which tidal signals and notification signals of arriving vessels were made (Lewis, 1973 and Queensland. Harbours and Marine, 1986: 88).

Townsville was to become the headquarters for a northern military district. Following the proclamation of the Defence Act 1884, volunteer forces in Townsville were once again invigorated. A public meeting on 11 April 1885 in the Town Hall led to the formation of local militia and artillery corps attached to the Queensland defence forces. No.4 Battery of the Queensland Volunteer Artillery Brigade had been redesignated the Townsville Garrison Battery, Kennedy Division (KD) of the Northern Military Division (NMD) on 24 February 1885 and on 30 October 1886 the Headquarters of the 3rd Queensland (or Kennedy) Regiment was established (Rough 1998: 53-56). By 1886 the population of Townsville was only 11,400. As this comprised only 7,000 men, the local militia would have been formed from a compact group of like-minded men (Queensland Census map 1886).

Following this enthusiastic response, Colonel French submitted the detailed report of the Defence Committee to the Chief Secretary in

1889 (QSA Gov 89 1889-1892). In the report French and his colleagues acknowledged the strategic position of Townsville when they stated:

The Colony is divided into two Military Districts Northern and Southern - the headquarters being Townsville, and Brisbane respectively...

A list of ordnance and the number of rounds of ammunition available in the Colony was noted in the report. French informed his superiors that the following guns were mounted in Townsville:

1 64 pr [pounder] Mk III  
1 64 pr [pounder] converted (on wooden garrison carriage)  
It is now proposed to mount at Townsville two 8 in [ch] B L guns 14 tons at Kissing Point and a 6 inch B L at Magazine Isd. [Island], and there would probably be one fire boat the Palumah [*sic*] there to assist in the defence and other armed barges manned by the naval Brigade.

The installation of guns would not be without problems. Replacement parts were often required due to 'unequally tempered material' and components had to be sent back to Britain to be tested at the Woolwich armoury (Robinson 1997: 110-111). The Nordenfelt machine guns were more successful: in 1888 the Nordenfelt company merged with the Maxim armament firm to become Maxim-Nordenfelt Guns and Ammunition Company (Robinson 1997: 114). They would go on to develop a wide range of machine guns for warfare and naval patrol.

Cleveland Bay was the focus of military assessment following the economic growth of the previous decades and the possibilities an expanded Townsville held for the future. French wrote:

At Cleveland Bay the cable from Cape Pallarenda to the [West Point] Quarantine Station on Magnetic Isd [Island] runs right across the anchorage in very shallow water and could easily be cut, if not defended, which could only be done by an armed vessel

There was obvious pressure on the establishment of fixed defences for he also stated:

The towns liable to bombardment are Thursday Isd [Island], Cooktown, Port Douglas, Cairns, Townsville and Bowen. The buildings being chiefly constructed of wood could easily be destroyed by fire ...

Only Thursday Island and Townsville would eventually be protected by coastal defence installations. At this time both were centres of considerable economic activity: Thursday Island focussed around the pearling industry and Townsville as a growing centre for pastoralism, mining and commerce. The defences of Townsville were also necessary to protect the hulks moored off Magnetic Island which held 800 tons of coal. These boats were anchored off Platypus Channel without any armed protection.

In addition to coastal defence, French recommended that strategic policy be coordinated for the protection of gold bullion held in Charters Towers, Ravenswood and Townsville.

Colonel French then divided the European population into four classes of men between the ages of 18 and 60 who would be liable for military service. The first class comprised unmarried men or widowers aged between 18 and 30 but without dependents; the second class were men aged between 30 and 45, again unmarried or widowers without children; the third class comprised married men or widowers aged between 18 and 45 but with children and the fourth class all men from 45 to 60. In 1889 he estimated that the first class consisted of 50,000 men, a figure that emphasised the character of a colony established by soldiers, convicts, miners and pastoralists. The report also contains detailed listings of the numbers, tonnages and locations of suitable support vessels, numbers of infantry, volunteer militia, police and ambulance officers, armaments, size and location of ammunition stores and powder magazines and general estimates of food supplies. In short, it provided the colonial government with a complete survey of the state of defence preparedness at a time of perceived external threats (QSA GOV 89 1889-1892).

At this time the colonial government appointed Major Edward Druitt as Engineer Staff Officer and Major effective from 27 May 1889 (QGG XLVII (38), 15 June 1889: 485). Druitt, who trained at the Royal Engineers submarine miners depot at Gosport near Portsmouth in England, was to be instrumental in designing and supervising the construction of the coastal fortifications of Lytton, Magazine Island, Kissing Point and Green Hill Fort (Thursday Island) between 1889 and his departure from the colonies in 1893 (McNicoll 1977, 1: 90-91, QV&P 1892, 1: 1017-1021 and King 1983).

In 1889 a Major-General Edwards was subsequently appointed to inspect and report on the condition of the various colonial defence forces with a view to their eventual amalgamation. However, rather than emphasise fixed coastal fortification, Edwards argued for mobility of forces and for active offence rather than passive defence. At a crucial time in the preparation for the construction of the Magazine Island and Kissing Point batteries he advocated a different strategy, one that ran counter to the concepts proposed by Jervois and Scratchley.

Edwards felt that the Great Barrier Reef could be regarded as a natural defence feature that would inhibit the movement of large warships along the northern Queensland coast. For this reason the northern ports need only rely on naval protection supplemented by floating defences such as torpedo boats which would be cheaper and more effective to maintain than fixed defences (Johnson 1974: 122-123). While Johnson (1974: 125) has called the Edwards report a landmark in 'Colonial defence reorganisation', it did not go unchallenged.

However, the debate over defence strategy was far from the minds of the citizens of regional Queensland. Voluntary service was popular again and the Townsville encampment of 1890 was a busy social event. The Townsville Herald of 17 June devoted three full pages, 12 columns, and reported in minute detail on the comings and goings of the various units and their associates. Troops from Charters Towers arrived by train and marched down Flinders Street singing 'One more river to cross', while the corps from Cairns, Bowen and Mackay arrived by sea. The official Queensland naval vessel, *Gayundah*, arrived as part of the show. At various stages, the camp held about 650 men living in tents pitched on Norman Park and Queen's Park. Colonel French arrived and crossly remarked to journalists that the town council had sold housing allotments too close to Kissing Point battery but then arrogantly proclaimed that 'No enemy would, of course, land in the teeth of battery (Townsville Herald 17 June 1890). The battery was examined by French and his officers but the artillery unit had to haul guns from Magazine Island to Kissing Point for training. Not everything was proceeding to plan.

The reorganisation of the Queensland defence forces, on the lines laid down by Edwards, continued to be debated in government correspondence as late as 1892 (QSA Gov 89 1889-1892 see also QV&P 1890, 1: 1255-1258). John Owen, the Commandant of the Queensland defence forces, while acknowledging the fundamental principles laid down by Major General Edwards, noted the main force in Townsville comprised three garrison batteries whose purpose was to maintain coastal defence, and a force of about 750 mounted infantry and general infantry scattered between Townsville, Mackay and Herberton. He wrote dismissively that the volunteer forces were unsatisfactory. There was still little coordination of effort and only tenuous communication between units. The proposals by Edwards can now be seen as logical

and reasonable. If followed, the fledgling Queensland defence force would have evolved into a very different, and probably more robust, military organisation. However, the Jervois and Scratchley proposals for fixed defences in coastal Queensland had found their mark and work soon commenced on the construction of batteries at Kissing Point and Magazine Island. While work at Kissing Point moved quickly, the construction of the Magazine Island installation was repeatedly delayed by the need to obtain stone for the eastern breakwater (QV&P 1890, 1: 1213 and QV&P 1891, 11: 344).

The Townsville Garrison Battery was now part of the Queensland Artillery, Kennedy Regimental Division (KRD) of the NMD. The KRD covered Bowen, Townsville, Cairns, Charters Towers and Ravenswood (Rough, 1998; Burla, 1971?). In his report on the Queensland Military Forces for the year 1891-92, the then Commandant, Major-General John Owen, reported to the government that the fixed coastal defences of Townsville consisted of:

[The] Kissing Point battery - Two 6 in[ch]. B.L. 5-ton guns (on barbette mountings). [and] One 10-barrelled 0.45 Nordenfelt machine gun.

[and the] Magazine Island Battery - Two 6 in. B.L. 4-ton guns, converted (on barbette carriages). [and] One 10-barrelled 0.45 Nordenfelt machine gun.

Both these batteries are now completed, and much satisfactory work has been carried out during the past year by the Permanent Force; the whole of the guns are mounted, and all have been fired to test the mountings, &c. The mountings of the two 6-inch guns at Magazine Island were furnished with compressor plates of old type. Hydraulic buffers to replace these have been now received and will be fitted within the next few months. The ammunition for the guns at the rate of 22 rounds per gun has been received and distributed in the magazines. Range instruments for these works are required, but have now been ordered, [23rd July, 1892]; emplacements, &c, for their mounting have already been prepared. The completion and arming of these works necessitates the keeping at Townsville of an officer's detachment of the Permanent Force to guard and keep in order the guns, small arms and stores, and to work the guns (QV&P 1892, 1: 1036).

General Owen was then instructed to report on the possible reorganisation of the defence forces on the lines laid down by Edwards. In his report on the NMD centred on Townsville, he wrote:

In this District, (beside 3 garrison Batteries for the manning the Coast Defence Works), there is a force of about 750, (which could easily be expanded to 1,000) of Mounted Infantry and Infantry.

The Infantry is organized in a Regiment of one Battalion of 5 Companies, with two detached Companies at Mackay, (200 miles from Townsville). Communication being by sea.

The Battalion is now fairly organized as such and improving.

The whole of the troops are under a District Staff Officer at Townsville.

Townsville is 700 miles from Brisbane by sea, the only mode of communication.

A Northern Camp is held annually near the Head Quarters and, if funds are available, the whole of the troops in the District exercised in the same for 8 days.

A small compact body can thus gradually be trained which, if emergencies required could be transported by sea to any required point.

There is at present no Field Artillery nor Engineer Corps formed there. (QSA Gov 89 1889-1892: 7-8)

With a regional population in 1891 of only 13,000, comprising in part 7,500 men, the pool of manpower available for training in the Townsville militia was not large (Queensland Census map 1891). In the period between the census of 1886 and the one of 1891 it appears that the permanent population of men had only grown by 500. It was also apparent that organisation and training of local units was inadequate, infrastructure poor and communications tenuous. In the forty years between Sir George Bowen's call for volunteer defence forces to be established in the newly separated Queensland, and the close of the colonial period signalled by federation, the military position had not changed a great deal. Minor name changes occurred during the intervening years: on 14 January 1893 the Townsville Garrison Battery became No.1 (Townsville) Garrison Battery, KR, NMD, and on 19 September 1896 it became once again the Townsville Garrison Battery KR, NMD (Rough, 1998: 53-56).

At the close of the colonial period, Queensland defences continued to reflect the values and attitudes of an imperial defence structure. Men like Edwards were pressing for change but conservative attitudes still prevailed:

It is ten years ago since I warned the Colonies in the Queensland Review to prepare Federal defence in anticipation of foreign aggression in the Pacific, and 'not to bask under the sunshine of Imperial protection on the cheap', but to try and ease off the burden of the British tax-payer to maintain command of the sea. (Craig, 1897: 97)

The colonies were in fact contributing substantially to their own defences. In 1900 a comprehensive report of the Scheme of Defence for Queensland was prepared for the Queensland Government (AA Vic MP 153/16 File item 5). This document reported on the nature and condition of defence forces and equipment, the organisation for war and on the various modes of attack to which Queensland may be subjected.

Concerning fixed and floating defences the Scheme of Defence stated:

The permanent works for defence of Brisbane, Townsville, and Thursday Island, respectively are described and the armament for the same given in Table A (page 7).

The description of the defence work and the nature of the armament should, of course, be fixed with reference to the nature of attack reasonably probable. As to this the Colonial Defence Committee have reported: - 'For the purpose of dealing with the class of vessel which will alone be found in Australasia the 6-in. gun will suffice, and, by its great handiness and speed of fire, will prove more effective than the heavier natures.'

The cost of armament and emplacement rapidly rises as calibres increase, and by restricting the size of their guns in future the colonies will secure economy, efficiency, and simplicity at the same time.

The Scheme of Defence stated rather grandly that Townsville, the main port of a great pastoral and rich mining area is 'situate' [*sic*] on the shores of Cleveland Bay, a shallow bay with well sheltered roadstead for large ships. The town is liable to bombardment but 'is protected by defensive works mounting formidable guns of which there is no reserve'. There fixed defences were carefully described for all to read, along with the number of rounds of ammunition, the manpower available and even the methods of communication between various sections of the armed services. The Scheme of Defence even went into such detail as to describe the possible failures that could occur in time of attack. While it would seem admirable to inform the Queensland public that their safety was under careful consideration, it appears strange that all defensive positions and arguments regarding military strategies would be made available as a published government document. No doubt the report served to give regional communities psychological support. Perhaps colonial military security was not a major factor in the late 19th century.

In the event of an attack on Townsville, the Scheme of Defence noted that an enemy landing near the Ross River and approaching the town would be repelled by defence forces occupying Flagstaff Hill (Pilot Hill) and by the artillery mounted at Magazine Island. The purpose of the Kissing Point battery was to repel attack from the north. In the event of war a depot would be established at Kissing Point on the camping grounds behind the fort and supply reserves 'of seven days' tinned meat and biscuit would be stored at Kissing Point and Magazine Island Forts (AA Vic MP 153/16 File item 5: 18 and 21). The assumption was that the invading force would be



FIG. 2. Photograph of Magazine Island c.1870 showing magazine building on lower slopes. (John Oxley Library)

small, operate in a conventional frontal attack and be easily repelled in a few days. The idea that the small settlement could be easily isolated and panicked by land invasion either to the north or the south was not considered.

The manning schedule at Magazine Island was similar to that at the Kissing Point Battery. An officer acted as Battery Commander and Sub-Commander and two men acted as his orderlies and trumpeter. Three men operated the signals and telephone communications and one Non-Commissioned Officer (N.C.O.) and two men were detailed on the depression range finders. Ammunition supply was staffed by two N.C.Os and six men. 'A' gun was manned by one officer, two N.C.Os and 15 men while one N.C.O. and two men operated the machine gun. One officer, three N.C.Os and eight men were deployed as relief crew for the two 4.7 Q.F. guns. Again, to be ready 'when they arrive' (AA Vic MP 153/16 File item 5: 26).

Certainly, the Scheme of Defence for Queensland was the most significant document prepared for the colonial government as it detailed the logistics, manning schedules and the organisation for war. However, the detailed and comprehensive document was still conservative and impractical for under-resourced colonial administrations. The chain of command could be easily broken.

Federation in 1901 changed little in the way of defence preparedness. The former colonies were still poor and isolation a significant problem. The Commonwealth Government met in Melbourne, members of Parliament had to travel by road, rail or sea to attend, and even the railway gauges were not standardised. The nation only accepted the need for a defence strategy in 1903. Then the Townsville Garrison Battery was redesignated the No.2 Queensland Company, Australian Garrison Artillery. Permanent defence forces were formed late in the colonial period. 'A' Battery, Queensland Artillery, KRd, NMD which was formed on 28 December 1889 became a detachment of the Brisbane based 'A' Battery, Queensland Permanent Artillery on 19 September 1896. In 1899 it became 'A' Battery, Queensland Regiment of the Royal Australian Artillery and later further fragmented to become part of No.8 Company of the Royal Australian Artillery in July 1903. The volunteer garrison battery also was redesignated at this time (Rough, 1998: 53-56).

The complexities of name changes seemed to be of little effect. The Colonial Defence Committee, in a revision of coastal defences in Australia in 1906, rather dismissively remarked:

Townsville is not suitable for use as a harbour of refuge for ocean-going shipping on account of the shallowness of the entrance channel. The first requirement of a port of

refuge is accessibility at all times of the tide, and this condition is not fulfilled by the inner harbor. The deep-water anchorage, being three miles from the shore, cannot be effectively protected. There are no resources of strategic importance at Townsville. (AA A5954 Box 2400, and AA Vic MP 826/1 Defence Schemes 1906-1938 File 1C)

No doubt to the dismay of the citizens and forces in Townsville, the report of the tour of inspection by Field Marshal Viscount Kitchener of Khartoum in 1911 was even more damning. Kitchener wrote:

Under present conditions the fixed defences of Townsville are valueless, and their maintenance a waste of money, because the shallow waters of Cleveland Bay will prevent warships of any size or power approaching within a distance of 8,000 yards of the town. Nor could it be improved by a battery on Hawkings Point, Magnetic Island. The only form of attack which Townsville need fear is by landing parties from the boats of a cruiser, and the best form of defence to meet such an attack is by mobile rifle, machine, and field gun fire.

Under the [Australian] Defence Act 1909, Townsville should supply its quota to the Citizen Forces, and I recommend that the necessary garrison should be provided from this quota, and that it should consist of not less than 4 Companies of Infantry with 2 Maxim guns [and] 2 15 pr field guns with detachments. (AA Vic MP 153/7 Report by Lord Kitchener on Fixed Defences 1911. File no.: Kitchener's Report. See also MP 367/1 Memorandum on the Defence of Australia and MP 84/1 Lord Kitchener's memoranda on the Defence of Australia Inspector General's Report's)

Both comments ignored the growing commercial importance of Townsville and the spread of economic activity into the south-western Pacific. Northern Australia held little strategic importance to the main centres of economic and political power in the southeast corner of the country. This judgement would only be challenged during the Second World War with the invasion of the north coast of New Guinea by the Japanese and the direct threats to Australia. Then, it would be the Battle of the Coral Sea in 1942 that would reinforce the strategic military importance of Townsville.

However, by 1911 the era of fixed defence fortifications protecting coastal towns appeared to have passed. Kissing Point and Magazine Island fortifications were little more than 20 years old, and had never fired a shot in anger, when General Hamilton, on an inspection of coastal defences in Australia in 1914, remarked rather sarcastically, that the nation's use of fixed defences was in inverse ratio to its confidence in its mobile forces for:

Certain subtle influences favouring fixed defence have consistently to be guarded against. Nervous voters - the old women of both sexes ... find something tangible and comforting [in] the Existence of a permanent work. Accordingly, fixed defences are always popular with the

more complaisant and vote catching type of politician. Moreover, townspeople, where the works exist, regard them as adding to some extent to the importance of the place, and for material reasons they strongly resent any reduction in the scale of garrison to which they had become accustomed... Given a sufficient land force, coast defence rightly considered exists for three purposes only:-  
(1) To protect naval works and shipping of all kinds against direct attack by an enemy's naval forces.  
(2) To prevent distant bombardment.  
(3) To deny the enemy's ships the use of roadsteads at points of strategic importance. (AA Vic CRS B 197 File 1855/1/14?)

A new approach to national defence appears to have taken place and Edwards' ideas of a defence force based on mobile and flexible operations appears to have taken root. It was apparent, however, that neither Kitchener nor Hamilton had ever lived along the vast, isolated and unprotected coastal regions of north Queensland. The vulnerability of the north to attack would remain part of local fears well into the Second World War.

#### PRE-FEDERATION FIXED COASTAL DEFENCES OF TOWNSVILLE

**CONSTRUCTION OF THE MAGAZINE ISLAND BATTERY.** Prior to 1891, Magazine Island was variously known as Redcliff Island, Darling Island and Inch Gordon. In 1870, an explosives magazine of local granite was constructed on the island. The explosives store had a floor area of 18 feet by 14 feet and walls 10 feet high, together with an iron roof and hardwood floor and an entrance door of copper-sheeted cedar (Gibson-Wilde 1984: 106). After this, the island became generally identified as Magazine Island. An early photograph of the island, dated c.1870, shows the magazine building on the lower slopes (Fig. 2; see Gibson-Wilde, 1984: 107).

In the early 1870s, due to an increase in port traffic, the Queensland Harbours and Rivers Department agreed to improve the harbour entrance at Townsville. The project to develop an outer harbour between two stone breakwaters began by linking Ross Island (now known as South Townsville) with Magazine Island, commencing from the base of Flagstaff, or Pilot Hill. At that time Pilot Hill was also known as Darling Point or Sibbie Point. William D. Nisbet, engineer for the Department, reported to the Queensland Government in 1877 that the construction of the eastern breakwater was proceeding satisfactorily 'there being abundance of rock, of the hardest description, on Magazine

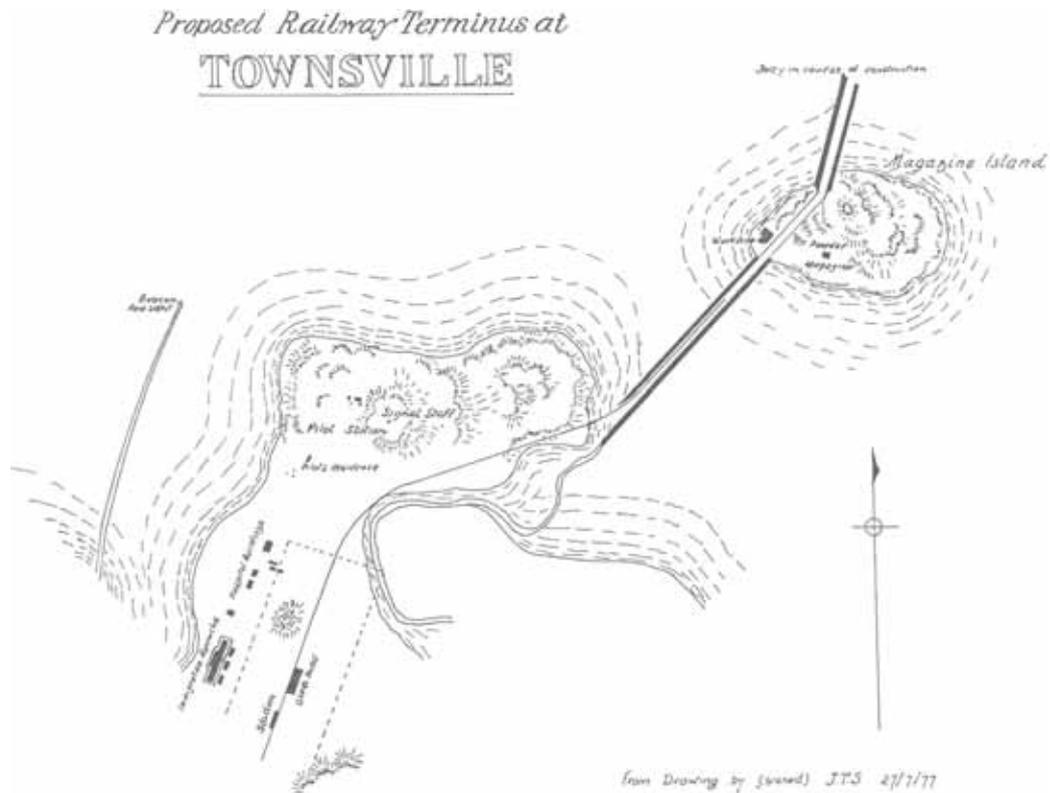


FIG. 3. Copy of plan of proposed railway terminus and line to eastern breakwater showing powder magazine and workshop on Magazine Island, 1877. (QV&P 1877, I, 648-653)

Island' (QV&P. 1877,1: 943-944). This rock fill was sourced from behind the magazine side.

A map of the proposed railway line linking Ross Island to the eastern breakwater was included in a report on a planned bridge across Ross Creek (QV&P. 1877,1: 648-653). This map shows the relative positions, in 1877, of both the powder magazine and a workshop located near the foreshore as well as the Pilot Station and other buildings on Ross Island (Fig. 3). The project to link Magazine Island to the mainland had been submitted to the Legislative Assembly as early as June 1875 but the ballasting for the road and railway along the causeway between the pilot reserve and Magazine Island was not completed until 1878 (Taylor, 1980: 27). Construction of the breakwater posed other problems. In 1879 the Portmaster reported:

the constant blasting at Magazine Island, in connection with the jetty works at Townsville, being in dangerous proximity to the magazine, another building was erected

on the bank of the creek above the town, into which the powder was removed. (Taylor, 1980: 32)

By the time construction commenced on the fortifications at Magazine Island and Kissing Point in 1890, the Port of Townsville had eclipsed Bowen, to the south, and Cardwell, to the north, in volume of traffic. Townsville had established itself as the major, viable, commercial centre in the north. The history of Magazine Island battery is linked closely to the growth of the port and the expansion of the harbour. As the port grew, and new reclaimed areas were developed behind the breakwater, Magazine Island became isolated in a sea of industry. The rock was viewed as a valuable, and accessible, source of building material.

On 22 March the Townsville Herald reported:

Major Druitt R.E. arrived by the Aramac on Thursday morning to direct the commencement of fortifications at Kissing Point and Magazine Island, on which £20,000 are to be spent. At present, however, only £6,500 of that sum is available, and £5,000 will be expended on Magazine Island, and £1,500 on Kissing Point. The fortifications

will be constructed by day labor [labour], and the men employed will be under the control of a foreman, who came up by the Aramac, and who will act under the direction of Mr A. McMillan, Government Foreman of Works. The two 6in Armstrong breach loaders on the jetty are for the Magazine Island battery, but the carriages have still to arrive from South. Heavier and more expensive guns will be obtained for the Kissing Point battery. Today Major Druitt, accompanied by Major Haldane and Mr G.F. Elliott, Resident Engineer for Harbours and Rivers, will visit Magazine Hill to settle how much of that now considerably reduced island will be left for Defence Force purposes. (Townsville Herald 22 March 1890: 11)

Already problems were surfacing. Money for construction was reduced, the more expensive guns were not yet available and Magazine Island was quickly becoming a quarry site. It was necessary to quarry even more stone for use in the eastern breakwater and so Mr Elliott decided to blast down more stone from Magazine Island before the Defence Forces could take possession. The excuse was that construction of the fortifications could not commence due to possible damage to the foundations. Major Druitt was then delayed by the necessity to receive permission for fort construction from the government in Brisbane (Townsville Herald 22 May 1890: 10). The newspaper further reported that the construction of the fortifications at Magazine Island was to be delayed a further 12 months so that the port authorities could remove yet another load of stone for the completion of the eastern breakwater. While the breakwater grew in importance the battery designed to defend it was being carted away. The port authority obviously had more influence in Brisbane than Major Druitt. The future of Magazine Island was precarious as early as 1891.

While these further delays occurred, construction of the Kissing Point battery continued and, in June 1891, the Townsville Herald was finally able to print:

A good start has been made at the Defence Force fortifications on Magazine Island. The operations are in charge of Major Druitt, Mr Cryle acting as foreman of works. The work on Kissing Point is now almost finished. (Townsville Herald 17 June 1891: 11)

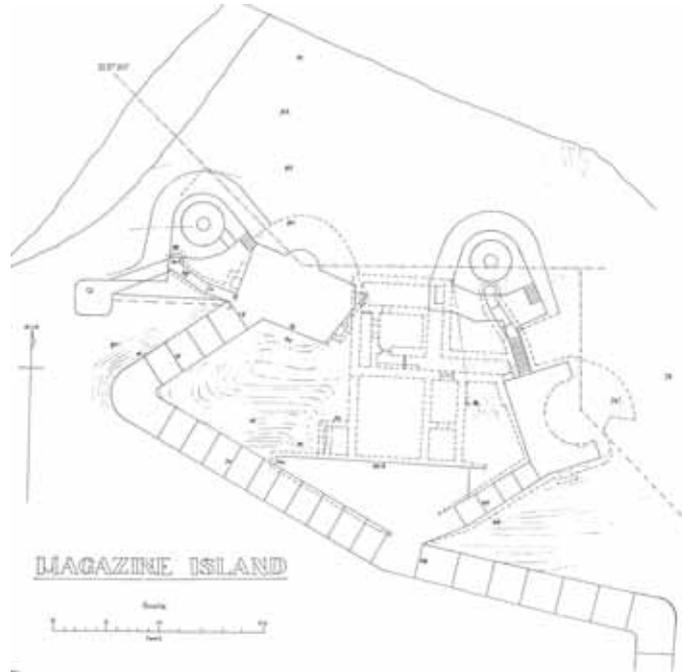


FIG. 4. Plan of Magazine Island fixed coastal defence installation, c.1891, showing surface and underground constructions. (AWM 1/192)

From this point on progress was rapid. In August 1891 a local newspaper announced proudly — and with a notable sigh of relief:

The battery at Kissing Point is ready for its two guns (two 6in B.L., 5 tons, on barbette mountings). The racers are already fixed. With the exception of iron palisading and some small fittings not yet received, this battery is completed. Magazine Island Battery: This could not be commenced until the middle of May, as blasting operations to obtain stone for the eastern breakwater were still going on. The guns and carriages are on the spot. The armament consists of two 6in B.L. 4 ton guns, converted from muzzle-loaders on iron carriages, fitted with Elswick compressor plates. Major Druitt anticipates that the guns will be mounted early next year. (North Queensland Herald 26 August 1891: 13)

On 30 September 1891, the newspaper finally announced that the Townsville Garrison Battery had reached its full complement of one Captain, one Lieutenant, two Sergeants, one Corporal, one Bugler and 21 Privates: a total Garrison force of 27 men. The fortifications at Magazine Island and Kissing Point and their establishments were now in place for the defence of Townsville.

The most important document concerning the construction of the fortifications on Magazine Island is the original fort record book. It contains not only details of the construction, costs of

construction, and original plans but also valuable information on details of ordnance, supply manning and signal codes. The original Magazine Island fort record book is housed in the Australian War Memorial in Canberra (AWM 1/192).

According to the record book, the Magazine Island fortifications, built by day labour under the supervision of George Cryle, cost £2,000. Drutt, as engineering officer in charge of works drew the original plans (Fig. 4). The fort record book states:

This battery is built in Latitude 19°15'30" South. Longitude 146°49'54" East of Greenwich. It is situated on an abrupt point almost an Island close to the inner Harbour and to the east of it. The ground rises steeply on all sides the three seaward sides are almost vertical owing to the large cutting made into the rocky face from which the breakwater was built. The Wharf Line of the Queensland Northern Railway passes at the foot of the hill on the western side. (AWM 1/192: 7)

The physical relationship between Magazine Hill and the wharves of the eastern breakwater is illustrated in Fig. 5.

The fort record book stated that the principal object of the Magazine Island emplacements was to protect the shipping coming in and out of Townsville harbour from hostile attack. Because

the Fort was situated on the shore of Cleveland Bay, it clearly commanded the entrance to Ross Creek and the northeastern entrance to the Bay between Cape Cleveland and Magnetic Island (AWM 1/192: 2). No doubt a secondary object was to protect the commercial centre of the town which was expanding along the shores of Ross Creek behind the fortifications. Barracks were also located within the fort enclosure between the magazine and the railway line for accommodation of troops guarding the fort (AWM 1/192: 7). However, it appears that the accommodation of the barracks was less than satisfactory. Early in the construction of the fort the record book noted:

Omitting the Casemate which is now used as an Artillery Store as it was hardly suitable for men to live in during the hot season, the following Barrack accommodation [*sic*] exists:

Barrack Room	20' x 15' x 11'
Kitchen	10' x 15' x 11'
Bath house	10' x 8' x [illegible but possibly 11']

The buildings are of wood roofed with galvanized corrugated iron built on brick stumps. A verandah runs the full length of the Barrack building on the North Side. This building is estimated to accommodate [*sic*] 12 men and 1 N.C.O. in case of emergency. (AWM 1/192: 22)

No doubt the poor location of the barracks in a treeless open compound, in a dry, hot northern



FIG. 5. Magazine Hill from eastern breakwater wharves, c.1902-04. (John Oxley Library)

climate, added to the discomfort of the garrison. Thirteen bored, isolated men in one modestly-sized room would have been trying at the best of times. Camping accommodation was available at the foot of the hill on the southern side of Magazine Hill and also at the top of the hill on the south-eastern side, close to the entrance gate of the fort. However, the record book notes that little room existed within the compound for tents. The water supply for the men in the fort consisted of one tap in the barracks building; one tap, one shower and one bath in the bathhouse and one tap at the front of the casemate for the fort. Details of other water supplies are also noted in the record book (AWM 1/192: 23). Twenty years later, a defence report indicated that only four men could realistically occupy the barracks with any degree of comfort at any one time (AA Vic MP367 File 517/7/105 Letter dated May 13, 1919).

The magazine was built into the rock in the rear of the casemate and constructed of brick facing with a cement and concrete arched roof (Fig. 6). The fort originally contained two 6-inch breech loading (B.L.) 80 pounder guns on traversing slides. However, these were later removed and relocated:

A change took place in the months June to August 1896, when the two (2) 6 inch 80pr. B.L. Guns were dismantled and removed; one being sent to Brisbane and mounted on the Victoria Barrack Square and the other mounted in Townsville at the Armoury below the Supreme Court for drill purposes only. (AWM 1/192: 12)

In December 1900, two 4.7-inch guns which had been ordered from England arrived as replacements. Between November/December 1901 and March 1902 the old emplacements of the 80 pound 6-inch guns were removed. New emplacements for the two 4.7-inch quick firing (Q.F) guns were then built, and a lift for the transport of ammunition, from the underground magazine to the gun on the right flank of the battery, was constructed. Other structural changes made at this time included the replacement of the old, conspicuous, ventilators

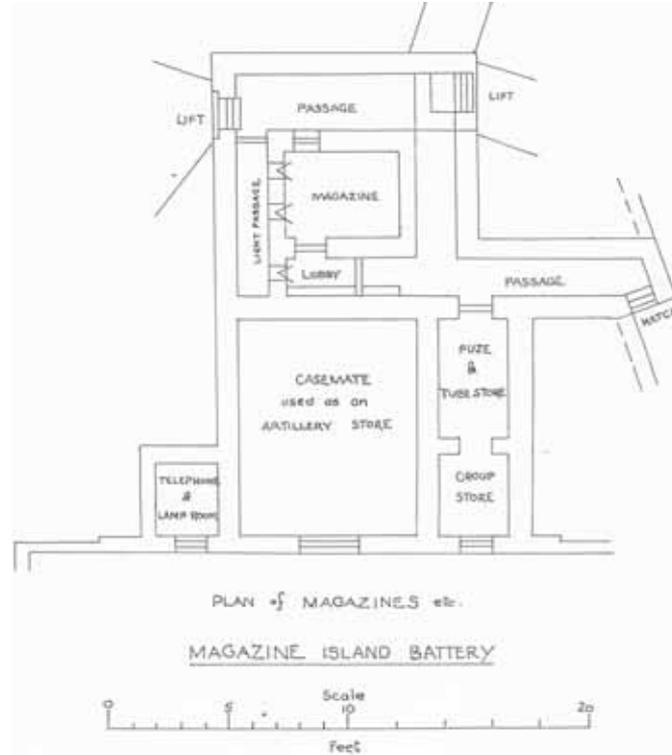


FIG. 6. Copy of plan of casemate and magazine rooms and passages, Magazine Island battery, c.1891. (AWM 1/192)

with new casemate ventilators (AWM 1/192: 12). These alterations were undertaken at a cost of £1,300. The work was carried out by local tradesmen under the supervision of Captain Cohen of the Royal Australian Artillery (AWM 1/192: 2 and 12). However, given that the original guns were removed in 1896 and the reconstruction works not completed until 1902, then the battery was lacking any effective artillery for nearly six years. Once again the Magazine Island fortification was proving to be a costly, and largely unnecessary, mistake.

Full details of firing procedures, ranges and manning of the 4.7-inch guns were documented in the fort record book. Following reconstruction of the gun emplacements the ordnance of the fort consisted of two 4.7-inch Q.F. Mark IV guns, numbered 794 and 795, and one ten barrel Nordenfelt machine gun, number 188. Recesses in the concrete walls of the emplacements were designed to contain eight boxes of cartridges, each of 48 rounds, and 78 rounds of shell. The height of the axis of the trunnions of both guns

was 91.80 feet above mean sea level (AWM 1/192: 32).

The pedestal for the Nordenfelt machine gun was erected on the left flank of the Battery in a small concrete emplacement about 6 feet in diameter with 4 foot walls that were 12 inches thick. A Mark 1A direction range finder was installed in an emplacement measuring 10 feet by 9 feet and situated on the left flank of the Battery. The direction range finder was connected to the number A 4.7-inch gun by means of a passage through the parapet (AWM 1/192: 82), and, in July 1907, a Mark II direction range finder was received and installed.

The railway line running from the eastern breakwater into the town along the causeway was also an important part of the defensive structure of the harbour and port. In the fort record book it was recorded that:

The wharf line of Railway runs immediately at the foot of the hill on which this Battery is built. Thus affording an easy means of transporting stores &c. from ships or steamers lying alongside the Eastern Breakwater wharves. The lines run right down the wharves so that goods can be hoisted straight out of the hold and put into the railway trucks without further handling. There is a loading bank on a siding within 50 yards of the entrance gate to this Battery connected to this wharf line. This line connects with the Queensland Northern railway which runs to Charters Towers, Hughenden, Winton &c. (AWM 1/192: 57)

It should be remembered that, at this time, coastal shipping was the principal means of transportation for both people and goods to and from the northern and southern ports. There was no rail link with Brisbane. The Great Northern Railway linking Townsville with Charters Towers, then Ravenswood and Hughenden, was completed in 1887. This east/west rail line was in use long before the North Coast line was completed in 1924. Following the 1911 report by Lord Kitchener on Townsville's coastal defences, though perhaps not as a direct result of it, the Townsville Harbour Board initiated correspondence with the Secretary of the Commonwealth Department of Defence in Melbourne concerning the fate of Magazine Island. Permission was sought for the expansion of the eastern breakwater using further stone obtained from the quarry on the seaward side of the island.

The Clerk of the Townsville Harbour Board wrote to the Commonwealth Defence authorities:

This quarry I am to explain is the only place in close proximity to the proposed work, where suitable material may be procured, and it is understood that sufficient [quarry stone] could be obtained therefrom without interfering with the suitability of the fort for drill purposes. (AA Vic MP 367 File 517/7/105)

It seems slightly incongruous that in 1913 quarrying could proceed without interfering with the structure of the completed and manned fortifications, when, in 1891, initial construction was delayed because quarrying was felt to be a potential threat to the foundations. It seems clear that, even at this early stage, the fortifications on Magazine Island had not met expectations.

Between 1913 and 1919, the Townsville Harbour Board made further requests for rock fill from the Commonwealth Department of Defence (AA Vic MP 367 517/7/105). A survey map showing the quarry and defence leases attached to a letter from the Lands and Survey Branch of the Department of Home and Territories details the request from the Townsville Harbour Board for acquisition of the lease over the whole of the Commonwealth lands on Magazine Island (AA Vic MP 367 File 517/7/105 Letter 4 March 1919). The Harbour Board request encroached on the fortifications from the north, east and west.

In May 1919 the Secretary of the Defence Department reported to the Home and Territories Department that the Commandant of the First Military District in Brisbane had made a number of relevant comments concerning the strategic value of Magazine Island. The Commandant wrote:

1. When the property [Magazine Island] was taken over by the Commonwealth its value was from a defensive point of view. The principal improvements were emplacements, two 4.7 guns and a wooden building giving sleeping and living accommodation for about 4 men [not the 13 as originally anticipated in 1891].
  2. ...
  3. Guns [presumably the two 4.7 inch guns obtained in 1900] have been removed - The emplacements are of practically no value, and the value of materials for removal would probably be less than £200.
  4. Practically no further quarrying can take place without interference with the emplacements.
  5. The site is of no further value for Military purposes.
  6. Recommended that the property be struck off Defence Charge: This will leave the site free for disposal as the Commonwealth may desire.
- (AA Vic MP 367 File 517/7/107 Letter dated May 13, 1919)

Eventually the Townsville Harbour Board was granted a lease by the Department of Defence over all defence reserves for a fee of £52 per annum (AA A 458 Ae 356/15). On 23 November 1927 the Harbour Board was offered the property, fee simple, for the sum of £1,500. The estimated total value of the reserve property was calculated, at that time, as £7,110. As the value of the structures was considered to be £5,610 the value of the land itself was only £1,500. When the completed transfer of property was made in



FIG. 7. Aerial photograph of harbour installations showing reclamation works and expansion of oil storage facilities, c.1966. (Townsville Port Authority)

March 1928 for the sum of £1,500 the purchase price was 'the price at which it was taken over as a fortification at the time of Federation' (Taylor, 1980: 120). Magazine Island was sold off for scrap.

By 1928 both the Shell Company of Australia and the Vacuum Oil Company had been granted leases for the construction of oil storage tanks on sections of reclamation near Magazine Hill. The Harbour Board began further levelling and excavation of the hill at the expense of these companies. In 1929, when the first oil was discharged into the completed storage tanks, only part of the original Battery complex remained (Taylor, 1980: 121).

A map included in the Townsville Harbour Board annual report for the period 1933/35 shows the leased areas occupied by the two oil companies as well as the quarry lease surrounding the remains of the fortifications. An excellent

aerial photograph obtained from the Townsville Port Authority (unpubl.), dated possibly to 1966, shows the fortification emplacements and buildings on the remaining parts of the island, isolated and surrounded by encroaching industrial development, but still in relatively good condition (Fig. 7). The former barracks building was at that time occupied by a caretaker.

It was apparent that the expansion of industry around the harbour and the demands of the port signalled the end for the fortification as early as the 1920s. Pilot Hill was finally removed in 1958 and the reclamation in that area completed in 1962. Railway lines and bulk sugar storage sheds now occupy the site of the former pilot and signal station.

James Cook University staff made a photographic record of the remaining fort structure in January 1983 prior to the complete removal of Magazine Hill (James Cook University, History



FIG 8. Casemate, group store, telephone and lamp room entrances, Magazine Island battery prior to demolition, 1983. (James Cook University, History Department)

Department, 1979 and 1983?). These photographs are valuable evidence of the structure of the fortification prior to demolition (Fig. 8). Magazine Island remained a lone pinnacle of history for over 20 years.

The Townsville Harbour Board also commissioned local photographer Arch Fraley to make a study of the remains of Magazine Hill. This album is held at the Townsville Port Authority offices (unpubl.) and is of considerable historical importance as it includes internal and external images. A collection of negatives, documenting further demolition work on Magazine Hill in 1983/84, prior to its complete demolition in 1984/85, is also held at the Fraley studio in Townsville. The site of the Hill is now part of the industrial landscape of the port precinct.

On October 1982 the Townsville Daily Bulletin published an article entitled 'An old city landmark remembered' containing reminiscences from a resident of South Townsville. In part the article declared:

There were also a couple of artillery guns mounted on top of the hill for defence purposes during the town's early development... Sometimes the military, or whoever was in charge, fired practice shots at moving buoys out on the

horizon. They were towed by an old coal-burning tug. (Townsville Daily Bulletin, 30 October 1982: 13)

Magazine Island battery was outdated almost as soon as it was completed. It seems fitting that its guns were never fired in anger.

**CONSTRUCTION OF THE KISSING POINT BATTERY.** It appears that Kissing Point was originally known as Red Cliffs Point, locals renamed it Kissing Point as Darling Point and Darling Island were located at the south-eastern end of the beach (Doherty, 1919: 95). Kissing Point remained the favourite name. A town plan from the 1870s showed that the town, in those early days of expansion, circled the base of Castle Hill. Kissing Point, Magazine Island and the Pilot Station Hill were all clearly identified (QSA L6/5).

Though both were proposed at the same time, the fortifications on Kissing Point were completed prior to the construction of the Magazine Island Battery. This was due, of course, to the continuing need to quarry granite from Magazine Hill for the construction of the eastern breakwater. The location of the Battery on Kissing Point at the

north-eastern end of the beach, away from the harbour, has played a major part in its preservation.

The residential land at North Ward, facing Cleveland Bay, was laid out in the 1870s (Lawson, 1977: 34). It is also apparent from this map that the reserve at Kissing Point had not been gazetted, and that a substantial portion of the land near Kissing Point headland was low and swampy and faced onto the mangroves bordering Rowes Bay, then known as Rose Bay. Around this time the town council allocated 84 acres of land as reserve: 25 acres behind Kissing Point were given to the Grammar School and the reserve to the seaward side of this land, including the rocky promontory, was allocated as defence reserve (Lawson, 1977: 34). The presence of military forces in Townsville dates from first European settlement.

Around 1885 the Grammar School exchanged their 25 acres with the council for land at the northern end of the public garden reserve, now called Queen's Park. The council named the undeveloped reserve Norman Park which was assumed to have been 'annexed by the Defence Department' and not returned to the Townsville City Council following the First and Second World Wars (Lawson, 1977: 34). However, the Titles Office in Townsville records that the reserve of 25 acres 3 roods was in fact purchased in December 1909 by the Defence Department for £1,541 and prior to purchase it was leasehold land. The area of approximately 12 acres at the Kissing Point promontory, which included the Battery, was also originally declared leasehold land. A small area of about 1 acre was later made over to the council. At present this area is the site of the Rock Pool and a restaurant. The remaining 11 acres 1 rood and 17.5 perches of freehold land were also acquired by the Defence Department. Prior to purchase, the land was regularly used by the defence forces as a training and parade ground, although not officially 'annexed' by them.

In the years prior to 1885 the volunteer defence forces had trained near Cluden, to the south of Townsville, but this land was far from suitable as it was swampy, a considerable distance from the town and had no readily available drinking water. In 1888 the annual army encampment was held at the Queen's Park reserve. This seems to have been unsatisfactory as the men were required to pitch their tents along Warburton Street and they complained that 'the traffic along [the street] at night and in the early morning disturbed the men,

and the horses' (Townsville Herald 18 May 1889: 15). There would have been considerable movement of horses and carts along Warburton Street each morning as the suburb at the base and to the west of Castle Hill was the productive market garden area, then called German Gardens. During World War I, and as a reaction to the German invasion of Belgium, the area was renamed Belgian Gardens. Subsequently, on the suggestion of Major Haldane, a staff officer with the volunteers, it was proposed that the annual camp be held on the 10 acres of defence reserve at Kissing Point.

In 1889 it was reported:

the Government have [*sic*] decided to grant the area including the salt pans at the back of Kissing Point for Defence Force purposes, and tenders are called for the construction of a dam and sluice valve at Kissing Point, it being the intention of the authorities interested in the matter to stop the tide from flooding these flats. (Townsville Herald 19 January 1889: 12)

The clearing and draining of the scrub-covered, swampy ground behind Kissing Point was undertaken under the supervision of Major Haldane with the aim of providing the annual encampment, held at Whitsuntide (following Easter), with a suitable training field. It was also found that the rocky headland of Kissing Point was at first unsuitable for mounting the 64 pounder field guns. The defence authorities then approached the Queen's Park trustees for permission to use the 25 acres adjoining the defence reserve which, when suitably prepared, was found to be more suitable for field gun training. The reserve lands then totalled 35 acres.

Following acquisition of the public reserve, the military authorities called for tenders for the construction of earthworks which included a dam across the creek flowing into Rowes Bay, a roadway on top of the dam which formed the continuation of Bishop Street and construction of embankments along Eyre Street. The whole area between present day Bundock Street and Rowes Bay was mangrove, marsh and salt flats. These complex earthworks, detailed in the Townsville Herald (18 May 1889: 15) were designed to block the flow of the tide onto the reserve and enable it to be drained and leached by fresh water during the summer wet season (Townsville Herald 9 February 1889: 13). It was evident that progress was not always satisfactory. Lack of attention and bureaucratic bungles concerning defence matters were blamed on Colonel French whom the local newspapers accused of being antagonistic to the defence needs of the isolated and insecure North.

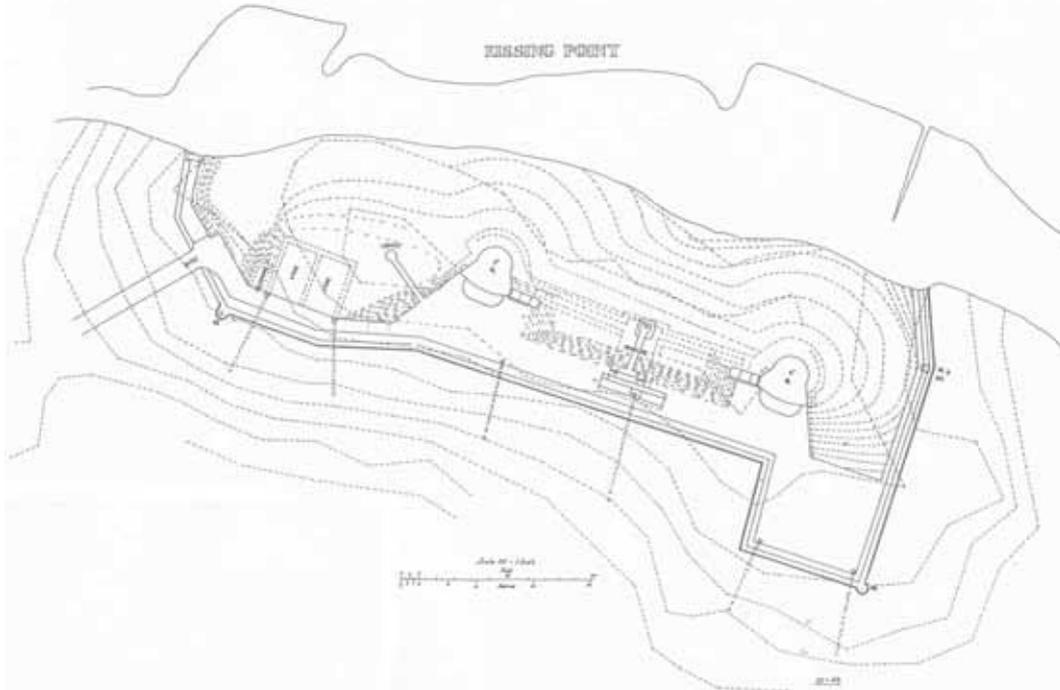


FIG. 9. Plan of Kissing Point fixed coastal defence installation. Copy of original plan drawn by Major Druitt, 23 January 1890. (KPA 654 (1))

During the following year, the *Townsville Herald* reported, with much feeling and even despair, the sight of the guns lying neglected on South Townsville:

Where is this plan for the defence of Townsville which was being prepared by the Engineer officer [Druitt] in July last [1889]? Why has the local permanent establishment been left below its proper strength and unofficered, and why-oh! why!-does Colonel FRENCH permit those monuments to his neglect of the North, the unmounted guns on the Eastern breakwater, to lie there buried in grass, with Ross Island goats browsing peacefully around them, like models for a fancy picture of the millennium? (*Townsville Herald* 25 January 1890: 10)

Those familiar with the windy, salt-encrusted landscape of the coast, south of Ross Creek, would not recognise this peaceful bucolic scene. However, the people of Townsville were later appeased. The *Townsville Herald* of 17 June 1891 reported that the Kissing Point constructions, under the charge of Major Druitt and Mr Cryle, were nearly completed and, by August 1891, were ready for the mounting of the two 6-inch B.L. 5 tons guns (*North Queensland Herald* 26 August 1891: 13). The Commandant of the Queensland defence forces had reported to the Legislative Assembly on 22 July 1891 that the

battery was ready to accept its guns and the establishment was operational, with the exception of some small fittings and iron palisading (*QV&P* 1891, 11: 343).

The original plans for the battery drawn by Druitt and dated 23 January 1890, were obtained from the Kissing Point Archives (KPA 654 (1))(Fig. 9). It is apparent from these original plans that the battery was designed with two 6-inch gun emplacements, an underground magazine storage placed between the guns and casemate storage rooms located to the west of the guns near the entrance roadway and gate. Other features placed in the battery compound are two machine gun emplacements and the lookout and direction range finder locations.

Kissing Point battery was reinforced during the Second World War. The plans drawn in 1940 contain specific details of the layout of the battery and the location of the iron palisade or perimeter fence that enclosed the fort on three sides (*AA Vic MP* 729/6, File no. 32/401/128). The relationship between the guns, magazine, casemate and approaches was common to many small coastal defence installations. Like

Magazine Island battery, the installation at Kissing Point was based on a generic design and followed a strategic fixed defence position that was not adapted to environmental conditions, political or economic importance or local geographical features. The physical structure of the fortifications was virtually unaltered between the date of construction in 1891 and the start of the Second World War.

As was noted in the previous chapter, the most important document concerning the construction details, alterations to the physical nature of the battery, as well as manning and operational schedules was the fort record book. Fortunately, the original record book, compiled between September and November 1900, but dated January 1901, is held at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra (AWM 1/206).

The record book (AWM 1/206: 14 and 16) reports that the general object of the coastal defence installations was for 'the protection of shipping in the harbour and the repulse of any attack by vessels of a hostile power'. The fort at Kissing Point was specifically designed to protect the north-western approaches to the harbour. On the other hand, the fort at Magazine Island served to cover the eastern- and north-eastern approaches, between Magnetic Island and Cape Cleveland.

No original plans were contained within the record book. It may be assumed that the plan by Druitt (KPA 654(1)) was previously included in the record book and afterwards removed.

The record book noted that the Kissing Point fort, located at latitude 19°16'55"S and longitude 146°48'24"E, was constructed on a granitic promontory about two miles northwest of the main Townsville harbour and 108 feet above mean sea level. Construction was completed in June 1891 at a cost of £3,500. The two 6-inch guns were mounted under the direction of Captain H.C.W. Hamilton. The site was chosen for its field of fire as well as the inaccessibility of the battery from the seaward side: the only points of access were blocked with barbed wire entanglements. The barracks, sergeants' quarters and officers' quarters were located below the hill to the southwest side of the installations. On the western side, the large cleared space was utilised as the parade ground and the site for the annual encampment.

The ordnance consisted of two 6-inch B.L. Mark V guns, two 64 pr guns on the left of the larger guns, and two 0.45-inch Nordenfelt machine guns. The magazines were built into the parapet between the two 6-inch guns and were connected to the gun emplacements by

underground corridors. The casemate was also built into the parapet to the left of the main guns.

The parapets on the seaward side were deliberately built up to a great thickness with earth and stone as protection for the guns. Full details of the width of the parapet and the placement of the guns may be found in the record book (AWM 1/206: 20). An iron palisade, 10 feet high, surrounded the battery on the landward side.

The two casemates, constructed of brick and concrete, were contained 'in the front parapet; the superior slope of which gives them an earth head cover of some 5 or 6 feet' (AWM 1/206: 22). These underground rooms were used as general supply stores, but by 1900 were certainly in use as artillery and shell stores. Adjoining the casemate was a small telephone communication room. In 1900 the casemate was fitted with air funnels and windsails for ventilation as it was considered unfit for occupation by troops. The casements had also been built to a standard design without adaptation for location and subsequently required remodelling. Both number one and number two casemate stores measured 28 feet in length, 18 feet in width and 10 feet in height to the centre of the curved, arched ceiling and 6 feet 2 inches in height at the walls. The telephone room measures 12 feet in length, 10 feet in width and 8 feet 9 inches in height to the centre of the arched roof.

The magazine of the battery was situated midway between the two main gun emplacements. Entrance to the magazine, from the compound, was by a flight of stairs on either side of the entrance door well. The entrance led into the lobby, the magazine passage, the shell store, ammunition lockers and the main magazine. From the shell store two passages led off to the guns (AWM 1/206: 100).

The barracks, with a detached kitchen, as well as a separate bathhouse and recreation room/canteen, were located on the landward side of the fort. The barracks building was designed to accommodate 25 men in a room 40 feet by 30 feet by 11 feet. The barracks also had a front verandah that measured 6 feet wide and 40 feet long. The record book also noted that the recreation room, which measured 31 feet by 16 feet by 11 feet could also be used to house 15 additional men (AWM 1/206 following 100). This recreation room also had a front verandah. The sergeants' room, not illustrated in the record book, was capable of housing either four N.C.Os or, what

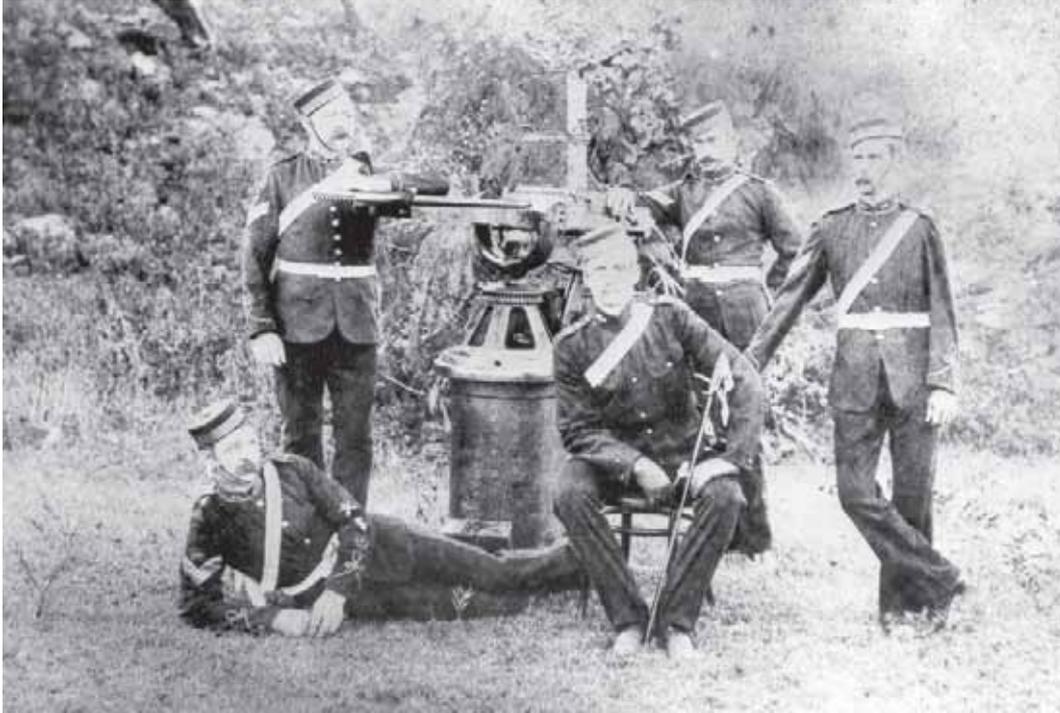


FIG. 10. Five soldiers, Kennedy Regiment, with Nordenfelt machine gun. (KPA 494d Kennedy Regiment 1886-1900)

was considered to be their equivalent, eight ordinary soldiers. The sergeants' accommodation consisted of a front room, two back rooms or bedrooms, a kitchen, presumably detached, and a front verandah. The officers' quarters, designed to accommodate four officers, or six N.C.Os or, according to the rules of rank and status, 12 enlisted men, contained seven rooms, a kitchen, bathroom and passage, with a verandah all around.

All these buildings were made of wood, raised on piles, with roofs of galvanised iron: the standard Queensland timber and iron building style of the period. Each building had its own water supplied from tanks attached to the building. An interesting note in the record book stated that the sergeants' building was built in 1890, but the officers' building was formerly the residence of the Inspector of Police and was built between 1880 and 1890. It may have been relocated from elsewhere as this was a common practice. Additional accommodation could also be obtained in nearby private housing or in tents located on Norman Park: the cleared, level ground behind the fortification.

Kissing Point and the reserve clearly provided a more accessible and more attractive training and deployment site than the rocky and exposed Magazine Island. The Kissing Point Archive contains a number of pre-federation photographs that illustrate the style of uniform and methods of training during this early developmental period. A group of five soldiers photographed with one of the Nordenfelt machine guns is illustrated in Fig. 10. All photographs have been labelled Kennedy Regiment (Kissing Point) 1886-1900 (KPA 494a-d).

Full details of the signal codes as well as manning and communications operations are to be found in the record book. Structural changes were made to the battery following construction: the Battery Commander's Post and Depression Range Finder, added in 1905, was located between the guns and the casemate.

It was estimated that in the mobilisation phase the battery at Kissing Point would require five officers and 65 men, the battery at Magazine Island would require three officers and 47 men made up from men of the detachment 'W' battery

and the Townsville Garrison Battery. In the second phase of defence, under conditions of complete manning of all fixed defences, Kissing Point battery would be manned by five officers and 65 men — with one horse. Magazine Island would be manned by three officers and 47 men — and two horses (AA Vic MP 153/16 Item 5: 22 and 23).

The schedule of manning, in detail, indicated that at Kissing Point, one officer acted as Battery Commander and Sub-Commander, three men were the commander's orderlies and trumpeter, one N.C.O. and two men were used as signallers and telephone operators, and one N.C.O. and two men were employed on the depression range finders. As well as this, three men acted as permanent fort staff while one officer, one N.C.O. and nine men were deployed on ammunition supply detail. 'A' gun, a 6-inch B.L. on barbette mountings, was manned by an officer, four N.C.Os, and 13 men. The second, or 'B' gun, a 64 pr rifled-muzzle-loading (R.M.L.) garrison carriage, was also manned by an officer, four N.C.Os, and 13 men. In addition, one N.C.O. and two men operated the 0.45-inch and the 1-inch machine guns. Two N.C.Os and four men were stationed as relief crew for the two 4.7 Q.F. guns 'when they arrive'.

While the large 6-inch guns on Magazine Island were withdrawn from commission between June and August 1896 and replaced in November 1901 by 4.7-inch Q.F. guns, the 6-inch guns at Kissing Point were retained. Following the inspection of the record book in April 1904, the details of the armaments at Kissing Point were listed as: two B.L. 6-inch 5 ton EOC Mark V guns ('A' group), two Nordenfelt 0.45-inch machine guns (located on the left flank rear parapet, covering the approach), and, on the left of the fort, the 'B' group consisted of one R.M.L. 64 pounder Mark 3 and one R.M.L. 64 pounder 71 cwt (hundredweight) converted gun as well as two R.M.L. 9 pounder Mark 2 guns. All the R.M.L. guns were labelled as obsolete (AWM 1/206: 36). Both batteries survived the devastating Cyclone Leonta of 9 March 1903, although it would be likely that ancillary buildings were damaged along with much of the town.

Kissing Point Archive also contains a letter from Mr T.D. Wetherell, a resident of Magnetic Island, (KPA 654(2)) who wrote:

Kissing Point has been built to conform to the established pattern of Fortresses of the late 1800s when gunpowder was the propellant used, in that the magazine and gun storerooms are sited underground, of double wall

construction with safety passages, special niches for lights, spark free clothing and shoes for magazine personnel and ascending passage to the two gun emplacements. The gun emplacements are sited just below ground level so the armament gave a small profile to the enemy affording maximum protection for gun crews from surface craft... A small enclosure for the range finder, its crew, the Battery Commander and his staff is sited between the two gun emplacements to allow maximum observation and ease of control, and some protection for personnel.

Between 1929 and 1930 the then Naval Board offered the Defence Department two 6-inch B.L. guns Mark XI on P6 mountings which the Defence Department proposed to locate at Kissing Point battery as replacement for the 6-inch B.L. guns on mark 1 mountings. These replacement guns were inspected by the officers at the Artillery School of Instruction in Sydney as they were located at Spectacle Island in the Parramatta River. The island was the main naval ammunition depot and is now a repository for naval history (Doak & Isaacs, 1988: 165-7). Following detailed inspection, an estimate of costs totalling £771, which included transportation and manpower required for removal and installation, was submitted to the then Military Board. Documentation attached to the file (AA Vic CRS B 197 1888/1/139) notes that after consideration of the costs of transportation, including a quote of £250 by Cummins and Campbell, a local mercantile firm, the project was abandoned in July 1930. According to the Kissing Point Museum brochure, the old 6-inch guns were finally replaced in 1936 by 4.7-inch guns.

During the Second World War, a War Cabinet Minute of 3 September 1941 (AA Vic MP 729/6 16/401/456) stated that a Defence Committee report of March 1941 had reviewed the provision of fixed defences at the defended ports of Koepang [Kupang] in Timor, Port Stephens in New South Wales and at Townsville where 6-inch guns were installed. The report recommended that the existing 4.7-inch guns be retained at Townsville and not be replaced because:

the Department of the Navy was mining the Barrier Reef passages and stated further that one of the main objects of the coast defences at Townsville was to cover the inspection anchorages and that this could be reasonably well secured with the existing guns if a search-light and signal station were installed on Magnetic Island opposite the anchorage, and quite adequately secured if, in addition to the installation of such signal light and signal station, the existing 4.7 inch guns were replaced with 4 inch guns.

Further correspondence (AA Vic MP 729/8 File 5/434/38) reports that the 4.7-inch guns were retained at the Kissing Point battery where their role was close defence. The effective range of the



FIG. 11. Gun crew preparing 4 inch coastal gun for firing during exercises, Kissing Point, 1940. (KPA 735)

guns was 8,000 yards with a maximum range of 9,700 yards. Although the 6-inch guns would have had an effective range of 16,000 yards and a maximum range of 17,600 yards, it was decided that the smaller guns would have been adequate for defence of a harbour the size of Townsville, the Platypus channel and west channel between Hawking Point and Cape Pallarenda.

A photograph from the Kissing Point Archives (KPA 735, see also KPA 681)(Fig. 11) clearly shows the number 2 gun being made ready for firing at the annual camp held at Kissing Point between 19 March and 1 April 1940. Documentation on the back of the original photograph states that at least one 6-inch gun was replaced by this 4-inch gun which was then also removed, in late April 1940, and replaced by a 4.7-inch gun. This photograph shows the manner of construction of the coastal gun emplacements at Kissing Point during the early part of the war. The general tide of war in the Pacific turned following the Battle of the Coral Sea in May 1942. After the heavy fighting on the Kokoda track near Port Moresby and the subsequent allied recapture of strategic areas of Papua New Guinea, the Japanese forces were pushed back. By 1943 the coastal defence installation at Kissing Point was no longer

considered strategically important. The emphasis had shifted to anti-aircraft defence. Townsville became a major garrison town and logistics base and large areas were taken over by American and Australian forces. The 4.7-inch guns were removed and installed at Cape Pallarenda where they could be used to defend the northern approaches of the channel. The Second World War officially ended with the surrender of the Japanese forces on 15 August 1945, following the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

A United States Military Cemetery had been established at Belgian Gardens in July 1942 to take the war dead from the New Guinea and northwest Pacific campaigns. The remains were then repatriated back to the United States at the end of the fighting in 1945. The original flagpole from the cemetery was retained and later relocated to Kissing Point hill in 1992 during the 50th anniversary celebrations to commemorate the Battle of the Coral Sea.

The fortifications at Kissing Point remained defence reserve land following the Second World War. They were left untouched until the mid-1960s when the gun positions that had been altered during the war were demolished and the battery filled in as the area had become the haunt



FIG. 12. Gun emplacement, Kissing Point, following restoration, 1979-80. (KPA 578)

of vagrants. The casemates were retained by the Army, stationed at Jezzine Barracks, and used as storerooms.

In 1979, it was proposed that restoration work be undertaken by the army engineering corps to preserve what remained of one of Townsville's early military historical sites. The proposal to restore the battery was agreed to by the Commanders of the 3rd Task Force and the District Support Group who planned that a restored battery would serve as a military museum emphasising the role of the defence forces in North Queensland. Restoration commenced in February 1979 (KPA 681 File Restoration Kissing Point Battery).

This was a time when Townsville was once again assuming a greater military role. Lavarack Barracks had been constructed on the southern side of Ross River in the suburb of Murray. The RAAF base at Garbutt was also expanding. The social and economic influence of the military services was becoming a major source of strength behind the growth of the region. The Townsville suburbs of Annandale and Douglas, the James Cook University and the hospital have now grown around Lavarack Barracks. Kissing Point

and Jezzine Barracks are also surrounded by urban development along the Strand. The economic foundations of Townsville remain industry, education, government services, pastoralism, mining and the military. These foundations remain little changed from the original economic and service objectives set by Robert Towns and John Melton Black.

The task of restoration required the excavation and repair of both gun positions, the excavation of the magazine together with general clearing, and reconstruction work at the magazine entrance. All brickwork was sandblasted and electrical installation and water reticulation replaced. Stone pitching was repaired and landscaping planned.

In July 1979, the North Queensland Army Museum Committee of Management approached the Townsville Harbour Board with a request to obtain several door and lintel frames from the Magazine Island battery. Later that month, the Townsville Harbour Board granted permission for the removal of some features from Magazine Island that were then incorporated in the reconstruction. The programme for restoration was amended to include acquisition of display cases, installation of lighting in the casemate that

was to become the display area, completion of external works such as the perimeter fences and roadworks, the erection of display signs and the preparation of a brochure on the museum. The date set for the opening of the museum was 12 June 1980.

It was also proposed that a 4.7-inch gun be obtained from the Green Hill fort on Thursday Island but, as the cost of removal and transportation would have been at the expense and responsibility of the committee, the plan was not approved. Other weapons obtained for display on the opening day included a 3.7-inch AA (anti-aircraft) gun and a 64 pounder R.M.L. gun relocated from the headquarters of the 11th Field Force Group.

The Army in Townsville is to be commended for their action in restoring the pre-federation battery at Kissing Point to a highly acceptable status. Despite structural changes and the requirements of restoration, the battery retains its intrinsic historical and military nature (Fig. 12). The present museum, located in the casemate, is now called the North Queensland Military Museum. The objectives of the museum are to record, in a tangible form, the history of the military forces in North Queensland, and to serve as a means for publicising the role of the defence forces in the region.

The Kissing Point battery is a tangible piece of colonial and military heritage in Townsville and is preserved as an important part of the National Estate.

#### NORTH QUEENSLAND IN WORLD WAR II

In 1939, at the commencement of the Second World War, the Australian Army in North Queensland comprised the militia units of the Kennedy Regiment (31st Battalion), based in Townsville, and the Far North Queensland Regiment (51st Battalion), based in Cairns. A handful of regular soldiers were based at the fixed defence installations at Kissing Point in Townsville as well as at Green Hill on Thursday Island and on nearby Goode Island.

The Pacific War, which began in December 1941 with the invasion of Malaya (Malaysia), the subsequent capture of Singapore and the simultaneous attack on Pearl Harbor, highlighted the imminent threat of invasion. By February 1942 the Japanese forces had succeeded in advancing through South-east Asia and had captured much of the coast and islands of northern Papua New Guinea. The Australian

Government established as a priority the defence of the industrial and commercial heartland in the south-east of the continent while the north, particularly the Townsville region, was to be defended by a few battalions largely for morale and psychological support for the isolated rural communities (Wilson, 1988: 11).

However, priorities changed with the retreat of the American and British forces from South-east Asia. Townsville became a principal embarkation and disembarkation point for Allied troops serving in the New Guinea campaign following the decisive defeat of the Japanese Navy in the Battle of the Coral Sea in May 1942, fought in an area 1,200 kilometres off the northern coast of Queensland. The Battle of the Coral Sea marked the end of the threat of invasion to Australia. Townsville was heavily defended with radar, searchlights and anti-aircraft installations. Kissing Point, Cape Pallarenda and Magnetic Island were fortified against possible naval, rather than air, attack. In July 1942 long-range enemy flying boats originating from Rabaul in New Britain attacked the city but the raids caused minimal damage.

The American forces under General Douglas MacArthur, who was based in Brisbane, established forward defence positions in North Queensland. The towns and cities of the north-east served as supply, hospital and logistics bases for the advance towards Japan. Townsville was chosen as the location for the Area Combined Headquarters for the North East Area. The American forces used Townsville as the headquarters of the United States Army Base Section Two, the United States Army Air Forces Fourth Air Depot, a naval replenishment port and a major transshipment centre for troops and supplies in the campaign for the recapture of the Philippines. Townsville remained a secure supply base that served to support the successful campaigns against the Japanese forces in South-east Asia. A large military hospital was established by allied forces at Pallarenda, now the site of a beachfront suburb. The Garbutt aerodrome was expanded and strengthened and became a major air force base for the Pacific theatre of war. A convalescence hospital and a radar station were built at Paluma, 60 kilometres north-west of Townsville (Venn, 2002). Between 1942 and the end of the war in 1945 the Townsville/Charters Towers region became one of the largest concentrations of airfields, stores, ammunition depots and port operations in the South West Pacific theatre (McIntyre, 1992).



FIG. 13. Command post, Pallarenda coastal artillery installations, 1989.

These developments changed the physical character of the town. About 5,000 people in the Townsville area were evacuated south in the early years of the war and the Australian Army tried unsuccessfully to have a further 10,000 people in the town evacuated in order to accommodate the rapid expansion of troops in the district (Wilson, 1988; McIntyre, 1992: 53). The civilians who remained 'had to endure constant road and air traffic; a total blackout; severe shortages and rationing of food items; shortages of water, ice, petrol and clothes; as well as strict control over movement in and out of the garrison area' (Wilson, 1988). Life in the garrison city was hard and uncomfortable with reduced services, rationing and the inevitable queuing. Public buildings and schools were occupied and people lived with the constant threat of invasion. Social changes were enormous: the culture of the city was profoundly altered with the arrival of thousands of Americans. The influx of people was perhaps the most significant social change since the flood of prospectors to the gold boom of the 1860s and 1870s. Reliable estimates indicate that the service population of the area in mid-1943 was

90,000. This was a ratio of 3: 1 between the service and the civilian populations. The story has been well documented by Darryl McIntyre (1992) in a book commissioned by the Townsville City Council for the 50th anniversary of the Battle of the Coral Sea (see Copeman & Vance, 1992).

During the 1942-1943 period, the Main Roads Commission, as the principal agent of the Allied Works Commission, became the senior road, airfield and troop compound construction authority in Queensland. The Allied Works Commission was a cooperative effort between the State Governments and the Commonwealth Government that undertook supervision of all wartime defensive and associated construction tasks. The two supervisory construction agencies were able to coordinate the construction of the fixed coastal defence installations at Pallarenda and Magnetic Island as well as the anti-aircraft facilities that were built on Castle Hill and near the harbour.

**CAPE PALLARENDA FORTIFICATION.** The defence installations included two gun emplacements and a searchlight installation, together with



FIG. 14. Coastal gun emplacement, Pallarenda, 1989

a sizable camp. The guns, designed to protect the harbour and the shipping passage between the mainland and Magnetic Island, were built on the Cape Pallarenda headland. The plans indicate that the ordnance located there were 4.7-inch guns mounted on concrete gun foundations. Behind these open gun emplacements were reinforced cartridge shell stores. Earth, to a depth of two feet was placed over the shell and cartridge stores, but this was reduced to six inches on the cantilevered gun emplacement roof (AA Townsville T 589).

Other plans are of the 4.7-inch gun cheese (AA Townsville T 650B), and a very detailed set of plans of concrete reinforcement in walls, floors and roofs of the gun emplacements, shell and cartridge stores (AA Townsville T 650A). All these plans are kept at the Australian Archives repository in Aitkenvale, Townsville. The only war diaries of the Pallarenda battery located in archives (AWM 52 4/19/37) date from January to October 1944 and reveal little apart from reports on the weather and minor camp duties. No plans of the searchlight installation were located. All three buildings remain in good condition at Cape

Pallarenda and are now located on Queensland Government land (Figs 13, 14). The Cape Pallarenda area provides Townsville with a particularly valuable heritage precinct. With the discovery of gold in the Charters Towers and Ravenswood areas in the 1870s, large numbers of immigrants were attracted to the region. The first quarantine barracks were built on Ross Island near Pilot Hill. Later a quarantine isolation area was located at Picnic Bay on Magnetic Island where people were housed in tents. This proved to be unsatisfactory and a more permanent settlement was constructed at West Point in 1885. These buildings were then relocated by barge to Pallarenda in 1915. These buildings were also used by the military during the Second World War as part of the larger hospital complex most of which consisted of tents erected on the flat sandy strand below the headland beneath the protection of the guns (Lawson, 1977: 22).

**MAGNETIC ISLAND FORTIFICATION.** The coastal defence installations built on Magnetic Island were more substantial than those at Cape Pallarenda. Between 1942 and 1943 a complex known as a Port War Signal Station (PWSS) was



FIG. 15. Camouflaged PWSS and Command Post, with mast, Magnetic Island, c.1942-43. (KPA 681 File Historical-ies-y)

built on rocky outcrops in the northeast corner of Magnetic Island, overlooking Florence Bay. This complex, now known as 'The Forts', was constructed as a defended communications centre protecting the main approach to the harbour via Platypus Channel. Both the Magazine Island gun installation and the PWSS were constructed for the strategic defence of this vital shipping lane but the designs reflect a generational change in the scale of warfare. Between 1942 and 1943, Cleveland Bay was an important naval assembly point and, at some times, up to 40 ships at a time were 'stacked' in the channel. Two 155mm coastal artillery guns were mounted below the main PWSS and the Direction Range Finder (DRF) station that housed the main range finder. These guns operated in association with two searchlight installations, one above Florence Bay and the other above White Lady Beach (Porter, 1983: 49-50). A radar unit was located on the high knoll above Radical Bay.

The fixed coastal defence complex on Magnetic Island was built by local civilian labour and was completed in 1943 (see Hogan, 1978).

Mrs Joan Parsons, the widow of Mr Stan Parsons who was a carpenter on the construction, was quoted as saying 'About 20 men from the Main Roads Department built the forts and an access road in only 10 months ... A lot of people are under the misapprehension that the American and Australian military did the work' (Townsville Bulletin 4 March 1989). Actually, the Townsville Daily Bulletin (22 August 1980: 9) some years earlier had reported on a return visit to the 'Forts' by Stan Parsons shortly before he died. According to the interview, the coastal signal station was constructed between September 1942 and July 1943 by a team of 20 men, which included eight carpenters, six to eight labourers, one truck driver, one bulldozer driver and one blacksmith. The men were required to perform a variety of duties in order to complete the connection road and defence installations within the required time limit of only ten months. In fact Parsons proudly remarked that the dirt access roadway to the installations from the main cross-island road was constructed in only two weeks.

The completed installations included the two gun emplacements, the magazine or ammunition store, the DRF and the PWSS (Figs 15, 16). The main building was camouflaged by fake boulders made from steel, wire mesh and concrete and the guns were camouflaged by netting. Stan Parsons (Townsville Daily Bulletin 27 August 1980: 9) remarked that the guns were originally intended for the defence of Guam but following the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor and the subsequent Japanese occupation of Guam, the guns and ships were diverted to Australia. Parsons also stated that an identical emplacement was constructed on Pilot Hill behind the main harbour but this was removed during the harbour expansion of the 1960s. However, there is no evidence of any Second World War structures in photographs of Magazine Island taken in 1966; Parsons may have been referring to the coastal defence installations built over the Kissing Point battery that were removed in the 1960s.

The remains of the main PWSS and the DRF stations, as well as the gun emplacements and the magazine store, are intact and, considering their age, maintained in good condition by the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service. They are a popular tourist destination, not only because of their historical and military value but also due to their commanding view from the top of the hill over the bays and islands. For the guns to operate effectively in case of attack they required a clear 180° line of fire. The result is a clear, often spectacular, view across Magnetic Island and Cleveland Bay to Cape Cleveland and Mount Elliot. In December 2003, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service erected new signage and interpretative information as part of the National Heritage Trail.

Parsons reported that the 75-foot oregon pine flagpole located at the PWSS which had to be transported to the island by Hayles ferry was taken down in the 1950s, slightly shortened, and given to the nearby scout group. The original plans for the connection of the flagpole to the

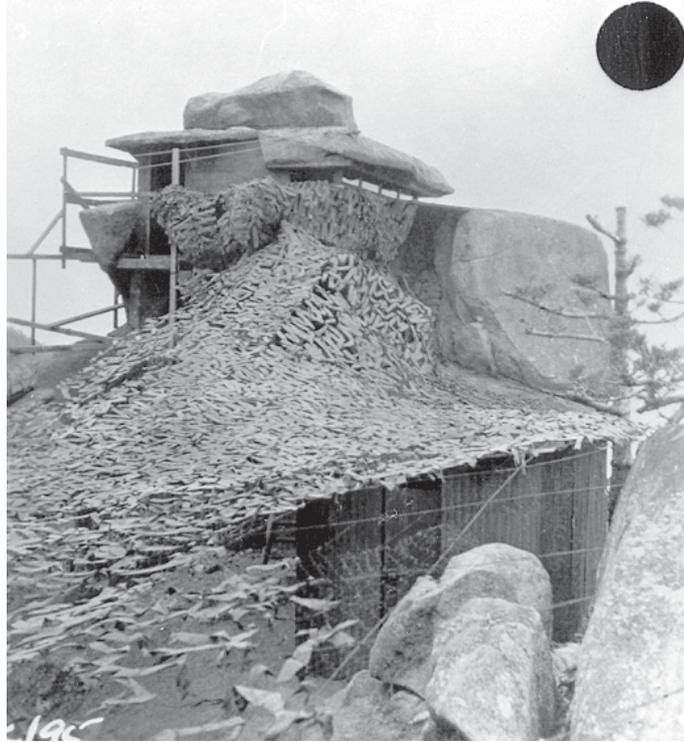


FIG. 16. Camouflaged DRF station, Magnetic Island, c.1942-43. Note false 'rocks' on roof. (KPA 681 File Historical-ies-y)

signal station roof are also housed at the Australian Archives office in Townsville (AA Townsville T676B).

A camp for the men manning the signal station and the guns was located nearby. The remains of the camp site kitchens and ablution blocks, identified from concrete foundations, can still be seen near the present walking track to the 'Forts'. Extant evidence also includes the foundations of some accommodation blocks.

War diaries of the Magnetic Island battery located in the Australian War Memorial (AWM 52 5/31/79 and 4/19/33) attest to the construction dates and progress noted earlier. The daily procedures of the signal station noted in the diary for 31 October 1943 stated:

During the period 1st Oct to 31st Oct the Battery was manned continuously and constant seaward watch kept. All incoming and outgoing vessels (merchant or war) were reported to PWSS and logged, the Bty [Battery] carrying out function of Exam[ination] Bty. Training continued progressively v[ery] good results were obtained from practice seaward. Normal constructional works being exercised by Unit labour continued satisfactorily.



FIG. 17. DRF station, Magnetic Island, 1989

The fixed coastal defences of Townsville were constructed at a crucial time in the defence of the north. A Joint Planning Staff report of 1942 (AWM 52 243/6/119) explained the practical reasoning for strengthening defence of the north:

Townsville, which is already provided with fixed defences and affords reasonable port facilities, should be developed as a fortress area in order to secure against the estimated maximum scale of attack [for] retention of the port area, and some protection for the belt of aerodromes and the line of communication installations extending westward through Charters Towers and Hughenden to Cloncurry.

The original plans of the PWSS, together with the plans for a gangway access, signal mast and construction details of the gangway to the PWSS, were located in the Australian Archives office in Townsville (AA Townsville T 676, T 676A and T 676C). The DRF (Fig. 17) and main signal station were perched on top of the hill and, in order to direct fire:

The DRF station housed the main range finder, although each individual gun also had its own range finder, mounted on a solid concrete stump on top of the rivetments. (Townsville Daily Bulletin 27 August 1980: 9).

At least one of these gun range finder stumps remains on site. According to Stan Parsons the range of fire was advantageous for:

The two gun positions involved the construction of two huge gun rings, with a "cheese" in the middle. The gun was mounted on top of the cheese, revolving around it on big rubber wheels for a clean 360 degree sweep, although the lower gun, in particular, would have been unlikely to want to blast straight into the side of the hill. As field pieces still mounted on their wheels the emplacements' outer rings were needed to chain the guns down.

The guns' emplacements are easily identified on site and a number of the support rings are still visible. The emplacements remain in good condition. The original guns had a range of 13 miles (Fig. 18). Gun practice was maintained by firing at a target set halfway between Magnetic Island and Cape Cleveland.

The Townsville Daily Bulletin (27 August 1980: 9) reported:

The magazine was last to be built. In fact they [the Army] were already test firing the guns by the time Stan and his mates were pouring the magazines' 12-inch thick roof. It was, in fact, 12-inch thick all around [walls and roof], and housed the guns' main supply of shells and powder. The ammunition was taken up to the guns' rivetments as and when needed, which wasn't often because the guns were never fired in anger.



FIG. 18. 155mm coastal artillery gun, mounted on gun cheese, Magnetic Island, 1943. (KPA 681 File Histor-ical-ies-y)

Once again Townsville was fortified against an attack that never eventuated.

Townsville retains strong links with the armed services. Army and Air Force installations, as well as large numbers of defence personnel and their families, are located in the region. The fixed coastal defences at Kissing Point, dating from pre-federation, and the Second World War installations at Cape Pallarenda and Magnetic Island, although no longer in use, remain as tangible reminders of Townsville's long history as a strategic defence location. Their presence emphasises the changes in the strategic role of coastal defence installations. Despite their apparent permanence, the static nature of the buildings also highlights their vulnerability in a changing world. Mobile, rapid response armed forces have no need for costly fixed structures. The fixed coastal defence installations never actively engaged the enemy: they are reminders of an obsolete defence strategy. This does not minimise their cultural significance, in fact it enhances their heritage value. The conservation and restoration of all extant sites remains an

important contribution to the preservation of Australia's National Estate.

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Research was undertaken at James Cook University Library, Queensland State Archives, John Oxley Library, Australian War Memorial and at the Australian Archives offices in Brighton, Melbourne, Canberra and Townsville. In Townsville, the Australian Army staff at Jezzine Barracks, Kissing Point provided access to the records stored in the magazine rooms of the Battery. The paper draws heavily on archival

documentation housed in the Australian War Memorial, Canberra. In particular, the original Fort Record Books contain a great deal of valuable information on the construction, manning and operation of pre-federation coastal batteries.

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Mr Denis Lawrence prepared the maps and plans. His skill is particularly evident in his careful reproduction of the plans of the Batteries at Kissing Point and Magazine Island from originals that could only be photographed or photocopied. Original drawings were scanned by Christine Cansfield-Smith of CSIRO Discovery, Canberra.

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