

THE FRENCH GUNS & FORTS OF VUNG TAU



Compiled & Edited By Ern Marshall

Introduction

This like many other projects started more or less by accident, a friend of mine asked me to write an article on the Guns of Vung Tau for a magazine that he was publishing.

I knew a little about the guns as I was stationed here during the war in 1968-69 with the Australian Army.

I was posted as a driver at 1 ALSG located on the back beach Vung Tau. So I was more or less next door.

We were warned not go near the old forts, but being young and bullet proof that's what we immediately did, we went exploring. That was the first time I saw the gun emplacements

Now I'm back living in Vung Tau and have had the opportunity to assist in tours for a Charity here, so again I gained a little bit more knowledge.

So that is how I became interested, having started my research, I soon realized that I did not know much at all and nobody else did for that matter, so after many months collecting as much information as possible (at this stage anyway) and then decided to put it into some readable form.

A great deal of it was in French and that had to be translated because I do not read/speak French I had to do it online. So some of it is not grammatically or technically correct, translated by machine. I have left most of it as is. Maybe later someone will do a better job than I have.

I've included a little bit of History to orientate the reader and help get a feel of the place. There are 23 forts (gun emplacements on the Vung Tau Peninsular) one of the 23 make way for a new road and I have not been able to locate any photos of it. So that leaves 22

Honestly I don't know how long they will last. Some of them are in bad need of some TLC

The Vung Tau Peoples Committee has done a marvellous job of restoring one of the Guns emplacements at Hem 444 (Street 444) and lately they have shown some interest in doing more.

The book is not really meant to be a book that you would sit down and read, it is more something that you can look at and talk to your friends about, maybe more important is that I have tried to save as much information as I can for histories sake before it is lost forever.

What would be great is to have these Forts opened up for tourism and the public.

Also being in electronic form it can continuously be updated as more information comes along.

If anybody has anything at all, any information whatsoever, please be so kind as to forward it to me on;

ern.marshall@gmail.com

I hope you get some small satisfaction from what I have collected.

Ern Marshall

Pre-amble

THIS BOOK IS NOT FOR SALE.

It may not be re-produced in any way shape or form whatsoever; without my written permission

This is my first attempt at researching. I have tried to be as accurate as possible but as with all first timers I may have made some mistakes. These are my mistakes, not anyone else's. I am always open to suggestions and corrections.

Any omissions or credits that I have missed then I apologise in advance;

Most importantly, I would like to thank the local Vietnamese people, without their generous help and courtesy I may have never been able to find some of these places

If there are any improvements that you can think of or any mistakes, please, contact me at.....

ern.marshall@gmail.com

If you have trouble reading anything, especially the maps just zoom in on the page

CHAPTER ONE

The history leading up to the establishment of the French Guns and Forts in Vung Tau

The Guns of Vung Tau

As with most historical archives, we find numerous contradictions and conjecture. When researching this article I found it to be no different, I have included my interpretation of the facts in order to provide, what I believe, is a credible account of events. (JJM).

Of course, I have had to do the same thing. I have done my best to be as accurate as possible
(Ern Marshall)

Historical Overview

Vung Tau is not just a place of stunning beaches, it is also the home of some of the oldest weapon collections in Vietnam. One of the most interesting is the old fortress's built by the French over a century ago.

During the 14th and 15th century, the fortress of Phước Thắng the Cape that would eventually become Vung Tau was a swamp where European Trading ships regularly visited.

Malay pirates built a base here turning Phước Thắng into dangerous waters, Emperor Gia long (1802-1820) the last Emperor of the Nguyen dynasty), sent 3 Army detachments to curtail the pirate activity. The pirates were ultimately defeated and the Generals of these 3 detachments were given the land, as an incentive to continue to protect the area from reinvasion.

In 1876, according to a decree by the French colonialists, Vũng Tàu was merged in Ba Ria county, a part of the Saigon administration (French: Circonscription De Saigon).

May 1st 1895, the governor of Cochin China, established by decree, that Cap Saint Jacques would thereafter be an autonomous town. In 1898, Cap Saint Jacques has merged with Ba Ria County once again, however, was divided yet again in 1899. In 1901, the population of Vũng Tàu was 5,690, of which 2,000 were immigrants from Northern Vietnam. The fishing industry quickly became the prominent source of livelihood. April 4th 1905, Cap Saint Jacques was made an administrative district of Ba Ria province. In 1929, Cap Saint Jacques became a province and in 1934 became a city (commune).

The French governor of Indochina, Paul Doumer (who later became President of France), built a mansion in Vũng Tàu that is still a prominent landmark in the city.

In 1979 Vung Tau was made the “Capital of Vung Tau – Con Dao Special Administration Zone”

2. The Guns

It is recorded that February 10th ,1859 marks the first use of cannons by Nguyen's army, when they fired at French battleships from the fortress of Phước Thắng, located 100m from Vung Tau's Front Beach. This marked an important period in Vietnam's war against French invaders in South Vietnam (then called Cochin China).

The battle lasting some 40 years was not successful however and the French demolished the fort in 1898 rebuilding the new defence forts along with a luxury 3 story villa which came to be known as “The White Palace” and can still be seen today.

The old fortress on Nui Lon is one of three defense bases built by the French Colonists at the end of 19th century, it was the strongest and the most advanced in Indochina at the time and designed to secure the sea gateway to the South Eastern region and to safeguard Vung Tau, a resort centre for the French. From 1885 to 1905 the French deported thousands of revolutionary fighters to Big Mountain and Small Mountain (Vung Tau) in order to build the defence system, they placed 23 artillery pieces with calibres from 140 - 300mm, in strategic locations throughout the area.

Work started in 1885 to build a fortress 100m above sea level covering an area of approximately 1ha on Big Mountain taking 15 years to complete. Six heavy guns, built during 1872-1876 by the French, are positioned in a bow line 17.5m apart mounted on 360o rotating bases pointing out to the sea toward Can Gio, now HCMC.

“The call of national resistance” is the handwritten draft of President Ho Chi Minh’s appeal to the whole nation for the resistance war written at the end of 1946. It is being kept at the Viet Nam National Museum of History in Ha Noi. The draft, that was written on only two separate pages, has not only great historical meaning but also high values in Vietnamese literature. “The call of national resistance” asserts the Vietnamese patriotism and willpower. “This is the basic starting point for all Vietnamese victories”. Using stolen/reclaimed weapons and ordnance, the resistance reshaped the course of history, ousting the French and reclaiming their land. There is a major tunnel system, built by the French, inside small mountain complete with its own rail system transforming the fortress into one similar to “Navarone”

The Ancient Canon Bastion was constructed by the French colonialism more than a century ago, connecting Lon mountain and Nho mountain of Vung Tau city, creating a safe corridor to the Southeast region border gate. The Ancient Cannon Battlefield was divided into three areas: Da Eleven guns on Small Mountain are divided into three groups which are about 300 meters apart. The first group is located on the top of Nghinh Phong Cape at 136m above sea level and the second includes five guns is located near a solid underground hideout. The final group includes three guns that are linked together with a communications trench and an underground hideout.

Since January 18, 1993, the old fortress has been ranked as a National Historical Relic “The Most Valued and Biggest Collection of Weapon” in Indochina by The Ministry of Culture and Information (The Ministry of Culture-Sports and Tourism of Vietnam).

A very Short History of Vietnam from the 1850’s

History of Vietnam from the late 1850s to 1949 witnessed two invasions of French and Japan, along with many uprisings and campaigns of Vietnamese patriots.

France steps in

History of Vietnam in the late 1850s was marked by French colonists’ invasion in Indochina. Gunships of Rigault de Genouilly, under Napoleon III of France’s orders, assaulted the port of Da Nang in 1858.

This caused a significant damage but gained no foothold. Besides, humidity and tropical diseases were great burdens of the area in this process. For that failure, De Genouilly decided to move southward and attacked Gia Dinh (present-day Saigon), a poorly defended city. From 1859 to 1867, French invaders expanded their control over six Mekong River Delta provinces, which sooner became a colony of France known as Cochinchina.

A few years later, Northern Vietnam was landed in by French troops which seized Hanoi twice in 1873 and 1882. Although top commanders of France were trapped and killed by the Black Flag Army, French troops attempted to remain its power in Tonkin. After the Tonkin Campaign (1883-1886), French colonists supposed to control all Vietnam. During the time of Tonkin Campaign (in the north of Vietnam), in Central

Vietnam, a Treaty of Hue or Protectorate Treaty was signed between France and Central Vietnam on June 6, 1884. According to this protectorate, French colonists had a right to rule Vietnam for the next seven decades. This treaty rehashed the main tenets of Harmand Treaty of August 25, 1883 with some less harsh provisions. From October 1887, French Indochina was formed in three parts of Vietnam: northern Vietnam as Tonkin, Central Vietnam as Annam, and Southern Vietnam and Cambodia as Cochinchina (then in 1893, Laos added). Yet, the status of each part was different. Cochinchina had the status of a colony, while Nguyen Dynasty still ruled nominally in Annam, and Tonkin was controlled by a French governor with the support of Vietnamese officials' local government.

In the 1880s the “aid the king” (can vuong) movement mobilised thousands of patriots who sought fruitlessly but with great courage to restore the status quo ante. They were crushed by French military force, but their patriotism inspired many later thinkers, including Ho Chi Minh.

The aim of this insurgency was to drive out French invaders and to take Ham Nghi Emperor to this throne.

However, this movement was not successful as its incoherent national structure. Initially, this movement flourished and defeated French strongholds in Central Vietnam, yet, more French troops were poured into

this area which led to the later failure of this movement. In 1886, the sedition in Annam spread more and reached its peak until its collapse by 1889. After Can Vuong Movement, there were revolts of Thanh Thai

and Duy Tan (Kings of Nguyen Dynasty), but they failed. Then, they were exiled into Africa. Besides, many

uprisings of mandarins were carried out, but because of poor weapons, these movements finally failed. By

1900, a new trend of revolts bloomed. Leaders were young activists who partly depended on Western philosophy to found a republic upon independence.

Some Vietnamese independence societies, which were seen as a kind of model society, were established in Japan. Typically, it is Dong Du Movement (“Go East”) led by Phan Boi Chau in 1905. His plan was to send

Vietnamese students to Japan to obtain modern skills to lead successful armed rebellions against French colonists in the future. However, his plan failed because of French diplomatic pressure, which forced Phan

Boi Chau to leave Japan for China. After that, Phan Chau Trinh led a second movement called Duy Tan (Modernization).

This movement was to educate people, modernise Vietnam, and strengthen understanding and resistance between Vietnam and French. Unfortunately, after a short time later, this movement also suppressed by French.

Cannot bearing the fact, Phan Boi Chau established Vietnam Quang Phuc Hoi in Guangzhou.

In the early twentieth century, the prospects for turning the clock back dimmed. Vietnamese patriots like Phan Boi Chau (1867-1940) were impressed by developments in China and Japan, while opponents of France in the 1920s and 1930s, most notably Phan Chu Trinh (1871-1926), drew on European examples—including democracy and Communism—for their ideology. After 1900, few Vietnamese intellectuals sought refuge in the precolonial past. The association aimed to recover Vietnam and establish an independent and republic nation. Yet, in 1925, Phan Boi Chau was captured in Shanghai by French who spirited him to Vietnam.

In 1927, Vietnamese Nationalist Party was set up, which inherited from the Kuomintang in China (the Chinese Nationalist Party). In 1930, Yen Bai Mutiny, a large-scale revolt was launched in Tonkin. However, this triggered its leader, Nguyen Thai Hoc and other leaders arrested and executed.

In Vietnam at the time, and elsewhere in Indochina, Frenchmen grabbed lands, and they built plantations that produced rubber and other forest products. In the first decade of the twentieth century, France's colonial administration in Vietnam encouraged French commercial enterprises. They built railways, roads and hydraulic works to serve these enterprises, but projects that would have served Vietnamese farmers were ignored.

Vietnam was a predominate peasant society, and Vietnam's peasants continued to suffer from the usual droughts and floods. Per capita rice consumption declined. And what had been Vietnam's handicraft industry was destroyed.

By the 1920s, rich coal deposits in Tonkin and rubber plantations in Cambodia also produced revenue for French investors and spawned the beginnings of a proletariat, later drawn toward the Indo-China Communist Party (or ICP; founded in 1930). Investments in Indochinese public works such as the Hanoi to Saigon railroad, which carried few passengers and very little freight, reaped large profits for shareholders in France, who constituted the Indochina lobby.

At the same time, France was reluctant to encourage any manufacturing in Indochina that would compete with imported French goods. Local merchants grew rich in the import-export business and by buying up agricultural harvests, while local rice growers in Cambodia and the Mekong Delta (after the region had been drained by French engineers) became more prosperous as they expanded their subsistence-oriented holdings to produce crops for export. Marketing was assisted by a new network of roads, market towns, and railways in Vietnam and Cambodia. In the 1920s most of Indochina enjoyed an economic boom, spurred by international demands for rubber, rice, and other agricultural products.

During the time of French invasion, there were a large number of movements and uprisings occurring against France. Between 1885 and 1889, it was the breakout of Can Vuong Movement, a large-scale revolt of Vietnamese against the rule of French colonists.

A new class of Vietnamese had come into being: people who laboured for the French as servants, or who laboured in French-owned mines, on French-owned plantations, at French construction sites or in French-owned factories. The French paid them as little as they could – hardly enough for survival, and sometimes not enough.

As in Africa, the French were taxing the Vietnamese and drafting them to labour on public works. On one such project – the Hanoi-Yunnan Phu railway – 25,000 Vietnamese died. Conditions in Vietnam, in general, were creating a decline in Vietnam's population.

The French in Vietnam established a monopoly in the production of salt, alcoholic beverages and opium. They taxed consumption of these. They encouraged Vietnamese to buy their opium, and money gained from their opium trade was an important part of the colonial administration's income.

And in 1902 the colonial administration made buying alcoholic beverages compulsory, each Vietnamese village having to consume a definite quantity in proportion to its population – more of the behaviour that French commerce and government dare not perpetrate on people in France.

In 1908, Vietnamese farmers responded to a rise in taxes by marching to the French administration headquarters. For weeks, thousands of peasants picketed the governor's office in Hue and made passionate speeches, not only against taxes but forced labour. The protest spread and the French countered with ferocity. Demonstrators were gunned down. Whole villages were razed to the ground. Thousands were arrested, and two Vietnamese scholars who had spoken against French policies were executed.

But in Vietnam, while French commercial operations were benefiting privately owned French companies, revenues from France's colonies were not paying the cost of maintenance and administration. Average French taxpayers were subsidising their nation's colonies

The Japanese occupation of Vietnam



Japanese troops entering Saigon in 1941

In World War II, French became weak in the world battle, and then it was defeated by Germans in 1940. Thus, the power of French in Indochina reduced significantly. In 1940, Japan invaded Vietnam which marked a point in this period of Vietnam history. The colonial authority in Indochina was the collaboration of French and Japanese according to Vichy French treaty. Although all affairs in the colony were run by French, the power resided in the hands of Japanese.

The Japanese invaders backed the Empire of Vietnam with Bao Dai as Head of State, and the French authorities were put in prison. After the failure of Yen Bao Mutiny, in 1941, Viet Minh common front was founded by Ho Chi Minh. This front was controlled by Indochinese Communist Party (later Communist Party), and it was seen as a common group for another party in the cause of regaining Vietnamese independence. Although not completed, Lang Son works (19) (20) (21), Dong Dang, Ha Giang and Lao Kay, will be the scene of fierce fighting when, on 9 March 1945, the Japanese in perdition in the Pacific, decide to invest the entire territory of French Indochina, and destroy the French forces.

They will act treacherously. At Lang Son, the Japanese staff invite the civil authorities and French military at a dinner at 1800 hours. After the meal, the guests were taken, prisoner. Two senior officers, the Amiguet lieutenant colonel and battalion commander Leroy, are murdered. While 5000 soldiers withstand the onslaught of the citadel and forts Négrier and Briere de l'Isle.

The resistance will last several hours, ten against one. General Émile Lemonnier, who refuses to order the surrender, was beheaded, as the Auphelle resident. The Colonel Robert knows the same fate 48 hours later. At the citadel, the fighting claimed 120 fatalities and serious injuries. But it is not finished and on 11, 12 and 13 March, the 400 survivors were murdered. They are beheaded or shot down, or pierced with bayonets and the killing completed with pickaxes.

The fighting in and around Lang Son made a total of 1128 deaths in the French ranks. Throughout Indochina, civilian and military losses exceed 3,000 killed. Admiral Decoux was captured with his staff. The six months of captivity that follow will cost even the lives of more than 1500 men.

The colonial administration cannot resist this, and French Indochina falls entirely under the yoke of Japan.

The English

The arrival of British troops into Saigon (Nepalese Gurkhas and Muslims from the Punjab and Hyderabad in the Twentieth Indian Division) Sept, 12th, 1945 - ostensibly with the aim of preserving European colonial control in the region. Major General Douglas Gracey commander of the Twentieth, walked past the Viet Minh delegation and departed in the company of Japanese soldiers after disembarking from his C-47 at Tan Son Nhat airport. He refused to meet with Viet Minh leaders "...they came to see me and said 'welcome' and all that sort of thing, " he later said. "It was an unpleasant situation and I promptly kicked them out. They were obviously communists."

He then declared martial law on the 21st, shutting down the nationalist government, released and rearmed more than a thousand French soldiers - swollen by ranks of angry French citizens who then set out to terrorize, beat, jail, some members of the Committee of the South were hanged, and one French woman who supported the Viet Minh had her hair shaved. The following day, the French flag was flying and the "coup d'etat" had taken place. Gracey, angered by the brutality, ordered the French back to their barracks as punishment, but the Viet Minh had already ordered a general strike. By the next day, the airport was attacked, the local jail stormed, and hundreds of Viet Minh slipped past Japanese guards to massacre scores of French and Eurasian civilians, including women and children.

Thus September 23rd, 1945, is the plausible date where the war of Liberation and Independence against France began

The Americans

The head of the OSS in South Vietnam, 28 year. old Colonel Peter Dewey was a remarkably accomplished young man - entering the Polish army prior to American involvement in WW II; he joined the OSS and was a paratrooper into southern France to organise the resistance; became a member of the legendary Jedburgh teams conducting guerilla warfare within enemy lines; author of two books... Dewey was an anti-colonialist, and as such, a strong believer in the independence for South Vietnam

Gracey wrote that unless something was done quickly, the state of anarchy would worsen. This situation was worsened by the Viet Minh's lack of strong control over some of their allied groups.

Because of this, the French were able to persuade Gracey (in a move which exceeded the authority of his orders from Mountbatten) to rearm local colonial infantry regiments who were being held as prisoners of war.



A Japanese naval officer surrenders his sword to a British Lieutenant in Saigon on 13th September 1945.

Gracey also allowed about 1,000 former French prisoners of war to be rearmed. They, with the arrival of the newly formed 5th Colonial Infantry Regiment (RIC) commandos, would then be capable of evicting the Viet Minh from what hold they had on the Saigon administration. Gracey saw this as the quickest way to allow the French to reassert their authority in Indochina while allowing him to proceed in disarming and repatriating the Japanese. Gracey faced another problem in his relations with Mountbatten. One example of this occurred on Gracey's arrival in September. He drew up a proclamation that declared martial law and stated that he was responsible for law and order throughout Indochina south of the 16th parallel. Mountbatten, in turn, made an issue of this, claiming that Gracey was responsible for public security in key areas only. The proclamation was published on September 21 and, although Lord Mountbatten disagreed with its wording, the Chiefs of Staff and the Foreign Office supported Gracey.

During the following days, Gracey gradually eased the Viet Minh grip on Saigon, replacing their guards in vital points with his own troops. These vital points were then turned over to French troops. This procedure was adopted because the Viet Minh would not have relinquished their positions directly to the French.



The photo depicts the surrender of Japanese forces in Vietnam to Brigadier E.C.J. Woodford, Commander of the 32d Indian Infantry Brigade (of the British Army). Note the British Union Jack draped over the table.

The Japanese officer was Major General Hattori who offered his personal sword (forged in the year 1511) ceremoniously as a symbol of surrender. The ceremony took place sometime in late 1945.

The victory of August Revolution During 1944 – 1945, Northern Vietnam had to suffer a serious famine owing to poor weather and Japanese exploitation, which resulted in the death of 1 million people. Taking advantage of the administrative vacuum of French authorities, in March 1945, Viet Minh ratified Vietnamese people in the north to pillage rice warehouse and refuse to pay taxes; about 100 warehouses were captured.

By virtue of this rebellion, Viet Minh gained its popularity and appealed more members in this period. After the succession March 1945 which was seen to be a favourable condition for rising up to ambush Japanese force them to surrender in August 1945. This formed a political gap in Vietnam when the French were interned and the Japanese forces were defeated by the Allies and Viet Minh. Thanks to the Vietnam August Revolution, Viet Minh entered and clutched the power in Vietnam. On September 2, 1945, the leader of Viet Minh, Ho Chi Minh, made a Declaration of Independent Democratic Republic of Vietnam in Ba Dinh Square, Hanoi, in front of 500,000 people. In this declaration of independence, Ho Chi Minh restated the Declaration of Independence of the United States that all men have his own equal rights, they have rights to live, to be free, and to achieve happiness.

After that, Japanese military forces were disarmed by Chinese, Vichy French officials and military officers were interned after the surrender. Although Viet Minh gained power in Vietnam, the Allies supposed that Vietnam belonging to France. At that time, the French did not retake Vietnam immediately, so Vietnam was divided into two part: the North Vietnam was occupied by Chinese armed forces, while the South Vietnam was rearmed by British troops.

This then promotes the formation of independent regimes. After the armistice, the northern part of Indochina is occupied by the Chinese of Chiang Kai-shek, and the south by the British. It was not until October 1945 to see the French authority established in Saigon, and in March 1946 for it to be the in Tonkin. The Chinese, before their departure, destroying almost entirely fortified structures built facing their border, between 1942 and 1945. The coastal batteries are recovered in varying states often looted, or deprived of their equipment. In March 1946, Dason batteries and Appowan be sufficiently suitable for the hands of the Vietminh, open fire on the French ships bringing troops coming, as part of Operation Castor, reoccupy Tonkin. The following events are called Indochina War and the Vietnam War, but that's another story.



Viet Minh

However, with the desire of reunifying all the country, Ho Chi Minh urged the support of the Soviet Union, along with attempting to negotiate with France. At this time, the French were gradually retaking its power in Indochina. In January 1946, an election across northern and central Vietnam was held with the winning of Viet Minh were freely supported with arms to begin its resistance war against the French. On March 6, 1946, Ho Chi Minh. signed an agreement with the French.

According to this agreement the French were allowed to take the place of Chinese armed Forces as an independent nation in the Indochina Union and the French Union. Besides, the French at the same time has to recognise the Democratic Republic of Vietnam as an independent nation in the Indochina Union and the French Union. Besides, the French had to agree to hold an election in Southern Vietnam to reunify the country. After that, all Vietnam was under the control of France.

By 1949, by dint of the winning of Chinese Communists in Chinese Civil War, the Viet between Western powers and the Soviet Union in World War II no longer existed in the Cold Khmer Serei movements were organised by communists. At this time, the rapprochement

led the first Vietnam War in Indochina. Laos and Cambodia joined this war. Pathet Lao and Serei movements were organised by communists. At this time, the rapprochement between Western powers and the Soviet Union in World War II no longer existed in the Cold War. By 1949, by dint of the winning of Chinese Communists in Chinese Civil War, the Viet Minh were freely supported with arms to begin its resistance war against the French.



Ho Chi Minh – Profile

Characteristics of Ho Chi Minh that made him a distinctive personality:

1. Fierce commitment to Vietnamese Nationalism and the willingness to use force to achieve national independence.
2. Believed that Vietnam should be communist
3. Initially believed that the United States would support Vietnam's independence.

What led to these characteristics developing:

1. Childhood experiences in Vietnam.
2. Experiences while travelling and in Paris.
3. His experiences as the founder and leader of the Viet Minh.
4. His experiences as the founder and leader of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam



CHAPTER TWO

A very general chapter where I have tried to explain the general area with some maps and try to give you a feeling of the times.

The Time

Here is a delightful description from one of the early investigations by the French. I have highlighted in **BOLD** print the casual reference to taking the fort, although I think the reported has used a bit of poetic license when he describes some of the wild life (tigers and leopards). Although it may well be true.

We are now in sight of cap Saint - Jacques [Vũng Tàu], where a lighthouse was inaugurated on 15 August 1862. That lighthouse is located on the south summit of a chain of rocky and forested mountains, which has 139 metres of elevation and the advantage not being shrouded in clouds like neighbouring peaks. It stands 8 metres high. The lighthouse is a first class installation. Its light is fixed, and it is visible 30 miles out to sea. We will soon see the French flag floating over a fort which was built between the mountain and the sea. It's the military post of cap Saint-Jacques, which is connected to the lighthouse by a road of three kilometres, dug into the same side of the mountain. It is a very picturesque road and practicable on horseback. The fort is controlled by a naval officer who monitors the coming and going of ships in the harbour below.



Vietnamese Labourers building the Road to the Light House

The semaphore system of the lighthouse is used to communicate with ships as they enter or exit Coconut Tree Bay (Baie des Cocotiers). Dispatches and other communications are forwarded to the cap Saint-Jacques lighthouse by electric telegraph, and thence directly to Saigon.

Coconut Tree Bay is shaped like a horseshoe. In the background, standing out against a blue sky, are the graceful plumes of many coconut trees, from which it gets its name.

At one end of the bay stand the green wooded mountains of the cape and on the other the massif of **Gan-ray, flanked by a circular Annamite fort which we took and then abandoned**. It is in this bay, amidst a smiling landscape, that we may find the cap Saint- Jacques fortress, next to which lies the telegraph office. The signal mast at the corner of the fort is not just a semaphore installation. It is used to indicate to pilots, by means of signals of the local convention, which vessels are lying offshore, and to inform the captains of ships at anchor, as well as those making their way into the bay, when they are

sent a telegraph communication. This latter signal flag consists of a white ball with horn supported by a white and blue flame. The colour of the ball varies according to the number of vessels present in the harbour.

The bay of Gan-ray provides shelter from the monsoons, but it is used very little by shipping. Coconut Tree Bay is well sheltered from the northeast winds, and this is where the pilot boats are stationed. Chinese and Annamite junks and other commercial vessels also anchor here. The junk owners get their supply of wood in the nearby forests, and their water from the spring located between the cemetery and the foothills of the Gan-ray massif.

Chinese compradors and ship supplies merchants come and go between Coconut Tree Bay and Can-Gio. A floating beacon has been established at this location to indicate the route to ships at night time. Can-Gio village is situated 11 miles from cap Saint-Jacques. Here, ship-owners may procure poultry, pork, fish and fruit. It is also from here that fish are shipped to Saigon and Cholon by fast boat. As for the tiny village of Coconut Tree Bay, it consists of around 20 fishermen huts and doesn't have a proper market.

A number of Chinese have opened stores here and they sell some food for consumption by Europeans. In the "Valley of the Lilies," a large area of marshland situated next to the cape, we may find sacred Pink Lotus flowers (*Nelumbium speciosum*) and hidden amongst the dunes, covered with thick foliage, we can also see beautiful gardens with coconut palms which provide the lighthouse with the oil it consumes. The plain next to it sustains farms which grow corn and potatoes, natural meadows, and beyond that woods with abundant deer, wild boar, peacocks, tigers and leopards

A temperature cooled by the sea breeze and the fresh and crisp air of the forested mountains, along with the possibility of sea bathing on a fine sandy beach, make cap Saint-Jacques a sanitarium, a place of convalescence which is frequented in every season.

Account of a French soldier staying at Coconut Beach on Cape St. Jacques:

"...And this is why I was granted several days of R&R at Cape St. Jacques and that's also where I took my first-midnight swim!!!

What a pleasure it was to go out to the beach in the evening and to watch those large- shrimp fishermen, who, nearly naked in the water pulled in their nets where one could see the fluorescent eyes of these little creatures that we ate the next day.

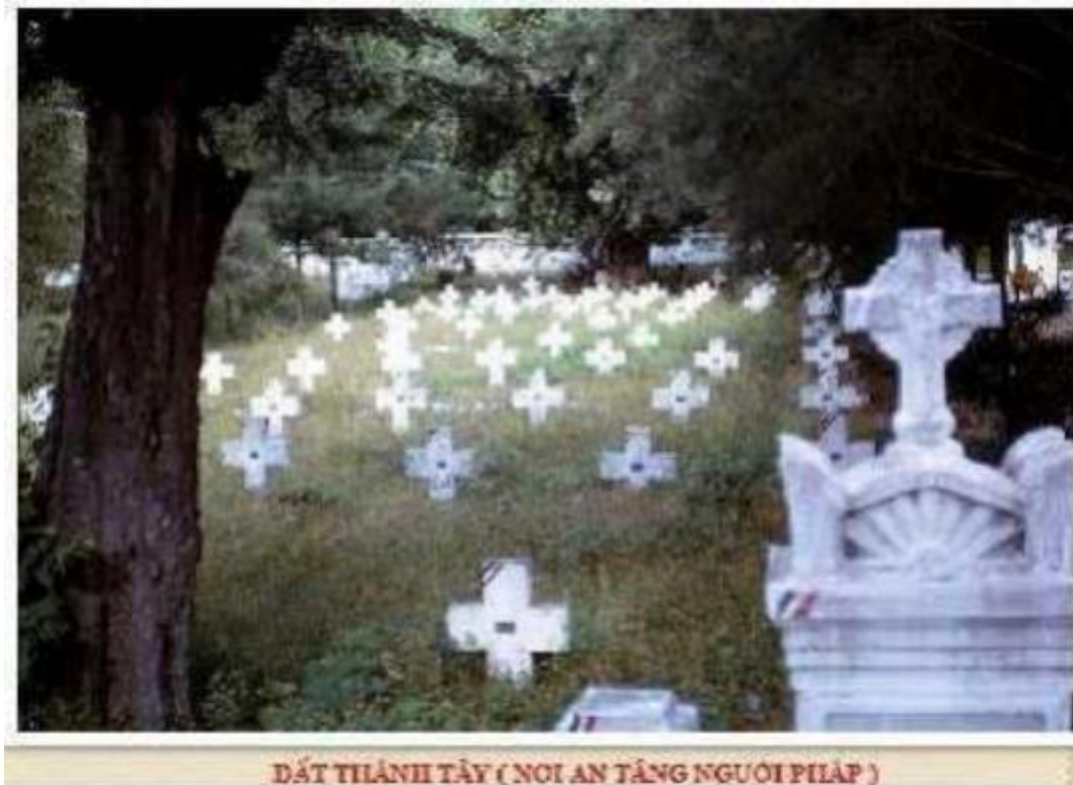
It couldn't last, but we knew that. It's not like what happened to those who came after us, and who were massacred in the same place where we were.

Jean Gourbil Decembre 1950.

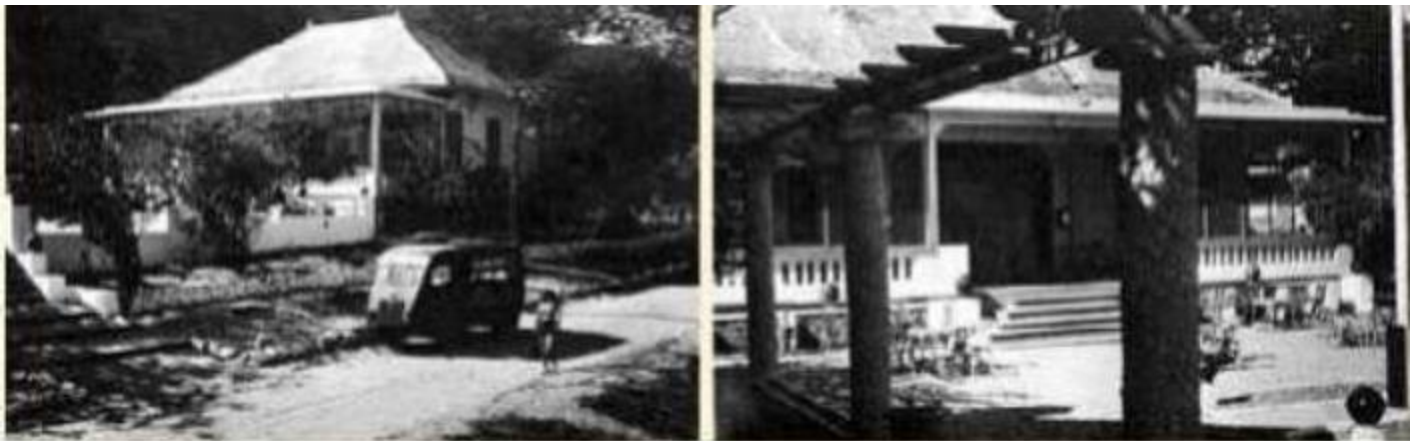
Indeed, on July 21st, 1952, an attack by the Vietminh resulted in 20 killed and 23 wounded in an R&R centre at Cape St. Jacques.

Viet Minh units remained active in various areas of the centre and the south of Vietnam. Terrorist attacks continued, none more brazen than one in late July on a group of French officers and their families at Cap St. Jacques, a resort town of palms and black sandy beaches at the mouth of the Saigon River.

During dinner, while white-clad waiters served the main course, a group of Viet Minh soldiers in stolen Expeditionary Corps uniforms rushed in and hurled grenades and emptied Sten guns into the crowded room. When French soldiers arrived on the scene, they found eight officers, six children, two women, and four Vietnamese servants dead, along with twenty-three wounded. Only a lieutenant who played dead and a small boy who hid behind a chair remained unhurt.



The French Cemetery in Vung Tau. It is no longer there, the bodies were returned to France. It was situated in Le Loi St. near where the dog track is now located.



The French R&R centre in Vung Tau 1950's

I have included these anecdotes to give you an idea of life in Vung Tau in those early colonial days. Below is an extract from *Street Without Joy*...Bernard Fall.

I remember well a quiet drive in a comfortable Station wagon from Saigon to Cape Saint- Jacques, in South Vietnam, with Major T, a comfortable looking, jovial southern Frenchman. It was a routine inspection trip along the newly rebuilt Saigon-Cape Saint-Jacques highway, now as peaceful as if the war had never happened. As we passed through the village of Ben- Dinh, Major T slowed down at the tiny cemetery, where a few Christian crosses stood discreetly apart from the other grave mounds. He got out, and I could see him trying to find his way among the matted weeds of this cemetery which obviously had been left unattended for many years. Finally, Major T found what he was looking for; he bent down and, with careful gestures began to clear the weeds away from the cross, a simple wooden cross whose whitewash seemed to have suffered from the weather.

It looked like the regular French G.I. issue to me, so that I thought that it might have been one of his men who had died here and whose tomb he had suddenly remembered.

But as I walked closer, I could read the inscription on the cross: "Christiane T, Morte pour la France, February 13, 1948," and I could see the tears now streaming freely over the face of Major T as I walked away.

Major T had been the commander of a convoy making its way from Saigon to Cape Saint- Jacques, and his wife, like many others who had been cooped up in Saigon for years and yearned again for the beaches and the sea breeze of the Cape, had begged him to take her along. "After all, it was only a short trip," said Major T to me, "and nothing at all had happened on the previous trips, and I couldn't see why I shouldn't let her come along." Indeed, the trip had remained uneventful until they were almost in sight of the Cape, near the fishing village of Ben-Dinh. It was there that the convoy was caught in a well laid ambush. Christiane T was hit by the first machine gun burst and was dying by the time her husband got her out of the jeep and carried her to the nearest ditch.

"And you know what she said? 'Don't worry about me, darling. I wasn't supposed to be with you anyway. Just do your job as if I weren't here.' Just like a woman who unexpectedly drops in on her husband in his office."

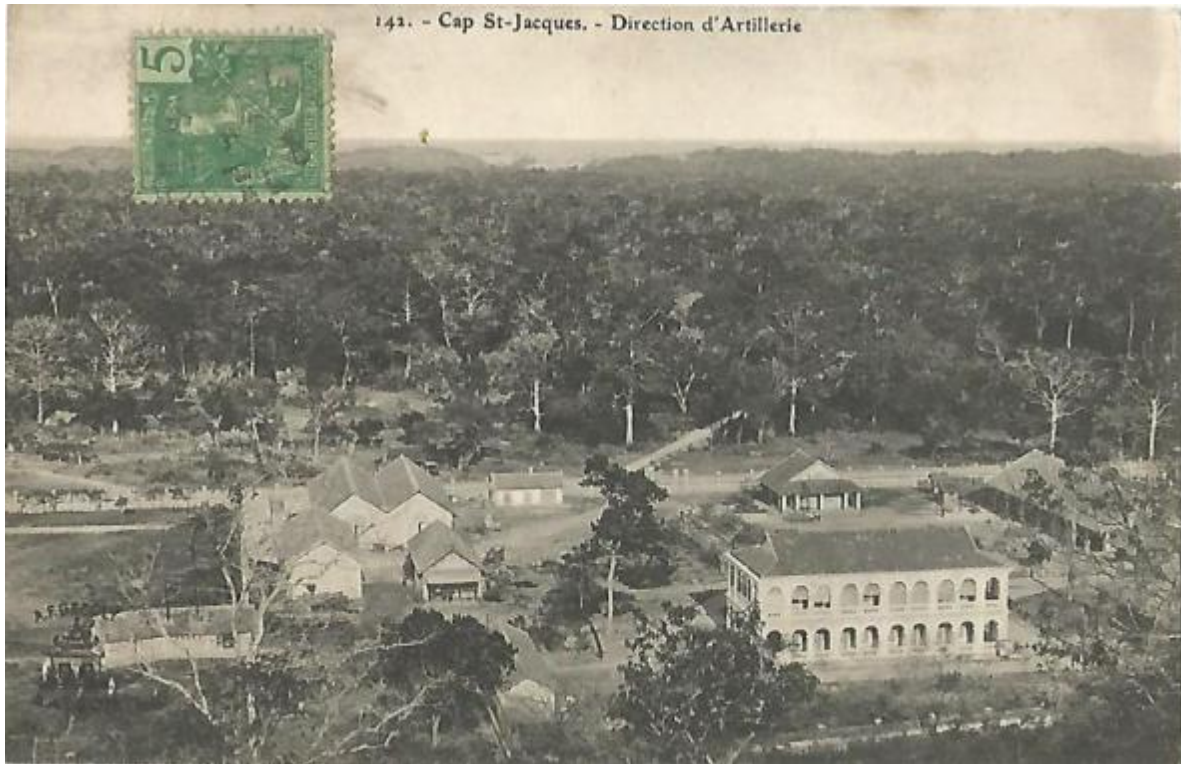
"And, of course, my men needed me. Well, we got out of the ambush thanks to an armoured car platoon from Cape Saint-Jacques which had heard the ruckus and came to our rescue. But it was too late for Christiane; by the time I got back to her, she was dead. We decided to bury her here at Ben-Dinh, near the Cape Saint-Jacques which she wanted so much to see. She never really liked the atmosphere of Saigon."

We had started to roll again in our shiny station wagon. Ben- Dinh lay absolutely peaceful under the hot midday sun, looking as improbable a place to get ambushed in as a Long Island suburb.

"This is probably the last time I'm going to see Christiane," said the major. "After twenty years in Indochina, I'm shipping out next Monday, for good."

He lit a Gauloise Bleue cigarette, sucked in the acrid smoke and never once looked back.

Ben Dinh was a small fishing Village on the old coast road to Vung Tau travelling from Saigon, probably only about 6 Kilometres out of Vung Tau in those times



The School of Artillery in Vung Tau located on Le Loi St.

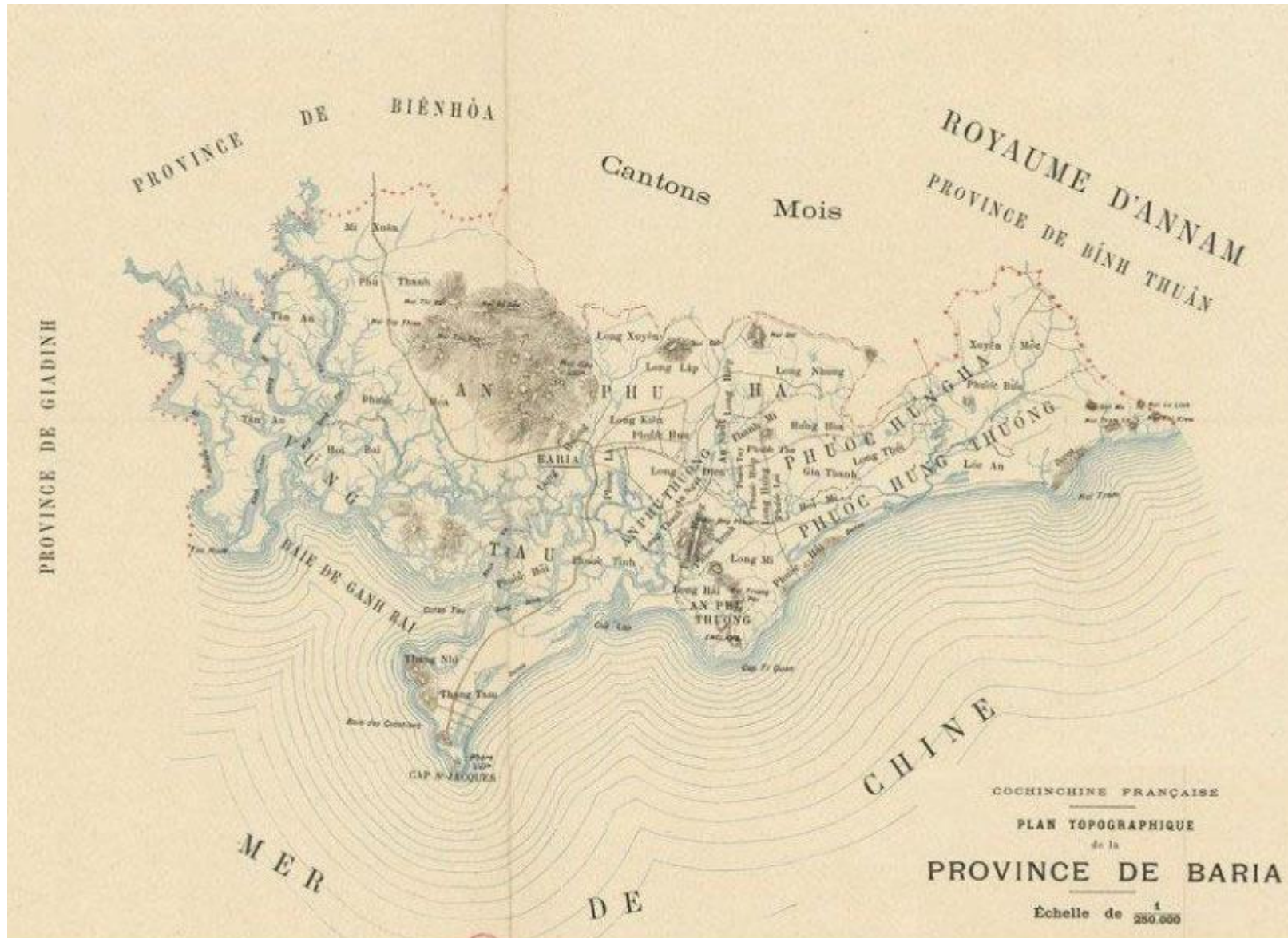


The Military Hospital Vung Tau also located on Le Loi St.

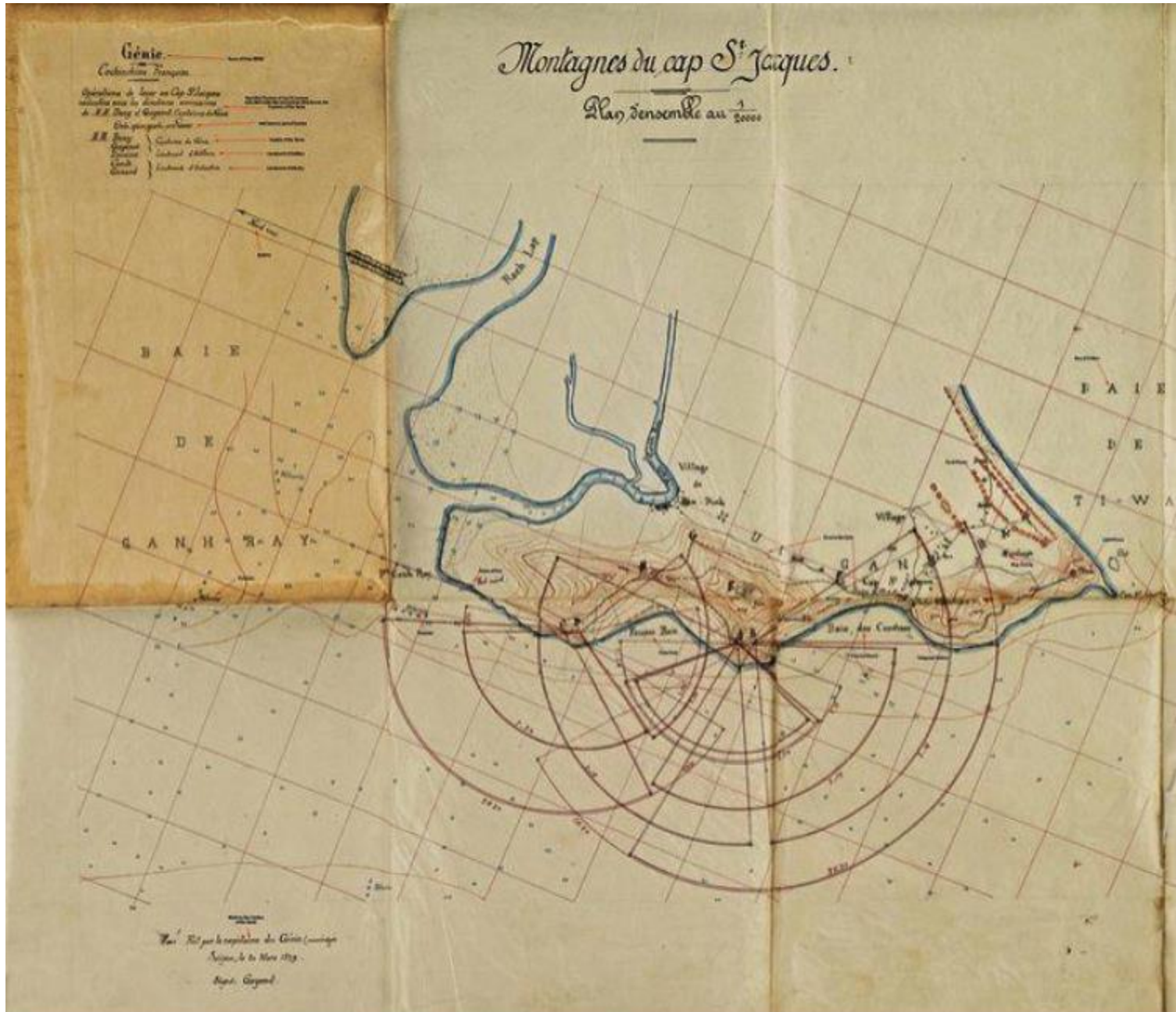
The following maps are to help you get an idea of the Vung Tau Peninsular. The first one gives you an idea of just how accurate the French Cartographers of the time were.



This is a very old French map of the Province then called Baria, now called Baria Vung Tau

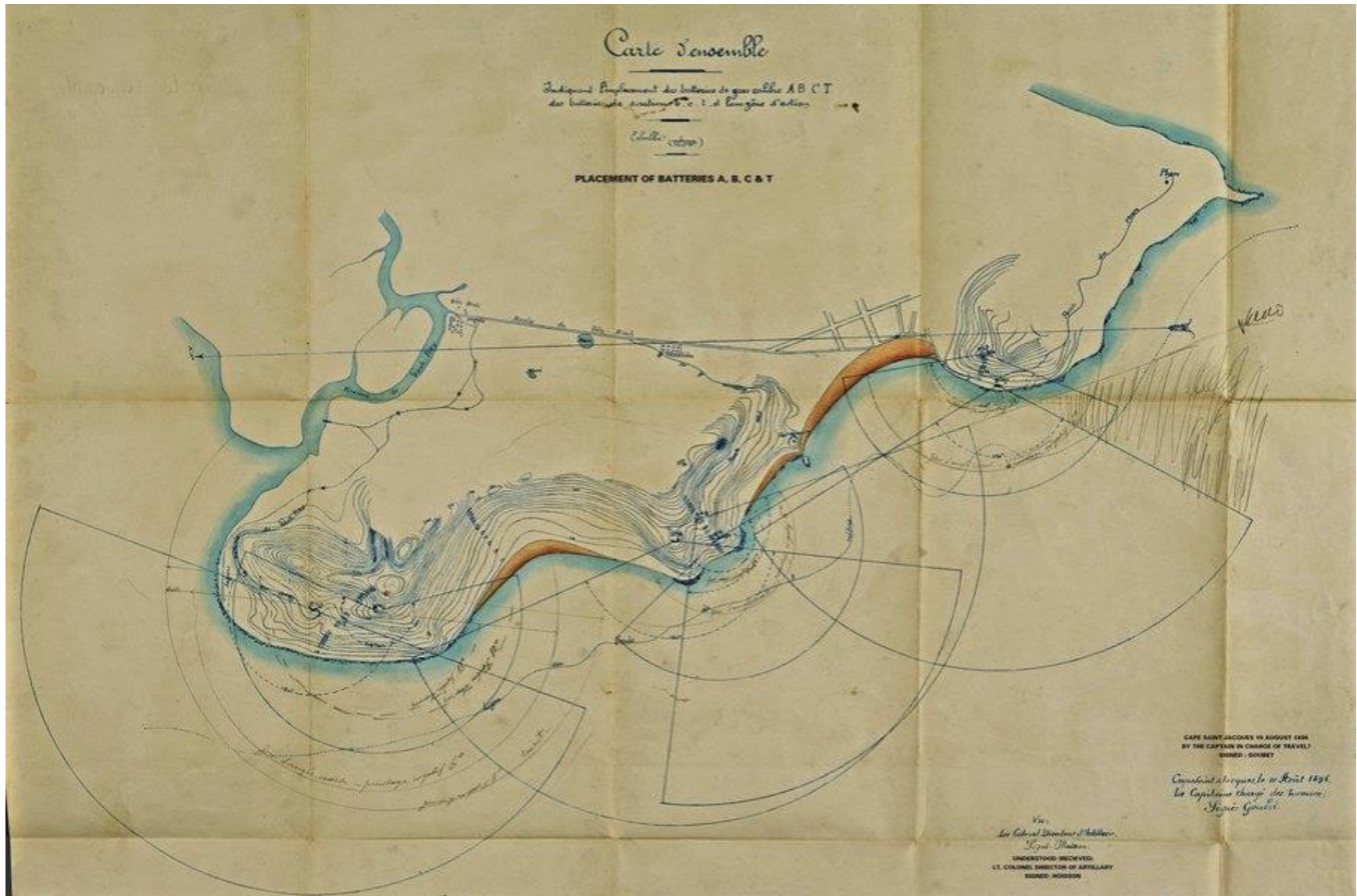


Another rare and interesting map showing the arcs of fire from a section of the Guns It is dated 1878 as far as I can tell

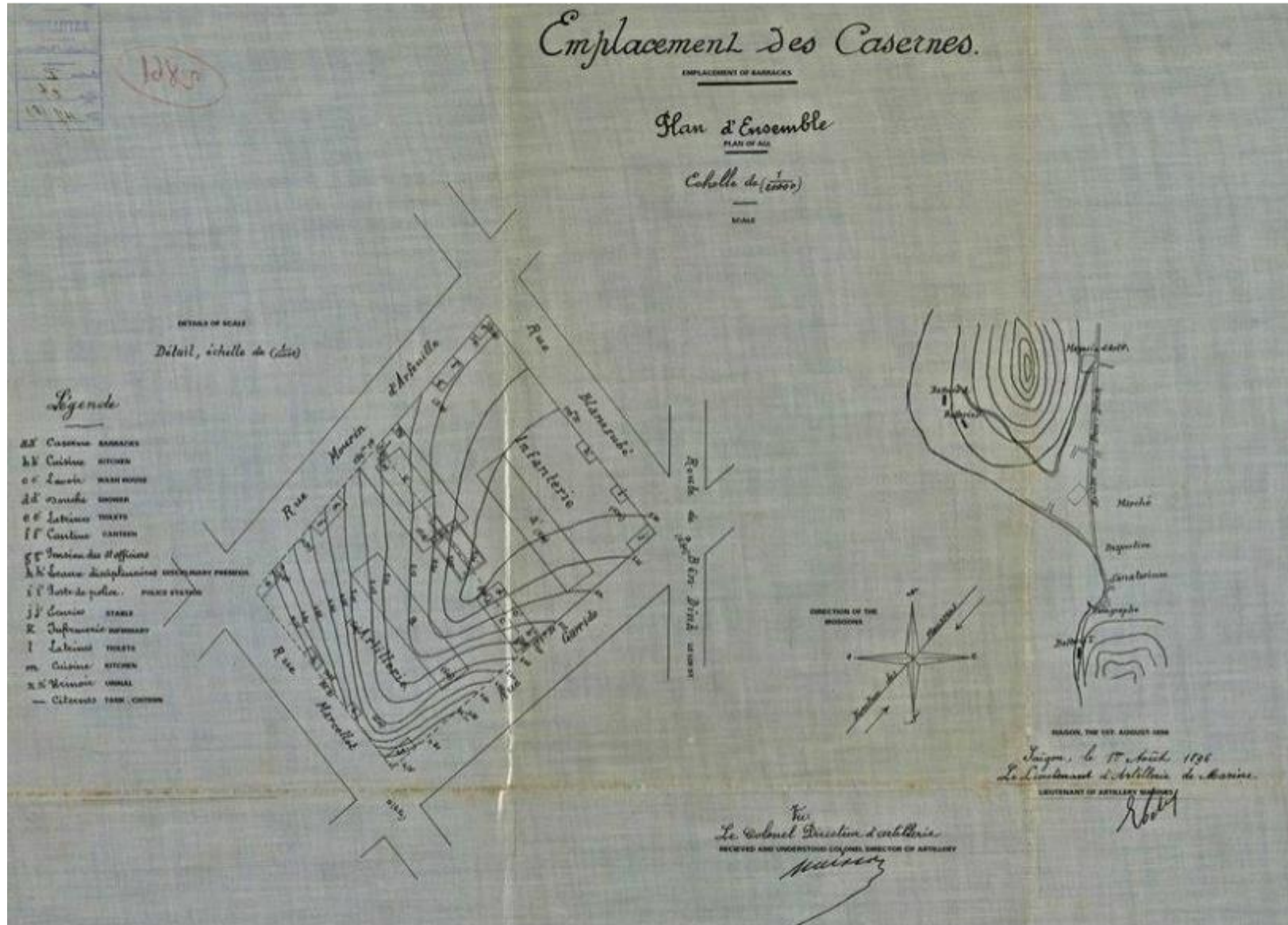


Placement of Batteries A,B, C & T on Vung Tau Pennisular

If you are reading this in electronic form you can Zoom in for detail



The design of the French Barracks in Le Loi street Vung Tau



This a very rare photograph an aerial shot taken in 1932, of the Light House. You can see the lighthouse, but what is unusual you can see the two forts on the left-hand side of the main building.

The Pier or Jetty



The two forts

The Lighthouse

Map of Vung Tau 1967.

The Map of Vung Tau below is dated circa 1967. It shows the layout of the Village at that period. The various point has been marked as a means of orientation. It will also show you how small the built up areas were at that time. Vung Tau was basically a small fishing village.



The built up areas are shown, shaded in this colour
Compared to 2016 there is a vast difference.



All the major roads are marked thus.....
.....of course, a lot has changed since those times



Map of Vung Tau 2016.

This is a 2016 map of Vung Tau. You can easily see the huge advances that have been made. From a small fishing Village to a fairly large metropolises in a comparatively small amount of time.



Near the actual port, you can see a large reclamation of land, which is now a thriving industrial park.

The Changing Face of Fortifications.

From the era of the Roman Empire to the close of the Middle Ages high crenellated walls, often surrounded by wet or dry moats, characterised most fortified towns and castles. Over time, construction materials and design features changed, accelerating with the appearance of gunpowder artillery in the fifteenth century. The new forts rapidly supplanted medieval castles, which nonetheless remained in use for more than a century albeit with significant modifications. As cannons increased in size, replacing the trebuchet and becoming more destructive, high crenellated curtains transformed into lower and thicker walls and bastions replaced towers. In many cases, the walls did not diminish in height, but they sank into deeper moats leaving less exposed above ground level. The trace of the forts became more geometric than the castle plan. Cannons became part of the new defences, which required thicker walls for mounting them as well as protection from enemy artillery.

Designers added outer works to counteract the increased range of the newer artillery. To increase the effectiveness of the defender's weapons while limiting the enemy's artillery, engineers created large sloping areas around the position and cleared it of all obstructions. This was the glacis. An early development was the creation of a covered way above the counterscarp wall of the ditch or moat with a parapet from which the glacis began its slope. Tenailles, ravelins, and other features occupied positions in front of a fort's walls as additional protection. Fortifications built between the sixteenth to the early nineteenth century were not greatly different. For centuries, sieges played a significant role in most campaigns. Monarchs spent a considerable amount of their nation's resources on building fortresses to protect their domains and hold conquered lands.

The Napoleonic Wars brought a change in strategy that lessened the importance of fortifications, as the main goal now was to crush and utterly defeat the enemy's army in battle, not by siege. This, however, did not stop the construction of new works. Barrier forts were built to prevent an invading army from making deep inroads beyond the frontier before engaging in battle. The range and destructive power of artillery greatly increased by the mid-nineteenth century as explosive shells and rifled cannons were developed. Initially, bastions covered the curtain walls (the walls between bastions) of a fort or fortress and served as strongpoints. Caponiers (defensive positions built into the moat to cover the scarp and moat) replaced bastions in some forts, especially those polygonal in shape.

This system of defences, first designed by the eighteenth-century French general Marc René de Montalembert, became predominant in fortifications from England to Austria by 1860. Ironically, the French did not adopt them until after 1871, preferring to keep the bastions. The Germanic nations adopted a tenaille trace (system) as early as the eighteenth century. This too was proposed by Montalembert and remained popular until about 1850. The feature known as a tenaille was a low work situated in the moat to mask the curtain walls between bastions.

The tenaille system consisted of a saw tooth or zigzag trace with salients that usually alternated in size and placed the covered way and its rampart in a position to enfilade an assaulting force. Ravelins and crownworks were similar but larger features.

Unfortunately, these features alone were not capable of resisting new developments in artillery. 2 Shortly before 1860, artillery underwent major changes. Heavy smoothbore cannons rated as 64-pounders³ were able to damage masonry forts at short range. At the time of the American Civil War, heavier 100-pounders and larger smoothbores, including 11in and 15in guns firing rounds from 100 to 300 pounds and the Rodman 20in gun firing a 1,000-pound round made their appearance. 4 The Parrott-rifled 100, 200, and 300-pounders and breech-loaders, including the Armstrong 70-pounders, were developed.

In many forts like those of the American Third System, which included several with a pentagonal trace, gun embrasures in walls were replaced or supplemented with en barbette (over the walls) positions to eliminate the weaknesses created by crenellations. The exploding shells of the new heavy 10in and 13in seacoast mortars that fired shells of 85 to over 200 pounds could easily clear the ramparts of their defenders. Many of the nineteenth-century forts included gun casemates that gave the new forts two or more tiers of guns, including those on the ramparts. Although walls of the casemates protected the gun crews from exploding mortar shells, their exposed surfaces and embrasures proved vulnerable to the new rifled artillery.

All these weapons spelt doom for the forts developed in the first half of the nineteenth century, the Victorian era iron sea forts built in England in the 1860s. The American Civil War demonstrated that earthen forts with bombproofs were better suited to resist the new artillery, but these earthen forts were hardly permanent structures. In the early 1870s, the search for better designs in fortifications began in order to match the lethal new artillery. In the 1860s, the polygonal fort had been modified with earth-covered ramparts, the masonry structure of which was mostly below ground. By the late 1880s, as the leading European nations built new forts, the high-explosive shell appeared creating, according to the French, the 'Torpedo Shell Crisis', a term referring to the shape of the projectile. This type of shell was able to penetrate a wall before exploding and leaving a massive crater. By the 1890s, the existing forts required major modifications as the Germans created a newer type of fortification.

The period from the 1890's is what we will be looking at in this Document..... Ern Marshall

The beginning

It is recorded that February 10, 1859, marks the first use of cannons by Nguyen's army, when they fired at French battleships from the fortress of PhướcThắng, located 100m from Vung Tau's Front Beach.

This marked an important period in Vietnam's war against French invaders in South Vietnam (then called Cochinchina).

The battle lasting some 40 years was not successful however and the French demolished the fort in 1898 rebuilding the new defence forts along with a luxury 3 story villa which came to be known as "The White Palace" and can still be seen today.

The old fortress on Nui Lon is one of three defense bases built by the French Colonists at the end of 19th century, it was the strongest and the most advanced in Indochina at the time and designed to secure the sea gateway to the South Eastern region and to safeguard Vung Tau, a resort center for the French. From 1885 to 1905 the French deported thousands of revolutionary fighters to Big Mountain and Small Mountain (Vung Tau) in order to build the defence system, they placed 23 artillery pieces with calibres from 140 -300mm, in strategic locations throughout the area.

Work started in 1885 to build a fortress 100m above sea level covering an area of approximately 1ha on Big Mountain taking 15 years to complete. Six heavy guns, built during 1872-1876 by the French, are positioned in a bow line 17.5m apart mounted on 360 rotating bases pointing out to the sea toward Can Gio, now HCMC.

"The call of national resistance" is the handwritten draft of President Ho Chi Minh's appeal to the whole nation for the resistance war written at the end of 1946. It is being kept at the Viet Nam National Museum of History in Ha Noi. The draft, that was written on only two separate pages, has not only great historical meaning but also high values in Vietnamese literature. "The call of national resistance" asserts the Vietnamese patriotism and willpower. "This is the basic starting point for all Vietnamese victories". Using stolen/reclaimed weapons and ordnance, the resistance reshaped the course of history, ousting the French and reclaiming their land.

There is a major tunnel system, built by the French, inside small mountain complete with its own rail system transforming the fortress into one similar to "Navarone".

The Ancient Canon Bastion was constructed by the French colonialism more than a century ago, connecting Lon mountain and Nho mountain of Vung Tau city, creating a safe corridor to the Southeast region border gate.

The Ancient Cannon Battlefield was divided into three areas:

- Da bridge Cannon Battlefield,
- Lon mountain Cannon Battlefield
- Tao Phung Cannon Battlefield.

Eleven guns on Small Mountain are divided into three groups which are about 300 meters apart. The first group is located on the top of Nghinh Phong Cape at 136m above sea level and the second includes five guns is located near a solid underground hideout. The final group includes three guns that are linked together with a communications trench and an underground hideout.

A rare photo of the Guns lined up on the Front Beach, ready to fire a Salute for some unknown dignitary or maybe a ship.



This is an extremely uncommon photo of the French unloading the Barrel of a cannon before being placed in one of the Forts in Vung Tau



Construction, abbreviations and observations.

Let's talk about the construction of Forts and Gun emplacements and some explanation of some technical words that do not translate well so that it may be just a bit easier for you to understand what we are actually trying to accomplish. Remember we are only talking about the Guns and Forts of Vung Tau.

Unfortunately there is not much left to go on now, but instead, I have looked at the forts built on the Verdun. It seems that most of the forts of the era were constructed along the same lines by the French in most of her colonies.

So I have taken the liberty of using some of these images from there to demonstrate the principles used in construction.

Here is an image of men constructing the actual Gun emplacements that were used in Vung Tau.



Not an easy task considering that most of the rock on the peninsula is granite. Also take note that the Vietnamese are working under French supervision.

Building some of the Gun Platforms

In the course of my research, I have been studying Google Maps and Google Earth. They have helped me a lot and occasionally with a bit of patience and thought, you can come up with some reasonable theories using maps from the dry and the wet seasons

The one below is shown as a typical example. Remember these are the 300mm Mortar positions, they fire in an up and over arc pattern while they are below ground level and reasonably protected, they still function as designed.



To build the emplacements would have been a difficult job, but what they appear to have done here is to excavate two sections of the slope.



From here it would be comparatively easy to build your foundations and complete all the building, ammunition storage, protection and anything else that needed doing and then simply backfill around what you have built. Over time the ground has settled leaving these depressions

Caponier. A caponier is a type of fortification structure. The word originates from the French word caponnière (house). The fire coming from the feature (e.g. muskets machine-guns, case-shot etc.) sweeps along the bottom of the attendant ditch the passageway was equipped with musket ports and cannon ports that fired along the ditch between the walls of a fortress and a ravelin outside the wall.

Originally the term referred to a covered passageway that traversed the ditch outworks, with the bastion-trace allowing for the defence of the ditch by fire from the main bastioned fortifications, the caponier served only as a covered means of access to the exposure and so prevents the enemy from establishing itself there. In some types of constricts the movement of storming infantrymen to an enfilade alignment of greatest curtain wall and inflict devastating damage on any attempt to storm the wall. Thus the passage however as fire from this point could sweep the ditch between the ravelin and the curtain wall and inflict devastating damage on any attempt to storm the wall.

While fortifications were evolving to the simpler polygonal style, the term was used to describe the blockhouses set in the corners of the ditch that provide the same function in that style of the fort. It usually takes the form of a low blockhouse, often partly sunk into the floor of the ditch, projecting outward into the ditch with access from the main fortress via a passage through the curtain wall, or as fortresses became largely underground, via a tunnel from within the fort. The roof is vulnerable to plunging fire and is thus usually exceedingly thick and curved to deflect falling shells, or covered with a thick layer of earth. The caponier is usually equipped with a firing step and rifle ports to allow troops to fire along the ditch, and often has provision for the small cannon to sweep the ditch as well. To clear the smoke and fumes from the firing the roof of the caponier is often provided with ventilation ports. To avoid fire from one caponier bearing on the next, caponiers are usually set at alternate corners of the fort, so that they fire towards a blank wall at the opposite end of the ditch, giving full coverage of the ditch without subjecting the next caponier to fire. The length of the straight sections of the ditch is chosen so that it can be covered by fire from a single caponier. Caponiers are often wedge-shaped so that they can fire down both angles of the ditch.

Casemate.

A casemate, sometimes erroneously rendered casement, is a fortified gun emplacement or armoured structure from which guns are fired. Originally, the term referred to a vaulted chamber in a fortress. In armoured fighting vehicles that do not have a turret for the main gun, the structure that accommodates the gun is termed the casemate. Conjugateur, it is mentioned several times in the accompanying documents. I have had trouble translating this phrase. The closest I seem to have come is "A tunnel joining two posts", I think that is fairly accurate as represented here in this content.

Vietnamese. There are referrals to Nui Nho, which is Vietnamese for Small Mountain. You will read about Nui Lon, which is Vietnamese for Big Mountain.

Phare, in French means Lighthouse in English



While we are talking about Military terms another one that you will encounter is PDT this is a French term which means, Command Post.

The word **Nevers** pops up now and again. This refers to a foundry in France where they sent the cast iron guns to be fitted with a breech loading system. The guns were sleeved with steel so not only could they be milled for the breech but take the extra pressure from the newer rounds.



You can see above the Model (Calibre) number and the year it was made ...24 % Modle 1870. 24% translates to 240mm.

Next, you can see No 4 15567 which I think is the number used after it was refurbished at Nevers in 1875.

You can also see the actual sleeve and the milling done to receive the new breech. Plus you can see the new rifling if you look down the barrel.

The main categories of artillery.

From the smaller to the largest one calibres, from the short to the long tubes, from fixed coastal positions or a fortress to the self-motorized weapons, from horse-driven to railway mountings, each one deploying a large variety of guns. The artillery of 1914- 1918 is declined, for each of the belligerents, in several categories, Some technical vocabulary can be needed

Before reviewing the weapons of that period. One will generally class the guns into about 3 main types :

Guns...(in French : ' Canon ') - Weapons generally used in direct sight shooting (flat trajectory) indirect fire only.

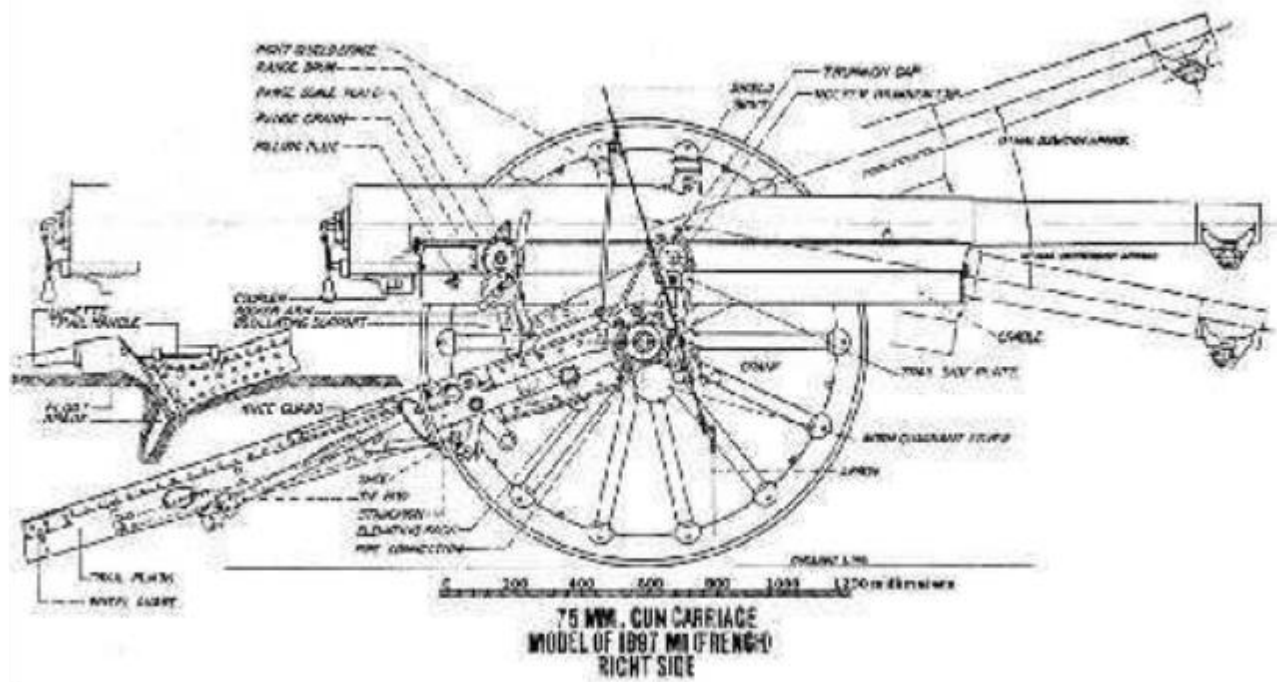
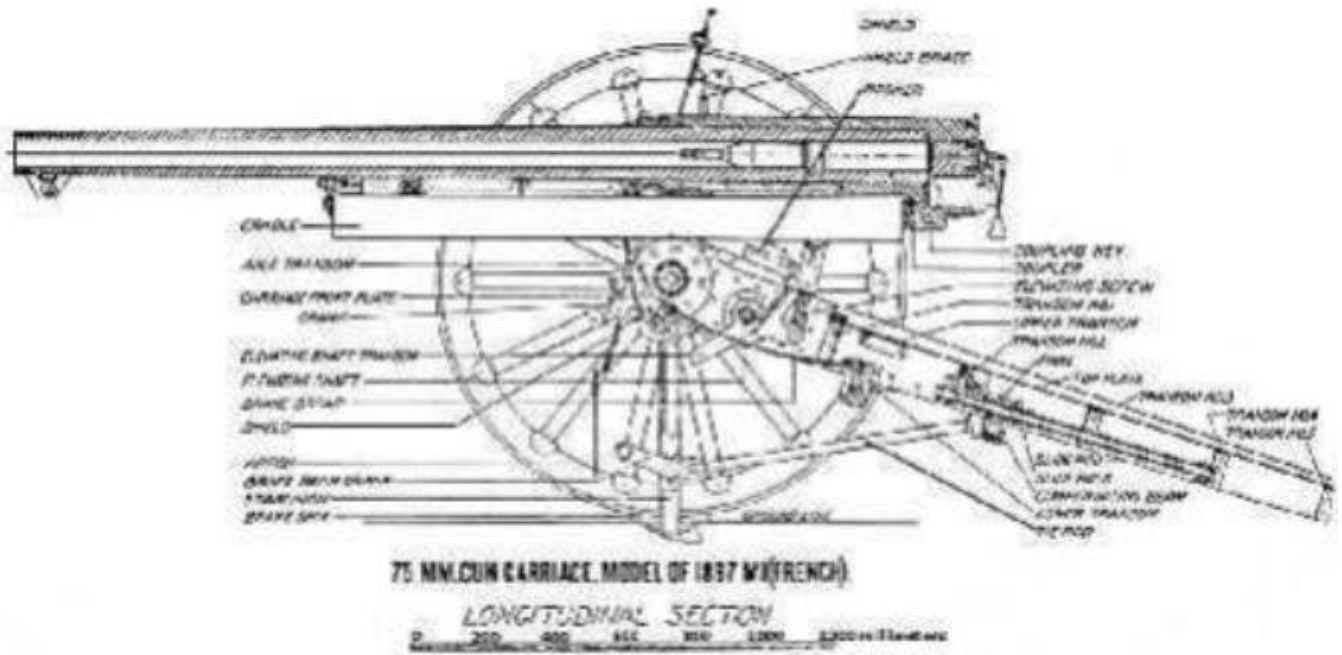
Howitzers... (in French : 'Obusier') - Weapons generally used for the indirect shooting (curved trajectory).

.
Mortars.....(in French : ' Mortier ') – Ancient name of the heavy guns used for the indirect fire only.

:

.

The 75 mm. Here I will use the 75mm Gun as an example of how they were used in Vung Tau. The 75 mm (French) was originally designed as a field gun, but it could, and was used as a Coastal defence gun



This was fairly easily accomplished by simply removing the Gun Carriage, shown below.

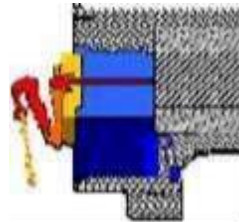
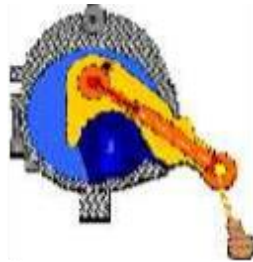


This a fine example of a 75mm gun being placed in a coastal defensive position.

The Breech.

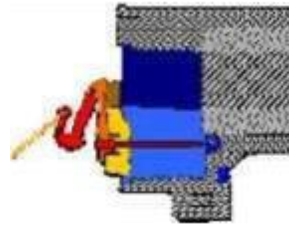
:

The 75 mm gun, with its eccentric mechanism, was particularly well designed a firm and sealed way the bottom of the gun for the shooting operation. The device of the gun, called the breech. The handling of this device was to be fast and had to lock in The ammunition was charged, and the empty cartridge ejected by the back mechanism of the 75 mm gun, with its eccentric mechanism, was particularly well designed.



Closed Breech ready for the firing cord

The the bottom primer cap of the shell started by simple traction on a cord. breech firing device functioned by the percussion of a needle through the bottom primer cap of the shell started by simple traction on a cord.the on



A breech-loading gun is a firearm in which the cartridge or shell is inserted or loaded into a chamber integral to the rear portion of a barrel. Modern mass production firearms are breech-loading (though mortars are generally muzzle-loaded). Early firearms, on the other hand, were almost entirely muzzle-loading. The main advantage of breech-loading is a reduction in reloading time— it is much quicker to load the projectile and the charge into the breech of a gun or canon than to try to force them down a long tube, especially when the tube has spiral ridges from rifling. In field artillery, breech loading allows the crew to reload the gun without exposing themselves to enemy fire or repositioning the piece (as was required for muzzle-loaded guns) and allows turrets and emplacements to be smaller (since breech-loaded guns do not need to be retracted for loading).

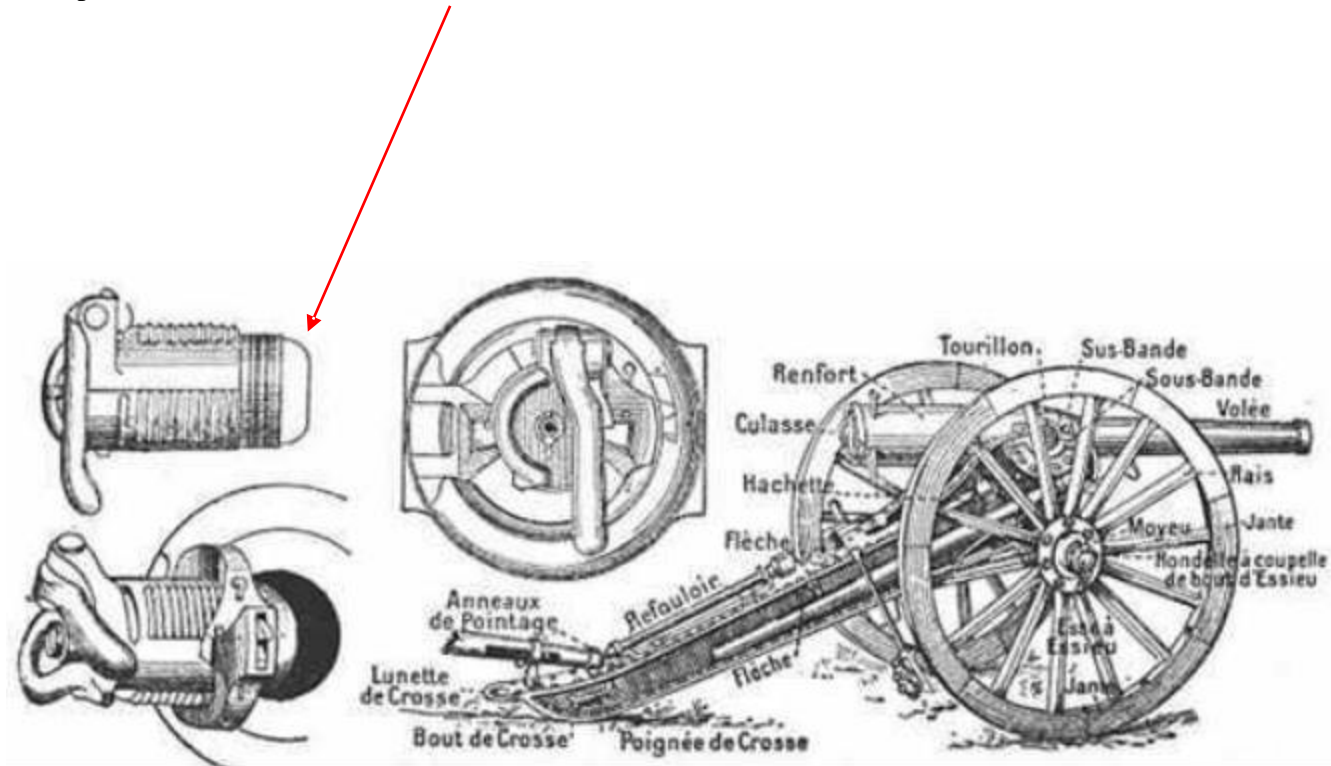
Système de Bange.

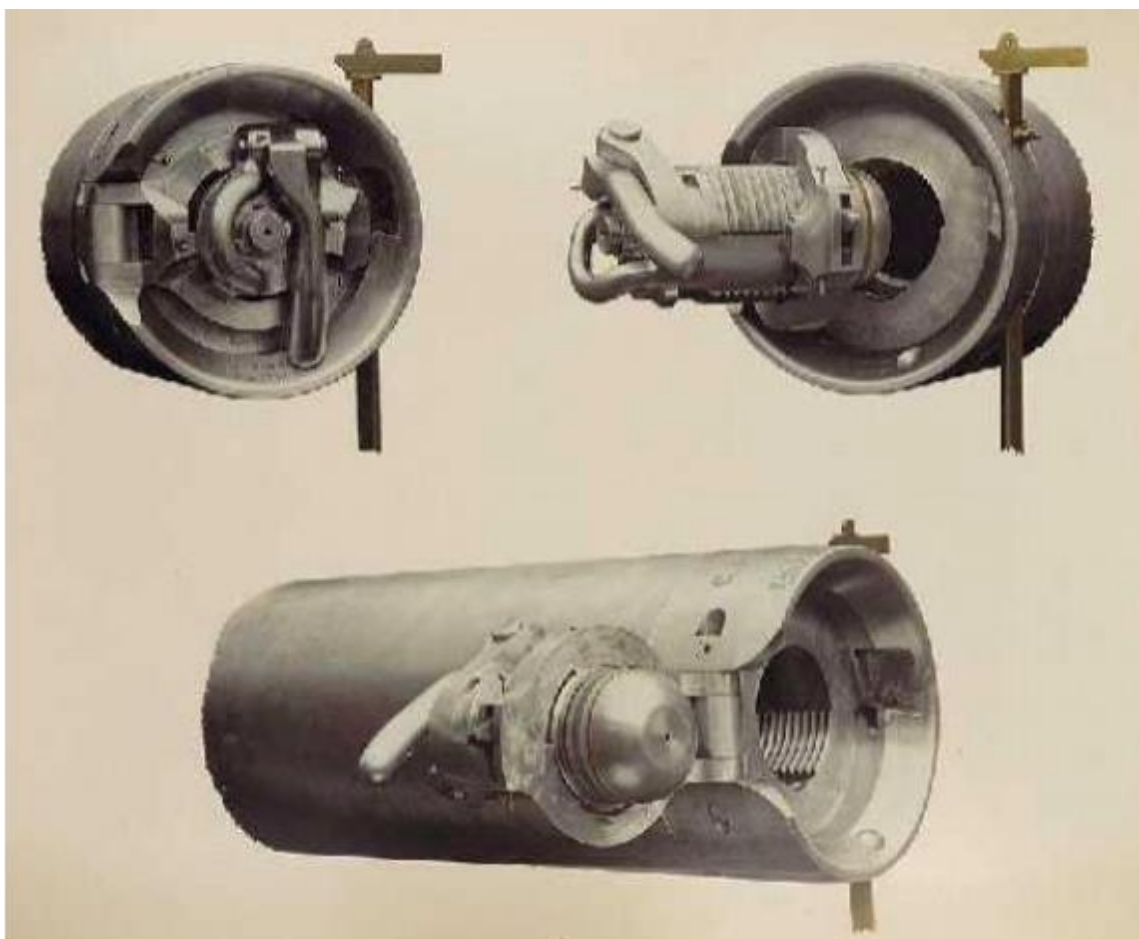
You will see this term often used on these pages.

Charles Ragon de Bange (1833–1914), often simply called de Bange, was a Polytechnician and a French artillery colonel of the 19th century. He invented the first effective obturator system for breech-loading artillery. Its basic principle of functioning is still widely in use to this day. He also designed a system of field guns of various calibres which served the French Army well into World War 1.

Many attempts had been made at developing breech-loading cannons but had only partial success sealing of the breech. When fired, hot gases and burning gunpowder could escape, losing power and potentially burning the operating crew. Rifles, with smaller loads and thus less stress, were able to use rubber in O-rings as on the Chassepot rifle. The same principle of breech sealing applied on cannons was not as easy to develop. Several materials were able to hold the pressure and heat of cannon fire but did not expand like rubber, thereby failing to provide a tight seal.

However, in 1872, de Bange successfully designed the *De Bange system*, a new type of obturator for cannons. His system used a breech block made of three parts; an interrupted screw locking mechanism at the rear, a doughnut-shaped grease-impregnated asbestos pad that sealed the breech, and a rounded movable "nose cone" at the front. When the gun fired, the nose was driven forward, compressing the asbestos pad and squeezing it so it expanded outward to seal the breech. The French referred to the shape of the breech's nose as "mushroom-like", as it resembled the cap of a mushroom....see. **obturator**





These pictures above shows you how the sleeving was accomplished, after the boring of the cast iron canon. The Barrel would be sleeved and then the breech firing system added. The action was controlled by a handle, normally mounted vertically on the right side of the breech. When lifted, the handle operated a cam that forced the breech to rotate counter-clockwise, unlocking the interrupted thread. The entire breech was then pulled rearward with the same handle, sliding on a ring-shaped holder. The breech holder was hinged on one side, normally the left, so when the breech block was slid all the way to the rear it could be rotated out of the way for loading.

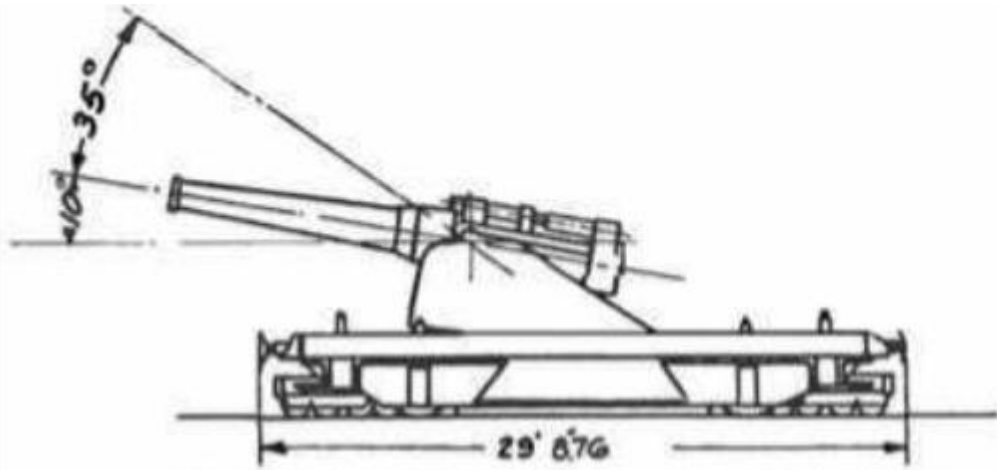
The de Bange system was widely adopted, including by the United States Navy and the British Royal Navy. The technique developed by de Bange is still in use today. The only major advance on the original de Bange system was the introduction of the stepped screw in the Welin breech block of 1889, which greatly increased the load-bearing surface of the breech, allowing them to be made shorter, simpler, more secure and faster to operate. Other block mechanisms are also used, but the de Bange obturator remains widespread even on these. The 75mm gun was sending its shells up to 6860 m, at the rate of a hit every 6 seconds. The French Armies had nearly 4800 specimens of this weapon in 1914. (As an information, in 1918 more than 17300 guns of 75mm were in service...) The contemporary guns had adopted the majority of the devices present on this one, with some modifications. In particular, certain models of recoiling systems were rather of hydro-mechanical type (oil + spring), and the breech closing mechanisms of the 'sliding breechblock' type (Germany), or of 'interrupted screw' (England and France).

Eccentric screw breech system of the French 75 mm field gun, closed Interrupted screw breech system of the French 155 mm Schneider Howitzer, open



The 240 mm Gun

The drawing below shows the 240 mm Gun that can be mounted on a rail track. It shows the Narrow and Standard gauge track. The Guns mounted in the Forts were mounted on a different system, called a Circular chassis



Total Weight	105,770#	Traverse on Curved Track	
Weight Per Foot of Length		Weight of Projectile	352#
" Over Bumpers	3,560#	" Charge	53.5#
" Over Foundation	2,710#	Initial Velocity	612 Ft. Per. Sec.
Weight of the Gun	39,200#	Range Maximum	17,500 Yds.
Elevation	+ 10° to + 35°		

240-MM. GUN, MODEL OF 1903, SHOWING STANDARD AND NARROW GAUGE TRUCKS.



Canon 240 model 1884-1903
on lookout model 6 1903
Côtes album Photos



Detail of the head of a barrel of 240
Canon system

Turrets

Rotating turrets - as distinct from unmanned remotely-controlled weapons mounts - allow the weapon complete with elevating, targeting mechanism, and crew as a unit. Weapons mounts meeting all of these conditions *but* free rotation are called barbettes.

The Mougin turret is a land-based revolving gun turret that housed some of the heaviest armament in French fortifications of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. While not reliably resistant to the explosive shells of opposing artillery, Mougin turrets remained active through 1940's.



The Mougin turret was named after its designer, Commandant Mougin, who developed the first turret in 1875. The turret consists of two 155mm guns under a bowl-shaped armour shield, sunk into the ground and surrounded by a thick concrete apron that protected the multi-level traverse and loading facilities below. The turret is distinguished from naval turrets by the absence of protruding barrels. Two oval ports show just the muzzles of the guns. By contrast with naval practice, in which guns pivot in elevation on trunnions near their breeches, their muzzles and barrels protruding and moving in an arc, the Mougin turret's guns pivot at their muzzles, the barrel, gun carriage and breech ends rising and falling within the turret. This reduces the chances of enemy fire hitting the guns, a small risk on a moving ship, but significant for a fixed fortification. When the turret was under fire it moved the gun apertures away from the incoming fire, returning fire while rotating without pausing, when contact was made on the correct target azimuth.

Another term used is Telemetrics

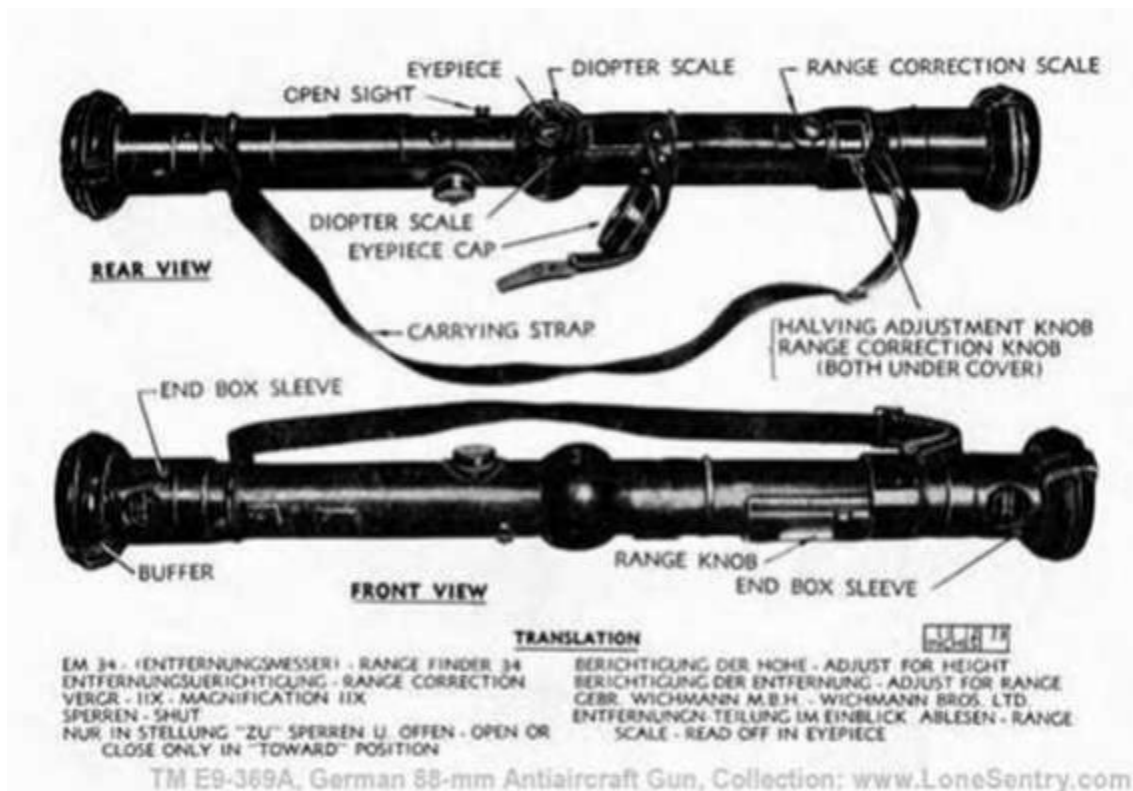
Telemetry is the automatic measurement and wireless transmission of data from remote sources. In general, telemetry works in the following way: Sensors at the source measure either electrical data (such as voltage or current) or physical data (such as temperature or pressure). These measurements are converted to specific electrical voltages.

A multiplexer combines the voltages, along with timing data, into a single data stream for transmission to a remote receiver. Upon reception, the data stream is separated into its original components and the data is displayed and processed according to user specifications.

Now this should bring you up to date on the different type of Guns that you will be seeing

Also, you see mention of a **Rangefinder H Modle (Model) 34** This is also a French machine and as the name implies it was used to find the range of targets in the bay.

The Model below is a German version of the same type. I have not been able to find an image of the Exact French type.



I have used this image for this kind of weapon as an example only

The Working Day

Now we move onto the Conditions that the men worked and sometimes lived in.



Some of the walls are over one meter thick.



No air-conditioning in those days





Room

You would have to be a good cook trying to keep the men happy working in these conditions, the kitchen shown below.



The Oven (main Barracks)

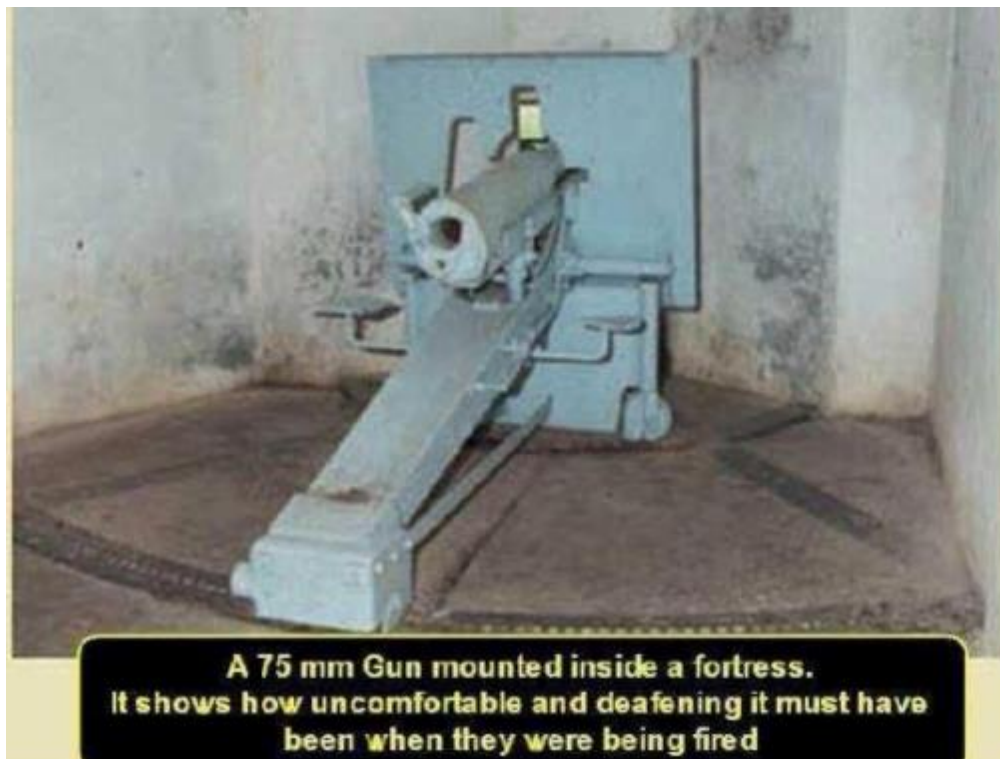


The Latrine (main Barracks)



latrines

The working conditions were not much better than the living conditions. Very small area to work in and it must have been stifling hot, the noise when firing would have been horrific



Some of the guns were fed from beneath the actual gun



Mechanism of the rotating turret



Mechanism of the rotating turret

Not much room to work in down here

The twin 75mm Schneider turret is an example of the type used at the Rach-Cat Fortress at the entrance to the Saigon River.



Schneider Turret for twin 75mm canon



Rotary turret guns of 75 mm

The one on the right seems to have had a bit of unwanted attention

A couple of snaps of the men who used to work in these places on a day to day basis.



Front Beach

IMG 1-610 - 1917 / 51- + Cie Jaubert Jaubert Côté - Capé St Jacques ???; THE MAOUR John Raymond DROUTHAN - [Drouthan Raymond]



IMG 1-611 - 1953-1954 - Cap Saint Jacques Pierre KEROUANTON, NOISIARD Francis RIEU, COTTON Michel, THE QUEN, DUVERGE, Vietnamese and Hurricane BARRY dog - [Marcel Fréchet]



Here is a fine example of how we lose the locations of some of the emplacements. This is a Searchlight emplacement “Grand Eperon C” That has been converted into a private residence

There are dozens and dozens of French-era buildings still left in Vung Tau today; trading houses, warehouses, residences, administration buildings, military facilities and both military and civil infrastructure. Of course, back in that period, Vung Tau was labelled with French names.

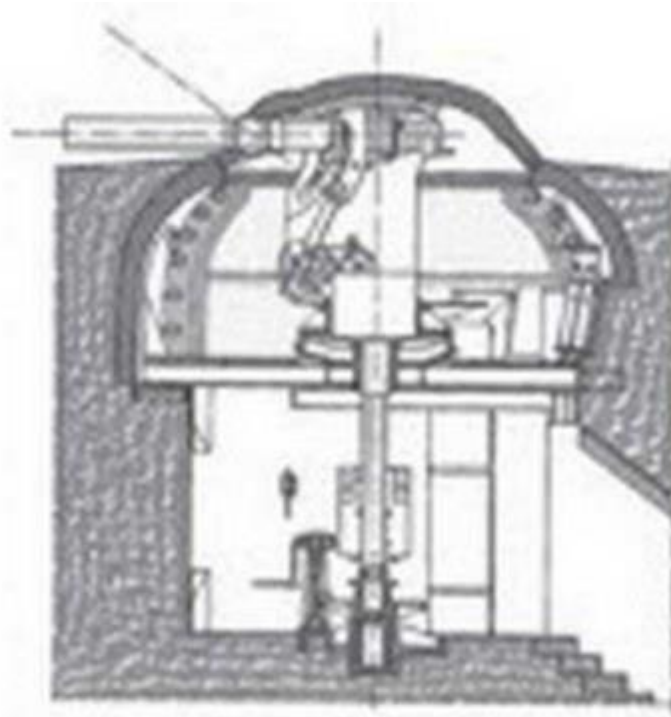
French

Cap Saint Jacques
Grande Montagne also Grande Massif
Petite Montagne
Baie des Cocotiers
La Plage de Derriere
Le Inspectorate
Villa Blanche /Villa Anna
Le Tribunal

English

Vung Tau
Big Mountain
Small Mountain
Coconut Bay / Front Beach
Bai Sau /Back Beach
Police Station (still here today)
Bach Dinh / White Palace (still here today)
The Court House (still here today)

Armoured Turret



Armored Turret PT03 for
100-mm gun

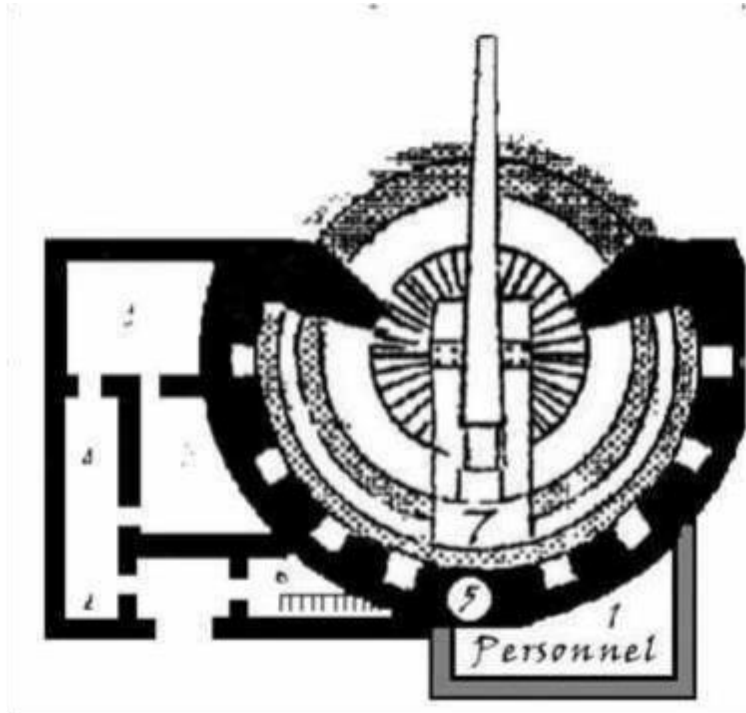
This is the best representation that I have found depicting how the Gun emplacements were set up. In all the gun emplacements that I have visited, this seems to be the best example for the explanation of how they were built.



Here I am using the newly discovered section of the Lazaretto Battery as an example.
Plan of a bunker of the Battery

Plan of a bunker of the Battery.

This is a General plan, not necessarily used in these forts. But it will give you an idea of how they were constructed



In room 1: the housing of the personnel.

In Room 2; and Room 3: the powder room which could contain 10 tons of powder where were stored the cartridges (Room 3), and the arsenal where the shells (Room 2) were stored.

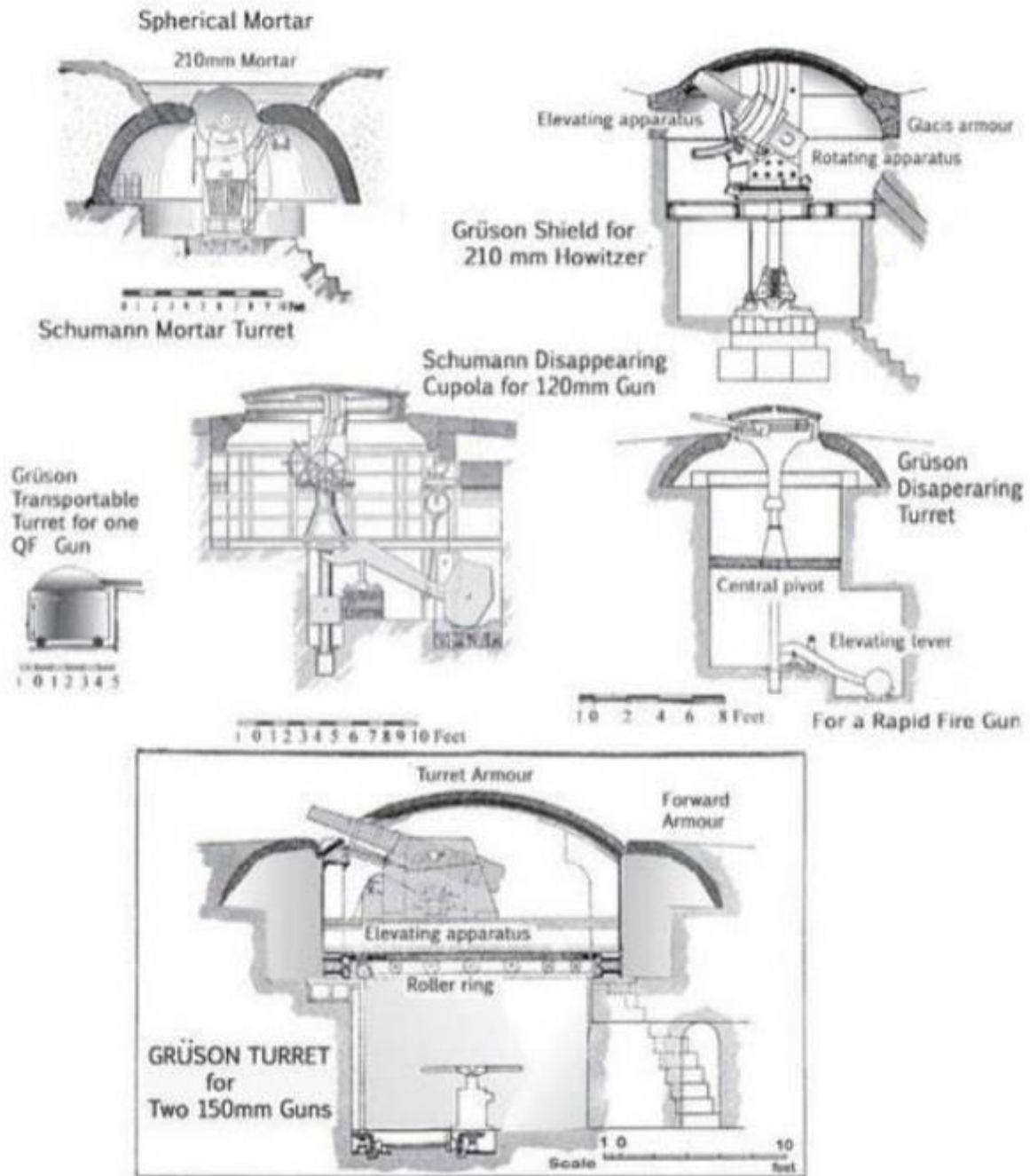
In Room 4: site of the power generating unit ensuring lighting and the driving force necessary to the displacement of the mounting and from where the ammunition were conveyed

In 5: a steel cupola, 10 cm thickness made it possible to supervise the surroundings.

In Room 6: a hall leads on the one hand, by a staircase, with the basement; in addition with the large circular shelter which sheltered the gun. The large concrete cone on which the pivot retaining was sealed the mounting.

In Room 7: swiveling on rails, the gun could move of 52 degrees height and of more than 90 degrees in width.

This is the kind of turret used by the French. At this stage this is what I think they were I am not in a position yet to say that this IS the type of battery used in the gun positions in Vung Tau They are just generalisation of the kind used in this era



The Torpedo Shell

All references to the word “Torpedo”, is actually referring to a particular French Artillery Shell shown here below.



Once the “shell” hits the target, It then explodes from a “secondary shaped Charge” Where it punches through whatever it strikes. A shell longer than a deck-piercing shell, with thinner walls and a larger cavity for the bursting charge, which consists of about 130 pounds of high explosive. It has no soft cap, and is intended to effect its damage by the powerful explosion which follows on slight resistance.

The reason that I have included this page is;.....In many paragraphs you will see references to TORPEDO’S. Do not confuse this with the Naval Torpedo. It is an Artillery shell specifically designed for penetrating armour or re-enforced concrete.



Information on the Torpedo Shell

With the construction of new fortifications on the frontiers, France could feel sheltered. But artillery is changing very fast with new research and industrial development.

From 1883, new shells will make their appearances, they are intended to paralyze and destroy these new fortifications. This period will render obsolete the new line of defence. It will be called crisis of the torpedo shells.

The Shrapnel shells

This new shell invented in 1883 is also called shell with grape because it projects full of lead shot in his explosion. It is used against infantry, for his firing is programmed to enable it to explode in the air, above a chosen target. What will make useless through the shelter because they no longer protect the gunners who load the parts.

Cotton-gelatinized powder

It is a new explosive powder that does not smoke, developed in 1884 by the engineer standby for use as propellant shells. It allows not to be bothered by the smoke after the shot, which makes them more difficult to locate guns.

Melinite

From 1871 seeking to replace black powder in the shell, but no explosive power and can not ensure stability. Not until 1885 for a dye chemical engineer Eugène Turpin, accidentally discovered a new explosive.

This is an acid composition picric but to mask its composition will be named Mélinite. This explosive more powerful than the old black powder is used for detonating charge shells.

The cylindrical-arched shell

This shell developed in 1886 is filled with Mélinite, it is made of steel rather than cast iron hard. Allowing both to increase the range of the guns, but also increase a number of explosive shells. By comparison, a shell 155 in font 40 kg containing 1.3 kg of black powder while a shell 155 steel weighing 43 kg contains 10 kg of melinite. What will make this new shell much more powerful. shell is produced in 1886 a resistance test on the new fortifications. This experiment was carried out at Fort Malmaison in Aisne with parts of 155L and 220 mm mortar shells 171 who will. The results are overwhelming, the 155 and 220 shells easily pierce the masonry vaults covered with two meters of earth. The shields do not resist and quartering of facades collapsing in the yard. This new shell upset the superstructure of the fort creating huge holes in 6 meters in diameter. In ditches, steep walls and cons-scarp collapse because of firecrackers melinite, making them difficult to defend. This experiment shows that the end 1886 built new forts can not withstand such an attack. Especially as France has just adopted in 1885 mortar 270mm model 1880 can fire shells of 150 to 230 kg. Moreover, the case Schnæbelé in 1887, causing a sharp tension with Germany, which did not help.

Connecting Tunnels (passages)

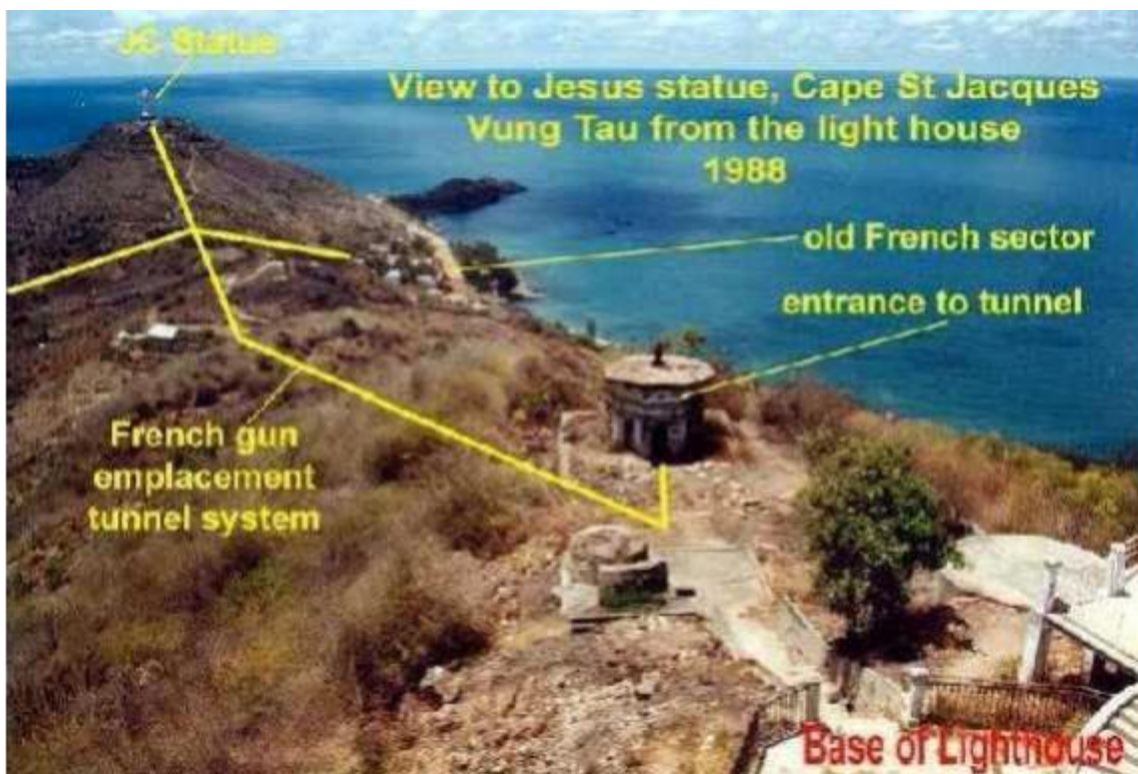
A quote from a previous passage..... There is a major tunnel system, built by the French, inside small mountain complete with its own rail system transforming the fortress into one similar to “Navarone”

Before we get into the nitty gritty of the Forts and Guns, I want to talk about the connecting tunnels in the area. These are dangerous, and should not be entered under any circumstances. In 1968 while posted here with the Australian Army, Myself and a mate decided to do some exploring ourselves. We entered one of the passages (no I will not tell you where), armed only with one torch between us away we went. Once inside the pitch blackness, we discovered that the bottom of the passage was covered in slime and unseen obstacles with about 60 cm of water covering the floor, listening to the snakes and frogs slither away from us we proceeded with a reasonable amount of apprehension.

It suddenly dawned on our tiny brains, that there well may be some vertical shafts in the bottom of the passage, invisible to us and filled with water.

If we stepped into one that could well have been the finish of us. So with as much dignity as we could muster under the circumstances, we retreated.

You have been warned and they would be a lot more dangerous now, so don't try it.



In some of these passages there are small railway tracks. These enabled the garrison troops to move ammunition from place to place in safety. For example under the Battery called B2 there are prime examples of one of these systems

Here is a small paragraph that I found on the WWW confirming the Tunnels. Not necessarily correct, but another confirmation that they exist.

Perhaps you know this and perhaps you don't. When Japan held Vietnam during WWII, they honeycombed this mountain (in Vung Tau) with gun-emplacements to protect against any amphibious landing. I've been through most of the tunnels ... main ones large enough to drive a vehicle through with splinter tunnels running off of it and leading either to gun emplacements on one side or ammunition, barracks, etc. on the other side of the main tunnel. Had we made an amphibious landing (ala Iwo Jima, Saipan, etc.), the price would've been high as this mountain commanded the beach and the sea approaches to it.

Tom Briggs

09-Sep-2009 23:31

Inside the Hexagonal Pill Box at the Light House



The above photograph is the vertical shaft leading down to the entrance of the tunnel which runs between the old French lighthouse and the big statue of Jesus. It goes to a depth of at least four metres. The cement pill-box is of high quality workmanship; this leads me to think that this tunnel was built by the French

I have no evidence for this so far. A consistent Vung Tau pub rumour says that the lighthouse tunnel extends passed Big Jesus right down to the beach. I have no evidence for this either. A trip to the Nationale Bibliotheque in Paris was futile in finding out more about the lighthouse

tunnel (and as is often the case in researching, more questions were raised than answered).

For many years access to the top of the tunnel was easy. The iron, bullet-hole ridden door to the pill-box was always open. I once entered the pill-box and photographed the shaft; however I had never climbed down the ladder into the dark tunnel. My friend Dang, who was born in Vung Tau, told me that when he was a boy-scout, his scout master took him through the tunnel.

I was eager to check out the tunnel and Dang was eager to help. Dang arranged to have the scout master (yes, the same scout master 40 years on!) assist us with this. However, on the morning of our planned expedition we found the pillbox door was locked with a very small, unofficial looking padlock. The scout master assured us that by the next week he would have access to the tunnel. The following week we turned up to find the metal pill-box door welded shut! I had missed my opportunity to enter the tunnel by a few days. Years later the door is still welded shut. I thought my chances of doing any tunneling in Vung Tau were over.

It was the 2014 Tet festival season, and I was attending one of Vung Tau's many Tet Festival parties. The hostess realized that I was an author who wrote about Vung Tau and Viet Nam, so during dinner she made a point of revealing a great deal about what it was like to live in Vung Tau during and after the America War. Everything she revealed was fascinating. I was riveted to her every word. Of all the things the hostess talked about, there was one thing that captivated me above all else. She mentioned a tunnel in Vung Tau. It was this conversation which really kick-started my interests in tunnels in Vung Tau. She knew about the tunnel because she was once a student at the school on Le Loi Street inside the French Military complex. If ever the school came under attack, the students had been drilled to run to the school canteen (the two-story building running east/west at the southern end of the complex). The tunnel under the canteen would take them to the old French Catholic School. Yes! I know of the canteen building, I have been in it. And I know the school.

The hostess suggested that I interview her mother regarding that period. Through her son, Hieu, she arranged a meeting for an interview. Hieu would be the interpreter. Though, when Hieu's grandmother told her story, the tunnel started at the canteen but exited on the beach at the foot of Big Jesus. It was a different story. I was ecstatic! Sure, it was a different story, but it confirmed the entrance of the canteen tunnel, and gave substance to the pub rumour of the lighthouse tunnel having an extension through to the beach. So Vung Tau instead of having one tunnel now has two tunnels, with a possible third tunnel. Having said that though, I almost immediately dismissed the idea of a tunnel running all the way from the canteen to the beach near Big Jesus (2.5 kilometres). It would have to run right under Vung Tau and I know that the water table is very high at this point. In fact, many private houses have their own fresh water well. But, this exciting information still equated to the possibility of three tunnels in Vung Tau.

In Viet Nam during Tet festival it is essential that families accrue luck to ensure the family's safety and prosperity throughout the up-coming year. So my family and relatives decided to visit a very lucky temple in the back blocks of Baria-Vung Tau province. The large SUV was packed to the roof with happy

kids and adults. The driver, my brother-in-law, happened to mention that the temple we were going to visit was a Buddhist army training base at one time. During the war he had sneaked in to this place to pinch chooks and fish. By the end of my visit to the temple/previous army base (equipped with a large museum) a rare, historical fact was revealed to me about Vung Tau. I had discovered where an underground weapons and munitions cache is in Vung Tau!

So now Vung Tau has two tunnels (possibly three) and an underground munitions cache. This topic was

exploding (excuse the pun) into something much bigger. I have been to the cache site. I have not been inside it, and I am sure I never will. I don't know where the entrance to the cache is and I don't really have any over-riding need to know. My asking to be shown the secret entrance would be akin to me knocking on the door of Albemarle Barracks in Northumberland and asking to be shown through the munitions depot. I am not going to reveal the cache's position. In hindsight maybe I could have made a reasonable guess as to its location. Such a military position needs to be on a very lucky site. It is. There to connect a cache to military establishments in the vicinity? I hypothesized that this could be a possibility. Might there be even more tunnels under Vung Tau? To summarise, let's find out where the tunnels project is up to now?

The lighthouse tunnel: An attempt last month to find the other end of the tunnel (the exit at the base of the Jesus statue) ended nowhere. 'Nowhere' is not totally true. It was actually 'somewhere' but that 'somewhere' was in the middle of an army facility. Of course it would be. The tunnel is a military asset. I will need an awful lot of local clout to gain access to either end of this tunnel.

The school canteen tunnel: I can get access to this building, so it will be a case of tracking down and questioning the caretaker.

The suggested tunnel exit at the Catholic school: I have just uncovered that the Vung Tau Catholic church which everyone refers to as the 'old French church', is not the original Catholic church. The first church was at the foot of Big Mountain. This new information increases the likelihood of a connecting tunnel from the canteen.

The above piece of invaluable information was provided to me by a mate by the name of **Paul Rowe**, His qualifications are as follows

Masters of Linguistics (TESOL)

B. of Arts - Asian Studies, with Medal B. of Education

Author: *My Viet Nam Stories*

Guild of Battlefield Guides – 640

<http://paulsvungtauhistoryclub.weebly.com/>



Inside an Artillery Tunnel

In 1914. the beachfront of Cape St Jacques includes:

The Saigon River, which leads into the Ganh-Ray Bay is the usual route of 74 kilometers of large ships to access in Saigon. These need to enter, follow the tip of Cape St. Jacques, at very close distance, which gives a great defensive value at that position.

The defense of rivers, which was to include several blocks, armed with guns 240 mm. some turrets. One will be realized, the Rach-Cat. armed with 4 guns 240 1893-1896 Model M 'Colonies ' in armoured turrets Schneider.

Cape St. Jacques. Named by Portuguese navigators, it extends over six kilometers from north to south. It essentially consists of three hills, the highest of which, the central one. rises to 248 meters. Thus we find, from north to south, the massive Ganh Ray, the Grand Massif, also called Grand Massif Spur, or Big Mountain and the Massif du Phare(Lighthouse) massive or Small Mountain. On these heights will be established batteries from the waterfront, the range is oriented to the southwest, and support batteries of ground-front that pull towards the northwest. This protects against a massive setback to attack an enemy who landed on the beach of Tiwan. It includes a block with turret guns eclipse for two 75 and two blockhouses, quite similar to those of the belt Saigon

• The group Ganh Ray

Battery Ganh Ray 6 canons barrels of 24 cm Model 1870 Model M 1889 PC of battery

Lazaretto 4 guns M 14 cm Model 1870 Model M 1897 AP o 100

Ganh Ray battery 2 canons barrels to 100 TR Model 1897 Model M 1897 PC

• The group Grand Spur or the Plateau or Central

Right battery Grand Spur 4 mortars G 270 1889 Model G circular frame

Battery left the Great Spur 4 mortars G 270 1889 Model G circular frame

Right battery Plateau 4 guns M 14 cm Model 1870 Model M 1897

PC of Battery left Plateau 4 guns of 14 cm Model 1870 Model M 1897

PC of Battery 100 Grand Spur 2 canons barrels to 100 TR Model 1897 Model M 1897 PC

• The Lighthouse Group

The mortar battery Lighthouse mortars M 5 30 cm Model 1893 Model 1889

PC of Battery Lighthouse 3 240 guns 1893-1896 Model M 'Colonies''

PC inclined frame o battery Lighthouse 2 guns of 240 from 1893 to 1896 Model M 'Colonies''

PC inclined frame o battery cable 4 guns 194 Model M 1893-1896

PC inclined frame battery # 1 Position 4 guns 194 Model M 1893-1896 PC inclined frame o Battery Lotus

5 canons barrels of 14 cm from 1881 to 1884 on Model M PC (also land front).

• Earth forehead support batteries include, besides the battery of the Lotus

Battery Bendinh 4 guns M 14 cm Model 1881 on M PC (Grand Massif Spur) to Careers battery of 4 guns M 14 cm Model 1881 on M PC (Massif du Lighthouse)

• The land front ncludes:

Work of Baria Road. 1 turret guns DF 1905-2 75 R and 6 guns of the Blockhouse Point

K. 2 machine guns at Blockhouse Point 16. 4 machine guns.

The defense of the rivers is provided by the work of Rach-Cat. armed with 4 guns 240 1893-1896 Model M "Colonies" in armored turrets Schneider. Much of this equipment is returned in France during the First World War and. in 1920. the defense does not understand that the parts 300 Model 1893 Battery mortars Lighthouse. 240 cannon battery Ganh Ray

The guns of 138 batteries of Lotus, the Lazaretto, left and right of the Plateau and the turret of the book of the road Baria. A first reset draft program was outlined in 1930. It provides, in a first step, the reset of the battery cable, and batteries 100 of Ganh Ray and Grand Spur. The modernization of the Lighthouse batteries and mortars Lotus is also considered. Secondly, a battery of Model 155 20 must be installed on each of the three massifs. One of the two turrets Rach Cat must be reset, but we do not know with what guns. None of this will be realized, and it was not until 1934 to see a coherent program. In 1939. the arming of the land front of the Saint- Jacques cap is:

Battery Lighthouse 3 240 guns Model 1902-1906 PC Lotus battery of 4 guns 138 Model 1881 Model 17

Lazaretto 2 138 Model 1881 Model 17

Battery Ganh Ray 2 guns of 105 Model 1897-1817 PC

Battery Grand Spur 2 guns of 105 Model 1897-1817 PC

The defense of the rivers is provided by the work of Rach-Cat. armed with 4 guns 240

-1896 Model M "Colonies" in armored turrets Schneider. Much of this equipment is returned in France during the First World War and. in 1920. the defense does not understand that the parts 300 Model 1893 Battery mortars Lighthouse. 240 cannon battery Ganh Ray. the guns of 138 batteries of Lotus, the Lazaretto, left and right of the Plateau and the turret of the book of the road Baria.

A first reset draft program was outlined in 1930. It provides, in a first step, the reset of the battery cable, and batteries 100 of Ganh Ray and Grand Spur.

The modernization of the Lighthouse batteries and mortars Lotus is also considered. Secondly, a battery of Model 155 20 must be installed on each of the three massifs. One of the two turrets Rach Cat must be reset, but we do not know with what guns. None of this will be realized, and it was not until 1934 to see a coherent program. In 1939. the arming of the land front of the Saint - Jacques cap is:

Battery Lighthouse 3 240 guns Model 1902-1906 PC

- Lotus battery of 4 guns 138 Model 1881 Model 17
- Battery Lazaretto 2 138 guns Model 1881 Model 17
- Battery Ganh Ray 2 guns of 105 Model 1897-1817 PC
- Battery Grand Spur 2 guns of 105 Model 1897-1817 PC

The June 1940 armistice leaves French Indochina in a difficult situation with virtually no connections with the mainland, and subject to the pressures of Japan. Coastal defense is strengthened with material recovered during the disarmament of auxiliary cruisers, as well as commercial vessels and loaned by the Navy. Are thus made, in Cochin, at Cape St. Jacques and the defence of rivers:

- Battery Tiwan (land front) 2 guns of 75 Model 1897 Model 1916
- Battery Not Archinard (land front) 2 guns TR 47 Model 1885
- Careers battery (ground support front) 4 guns of 90 Model 1877 Model 1916
- Battery Bendinh (ground support front) 4 guns of 90 Model 1877 Model 1916
- Rach Cat 2 guns 138 1924 Model edge and 4 guns of 75 Model 1897 Model 1916
- Drum Song-Long-Tac (Soirap) 2 guns of 75 Model 1897 Model 1916

The land in front of the Saint-Jacques cap is reinforced by the construction of 28 blockhouses for machine guns and anti-tank guns. Part of materials, different generations, is still in place today, often in fairly good condition. They are located on sites with varying statutes often still military, and sometimes poorly defined. Caution is required therefore in their discovery. JJM 03/07/2008

Intermediate battery

The Battery expected to be built in front of Cape St. Jacques, and unrealized.

Placed between the massive Grand Spur and the massive lighthouse, it was to be armed with four guns of 138 Mle 1881 on PC lookout. The material was artillery park in 1912.

Battery Telegraph Former Battery T 1892 A project includes the construction in this location, a battery of four mortars 270 Models 1889 Models lookout 1893 PC. The project was redesigned the following year, and mortars replaced by guns 24 cm Models 1870 Models lookout 1876 PA. The battery is commissioned in 1896. It is a masonry work, set at 11 meters north of the massif du Phare, and has a cavestore, dug under the opaque mass of the hill. A 1908 report gives it has not yet declassified, but maintained. We lose track afterwards. It no longer appears in the arming state of 1912. Today, there remains no trace.



This is a image of the old light house taken in 1908

In 1914, the Cap St-Jacques sea shore protection includes:

- Gan-Ray Detachment

- o Gan Ray Battery of 2 cannons 140mm model 1870 mounted on chassis model M 1897 PC
- o Lazaret Battery of 4 cannon 140mm model 1870 mounted on chassis model 1897 PA M
- o Gan Ray Battery of 2 cannons 100 model 1897 mounted on chassis model M 1897 PC

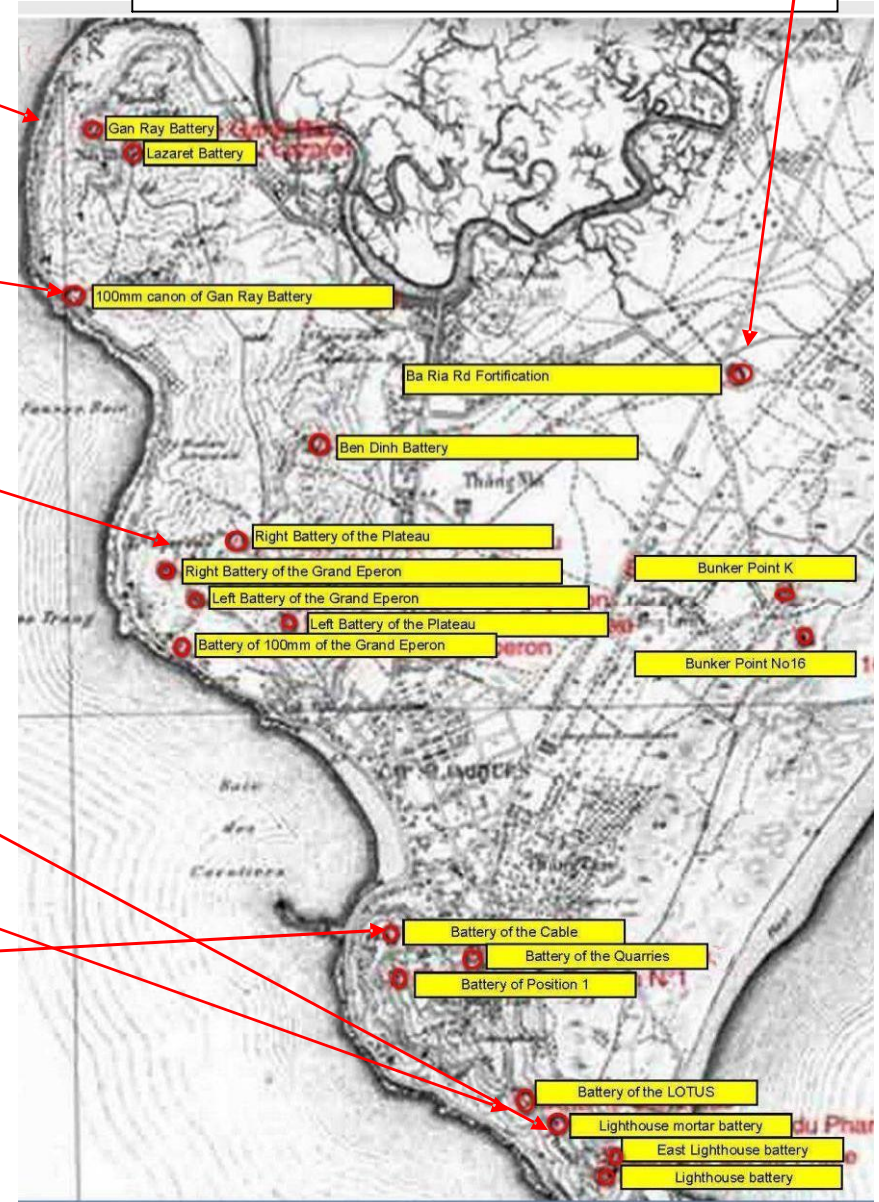
- Grand Eperon Detachment (also named Plateau or Centre)

- o Grand Eperon right battery with 4 mortar G of 270mm caliber model 1889 mounted on circular chassis G
- o Grand Eperon left battery with 4 mortar G of 270mm caliber model 1889 mounted on circular chassis G
- o Plateau right battery with 4 cannon M of 140 mm caliber model 1870 mounted on circular chassis M 1897 PC
- o Plateau left battery with 4 cannon M of 140 mm caliber model 1870 mounted on circular chassis M 1897 PC
- o Grand Eperon battery of 2 cannons of 100mm caliber model TR 1897 mounted on chassis M model 1897

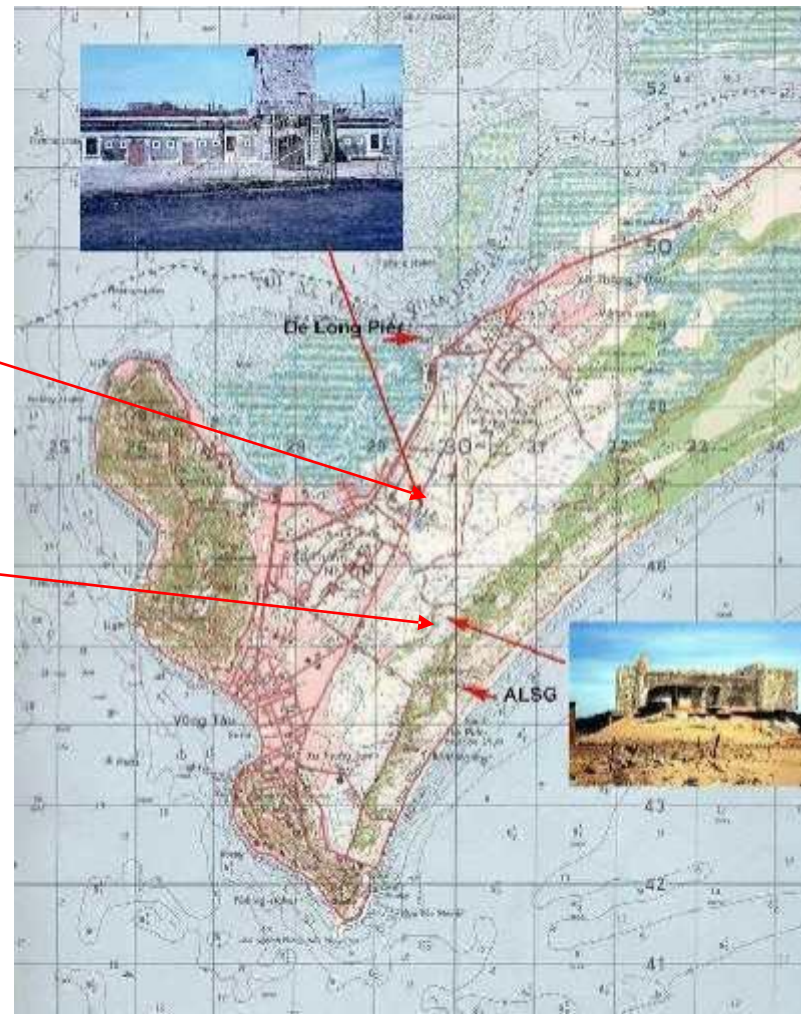
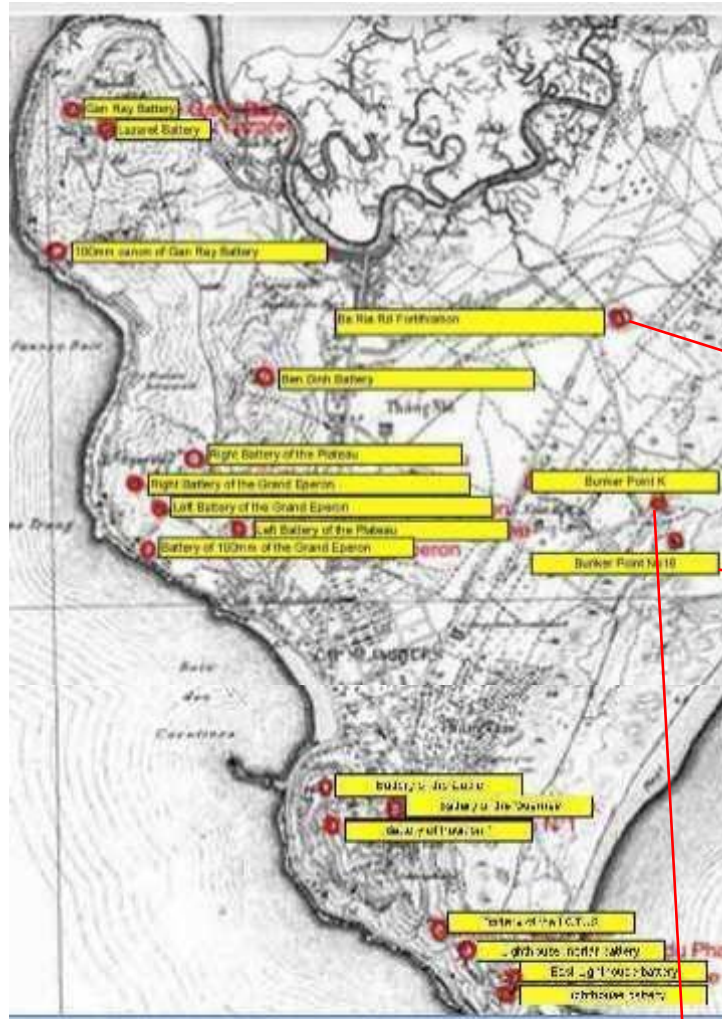
Lighthouse

- o Lighthouse battery of 5 mortar M 300mm model 1893 mounted on chassis 1889 PC
- o Lighthouse Battery of 3 cannon 240mm M (modified in length) Model "Colonies" 1893-96 mounted on inclined chassis model PC
- o Lighthouse Battery of 2 cannon 240mm M (modified in length) Model "Colonies" 1893-96 mounted on inclined chassis model PC
- o Cable Battery of 4 cannon 194mm M (modified in length) Model 1893-96 mounted on inclined chassis
- o Position No1 Battery of 4 cannon 194mm M (modified in length) Model 1893-96 mounted on inclined chassis
- o Lotus battery of 5 cannon M of 140 mm caliber model 1881-84 mounted on chassis M PC

Ba Ria rd fortification with 1 turret DF 1905 armed with 2 cannons 75mm TR and 6 machineguns



The old Forts or Bunkers of Vung Tau



The old Fort at Bunker poin "K" was torn down in 2015 to make way for a new road. Bunker "16" has just disintergrated and collappased over the Years.

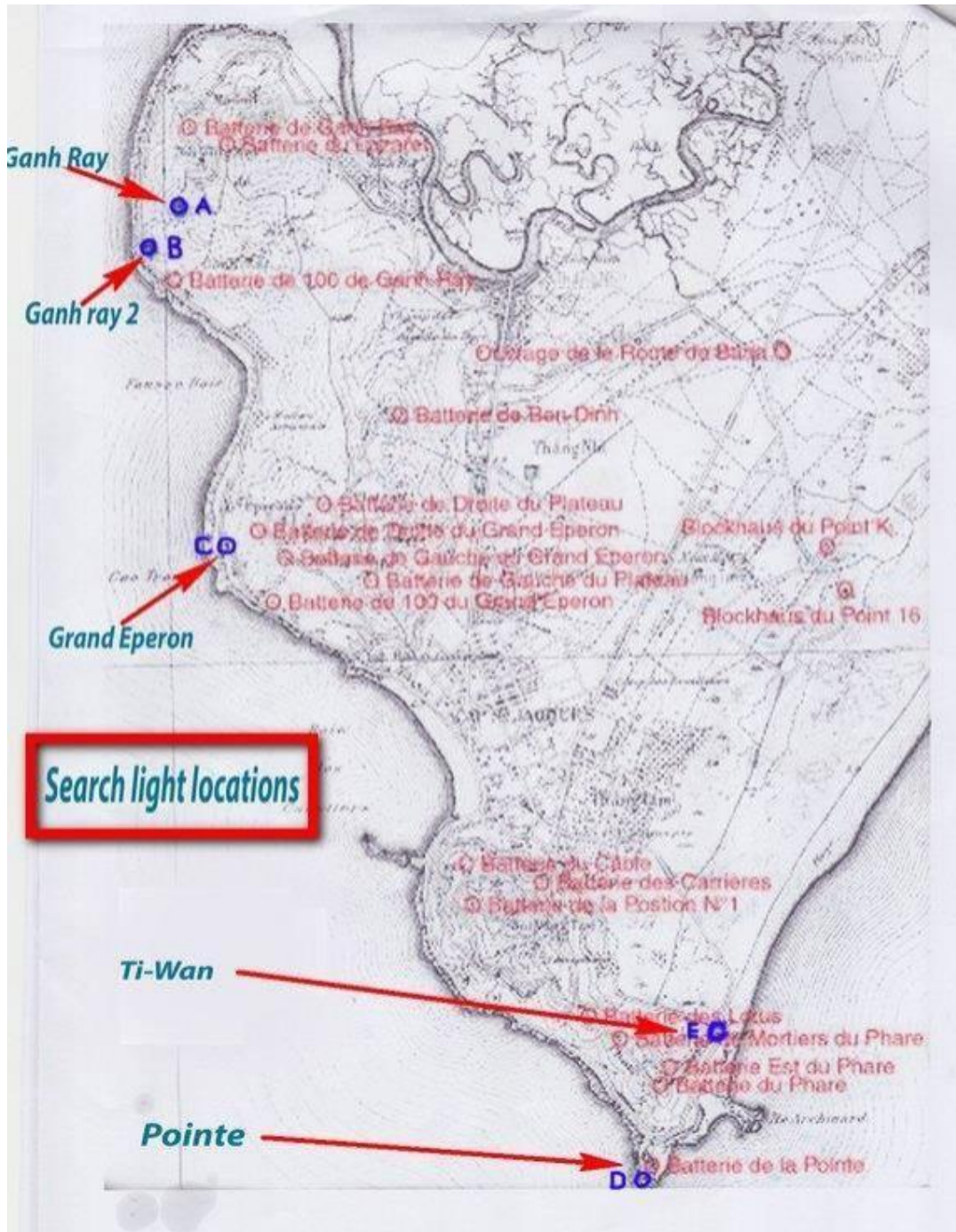


This a depiction looking down to the Jesus Statue.

With some of the paths and tracks shown. The relative gun positions have been marked. The term "Gun Position" is used as a guide only and is not an official designation

The Searchlights

There are four positions for searchlights on the peninsular, shown below.

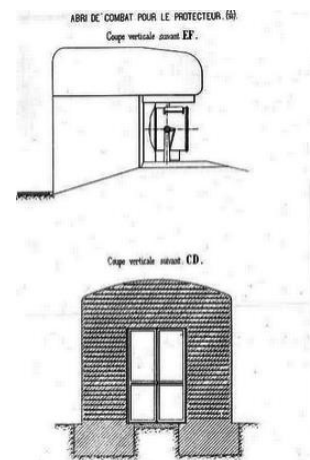
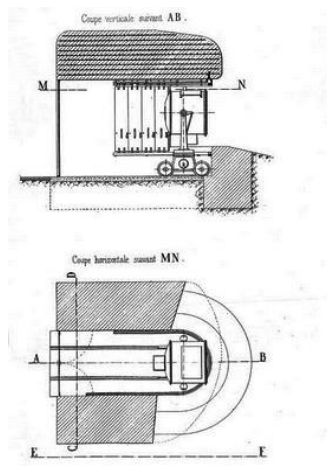


The Searchlights



This an image that I have created. It was accomplished by getting one image of a building that housed the searchlight, then finding a picture of the searchlight types that were used here in Vung Tau and superimposing one on top of the other. Very difficult to work out the dimensions but with trail and error I think I have made a very reasonable impression of what it would have looked like.

I assume that this room directly behind it would have housed a generator of some discription



JJM has been kind enough to send me copies of the original plans for the light house buildings

What we have here is a copy of some reports sent from Cap Saint Jaques (Vung Tau) by Lieutenant-General Godard, back to France reporting on the works being carried out. These are translated copies of the original shown as Images 1 - 5. The date 1908

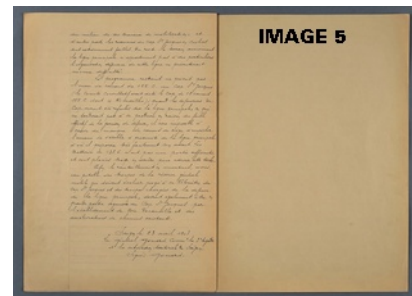
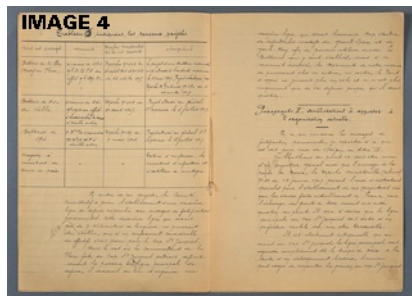
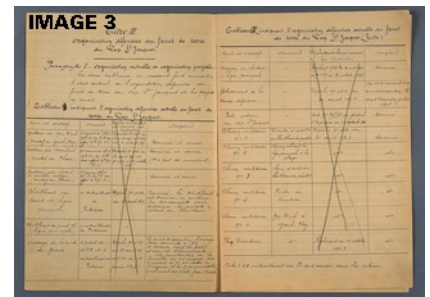
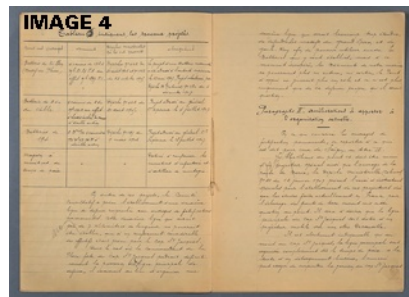
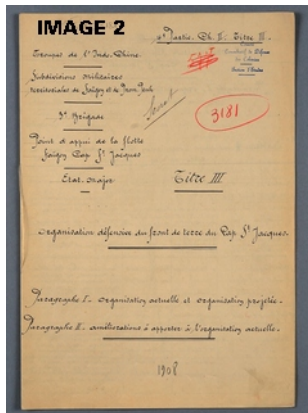
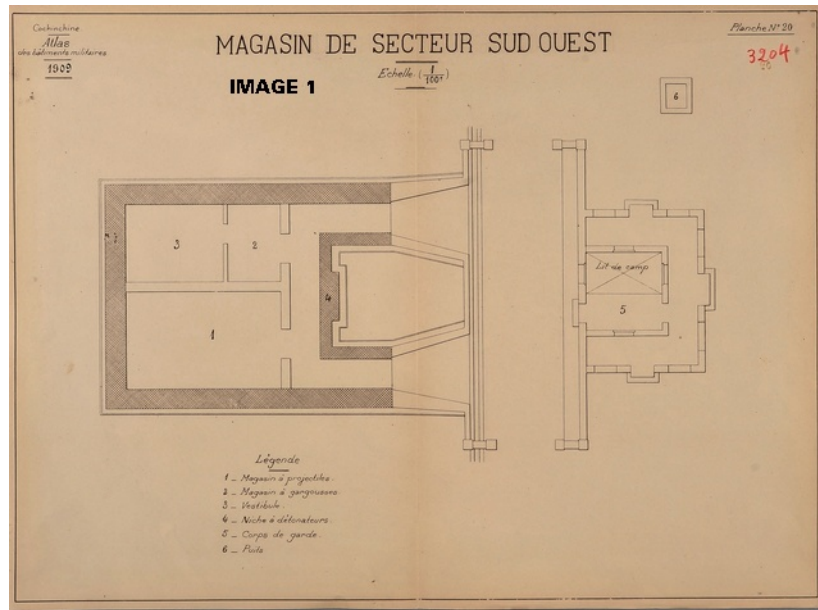


IMAGE 1

Cochin China
Atlas
The military buildings
1909

WAREHOUSE OF SOUTH WEST AREA
scale (1/100°)

Board N° 20
3204

Key

- 1- Store for projectiles
- 2- Warehouse of charges.
- 3- Hall
- 4- Kennel detonators
- 5- Guardhouse.
- 6- Sinks

Lit de camp

IMAGE 2

4th Part. Chapter II. Track III.

Groups of Indo-china

Military Subdivisions

Saigon and Gnsin. Genh Territorials

3rd Squad

Anchor of the fleet

Saigon Cap St Jacques

Staff

Track III

Defensive Planning of the Cap St Jacques Land Front

Section I – Current and Future Organization

Section II - Improvements for the current organisation

1908

IMAGE 3

Defensive Planning of the Cap St Jacques Land Front

Section I – Current and Future Organization

The two tables below show to us the current state of the defensive organization of the land of the Cape St Jacques front and ongoing projects.

Tables showing the current defensive organization of the land front of Cape St Jacques.

Names of works	Weapons	Observations
Battery of Ben. Dinh (huge ganh.Ray)	4 guns of 138.6 Mle 81.84 T.R. on the Mle 97.P.C.	Completed and armed
Careers batterie (huge lighthouse)	4 guns of 138.6 Mle 81.84-T.R. on the Mle 97 P.C.	Completed and armed (does not have his ammunitions)
Lotus battery with double action. (huge lighthouse)	5 guns 138.6 Mle 81.84 T.R. on the Mlle 97. P.C.	Completed and armed
Blockhouse point 16 (main line)	4 machine guns from Puteaux	Completed- the blockhouse is finished, or ongoing earthworks to remove the hedged before the blockhouse.
Blockhouse point k. (main line)	4 machine guns from Puteaux	
Work for the Baria road	2 parts of 75 I.R. and 6 machine guns from Puteaux	Running; the work will be completed at year-end except the water ditches and earthworks. The construction of the turret of this block for 2 guns of 75 is ranked 2nd

		emergency and the 2 canons installed to open on special platform.
Store to perform (main line)		Completed
Deforestation of the defensive throne		These clearings are ongoing. They will be completed in July 1908.
Visual position of Cap St Jacques		Completed
military road no 1	Anti-direction line to the blockhouse of the point 16.	Completed
military road no 2	Road linking the main line to the beach	d°
military road no 3	Access road to blockhouse of point K.	d°
military road no 4	Ring road	d°
military road no 6	Ben-Dinh to ganh. Ray	d°
Plan director	d°	d°

Note: 62 machine guns out of 88 arrived in the cobnies.

IMAGE 4

Table showing the proposed works

Names of works	Weapons	Departmental reports they have prescribed	Observations
Ei Battery 88an (huge lighthouse)	4guns of 138.6 Mle 81.84 T>A on the Mle 1897 P.C.	Report no 462 of 21 august 1905 and no 553 of 22 October 1905	The project of a casemated battery was referred to the higher authority on 23 May 1907. Project abandoned by Mle note (colonies) No. 680 of December 4, 1907.
Cable battery of 240	4guns of 240 Mle 1902 on the incline frame of Creusot of double action	Note no 462 of 21 august 1905.	Project addressed to the general superior Ct on the 4 July 1907
Batteries of 194	2batteries of 4guns of 194 Mle 93.96M of double action.	Note no 127 of March 1906	Project addressed to the general superior Ct on the 18 July 1907
Store ammunition in peacetime			Intended to contain the infantry and mountain guns ammunition.

In addition to these projects, the Advisory Committee expected the permanent establishment of a second line of defense with works of fortifications. This second line which would have nearly 7kilometers of length could be established, if a significant increase in staffing was planned for the Cape St Jacques.

In the case where the Captain of the fortress of the Cape St Jacques would definitely lose possession of the main line of defense, he would try instead of organizing a second line which would be too large, to defend the large spur and Ganh.Ray can still use batteries that are established; but at this desperate moment, the buildings of our Navy would no longer enter or exit, anchor is more play and the anchor no longer play its role and have not only his own defense to worry about.

Section II. Improvements on the current organization

Regarding the permanent fortification works, refer to what is said for those of Saigon, in title IV.

The blockhouse of the point 16 shall be fitted with a special projector as well as the work of the road of Baria. The Ministerial note (cobnies) No. 21 of January 12, 1907 provides special instructions sent to the establishment of these projector which shall be made when studies currently going on in France for the lighting of fronts of Earth will have raise the issue. It will be desired that the mainline of the Cape St Jacques has a mobile projector on a

It is absolutely essential that at least in Cape St Jacques, the main line is completely organized in time of peace. Following a successful landing, the enemy may try to surprise the garrison of Cape St Jacques mobilization during his works; and secondly, resources Cape St Jacques in coolies are extremely low. Besides the field around the main line if does not belong to individuals, the defensive organization of this line would not be difficult.

The limited program does not allow sending of guns of 155. C. to the Cape St Jacques (the Advisory Committee had endowed the Cape of 12 canons 155 C including 4 Rimailho); When defenders of the Cap will have turned on the main line, what would soon happen due to the small size of the garrison of defense, it will be impossible because of the lack of gun seat to prevent the enemy to settle near the main line where he will easily prepares his assault. Batteries of 138.6 do not have sufficient range and are placed too far back to ensure this task.

Finally, the supply of ammunition, food, drinking water to the troops of reserve mobile general which must move up to 10 kilometers from Cape St Jacques and troops instructed with the defense of the main line, should also be largely organized at Cape St Jacques by establishment of freeway and improvements of existing roads.

Saigon, the 23 April 1908
The Lieutenant-general Godard captain of the 9th Squad
And the territorial subdivision of Saigon.
Sign: Gonard.

CHAPTER THREE

In this chapter you will find a description and general specification of the Types and and general specification of Types and Calibres of the guns.



The barrel 138 is from the modernization of old smooth parts of 16 books which we still had a lot after the war of 1870. General De Reffye makes scratch and adopt a breech loading. This change and the entry in weapons states date from 1873 to 1874, without ever having received official notification of Model 1874. This gun is equipped with a cylinder head screw developed by General Treuille Beaulieu.

This muzzle could be mounted on wooden carriages 16 or 24 instead of or appropriate seat. These carriages were along the lines be equipped with appropriate smoother Director. In 1875. Lieutenant Colonel Perrier Lahitolle will develop an iron lookout called "uprising to look" designed to replace the old wooden carriages. The barrel 138 is also placed in the bunkers to direct or indirect fire on Tarbes bunker carriages to chassis and hydraulic brake type I No. 1 pivotally and journaled around the mouth where a lookout type II pivoting around the mouth It will also equip the first pillbox armoured of Pvlouain commander against the field gun on a Tarbes lookout bunker to chassis and hydraulic brake pivot and journaled around the mouth of the type I No. 2. this look was sometimes called lookout Reffye # 1. An unrealized project involved the design of a third lookout bunker Tarbes Type I 3 with a vertical firing range of -10 or -15 to + 15.

Properties canon 138

This muzzle originally to have a moderately flat trajectory is available in large numbers. It is designed to destroy the resistant obstacles that the enemy could develop pulling a shell much heavier than the 120 mm gun, which produces satisfactory effects against average resistance obstacles.

Firing the gun 138 is very accurate with new parts up to 2000 meters, it can still be effectively directed against a seat battery up to 2700 meters. Beyond this distance, you must not rely on the correctness of the muzzle.

The gun. it is not cased, wears quickly and soon the room gives an irregular firing. The load washers 24 tiredness much the gun and, secondly, shooting loses accuracy to loads less than 12 rounds. When not drop below this last charge the barrel 138 may be usefully employed in shooting plunging to medium distances. In view mobility, the muzzle is well below the 12QL barrel.

Employment and role in defending strongholds .

The gun of 138 mm can be used, failing piece newer models to counterbattery batteries small arms or placed in conditions of disadvantage struggle to flank a defence line and beat the field approaches. It will be widely used until 1888. After that date it appears especially in arming second row seats and medium importance squares located on the border and threatened little strong stop or curtain which, their topographic situation does not have to worry that the field artillery or mountain. But after 1906-1908. it is permanently replaced by the 120L parts produced in large numbers.

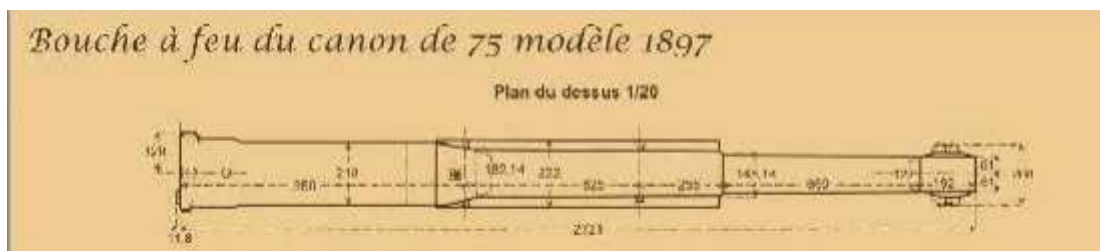
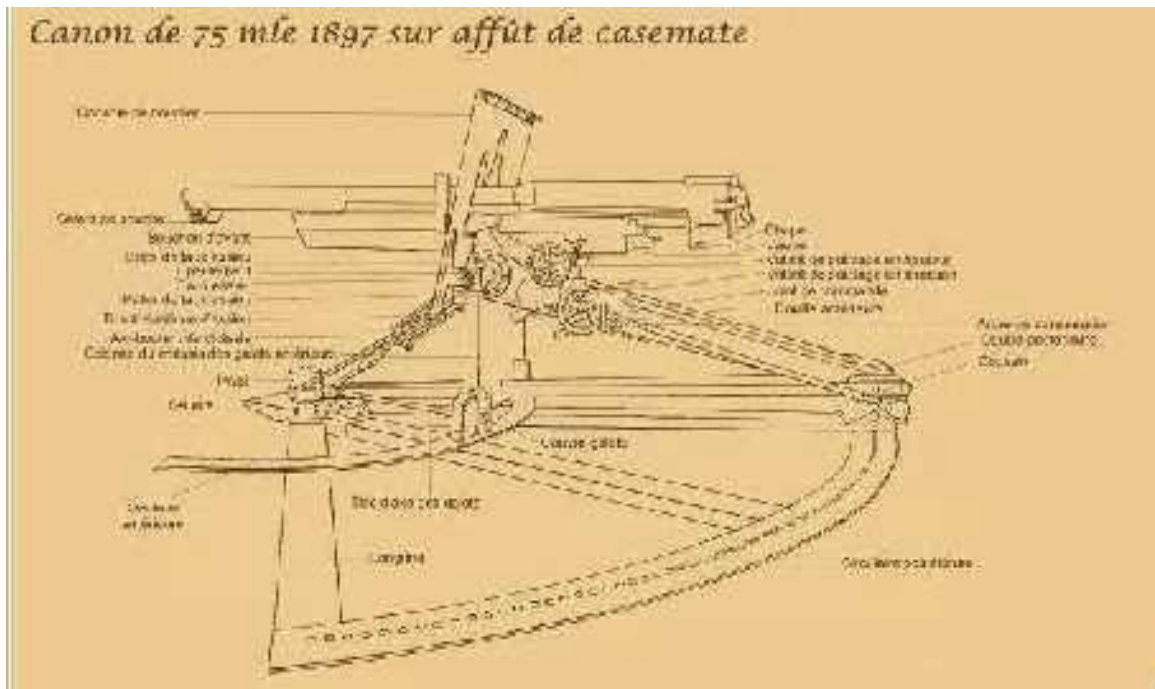


Mortar 30 1883/93 model is a steel part equipped with a movable screw bob. This piece is placed in the fortifications or central pivots (in carriages PC or final pivot PA) to protect maritime borders.

Features mortar model 1883 30 93 T model on lookout 1883 AP

Piece	30 mortar steel Coast	
Date Model	1883 T 90	
Weight parts	10.200 kg	
calibre	30 mm	
Tow length	10 foot	
Cylinder head	Mobile breech screw	
	1 shot / 4 min	
blind	Look at previous pivot model 1883	PA lookout modified 1883 model
Weight lookout	15.3 tons	14.75 tonnes
Shooting angle height	5 ° / 70 °	5 ° / 70 °
Angle shot towards	360	200 °
Shooting range	Approximately 8000 m	Approximately 8000 m
Initial speed	175-265 m / s max	175-265 m / s max
Weight of the shell	292 kg max	292 kg max
Unit Weight:	25.8 tons	24.9 tons
		1 shot / 4 min

Drawing of the 75 mm canon with it positioned in a pillbox



Use of 90 canon

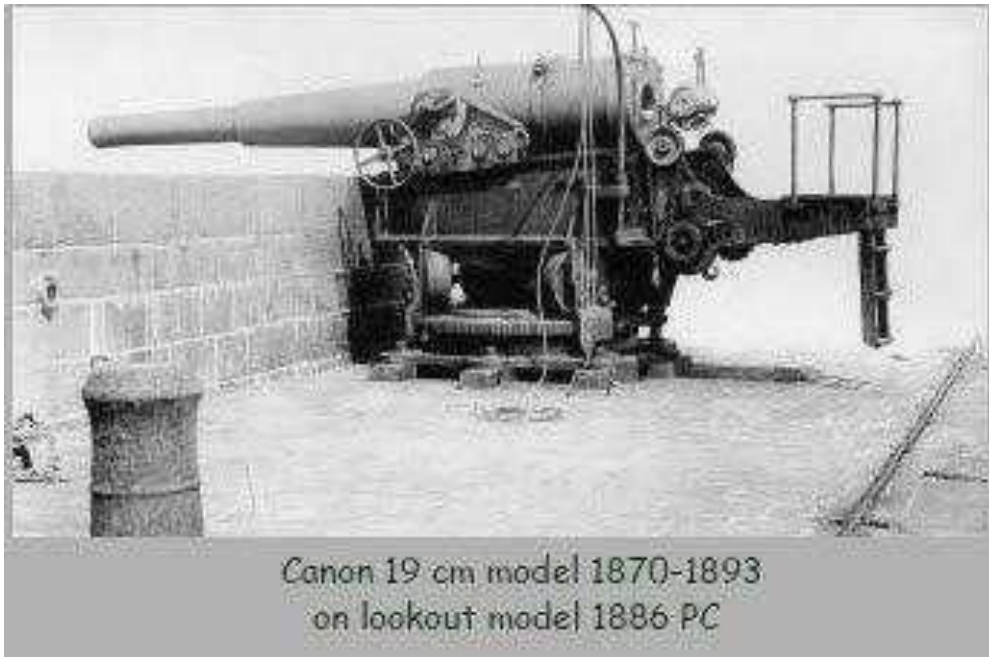
The barrel 90 has a substantially identical accuracy to regular combat distances that the parts of 95 mm and 80 mm . The effects of his shots against the troops and against the obstacles are somewhat higher than the barrel 80. but slightly lower than the barrel 95 . After a distance varying according to the nature of the soil, from 2500 to 3000 meters, ordinary shells hitting lose much of their effectiveness. The fuse and shells can only produce effects beyond these distances are large enough goals. The shrapnel or bullets can replace ordinary shells in the shooting against the obstacles of any kind that they are able to destroy. In the fusing shooting, shrapnel have an indisputable superiority over all other projectiles. But up to a distance of 500 meters, the use of grape boxes and preferable to that of the shells in the shooting against the troops. Depending on the kind of shot used, this ordnance has sufficient accuracy to 3000 and 4000 meters.

In addition, it has an ease of transport and supply which will be a valuable resource for the armament of artillery lines.

Employment and role in the defence of places

In the fortresses or fortified works, the choice of 90 barrel is often compared to that of the barrel 80 . This decision will be entrusted to local committees who study according to the topography of the place and nature of the goals achieve, what will be one of two sizes 90 mm or 80 mm which should be preferred and what lookout between the lookout and the campaign headquarters and instead should receive the part. The guns of 90 mm or 80 mm can be used to: Supporting mobile troops in active operations. Monitor the field or the approach to the work. Beat the distances close roads, communication, crossing points, etc. ... About kicking the lines of defence Arrner batteries circumstances or campaign shoulders arranged to control the outskirts of defence lines and advanced positions defended by the garrison.

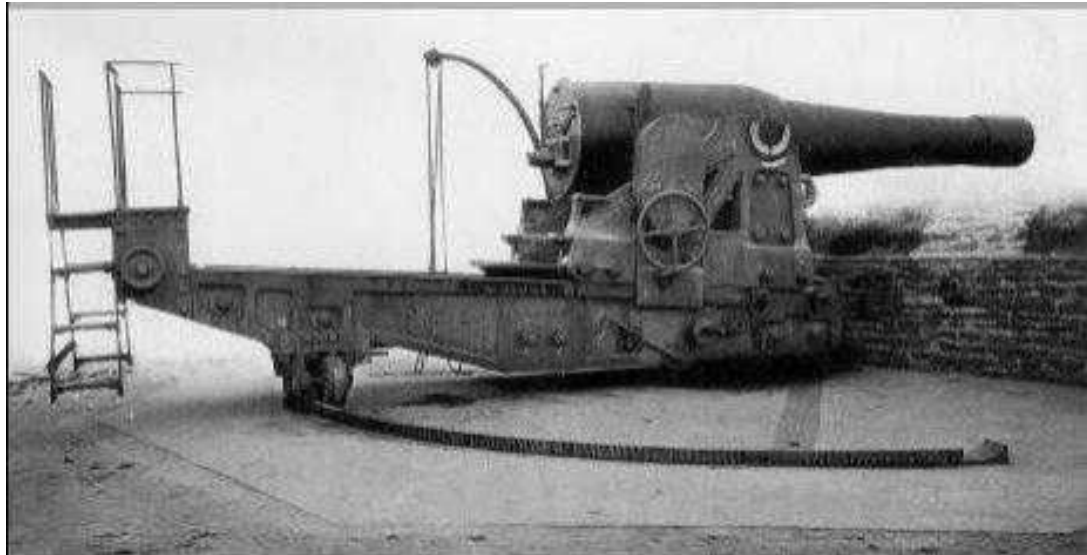
n 1914. the canon of 90 on field carriage or seat and look up model 1880 is available at 3994 copies it is mostly used by artillery regiments walk because it is replaced from 1900 to 1905. in field artillery regiments by the gun of 75mm 1897 model which is much more efficient and more manageable.



The 1870 model coast 19 gun changed in 1893, is a heavy artillery piece cast iron which the tube is made of steel. It is equipped with a yoke of Bangs system. This piece is placed on the center pivot coast carriages PC or RA prior pivot in the works to protect sea borders. During the First World War, some parts are mounted on carriages ALVF trucks that can take any azimuth.

Features of the gun model 19 C from 1870 to 1893 on lookout PC model 1886

Piece	Canon 19 Shore cast iron with steel casing
Date Model	1870-1893
Weight parts	10000 kg
Caliber	194.4 mm
Tube length	5 m 686
Cylinder head	Closing console and ordinary lock
Unit	In central pivot model 1885
Weight lookout	16000 kg
Shooting angle height	-5° / +30°
Angle shot towards	360
Shooting range	18300 m max
Initial speed	640 m / s max
Weight of the shell	65 kg max
Unit Weight	26 tonnes



Canon 24 C model 1870 PC 1876-1883 lookout M model.

The gun 24 1870-87 model on carriages models PC 1888 or PC 1886 is a cast part with the tube is steel. It is mounted on a more modern look with a recoil system improved on the lookout Tarbes. This piece is placed in the fortifications to protect maritime borders.

Barrel features 24 C model 1870-1887

Piece Date Model Weight parts Caliber Tube length Cylinder head	Canon 24 Shore cast iron with steel casing 1870-1887 20000 kg 210 mm 7.220 m Consoles and closing spring latch	
blind Weight lookout Shooting angle height Angle shot towards Shooting range Initial speed Weight of the shell Unit Weight	1000 central pivot model 33000 kg -6 ° / + 28 ° 360 18500 m 590 m / s max 162 kg max 63 tonnes	Model 1000 prior pivot 27500 kg -7 ° / + 30 ° 180 ° 18500 m 590 m / s max 162 kg max 47.9 tons

The Model 100 TR 1881 some statistics

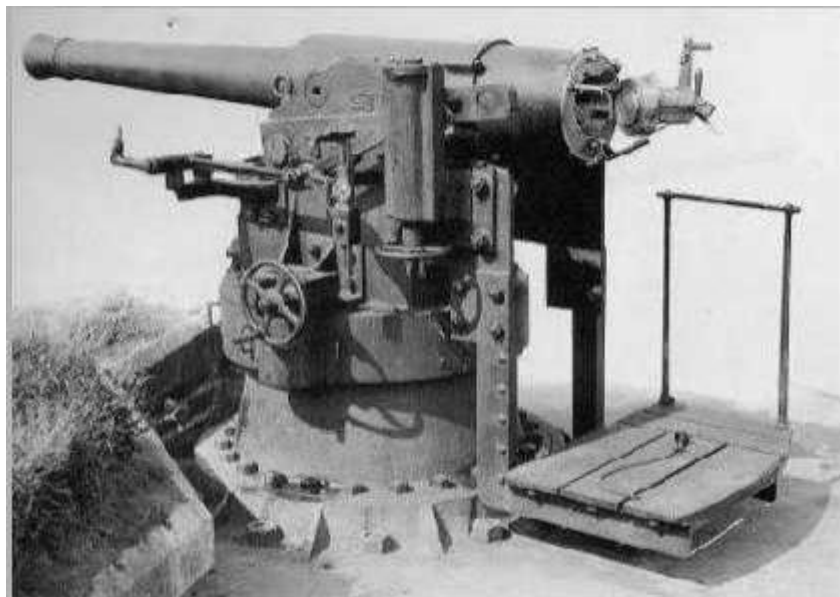


The gun of 100 1881 model is a rapid-fire steel part that is intended for coastal defense

Characteristics of 100 TR model 1881 guns

Piece	Canon 100 rapid fire
Date Model	Model 1881 TR
Weight parts	1190 kg
caliber	100 mm
Tube length	2 m 60
Cylinder head	Locking system screw and component
can look	Levasseur Model 1881 System
Weight lookout	1940 kg
Shooting angle height	-6 ° / + 20 °
Angle shot towards	360
Shooting range	11 300 m max as a function of the shell
Initial speed	580 m / s max
Weight of the shell	162 kg max
Unit Weight	3130 kg
Number of strokes / min	3 strokes / min

The 100 mm gun Model 1881



100 mm gun model 1881
on lookout model 1897, coasts Albur.

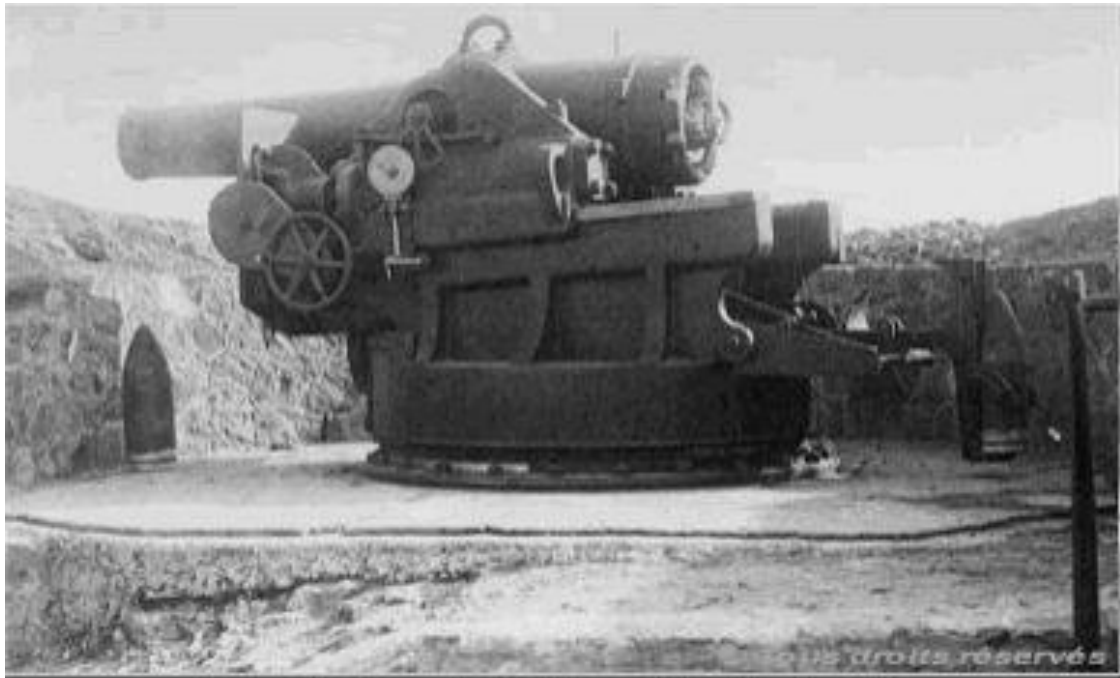
The barrel 100 1889T97 model is an ancient piece of marine steel that was originally provided with a wedge bot. It will be replaced in 1897 by a closing screw and console. This gun will be used for coastal defense.

The gun of 100 1897 mode is a new steel part for coastal artillery gun that resembles a 100 1889T97 mode. They both have the same characteristics.

Characteristics of 100 guns mode 1889 and model 1897 T97

Piece	Canon 100 rapid fire
Date Model	T97 model 1889 and 1897 model
Weight parts	1830 kg
caliber	100 mm
Tube length	5 m 00
Cylinder head	screw locking system
can look	1897 model
Weight lookout	3500 kg
Shooting angle height	-6 ° / + 15 °
Angle shot towards	360
Shooting range	14 500 m max as a function of the shell
Initial speed	760 m / s max
Weight of the shell	162 kg max
Unit Weight	3130 kg
Number of strokes / min	5 strokes / min

The model Mortar 270 mm mounted on a circular chassis



Mortier G de 270mm de côte 1889 sur affût G à chassis circulaire

The barrel 274 is a heavy artillery piece steel coast. It has almost the same features as its big brother the gun 24 1870-87 model. This piece will be used in fortifications for coastal defense. During the first world war, it will be mounted on carriages ALVF trucks (Heavy Artillery on Ferree Way)

Features of the barrel 274 mm G 1881 model 1888 model lookout PC

Piece	Canon steel 274
Date Model	1876
Weight parts	20.600 kg
caliber	274,1 mm
Tube length	0,260 m
Cylinder head	console-closing and spring lock
Unit	Model 1888 in central pivot
Weight lookout	45 tonnes
Shooting angle height	-6 ° / + 25 °
Angle shot towards	350
Shooting range	19500 meters
Initial speed	500 m / s max
Weight of the shell	216-350 kg Maximum
Unit Weight	47 tonnes

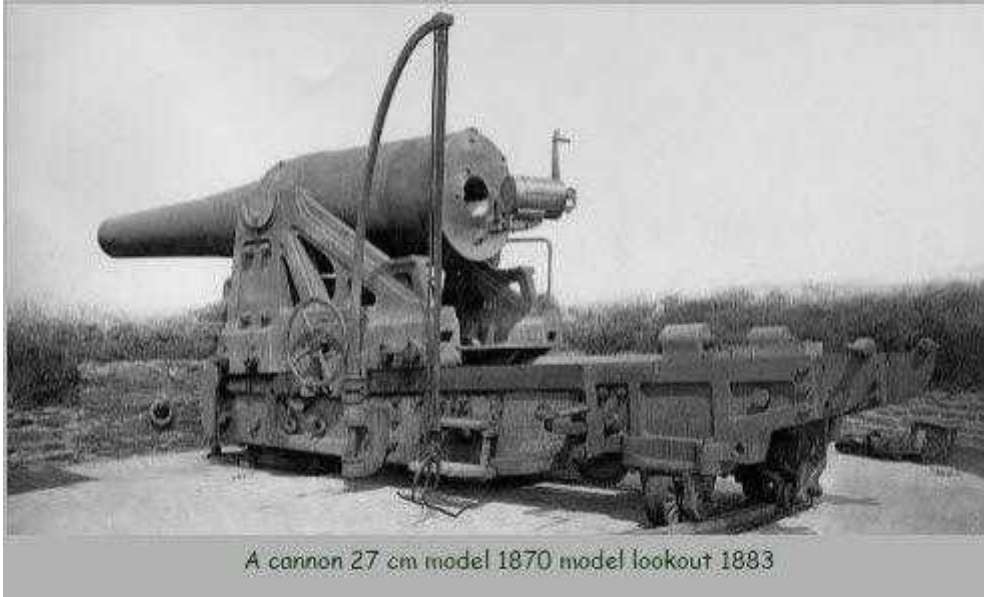
The Hotchkiss gun

The Hotchkiss gun rapid fire had a rate of fire 20 to 25 rounds a minute, It intended for the defense projectiles that of the coastal areas. These guns are commonly installed on coastal batteries or strong points near the sea.



Manufactured by the French Arms Company Hotchkiss et Cie, which had been established in the 1860s by first armament engineers Laurence Benet and Henri Mercie.

The Model 270 mm 18 70 – 1888

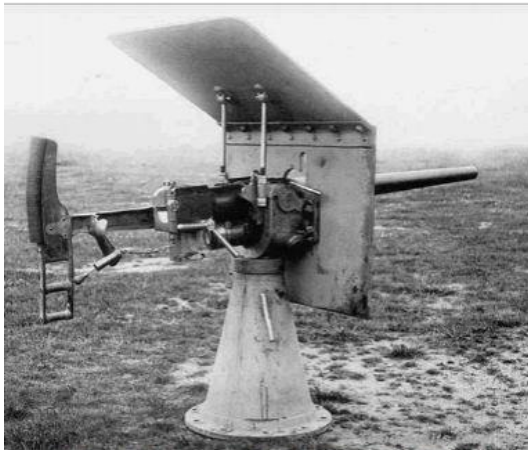


A cannon 27 cm model 1870 model lookout 1883

The gun of 27 1870-87 model is a heavy artillery piece cast coast which the tube is made of steel. It is equipped with a head bracket and spring-loaded latch. This piece is placed in the fortifications on the FA prior pivot side carriages to protect maritime borders.

General features 27 C model from 1870 to 1887 on 1888 model lookout FA

Piece Date Model Weight parts caliber Tube length Cylinder head	Canon 27 Shore cast iron with steel casing 1870 32,200 kg 274.4 mm 8.265 m console-closing and spring lock
blind Weight lookout Shooting angle height Angle shot towards Shooting range Initial speed Weight of the shell Unit Weight	Model 1888 prior pivot 45 tonnes $-6^{\circ} / +20^{\circ}$ 180° 13500 meters 590 m / s max 216-350 kg Maximum 47 tonnes



Canon M de 47mm TR 1885-2 sans tourillons sur affût M à recul dit automatique



Canon M de 100mm TR 1881 sur affût 1897 PC

Canon 47 mm TR 1885 Rapid fire automatic and the Canon 100 mm TR 1881 modified 1897

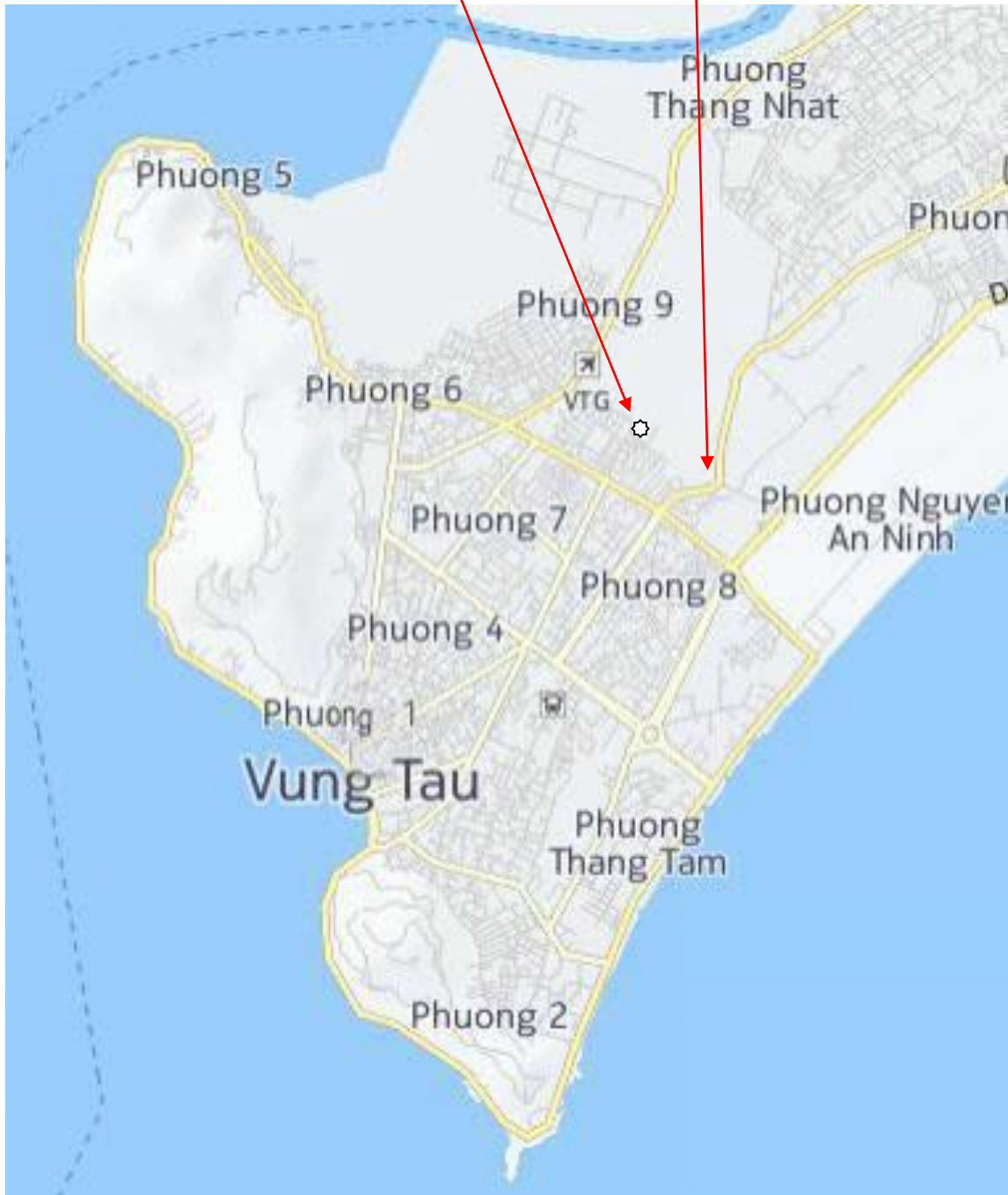


Image of a search light. This kind was the exact make and Model used in many of the Gun positions

CHAPTER FOUR

The gun emplacements location and general information on them.

History and Details of the Baria Road (Block) Blockhouse “K” & Point “16”



Photos of point No 16



This old fort (Blockhouse) was on the old road from the De Long Pier to ALSG on the back beach. These are photos from that period 1968 – 1970. This road ran behind the airfield. Unfortunately is now gone. It was demolished in 2015 to make way for a new road

Baria Road (The Blockhouse) "K"

Cap Saint-Jacques. This block, a pillar of the land defense of Cape St Jacques in 1914. has a turret eclipse DF 1905. Army gun of 75 mm. the only installed overseas, and a battleship observatory. It is quite similar to the intermediate structures of Verdun, with escarpment in flowing ground, and dry moat crossed by a stone bridge. It is protected by a defensive grid. Admission is achieved by a caponier (*military, historical, A type of fortification structure which allows firing along the bottom of a dry moat that surrounds the main fortress.*) flanking the throat itself through shooting slots. The turret is number 57. The structure, built at an altitude of 5 meters, is also armed with machine guns 6 to 8 mm. It is still in service in 1939. and even into the 50s. Today, topped by a watchtower, it is enclosed within the walls of the air base Vung Tau.

Despite efforts at several levels, we have not obtained permission to visit it. and had to settle for photographing us through a hole in the perimeter wall of the base. Unfortunately, it is very overgrown, and the turret is visible. We can, therefore, say that it is still in place. JJM03/07/2008

Baria Road Fortification" See Below. This was built before the Airfield was, and after the completion of the Airfield, it became its entrance. It was there during the War. It was used by the Americans as part of the perimeter defense. They used the tower for a perimeter guard post. Very spooky place! It went several stories underground. (rumor)



Circa 1968

Today 17-9-2016, I managed to obtain permission to enter the airfield and inspect the Fort. It is in surprisingly good condition for its age. Also, I have placed this at the front of this section on the Guns and Forts, because this fort shows how they operated the Guns. Things are comparatively well preserved and will help you understand the rest of what I have written. A very good understanding of the works has come from this one Fort.

Approaching the Fort the first thing you notice it that it is heavily overgrown. There is a fair amount of rubble strewn around the area.

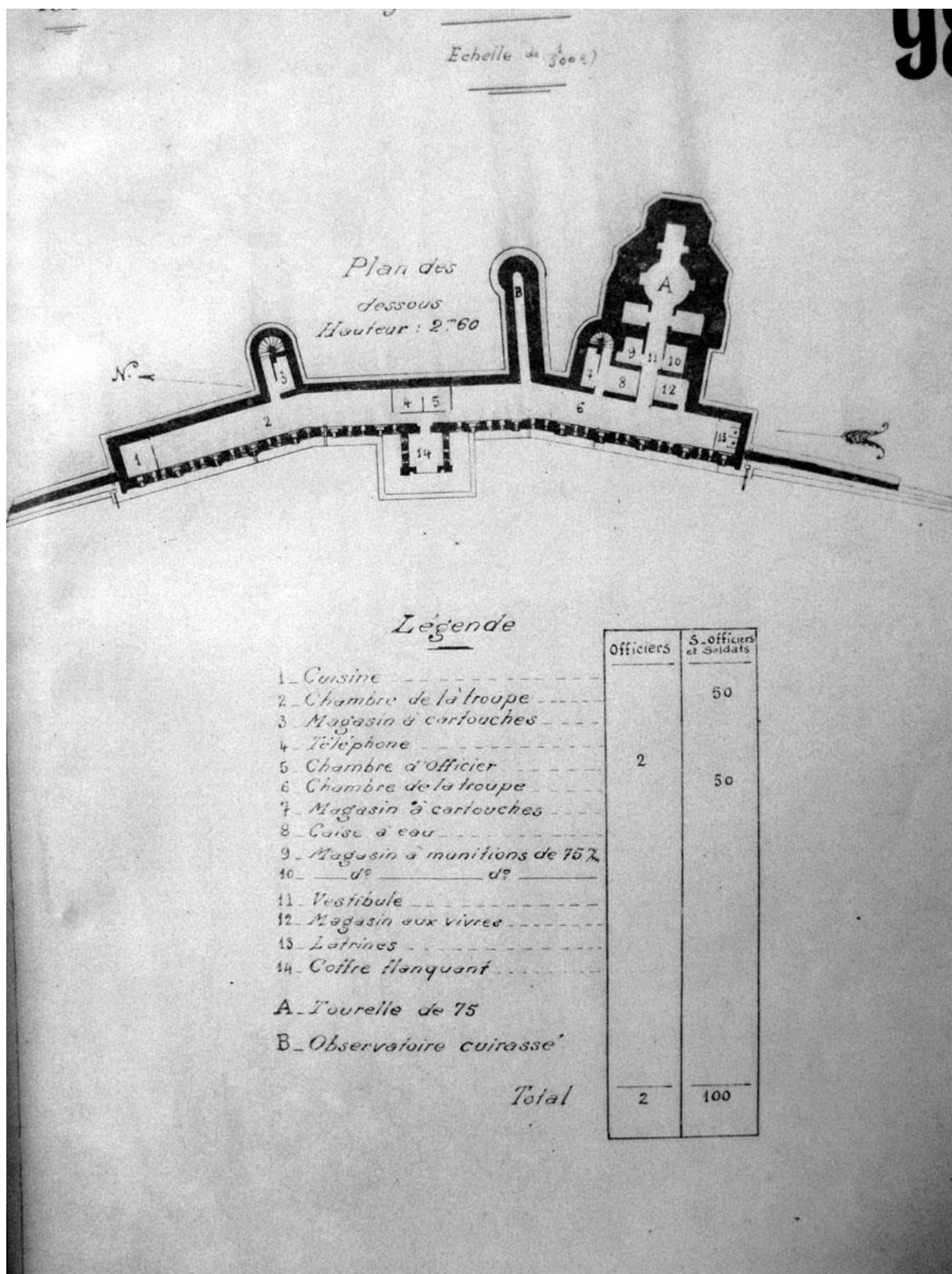


Walking up to the main entrance you come to a doorway that branches left and right when you enter. Estimated to be about 60 meters long in overall length, but it is not symmetrical the right branch is longer than the left; because it contains the 75 mm gun.



On the left looking into the entrance, on the right looking back out through the entrance.

I will be spending some time at this establishment because it is the best example of the working systems of a fort that we have managed to find. It is a good chance to properly understand what we are looking at.



This is the plan of the Fort. You can see that it was manned by 2 Officers and 100 other ranks
Below, I will go into more detail.



This is an aerial photo of the fort, taken in 1955. On the right, you can see what was then the main road to Baria. The white area around the Fort is cleared of vegetation. The darker areas show the dry moat.

You can also make out the bridge that connected the fort to the road, this has long since disappeared.

It is protected by a defensive grid. Entry is gained via a caponier (*military, historical. A type of fortification structure which allows firing along the bottom of a dry moat that surrounds the main fortress.*) flanking the entrance itself through shooting slots. Shown below.



Here we will generally look at the outside of the fort before we venture inside.



The first picture is the extreme left of the Fort, the next section heading toward the watchtower.



Looking at the entrance and the left-hand side of the watchtower, then the right-hand side.



Looking at the right-hand side of the fort which is longer than the left side.



This is the rear of the Fort looking at the watchtower



Above the entrance, there is the date 1908, now we are inside.



The end of the left section after entering the main doorway looking toward the Kitchen.

Looking at the inside of the Fort from right to left. It is now obviously being used as some kind of storeroom for builders, the was a definite smell of paint thinners in the air.



On the right section, there is a small tunnel type construction leading to the position of a small gun.



This position feeds the small gun mounted on the roof of the Fort

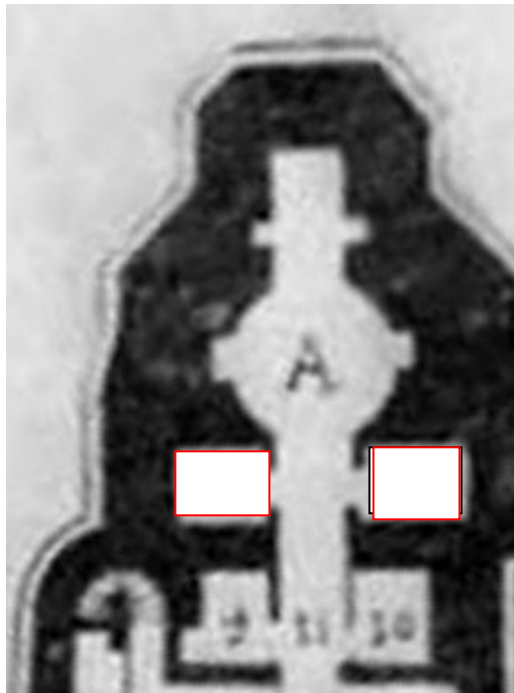


Look directly up from the previous picture to the top of the fort with a floor in place to fire the weapon.



At the very end of the left-hand side is the kitchen. The left photo shows the doorway and the next shows what was the kitchen.

The next position is the main armament room



These rooms are really interesting they are the best-preserved workings of the Guns we have found. I will do my best to explain the workings to you. Point A is where the feed to the Gun sits. The Gun is raised and lowered by a type of jack using the fulcrum and pivot system.

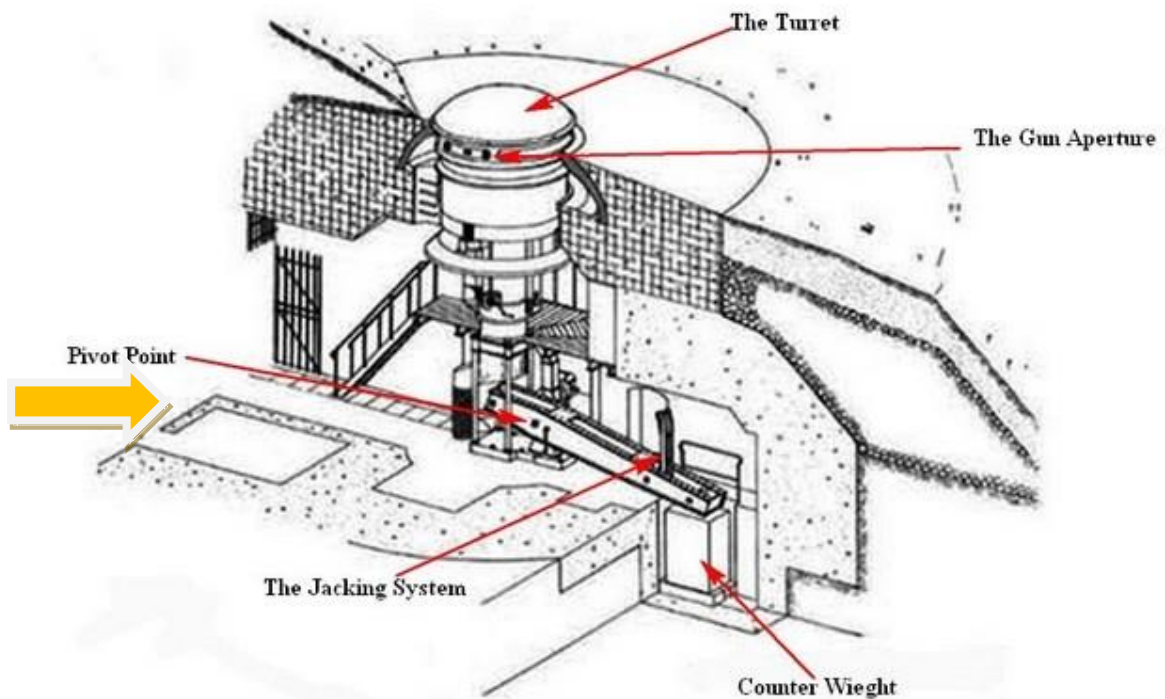
The numbers 9,11,10 are in sequence,(9) Magazine for 75 mm ammunition. (11) entrance; foyer, antechamber. (10) Magazine for 75 mm ammunition




Looking down into the room where the Gun is raised and lowered. (11) entrance; foyer, antechamber.

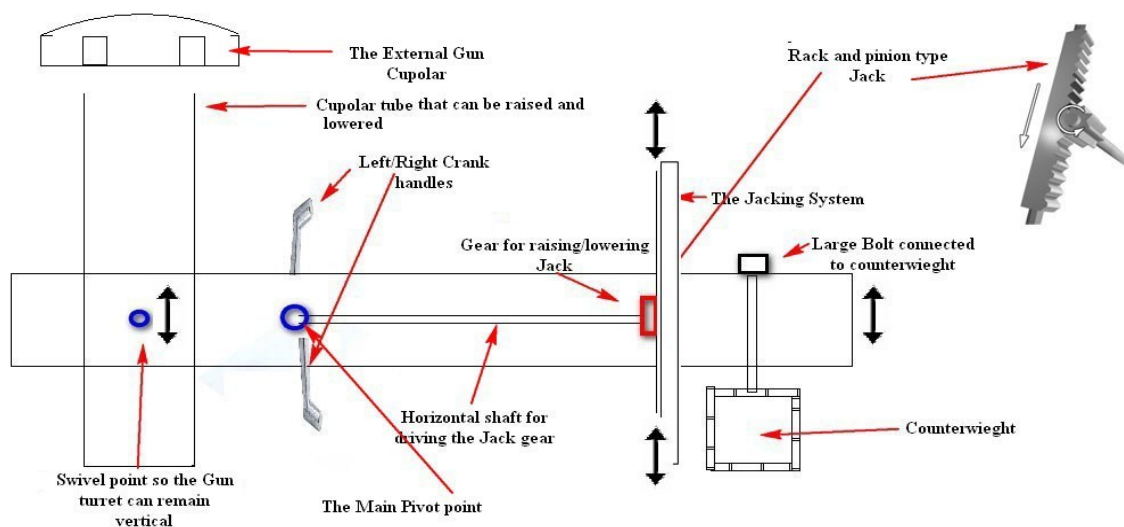
Below is the gun system used at this Fort

It shows the Turret and the operating system. You can clearly see the main support arm that lifts the Turret up and down. Take notice of the counterweight at the end of the arm just after the Jack.



The Pivot point is clearly marked. If you look at it as in relation to this particular fort, you would enter from the left as marked with a  Through the entrance and past the ammunition storage rooms on the left and right and continue onto the Gun itself.

Above the lifting system, you notice the mezzanine floor from where the troops would control the direction of fire, by rotating the Turret.



This a simple explanation of how the system works. By raising and lowering the Jack the Gun moves up and down and thereby opening and closing the cupola above.

Below is the Jack its self and the gearing system that raises and lowers the main spar. It operates on the same principle as a 4 wheel drive, Jack. A simple system capable of lifting great weights



You will notice that the ratchet is slightly curved in order for the gear to remain in full contact whilst operating.

It is a surprisingly good condition, considering it is well over 100 years old. As is the rest of the Fort compared to many that have been covered in this document. But time marches on, soon there will be nothing left to see or even remember.



The left picture shows where chains were attached to hold the gun in place. That is to take the weight off the Jack when the Gun is in the desired position. The right picture shows the jacking system.



The left picture showing the pivot point and the right showing how wooden blocks have been used to hold the gun in place to take the strain off the Jack, whilst the gun was dismantled.




You can still see the manufactures name on the main lifting spa

This room, because of its relatively well-preserved condition deserves a bit more attention. I believe this is the last Gun which can give a real chance to study the workings



The magazine rooms 9 and 11 used for the storage of the 75 mm ammunition.



These rooms that I have marked on the above plan with red squares  are for the Projectiles and Fuses.



This is the Jack well. That is to say, the place where the end of the main spar is connected to the Jack and counterweight.



Looking back from the end of the main spar, showing how it was connected and the rear end of the Jack. The large bolt at the end of the spar is connected to the counterweight below.



The reverse of the previous, looking back toward the jack. Showing the pivot point and the jacking arms.



This section raises the cupola column to move up and down in a vertical line by allowing it to swivel when being positioned.



Here is a blower or exhaust fan that is connected to the gun. You can also see the position where the electric motor was placed to drive it.



Another two images of the fan/blower connect to the Gun.



Here you can see another view of the gear system and the shaft that turns the gears from the hand cranks.



This is an important photo due to the fact that it is the first time you can get an idea of the true size of the emplacement. It shows Reece climbing up the turret.



Here we are looking straight up to the turret. Notice that there is a steel ladder there so that someone can climb up to the top. This would be necessary in the event that something got itself stuck in the breech of the Gun or maybe an empty shell case failed to eject.



Looking up to where the blower/exhaust connects to the gun turret



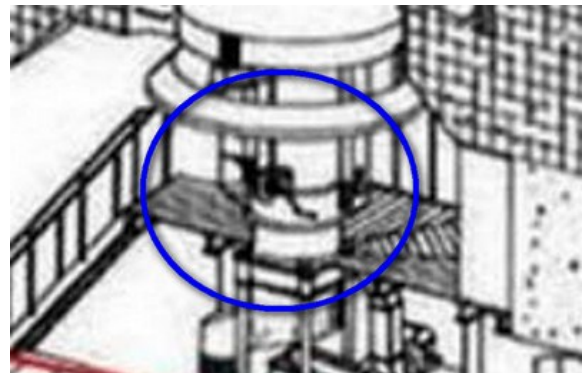
Looking directly up to the cupola. Then a ventilation shaft.



On the left, Looking at the shaft that connects the main spar to the cupola. Middle; Looking down to the bottom of it . Right; Looking up to the top of it.



The first is looking back toward the entrance, the next is looking into the gun.



This is particularly interesting because it shows the gears that enable the gun crew to rotate the turret, from the upper part of the gun above the lower portion. This was accomplished by rotating the handles that connect to this gear system as you can see in the drawing

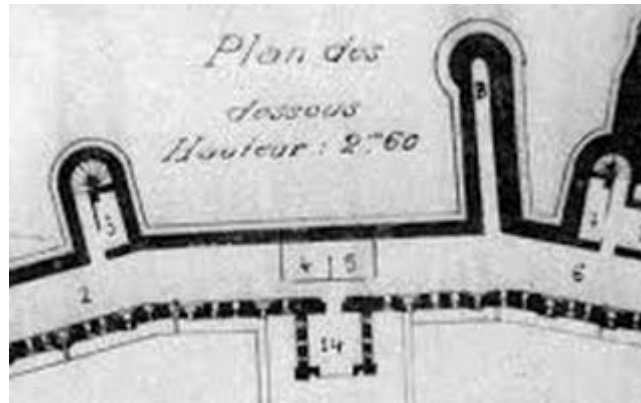
So by now you should be able to basically understand how the raising and lowering of the gun and rotation of the cupola worked. On top of the Fort, you see a partially raised cupola. When not in use the cupola would be in the fully closed position.



The Gun cupola situated on the roof of the Fort, in it's partially raised position.



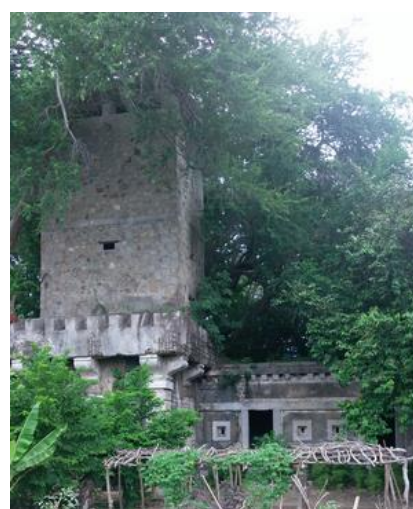
This looks to be the inverted cover for one of the small guns



The plan above shows the position of the left and right stairs case leading to the top of the fort. The part marked “B” is the tunnel/chamber leading to the small gun



Inside you will find two sets of stairs (both left and right) leading to the top of the fort and to the access point of the watchtower.



By studying the fort you can see that the watchtower is a later addition.

The standard of building is not as good as the original fort. Unfortunately, I have not been able to find out when it was built. There is a rumour that it added by the Viet Minh, as yet unconfirmed.



The entrance to the Watchtower. The door is on the rear of the building. The next is the side view.



Look up to the mezzanine floor which can only be accessed by a ladder. Also you can see the difference in the workmanship.

In summary, what have we been able to discover? Despite all the rumours about there being three different levels, we have been able to state categorically that there are only two levels. There are no underground levels as per the rumours over many years.

There are the main floor and a slight difference in levels where the gun is situated. Plus a depression where the base of the Jack apparatus is positioned.

Then there is the Watchtower which is placed on top of the fort. It does have a mezzanine floor, but I wouldn't call it another level.

It has one 75 mm gun and two machine gun positions of 6 to 8 mm calibre.

All in all, I was so pleased to be allowed access to the area as it has given me a greater understanding of how things worked

**The White House (Bach Dinh) (Villa Blanche)
also known as (Villa Anna)**



The White House

Before the White Palace, was the Phuoc Thang fortress (the 20th year of Minh Mang Nguyen Dynasty). This fort is a place which fired the first shot (10.02.1859) on the French fleet when they attacked Saigon - Gia Dinh (by sea) Nui Lon was an important strategic location for military forces. Gunshots from the fortress destroyed many French warships in 1859 as they passed by Vung Tau on their way to attack Saigon.

Today, cannons are still preserved as relics of the former fortress.

It was a glorious feat of the army and people of Vung Tau in the early war against France. After pacification of Cochin, The Governor French Indochina Paul Doumer was ordered to dismantle the fortress of Phuoc Thang (1898) to build their own villa .(Kanji meaning of the word Vietnam Bach Dinh). as a resting place for the Governor General of Indochina. Works started in 1898, completed in 1902. To build Bach Dinh, 800 / prisoners laboured for nearly 10 years. Every inch of ground, stones, tree tops here were covered in sweat, tears and blood of the prisoners.

Doumer"s public works program was funded by onerous taxation, state monopolies and forced labour that placed a terrible strain on the local population.

Later The White Palace was under the control of French envoy. Governor Paul Doumer (who later became president of France until his assassination in 1931), then named the mansions Villa Blanche, in the name of his daughter Blanche Rachel Doumer Especially from 09/12/1907 to 1916, the White Palace where the French used for the house arrest of King Thanh Thai..Actually, he had a better fate in this respect than some of the other emperors, who got shipped off to French colonies in Africa or to off-shore Vietnamese islands. The Palace thus was also called Dinh Ong Thuong (King's Palace).1926 White Palace was where King Bao Dai used to visit on holiday with their families. Bach Dinh pre-1975 period is the resting place of the old regime's president.

There are two entrances to the White Palace. A winding road running under forests price, for cars up to the lobby. A walkway over 146 ancient stone steps, discreetly located between rows of porcelain seniors. Bach Dinh 19m high, has three floors, with bold shades of French architecture of the late 19th-century basement used for cooking. Ground floor reception.

Here also decorated the ancient artefacts for interior decoration Walking around the White Palace, visitors are surprised to see about eight stone statues busts mounted on a straight line the main wall around three sides of the building. Most of the subjects are art style of ancient Greece. At dawn , and the statues symmetry portrait sketches based sparkling peacock looked magnificent and magical. With all the charm, the White Palace not only satisfying for Paul Doumer that the whole of Vietnam still like Bach Dinh and is used as a place of rest, recuperation.

Now 2016 it is a Museum containing beautiful old furniture and Porcelain from a Chinese wreck off the coast.



The White House circa 1905



A cannon in the Nguyen Dynasty fort on Big Mountain, Front Beach.





Ham Tru An.....Safety Tunnel ...Shelter

History and details of the B2 Position 1 (Battery)



B2 Position 1 (Battery)

Cap Saint-Jacques. This battery encoded B2. is installed at the altitude of 125 meters, and is part of the Lighthouse Group.

This is a modern reinforced concrete structure with four armed cells in 1912 with four guns 194 Model M 1893-1896 PC inclined chassis. It is identical to its neighbour, the battery cable. Both blocks unquestionably among the most successful of French achievements in coastal batteries, with the approach of the First World War. Only they can be compared armed cannon batteries 240 1893-1896 Model M "Colonies" under turret or PC. The tube 194 Model M from 1893 to 1896 was conducted at nine copies per foundry Alley in France, and its sloping chassis mounting. 8 pieces, for Schneider, Creusot.(was a historic French iron and steel mill which became a major arms manufacturer)At the angle of 12°, it can send a projectile out of 10 465 meters.

No document or any photo, this material position has reached us. The battery is in the form of a reinforced concrete monolith with a length of 80 meters. A service gallery, accessible by three protected inputs, runs behind the canyon wall. It communicates with the parts distribution chambers by short gallery sections. Power to the room is through a vertical metal sheath, leading to the centre of the sub-harness, as can still be seen on parts of 240 Model 1902-06 Battery Lighthouse.

Everything suggests that the batteries of 240 "colonies" on PC were organized in the same way. though none of them is come down to us in the state. The headquarters, located at both ends of the battery are reinforced concrete and prefigure the future of Command post between the wars. The pieces remain only a short time in the position, the block was disarmed during the First World war and its equipment returned in France. It is not used again in 1939. despite a 1930 project, which plans to meet with the battery cable to form a modernized battery, armed with four guns 194 1893-1896 Model M turned on PC for shooting at large angles.

Indeed, of the eight tubes of both batteries returned in France, four were lost in the sinking of the ship carrying them, but the other four are available in France. When the carriages, they are always at Cape St. Jacques.

The battery was recently cleared of vegetation and is in remarkable condition. The wells feeding ducts leading to the centre of the sub-harnesses were covered after the dismantling of the parts, a concrete plug that gives them a turret Air eclipse, in retracted position. It's an exceptional site, even without its equipment. JJM 03/07/2008



Batterie de la Position N°1 Mai 2008

© Jean-Jacques MOULINS



Batterie de la Position N°1 Mai 2008

© Jean-Jacques MOULINS

B2 stands for Bastion 2, but the French call it position 1, confusing isn't it.



Batterie de la Position N°1 POF gauche Mai 2008

© Jean-Jacques MOULINS



Batterie de la Position N°1 POF gauche Mai 2008

© Jean-Jacques MOULINS





This (B2) is one of the best examples there is. It is also one of the most accessible, Therein lies the problem. (LITTER). You drive or ride your motorbike right up to it. But there are no receptacles to put your rubbish. A lot of young couples come up every day and have a picnic, unfortunately, they leave a lot of litter there

History and details of the Large Spur (Right Battery) Batterie De Groite Grand

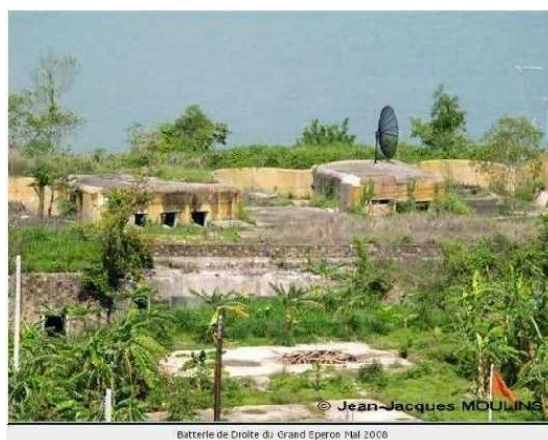


Large Spur (right battery)

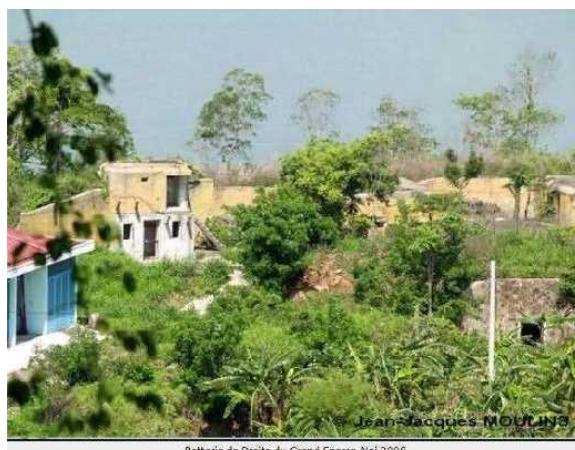
Old Battery A . Cap Saint-Jacques. A first battery was established in this location, since 1892. This block, part of the group of Plateau, is armed with mortars 4 G 270 Model 1889 PC lookout. Parts placed at an average altitude of 116 meters are arranged in a circular arc. into two half-battery. Projectiles and powder are stored in a cave shop, and a store located under the covering mass of the hill. A telemetry station is established, listed 179. Do not meet the requirements of modern warfare, and advances in artillery, the block is completely overhauled in the years before the First World War. The material placed on carriage G circular frame, are then arranged in a modern reinforced concrete structure with four compartments, separated by combat shelters Model 1901. The headquarters, located on the two wings of the work, ensure fire control. They are reinforced concrete and foreshadow, as in battery cable and the Position No. 1. PDT future of coastal batteries of the interwar period. It is a feature that is not available elsewhere, at far as we know, neither in France nor overseas. Only batteries of 194 Cable and Position No. 1, in the Massif du Lighthouse, have a similar organization. It is possible that in these three blocks, the shooting was settled by half battery, which was also the case in the battery A. Battery left the Great Spur being devoid of PDT. it is also possible that his shot was led from the PDT left the right battery. The block is disarmed during the First World War. and its equipment returned in France. The site is not reused in 1939. This Battlement was occupied by the Vietnamese army, but we can clearly see the road that goes up on the board. It seems in excellent condition. JJM 03/07/2008



Batterie de Droite du Grand Eperon Mai 2008



Batterie de Droite du Grand Eperon Mai 2008



Batterie de Droite du Grand Eperon Mai 2008

History and details of the Grand Spur (left battery) Battery de Gauche Grand Eperon



Grand Spur (left battery)

Old Battery B . Cap Saint-Jacques. A first battery was established on this site as soon as 1892. This work, which is part of the Great Spur group, is located 300 meters SE of the previous. It's armed with four mortars G 270 Model 1889 PC lookout. Relatively simple design, it has an underground powder magazine and a protected projectiles store.

Part of its endowment is stored in the battery stores A.

A telemetric station is established to the coast 180. Like its neighbour, the battery is fully remodelled in the years before the First World War. Its material placed on carriage G circular frame, installed in a modern reinforced concrete structure with four compartments separated by combat shelters Model 1901. Unlike its neighbour, the battery is devoid of PDT (Command Post) Like her. she is disarmed during the First World War. and its equipment is returned France. The site is not reused in 1939. Today, he is free to access but quite overgrown. JJM 03/07/2008



1968-1969

These four photos were taken by the Australian troops who were posted here during the war.



The wet 1968 – 1968



The dry 1968- 1969



Circa 1968 – 1969



Batterie de Gauche du Grand Eperon Mai 2008



Batterie de Gauche du Grand Eperon Mai 2008



Batterie de Gauche du Grand Eperon Mai 2008



Batterie de Gauche du Grand Eperon Mai 2008



Batterie de Gauche du Grand Eperon Mai 2008

The dry 2008

Returning to the site in August 2016, it was a bit disappointing to see how overgrown the site has become. When first trying to approach the site, you have to walk on about 300 mm of decomposing vegetation. You can actually feel it compressing under foot. All kinds of thoughts go through your mind; such as, this is a natural habitat for snakes!



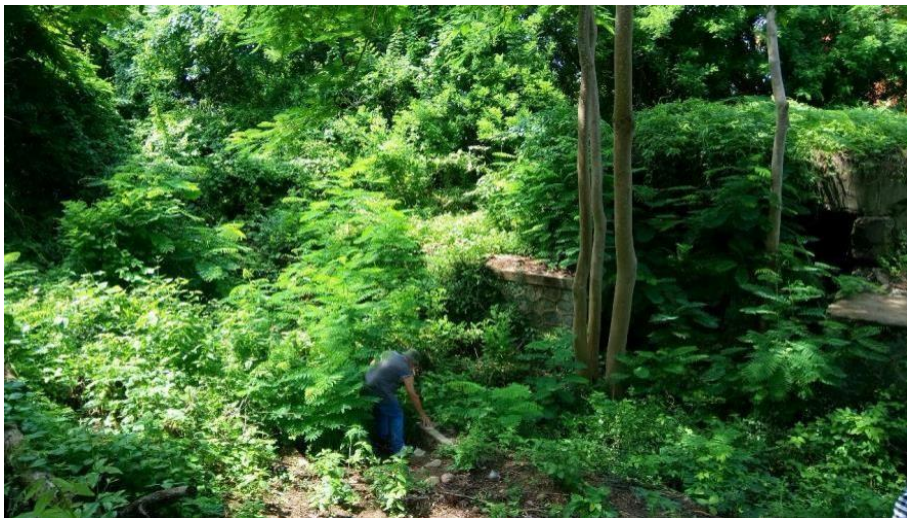
August 2016



The shells were passed through these holes to the Guns.



It is not very clear but you can just see the steps leading down to a lower bunker



The author looking for a way into the position August 2016



August 2016





August 2016

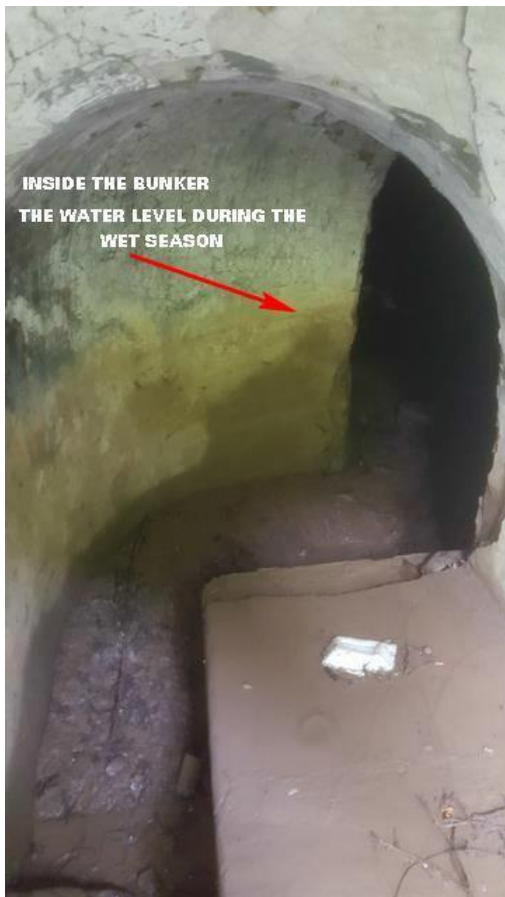




Entrance to the bunker with the actual Aperture, through which the propellant passed through.



Inside the ammunition storage room August 2016



On the left, you can see the high water mark left from flooding. No, it is not a swastika, it is a Buddhist sign. This site needs a lot of work before the vegetation completely destroys it.

History and details of the Lazaretto(Battery)



Lazaretto (battery)

Old Battery C, Cap Saint-Jacques. This battery support from the waterfront of Cape St Jacques, built at an altitude of 170 meters, is part of the group Ganh-Ray.

It's army in 1912. four barrels of 14 cm Model 1870 Model M lookout 1897 PC. This is a masonry structure, comprising two compartments for the two parts, separated by a crosspiece. The third of the ammunition load is contained in a concrete store built right alveoli. The balance of supply is contained in a cave stock, common to the battery and that of Ganh Ray. It's obsolete weaponry is not returned in France and is still in place after the First World War.

The battery is modernized and rearmed, from 1936. with two guns 138 Model 1881 Model lookout 1917. The pieces are placed in tanks of reinforced concrete, placed at both ends of the old battery. PDT (Command Post) of solid reinforced concrete, with a Colonial conjugateur is made in front of the battery.

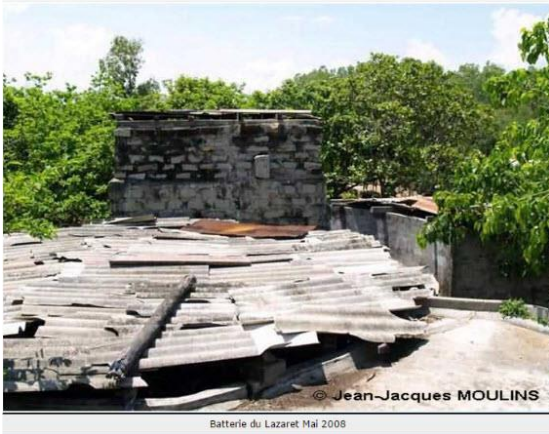
A rangefinder Model H 34 and projector 150 GP off the equipment. Today the site is occupied by a Vietnamese family who acts as caretakers.

It is unrecognisable to the point that we have gone through without realizing it, during the first pass. JJM 03/07/2008



Batterie du Lazaret Rue du rempart 1938

1938



2008

Jump forward now to July 2016, There has been a lot more exploration of the area. Some other Casemates and Quarters have been located in the area.

As mentioned in the introduction I will add more information as I find it.

The Big Mountain . Lazaretto Battery

For the last 5 days, I have been concentrating on exploring the Big Mountain. Although it has been exhausting, it has been well worth it. (15-7-16)

Below you will see what has been uncovered.



While walking around the Lazaretto Battery, I met the family who has since occupied it. After many tries, we got to talking. A very friendly gentleman, who let me inside the Battery which is now his home.

So the next day I took my wife to translate for me. It was then he told me about the other battery that is up a bit higher on the opposite side of the mountain.

On the way we walked past a Block that looked like old French quarters, about 30 metres on we came across an underground storage bunker, another 50 metres upward, we came to the Gun emplacement. Which turned out to be the Command Post for the Battery.





External views of the battery (known)



Inside the battery, which is now the Gentleman's House



The Left



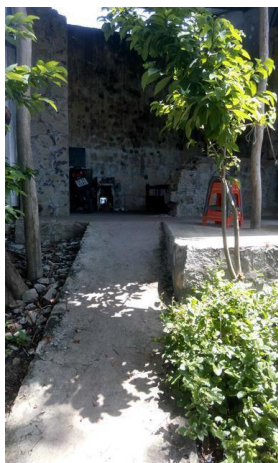
The Centre



The Right



Moving away from the battery, this is the next thing you see is this house which used to be the old barracks. It is hard to recognise but if you stand and look very hard, you will see that it was a block for quarters. Much easier to understand when you move around to the rear.



Images of the old Barracks which is now a home to another Vietnamese family.



The Old Quarters



This room here was used as a museum, with many weapons etc. on display. Over the years the locals removed the weapons and sold them for SCRAP and then tore down the building to be used for other projects.



When you go behind the Barracks and look to the right of the above building this is what you'll find. It was very hard to understand what I was looking at.



When I saw these constructions I was very confused, so I sat down and had a smoke and stared at them for a while. It dawned on me what I was looking at “Latrines !!” There is three latrines side by side, located behind the Barracks. All the walls and roofs are missing.



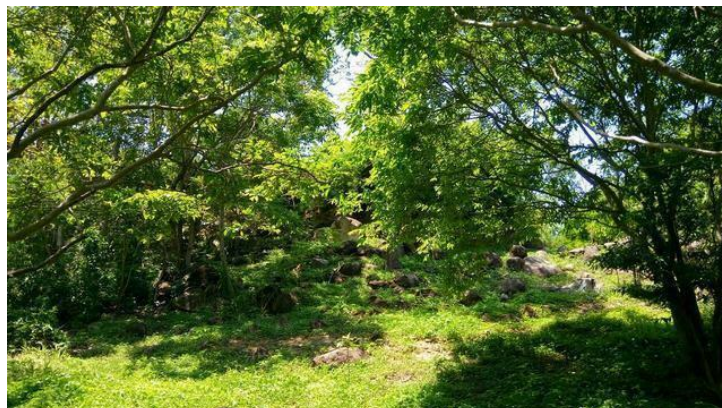
The three latrines; side by side. Look at the picture above and visualise the toilets sitting on top of this. The arches below are access doors so that the waste can be removed. Of course, there were no sewer systems on top of these mountains.



Move 50 metres to the east and you come across underground storage rooms.



Leaving the Storage, rooms moving even more easterly about 75 Metres



Climbing up a small incline you will get your first look at the Gun emplacement



Approaching the Position



The Entrance that gives the date of construction "1937".





You can see the size of the positions by comparing the size of the people in the shot



Above are the Entrances, there are two, a left and right, both identical.



Looking down to the bottom level



Various shots inside the Command Post



On top of the Casemate. This is PDT position (French for) fire control position. (Command Post)



External View of the Command post





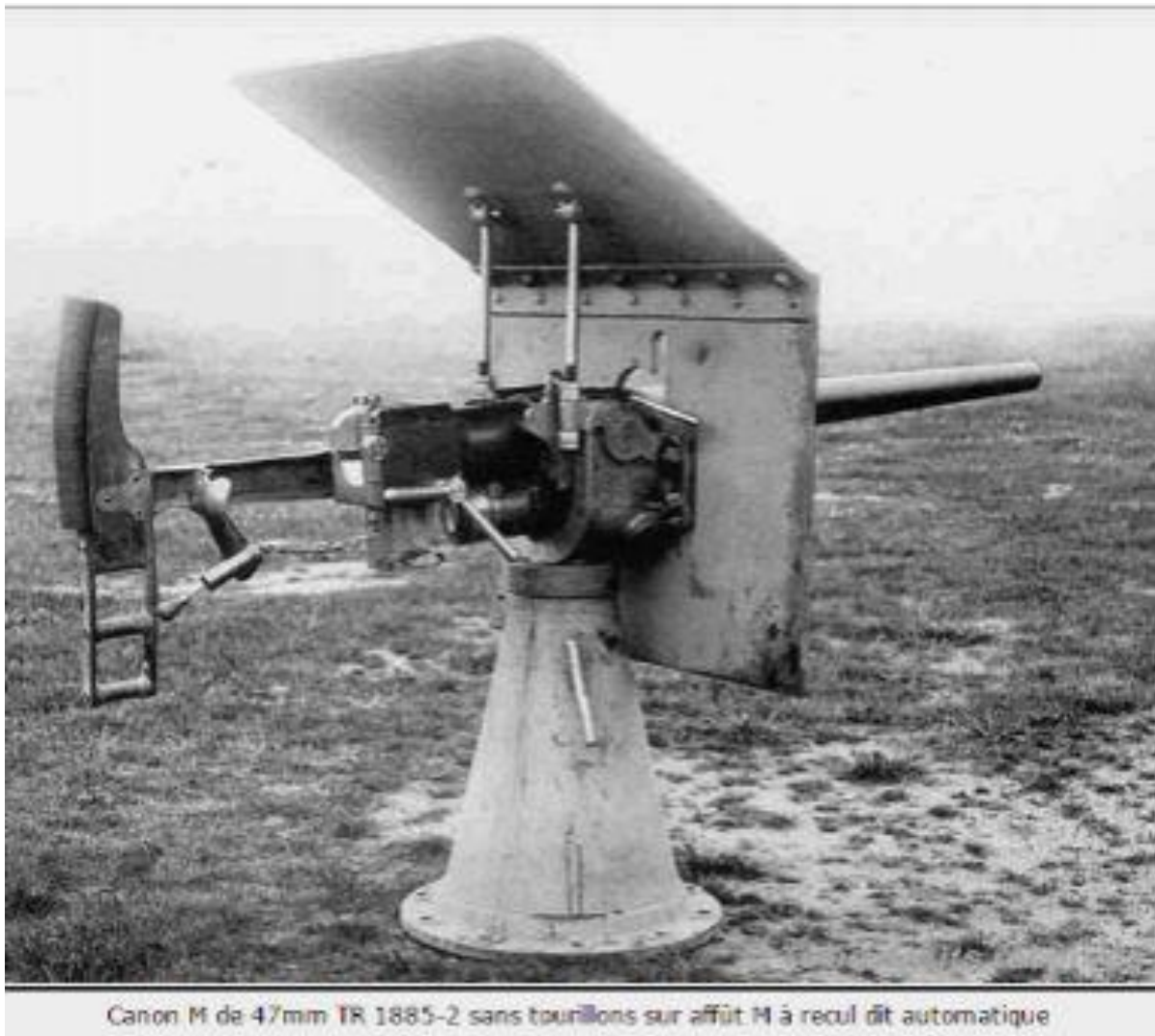
Still heading east, climb another 50 metres and you come to a very small gun position



Climb these rocks and look down at your feet and this is what you will see



Have yet to find out what LO-F5 means. Going by the bolts it looks like a Machine Gun Position, like the one shown below. The mounting bolts look the same type to me.



Canon of 47 mm without Trunnions on the lookout. A trunnion (from Old French "trognon", trunk) is a cylindrical protrusion used as a mounting and/or pivoting point. First associated with cannon,

History and details of the Lighthouse (Battery mortars of the)



Lighthouse (Battery mortars of the)

Lighthouse (Battery mortars of the) Cap Saint-Jacques. Built to an altitude of 75 meters, this battery, which is part of the Group of the Lighthouse, is an army, not navy in 1912. Of five mortars M 30 cm Model 1893 on M Model 1889 PC. A The Generals Borgnis-Desbordes and Delambre. In a report of 26 February 1899. expressly ask for the realisation of this block that they deem it essential for the Prohibition of anchorages, the Eastern Cape Saint-Jacques.

They describe as it will be realised. They are also calling for the construction of a battery of 24 cm. Which will also be carried out. Located between the battery of the Lighthouse and that of the lotus, the battery of mortars is a stone-lined block, quite similar, with two rectangular tanks.

The A receives three pieces, which points to SE. Above the battery of the lighthouse. It has a cross member shelter, between parts 2 and 3 and another shelter, to the right of the exhibit 1. The second tank receives the two other parts, which points to the SW. A building to use of quartering is located between the two tanks.

The materials, obsolete, are not returned to France and are still in place at the end of the First World War. The site is not reused in 1939. Although a draft 1930 plans to submit the mortars in service.

Of our days, four of those are still in place, destitute of their accessories, but always very recognisable, freshly painted the same dark green colour than those of the batteries of the Lighthouse and Ganh Ray. The naming of parts: mortar of Model 300 1893 R 1901 N° 1.2. 3 and 5. An underground of two entries, **gross of deroctage** and 100 meters to the south. On the road leading to the battery of the Lighthouse, was used for the storage of projectiles and their loads. JJM
03/07/2008..... **gross of deroctage**, cannot translate - unknown meaning



1968- 1969



Batterie de mousquet de Place Ha 2008



Batterie de mousquet de Place Ha 2008



Batterie de mousquet de Place Ha 2008



Jean-Jacques MOULINS



Jean-Jacques MOULINS



Batterie de mousquet de Place Ha 2008

Jean-Jacques MOULINS



Batterie de mousquet de Place Ha 2008

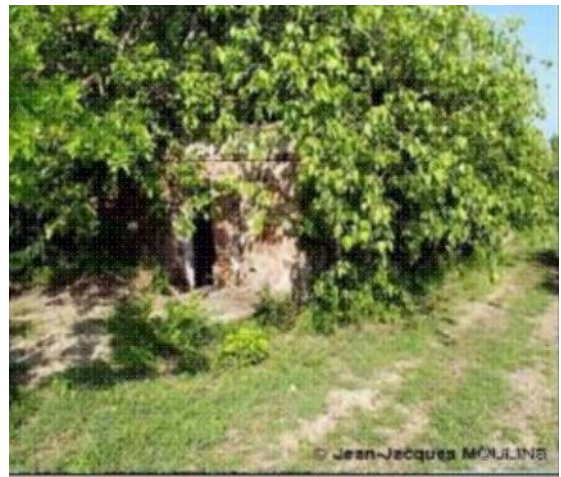


Batterie de mousquet de Place Ha 2008

Jean-Jacques MOULINS



Batterie de mortiers du Phare Mai 2008



Batterie de mortiers du Phare Mai 2008

Go to PC



Batterie de mortiers du Phare Mai 2008



Batterie de mortiers du Phare Mai 2008



Batterie de mortiers du Phare Mai 2008



Batterie de mortiers du Phare Mai 2008

This set of images shows the general state of the guns in the year 2008



Batterie de mortiers du Phare Mai 2008

I don't know how they did it, but some-one has removed a complete gun from its mount shown here. Almost an impossible task I would have thought.



Batterie de mortiers du Phare Mai 2008



Batterie de mortiers du Phare Mai 2008



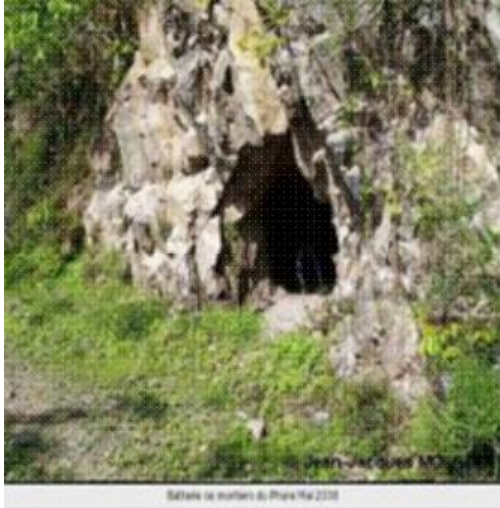
Someone has had a go at removing this gun also. One of the 300mm mortars photographed on the 2-7-2016



These pictures were taken in July 2016. a lot of vegetation has grown and the place really needs some attention.



The sign says
 The vestige of the "Ancient Artillery Battlefield" on the small mountain is a project of the Strategy Defence System, which was built by the French Colonialist from the ending of the century XIX to the beginning of XX, in order to mastership boats coming to and depart from the sea gate Saigon-Vung Tau. The Vestige was recognised the National Grade rank of the minister of Information and Culture under decision No 57. VH/QD Dated January 18, 1993. If you expand the picture you'll see that is what it says exactly.



There are caves all over these mountains be very careful when you go exploring.



This is the inside of what I presume an ammunition store at the site of the 300mm mortars. Very hot and humid inside. A lot of damage has been done over the years

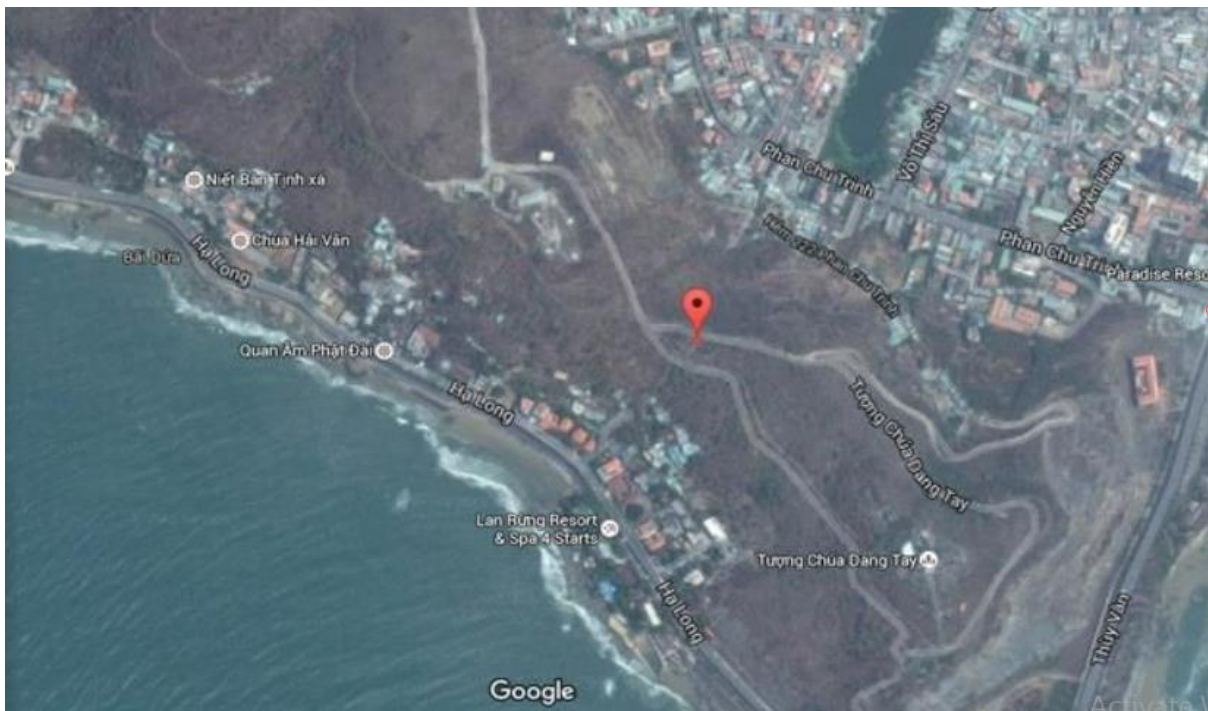


From inside the ammo this aperture leads to the gun. I presume it was used for feeding the rounds to that particular mortar.

It is dark and dangerous inside these bunkers. Also dank and humid with little or no light, sometimes the air is very bad with no ventilation. Always go in with group with one remaining at the entrance watching the others



The entrances to the ammunition bunkers.



Taken from Google Earth this image shows the location of the Battery. Although it is spread out over a fair distance going right back to the Jesus statue.

History and details of the Lotus (Battery of)



Lotus (battery of) Cap Saint-Jacques

Old Battery M Placed at an average altitude of 75 meters on the mountain pass separating the two highest point of the range, the battery of Lotus is part of the Lighthouse Group.

Early on a space for six cannons on field carriage was built on the site, to support the land front. But it was not until 1904 that a real battery is built. It gives it a double mission, defending the waterfront and support land front.

To fulfil these, it is armed, in 1914. five barrels of 14 cm from 1881 to 1884 on Model 1897 PC. It is a modern structure, with five compartments separated by cross shelters. It does not have cave store. Its armament is not returned in France during the First World War. The battery is modernised and rearmed since 1936. first with three and four guns 138 Model 1881 Model 1917. Its mission is no longer as a coastal defence.

The block is completely transformed with the construction of four tanks in reinforced concrete, with niches adjoining ammunition, and connected by a covered walkway. A modern PDT (Command Post) is there, with a conjugateur Colonies, and a rangefinder H Model 34. A projector 150 GP complete equipment.

The battery remains army until 1945. It still had its armament in the 50s. and even more recently. Today, it is again military, and the tanks are occupied by double carriages CA guns, we could not see that far. JJM



Circa 1941



1968-1969



A couple of Aussie Diggers inspecting the Guns in 1968

History and details of the Pointe (Battery)



Pointe (battery)

Cap Saint-Jacques This battery, armed with two guns of 75 Model 1897 Model 1916 installed on platforms, is made in 1939 at the southern end of Cape St. Jacques, at the altitude of 20 meters. It has a small concrete command post Several bunkers are also present on this site and free the projector factory 150 GP Battery Lighthouse. The site has been quite distorted by the construction of a small semaphore. The TMP was almost shaved, and the remains of other bunkers are in poor condition. The only immune projector 150 Battery Lighthouse, squatted, is clearly identifiable. JJM 03/07/200





Ruins of the old command post



History and details of the Ben Dinh(Battery)



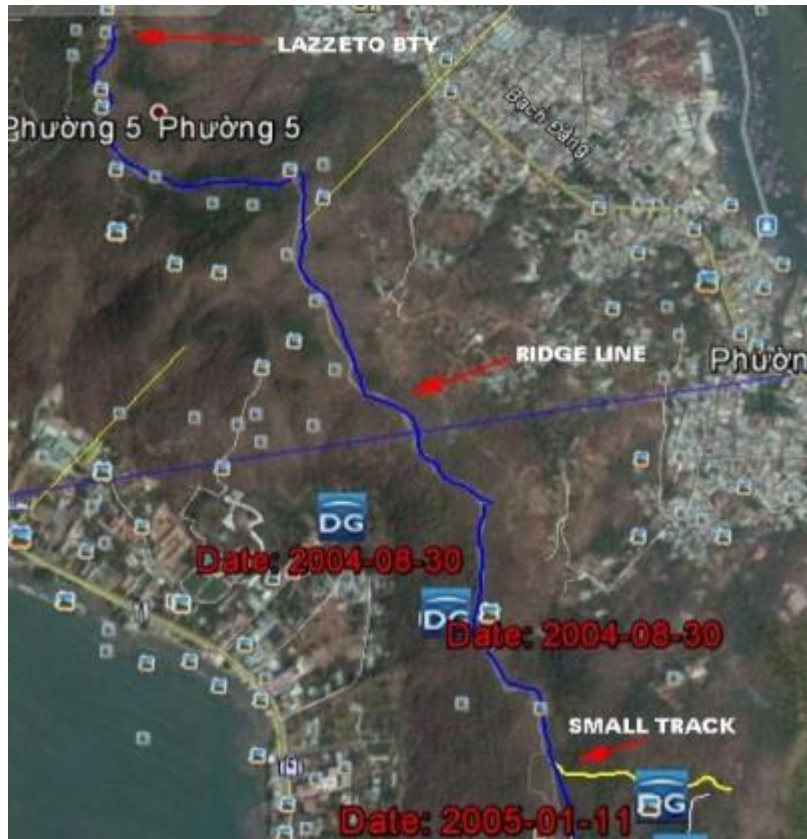
Ben Dinh (Battery)

Ben Dinh or Ban Dinh , Cap Saint-Jacques. Support battery ground front, north of Grand Spur 165 meters. It is a work built in 1912 armed with four guns M 14 cm Model 1881 Model M PC 1897. placed in two cells, framed and separated by cross shelters. The block is disarmed during the First World War. and his equipment returned in France. It is reset in 1940. with 4 guns of 90 Model 1877 Model 1916. and remains in service until 1945. Today the structure is still visible, although very overgrown. JJM 03/07/2008

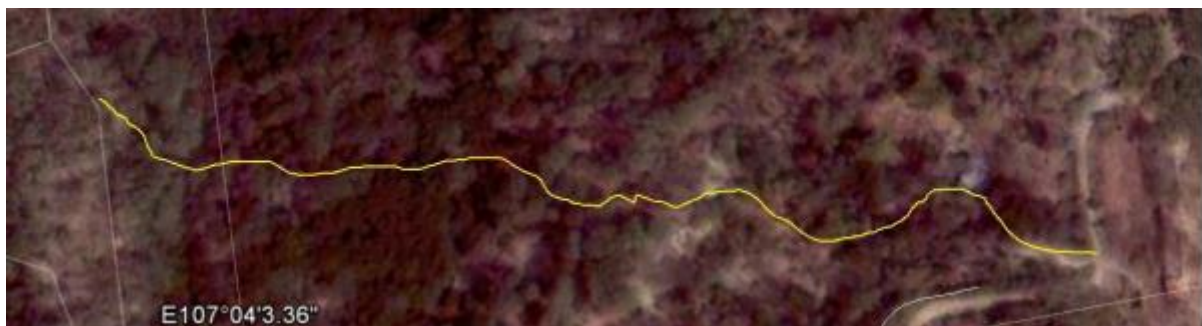




Today 1-9-2016, we ventured to the Ben Dinh Battery, it was very very hot with humidity about 90%. We drove up along the ridge line from the Lazzeto Battery toward the theme park. Follow the **blue** line



Since the Theme Park has taken over the top of the Big mountain, they have fenced off a big part of the area. This means that they have effectively cut some of the roads thereby restricting access. Once we arrived at the fence we stopped and got our bearings. Turned around and backtracked about 75 meters. We were prepared to do a compass march through the Jungle to get to Ben Dinh, Reece saw a small track leading in the right direction so we decided to try and follow it. Follow the **Yellow** line



As we started off we met a Buddhist Monk, I asked him if this was the right track to the French Fort he replied that it was and offered to show us the way. Apparently from what we could understand he had a small temple on the way.

It may not look it from the map (it is not level ground) but it was a difficult march with the heat and humidity, only about 400 meters but it felt like 40 Kilometres. We finally got to his Temple and stopped for a rest. Obviously to us he had converted one of the French buildings into the Temple. He told us we only had about 75 meters to go to get to the Battery. So off we went. The maps I have used are from 2010 taken during the dry season, the maps of 2016 are taken during the wet season and it is difficult to see anything because of the vegetation



The Kindly Monk and his Temple.

At last, we arrived at the Battery and found it very overgrown, the jungle is slowly taking it's land back. Our first view of the Ben Dinh Battery.





The Gun platform, one of the four located here.



This view gives you a general idea of the position. Nature is having her way.





What a shame that the date of construction has been partially destroyed. You now have a good idea of how dilapidated the Ben Dinh Battery has become. I have no idea how much longer these building can hold up against the encroaching jungle.

History and details of the Cable (Battery)



Cable (Battery)

.Battery T Cap Saint-Jacques. This battery, positioned at the altitude of 94 meters, is part of the Lighthouse Group. A support battery, armed with four guns of 14 cm Model 1870 Model forecastle for 1878 and 1897 Model PC. is first performed. It is in service in 1899. It was replaced in 1912 by a modern battery, armed with four guns 194 Model M 1893-1896 PC inclined chassis. It is a reinforced concrete structure, absolutely identical to the Position No. 1. The materials were dismantled and returned to France during the First World War. The block is not reused during World War II. despite a 1930 project that will bring together the battery cable and Position No. 1 in a single work, armed with four guns of 194 Model 1893-96 M raised on . It is today in good condition, but very overgrown. On the access road, one can see a store with two inputs, raw ripper, and in the immediate vicinity of the battery, a brick cavern store, close to the keeper's house, transformed into a pagoda. JJM 03/07/2008



Batterie du Câble PDT gauche Mai 2008

Every time I visit this place, I get flashbacks to the movie “Apocalypse Now”



Batterie du dible Entr@e du magasin tilai 2008



The same as at July 2016





Batterie du Cable Nelson du gardien et entrée du magasin Mai 2008



The Barracks shown on the right-hand side, leading to the storage facility/ The picture on the right.....Inside the store room a very large room indeed.



Batterie du Cable Mai 2008



Batterie du Cable Mai 2008



Batterie du Cable Mai 2008

Today July the 4th 2016, I revisited the Cable Battery. Very much overgrown and a lot of rubble from nearby road building has been dumped on the site. It has been left over from the building of a new road to the Army barracks



external Images

We went inside the battery and took a few shots in there, it is not in too bad a condition for the age of the building.



Some internal Images

We cannot leave the Cable Battery without a small side track . A sad and beautiful side track that it may be.

The Mystery Graves

When doing any kind of research like The French Guns and Forts of Vung Tau you come across a lot of stories and so-called urban legends, this is one of them For years now I have heard rumours of two Japanese graves near one of the Forts in Vung Tau. I thought that it was just another rumour that you come across now and again. So I put it in the back of my mind and thought no more about it. You can imagine my surprise when I accidently stumbled across two graves near the Cable Battery on the Small Mountain. I looked at them for some time and thought, yes these are the two Japanese graves I've heard many rumours about; Which made sense because the Japanese were here in Vung Tau during WW 2. So rumours about Japanese graves could have been well founded



This image was supplied to me by Paul Rowe after I discussed the graves with him. It shows the Graves situated behind the French Artillery Barracks of the Cable Battery on the Small Mountain.

So putting two and two together I figured that I would get them translated from Japanese into English.

The Translation

Then, the two tombstones in your four pictures are for Chinese J01 from right to left Born at China Guangdong Province Fangcheng Prefecture Zhang family Yang's third daughter wife's grave Died at Vietnam Vung Tau in Western calendar on 1968 September 3 in traditional Chinese calendar (nong lich in Vietnamese) on the year of Dog Monkey July 6

We might be fair to interpret this as follows.

This will be the grave of the wife of J02 which I will translate below. Fangcheng prefecture is a quite interesting information. It is because Fangcheng was a part of French concession of Guangzhouwan (which France obtained after 1899 Treaty of Guangzhouwan).

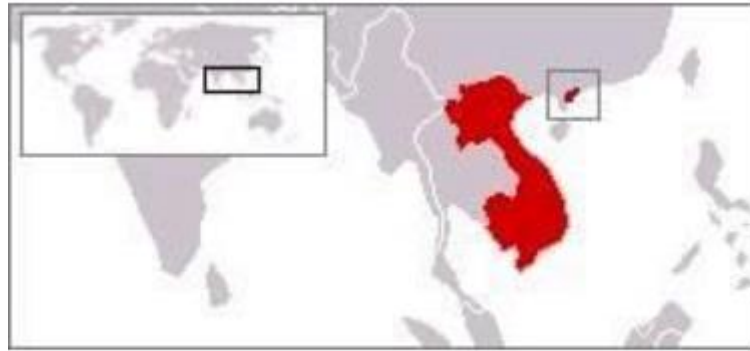
A Quick look at The Treaty Guangzhouwan (officially Kouang-Tchéou-Wan; also spelt Kwangchow Wan, Kwangchow- wan, Kwang-Chou-Wan or Quang-Tchéou-Wan) (Chinese: 廣州灣; literally: "Guangzhou Bay") was a small enclave on the southern coast of China ceded by Qing China to France as a leased territory and administered as an outlier of French Indochina.[1] The territory did not experience the rapid growth in population that other parts of coastal China experienced, rising from 189,000 in 1911[2] to just 209,000 in 1935.[3] Industries included shipping and coal mining.

The Geography The leased territory was situated in Guangdong Province (Kwangtung Province) on the east side of the Leizhou Peninsula (French: Péninsule de Leitchéou), north of Hainan, around a bay then called Kwangchowwan, now called the Port of Zhanjiang. The bay forms the estuary of the Maxie River (Chinese: Maxie He, French: Rivière Ma-The).

The Maxie is navigable as far as 19 kilometres (12 mi) inland even by large warships. The territory ceded to France included the islands lying in the bay, which enclosed an area 29 km long by 10 km wide and a minimum water depth of 10 metres. The islands were recognised at the time as an admirable natural defence, the main islands being Donghai Dao.

The Maxie is navigable as far as 19 kilometres (12 mi) inland even by large warships. The territory ceded to France included the islands lying in the bay, which enclosed an area 29 km long by 10 km wide and a minimum water depth of 10 metres. The islands were recognised at the time as an admirable natural defence, the main islands being Donghai Dao.

The limits of the concession inland were fixed in November 1899; on the left bank of the Maxie, France gained from Gaozhou prefecture (Kow Chow Fu) a strip of territory 18 km by 10 km, and on the right bank a strip 24 km by 18 km from Leizhou prefecture (Lei Chow Fu).[2] The total land area of the leased territory was 1,300 square kilometres (500 square miles).[3] The city of Fort-Bayard (Zhanjiang) was developed as a port.



Location of Kwangchow Wan in French Indochina 1899

Japan occupied the territory in February 1943. The French briefly took it back in 1945 before returning it to China in 1946,[4] at which point it was given the name Zhanjiang, also known in Cantonese as Tsamkong. The capital of the territory was Fort-Bayard. The old spellings "Tsankiang", "Chankiang" and "Tsamkong" were replaced by the pinyin romanisation "Zhanjiang" by the Chinese government in 1958. The Translation continued This concession was included into French Indochina. This is one of the possible backgrounds why she and her husband migrated from China to Vung Tau. The middle line is a bit difficult to understand. But, taking J02 into consideration, two characters written horizontally at the top will be understood as the name of a family of her husband. Then, next two will be her old family name. next two characters show that she was the third-born daughter of their parents (that means that it is not necessarily she was the third daughter. I mean, she is still third-born daughter, even if she had one elder brother and sister). next three characters mean "wife" in a respectful manner. And the last two are "of" and "grave". This is not an exceptional case, rather it is common, but what is interesting is that we cannot find her personal name in this grave.

Then J02 is also written in the same manner;

Born at China Guangdong Province Fangcheng Prefecture Mr. Zhang Dejiu's grave
 Died at Vietnam Vung Tau in the Western calendar on 29 August 1972 in traditional Chinese calendar (nong lich in Vietnamese) on the year of Dog Monkey July 6 So this couple (if they were) were from the same prefecture. What is interesting is the dates of the death of both are the same date in the traditional Chinese calendar. It could happen, but calculating from the western calendar, it would not be correct. The date of the western calendar would be the real date of death. And both graves are in the same manner in terms of material, the way of the inscription. So both are from the same artisan. These are very interesting. Since apart from whale cult, I am generally interested in migration history.

Best Regards, Hideaki Suzuki

The photos of the Graves



The above is J01



This is J02



The Left Grave when Facing them



The right grave when facing them



The Graves side by side

They are sad and beautiful in their own way, two lonely graves, husband and wife together far away from their homeland. Set inside the boundaries of an old French fort on a very secluded spot on the side of the small mountain in Vung Tau Vietnam.

Big Thanks to Hideaki Suzuki for the translation of this document

What are some conclusions that we can come to from what we have learned so far;
We now know that they are Chinese Graves, not Japanese

We know where the people come from.

We know the dates of their deaths.

We know the location of the Graves.

So where do I go from here;

This is where I had it over to you, the readers. If you know anything at all, Photos, Documents, Web Links and Rumours. Remember this is where it all started from “rumours”, anything at all. Ideas and comments are more than welcome. I can be contacted by email at;

ern.marshall@gmail.com

The History and details of the Ganh Ray (Battery)



Ganh Ray (Battery) Old Battery C . Cap Saint-Jacques. This battery, built at an average altitude of 97 meters, is part of the group Ganh Ray, which is the structure located further north.

The first established in 1892, provides an armament consisted of six mortars G 270 Model 1889 PC . The project was redesigned a year later, and mortars are replaced by six barrels of 24 cm Model 1870 Model M 1889 PC. The rooms are arranged in two groups of three, whose divergent shooting axis to cover the approaches to Saigon River. They are placed in masonry cavities, separated by rails with a small niche for a full 12 shots. Ammunition is stored in a store-cave nearby, which also refuels the battery of the Lazaretto.

In 1914, these obsolete equipment were already outdated at the time of commissioning, always position, although a project of 1905, unsuccessful, planned to substitute their four guns 240 Model 1902. They are not returned in France during the World War One. The site is not reused in 1939. Today, after a long period of neglect, the battery has been completely cleared of vegetation.

The cannons are still in place. While many accessories are missing, they are very representative. They are in excellent condition and repainted regularly. It seems that the battery is currently under development to be open to visitors.

This is one of the most beautiful sites we could see during our overseas trip. It is a pity that nothing similar exists in France. The pieces are 24 cm named Model 1870 R 1872 No. 1 and 3.1873, No. 27 R. R 1876, No.4. 1873 Nevers (city in France) No. 4 and No. 33 in 1874. Another tube is stored in a museum in Hanoi. He was baptized R 1873 No. 15. It's likely that this is the spare gun of the battery. JJM 03/07/200

The gun below is now stored at the Museum in Hanoi





Batterie de Ganh Ray Mai 2005



Batterie de Ganh Ray Mai 2005



Batterie de Ganh Ray Ma 2008



Batterie de Ganh Ray Mai 2008

© Jean-Jacques MOULINS



Batterie de Ganh Ray Mai 2008

© Jean-Jacques MOULINS



Batterie de Ganh Ray Mai 2008

© Jean-Jacques MOULINS



Batterie de Ganh Ray Mai 2008

© Jean-Jacques MOULINS



Batterie de Ganh Ray Mai 2008

© Jean-Jacques MOULINS



Batterie de Ganh Ray Mai 2008

© Jean-Jacques MOULINS



Batterie de Caill-Ray Mai 2008



Jean-Jacques MOULINS

Batterie de Caill-Ray Mai 2008



Jean-Jacques MOULINS

Batterie de Caill-Ray Mai 2008





The old French fort with its gun batteries









I found this engraved on one of the Guns, it says “Canon Rebuté” Which on one translating site says “Canon irksome” on yet another site it translates as “Canon put off”. Anyway, it seems like it was somebody's favourite Canon. Next to it you can see lines, I think these are “aiming/elevation” marks.

Underground Torpedos



About 150 metres up from the actual canons you'll see this sign that points to the "Underground Torpedos" I am told that this was built by the Japanese, but I have yet to find confirmation of this.

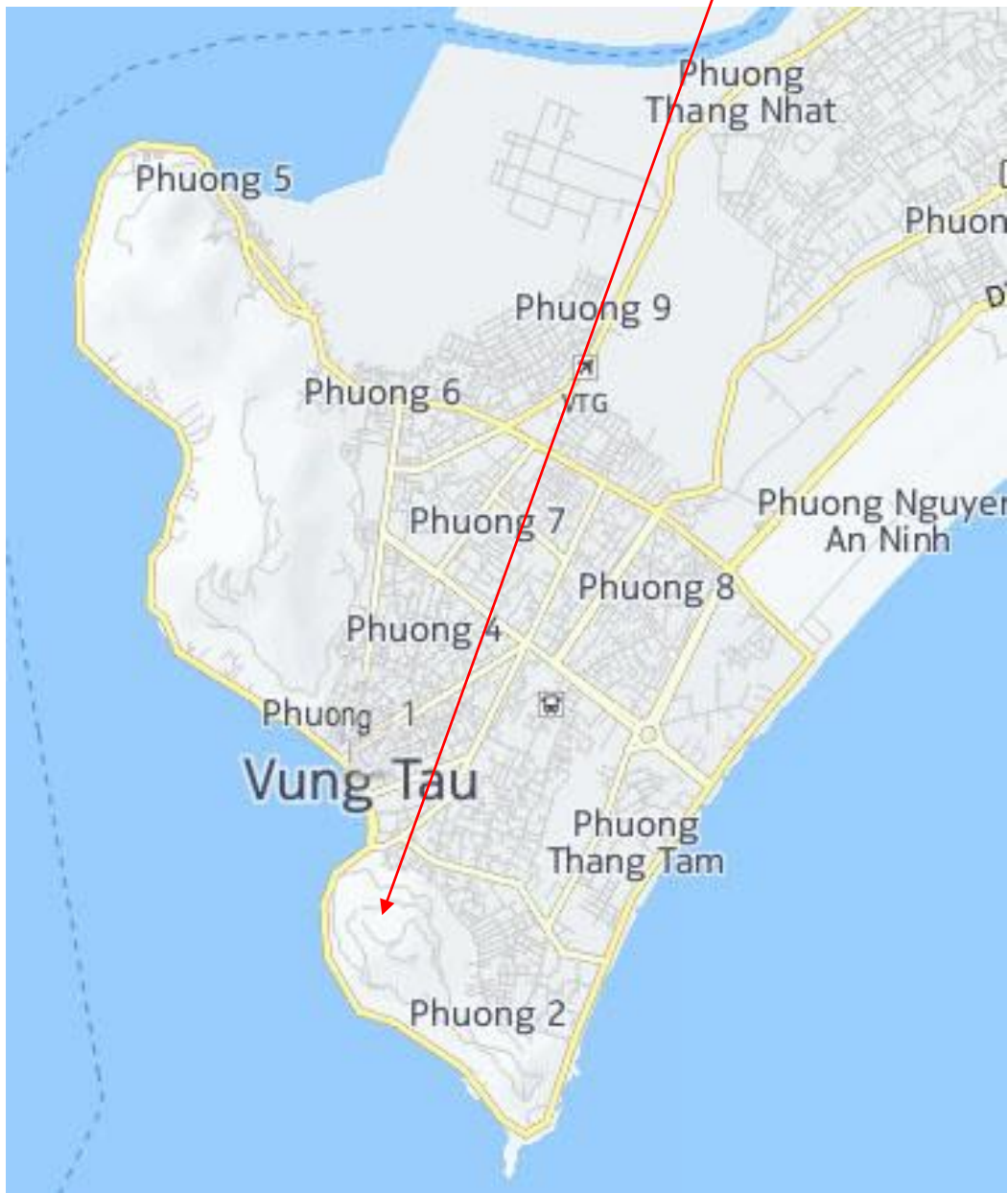


The path leading to the "underground Torpedos".

Inside the Storage room July 2016.



The History and Details of the Lighthouse B_1



Lighthouse B1

Cap Saint-Jacques. Although not a fortification, lighthouse, located in the northern part of the massif of the same name, deserves that one stops there for a while. Built in 1910. listed 170. is connected to the service building, located at its rear by a concrete tunnel. Several defense elements were built on its front, at different times.

Thus we find, from front to back, a blockhouse octagonal shape with shooting slots, marked B1, with a lightly armored door, and from the early 20th century, two masonry tanks for anti-aircraft machine guns and a bunker from the second World War.

The lighthouse is still functioning with its original machinery still equipped with its plate manufacturer Henri Lepaute 11 rue Desnouettes Paris. JJM 03/07/2008





The is the Hexagonal casemate just near the lighthouse

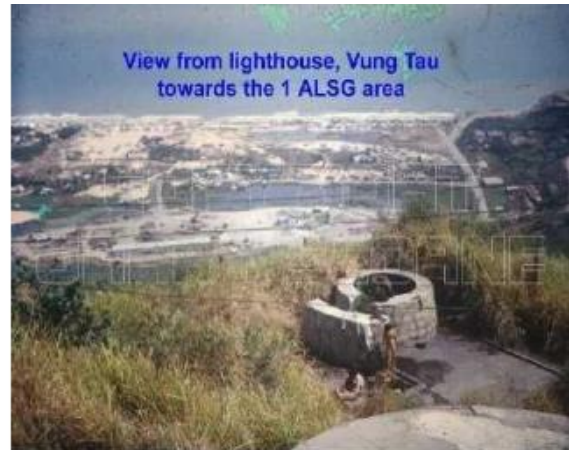


Through this steel door (complete with bullet scars) is a vertical shaft, that leads to a horizontal tunnel which then connects to the Military base





The walls on this casemate are about 1.5 meters thick



This is one of the two gun emplacements that held the two anti-aircraft guns. The guns are gone but the surrounding casemates are still there. The Hexagonal pillbox, shown in the left image background



Maybe this shaft was used to store ammunition for the anti-aircraft Battery that is located beside it, as it is filled with water, it was impossible to explore further



The light of a 1,500-watt lamp in the Yung Tau Lighthouse on top of Nui Nho (small mountain). Boats as far as 56 kilometers offshore can see the two strong beams from the country's oldest lighthouse.



Inside the tunnel leading to the Lighthouse



Looking down at the tunnel from the Lighthouse.

Formerly, three people working in shifts operated a kerosene lamp every night. Today an electric motor rotates the lamp to do five rounds a minute. In the day time, curtains cover the glass windows of the tower to prevent the sunlight from shining into the prism system. The round lighthouse itself stands 18 meters tall and has a diameter of three meters. In 1862, some years after invading southern Vietnam, the French started to build the country's first lighthouse on the lower peak of Nui Nho, also called Tao Phung. The tower was rebuilt in 1913, making it more solid and its light more powerful, and moved to its current position, 170 meters above sea level.



The original turning system designed by the Henry Lepaute Company



The Cape St. Jacques lighthouse is located on top of the Telegraph mountain (now Nui Nho), with the present structure having been built in 1913. It is 3 meters in diameter and 18 meters tall. The lighthouse provides an exceptional panoramic view over the entire Cape St. Jacques (Vung Tau). It is fitted with a lighthouse lens designed by Henry Lepaute Company, located at 11, Desnouettes Street in the 15th district of Paris.

The History and Details of the Grand Spur (left battery) Plateau



Grand Spur (left battery) Plateau Old Battery B .

Cap Saint-Jacques. A first battery was established on this site as soon as 1892. This work, which is part of the Great Spur group, is located 300 meters SE of the previous. It's armed like that with four mortars G 270 Model 1889 PC . Relatively simple design, it has an underground powder magazine and a protected projectiles store. Part of its endowment is stored in the battery stores.

A telemetric station is established to the coast 180. Like its neighbor, the battery is fully remodeled in the years before the First World War. Its material placed on carriage G circular frame, installed in a modern reinforced concrete structure with four compartments separated by combat shelters Model 1901.

Unlike its neighbor, the battery is devoid of PDT(command Post) Like it, it is disarmed during the First World War. and its equipment is returned France. The site is not reused in 1939. Today, it is free to access but quite overgrown. JJM
03/07/2008



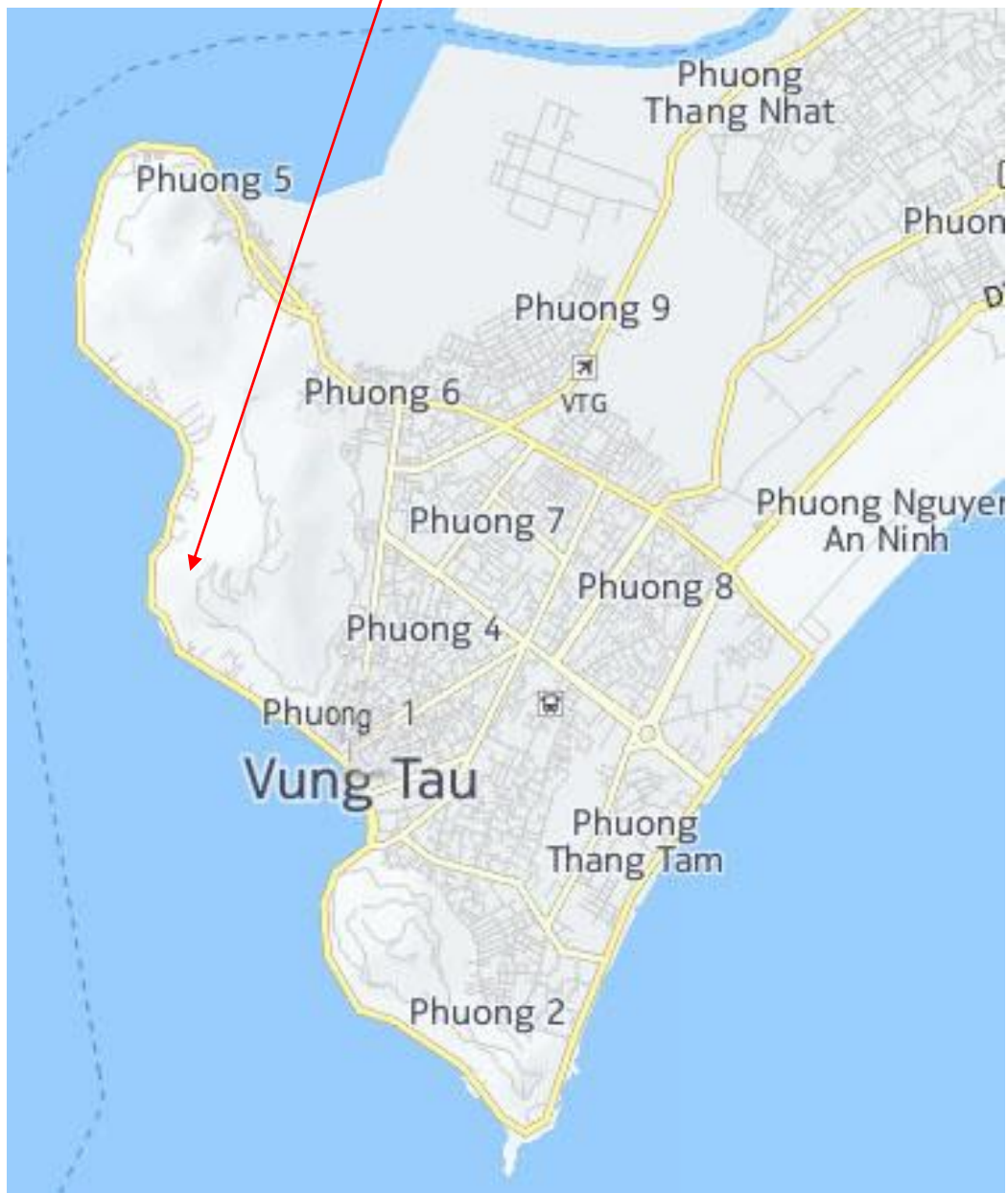


Batterie de Gauche du Plateau Mai 2008



Batterie de Gauche du Plateau: Mai 2008

The Details and History of the Large Spur (right battery) Plateau



Large Spur (right battery) Plateau Old Battery A .

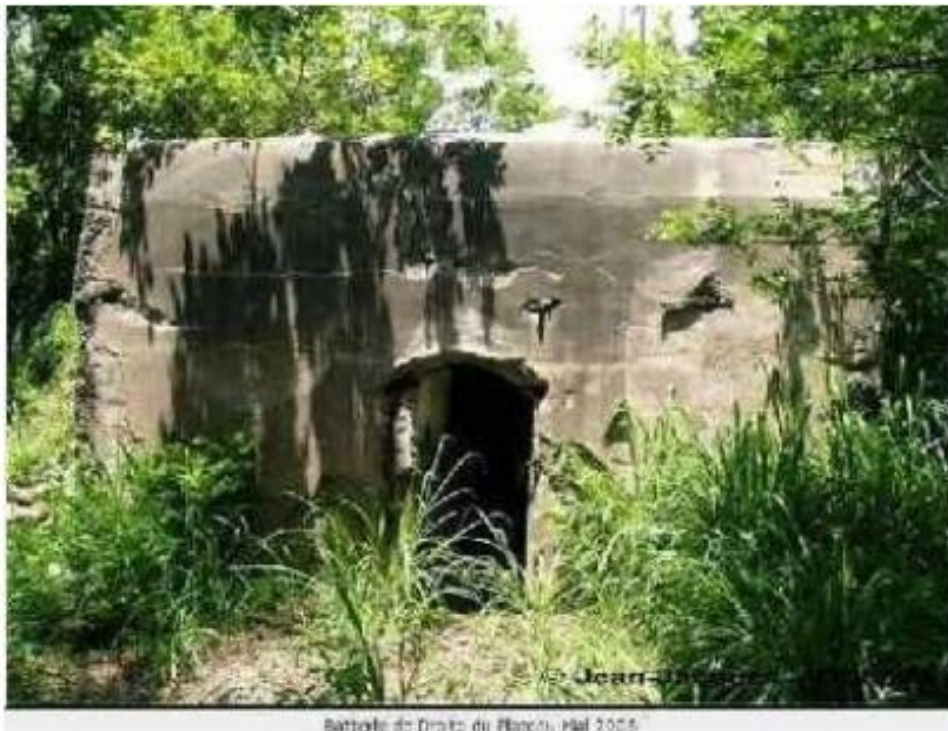
Cap Saint-Jacques. A first battery was established in this location, since 1892. This block, part of the group of Plateau, is armed with mortars 4 G 270 Model 1889 PC . Parts placed at an average altitude of 116 meters are arranged in a circular arc. into two half-battery. Projectiles and powder are stored in a cave shop, and a store located under the covering mass of the hill.

A telemetry station is established, listed 179. Do not meet the requirements of modern warfare, and advances in artillery, the Block is completely overhauled in the years before the First World War. The material placed on carriage G circular frame, are then arranged in a modern reinforced concrete structure with four compartments, separated by combat shelters Model 1901.

The headquarters, located on the two wings of the work, ensure fire control. They are reinforced concrete and foreshadow, as in battery cable and the Position No. 1. Command post future of coastal batteries of the interwar period. It is a feature that is not available elsewhere, at far as we know, neither in France nor overseas. Only batteries of 194 Cable and Position No. 1, in Lighthouse, have a similar organization.

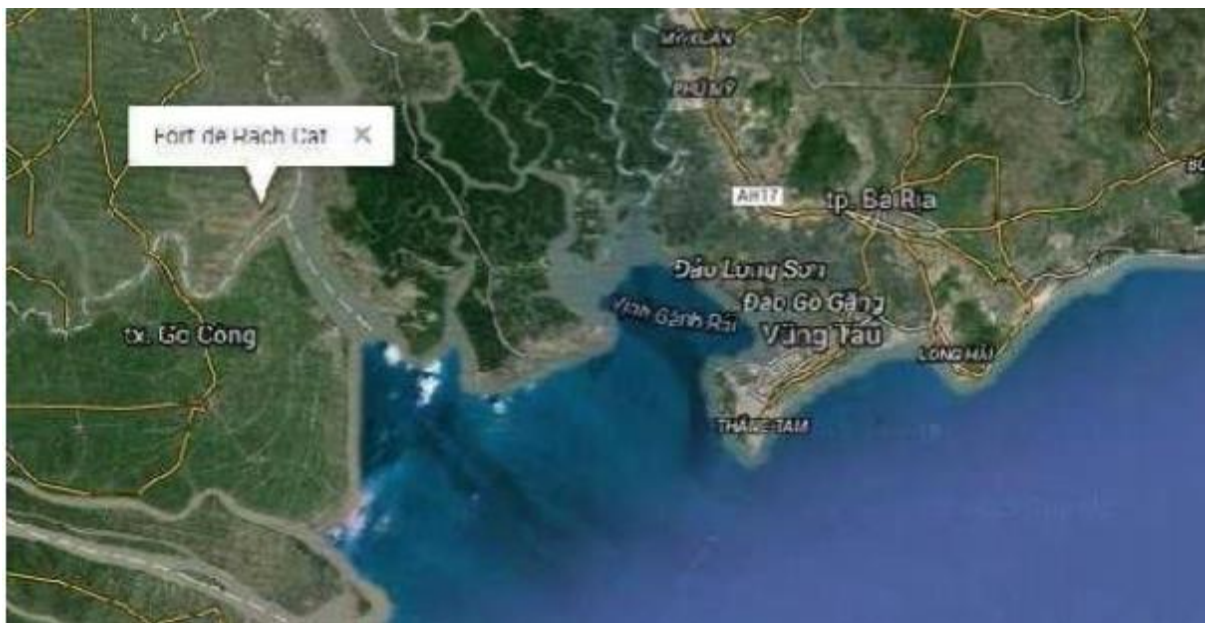
It is possible that in these three blocks, the shooting was settled by half battery, which was also the case in the battery A. Battery left the Great Spur being devoid of the command post. it is also possible that his shot was led from the command post left the right battery. The block is disarmed during the First World War. and its equipment returned in France. The site is not reused in 1939.

This Battlement was occupied by the Vietnamese army, but we can clearly see the road that goes up on the board. It seems in excellent condition. JJM 03/07/2008



The Details and History of the Rach Cat Block

This map shows the relation of the position of Rach Cat to Vung Tau



Rach-Cat(block) Saigon. Defense rivers. This fort is built between 1905 and 1914. to prevent access to Saigon ship's shallow draft, the Soai Rap River. and also prohibit access to Vaico. which is an easy landing base?

This important work, built in the rice field, required for its implementation, technical innovations that have made the ultimate fortification of the early twentieth century. It has cost seven million francs of the time. Built in reinforced concrete, it is based on compressed soil by supplying sand embankments.

It includes two symmetrical half-works, connected by a fire of war. It is protected by a wall, the upper part is pierced by shooting slots. The structure is surrounded by a wet ditch, crossed by a stone bridge, and fed by the river through a canal. A channel network of 60 runs through the block and connects to the pier nearby.

All construction materials, cuirasses, guns and ammunition were transported by river. Even today, use a tray to access the wrong path serving the fort. As a result of the soil, it was not possible to make underground stores. Projectiles and powder are stored in surface stores in reinforced concrete.

Unlike batteries of Cape St Jacques, established at altitudes putting away shots naval artillery of the time, the main artillery of the structure, built in the rice field, was placed under armoring although the initial plan to build six cannons 240 PC lookout, and four guns of 100 TR. The four guns 240 Model M 93- 96 'Colonies" are placed under two armored turrets Schneider, a half-work, similar to those installed in Dakar at the same time.

We reporters , therefore, the chapter on this fulcrum, to the characteristics of these materials. In Dakar, three turrets are installed, but in three different works, while at Rach-Cat. the two devices are combined in a single box. Each turret is installed on a massive reinforced concrete, which includes powder and projectile stores, power plant and the cooling station.

The secondary armament consists of three batteries of two guns of 75 Model 1897 lookout for suitable campaign to shore shooting, and two batteries of two guns G 95 Miss 1888 Model lookout C 1904 G. The block has a projector 90-night shooting. Close defense is provided by ten guns of 8 mm. All this armament is filed and returned in France during World War II. Turrets and cannons of 240 carriages remain in place.

The rearming of the block is considered from the 20s. but it was not until World War II. Turrets and cannons of 240 carriages remain in place. The rearming of the block is considered from the 20s. but it was not until World War II to become effective. In 1940. it plans to install a battery of 4 guns 155 L Model 1916. But. ultimately, they are two parts of 138 Model 1924. retrieved on auxiliary cruisers, which are installed in two tanks overcoming stores reinforced concrete, built at both ends of the fort. Shooting driving is ensured by PDT with a conjugateur C Model 1930. and a rangefinder SOM 5 meters, placed in the center of the block.

It also has a battery of four pieces of 75 Model 1897 Model lookout 1916. also placed in concrete tanks, equipped with adjoining niches.

This armament remains in service until 1945. but the Japanese recover 75 after their coup unless it is the Vietminh ... Today, the block is still in military field, and we could not see. and for a short time, as the left side. The turret is still in place and the barrel of 138 Model 24. in remarkable condition.

The barracks has lost its gates and armored shutters, only still frames. We had neither the time nor the authorization to visit stores and the factory of the turret, but everything suggests that they are empty, a report of October 1945 describing them as completely looted by the Japanese or by the Vietminh. B turret and barrel of the right wing are also in place, according to the officer commanding the area. We could not see them, so the block is overgrown.

There is no need. I think, to emphasize the historical importance of this exceptional block, its isolation, and its military occupation was relatively preserved. Baptism of canon 138 of the left wing: M 138 1924 1927 R # 4. JJM 03/07/2008







This page is an extract from the website at <http://www.vietnamheritage.com.vn>

The History of the Rach Cat Fortress, Long An Province. Within the desolate mangrove swamps, against the sea in Can Duoc District, Long An Province in the Mekong Delta, one of Indochina's largest artillery battle stations has survived for over a hundred years. Rach Cat Fortress was built by the French over seven years from 1903 to 1910, with the aim of laying preparations for the First World War (1914-1918). It is worth remembering that, one hundred years ago, there were no submarines, while airplanes were just newly discovered and still flew close to the ground. Thus, heavy artillery was a strategic weapon. The French feared that English, German, and Dutch battleships would advance on Saigon from Vung Tau by the Soai Rap River, so they erected a battle station at a strategic position where the Vam Co and Rach Cat rivers both flowed into the Soai Rap River. With a cannon range of over 20km, the position could control an extensive area from Can Gio harbour right up to Saigon and the area of Go Cong.

Rach Cat Fortress has symmetrical arches about 300m long and 100m wide. The wall is arranged with 100 square loopholes. On the fortress gate, we could still read the words 'Ouvrages du Rach Cat 1910'. The fortress has three subterranean floors and two elevated floors. The walls were cast with cement and steel pillars. It is 60-100cm thick, so the underground floors are always cool. The walls' stability was enough to withstand the kinds of bombs in that era (at that time, bunker-penetrating bombs did not exist). The cannons were placed to the sides of the gate doors. In the area, in-between where the control tower, storehouse, and living quarters. Around the fortress was a moat, but today it has been filled in. Local elders still recall that a tunnel remains under the fortress, one that runs out to the harbour, and that the tunnel doors are fitted with glass to make underwater observations. Since then, the glass has broken and mud and earth have flooded in, filling the tunnel and the fortress's underground floors. The main firepower of the fortress consists of two artillery towers.

Atop the ends of the gate doors. Each artillery tower is 6m in diameter and has two 240mm cannons placed in parallel. They are gunboat cannons meant to be placed on French battleships, but which have since been refitted for installation on artillery forts. Each cannon weighs 140 tons, uses cannonballs weighing 162kg, and has a

firing range of 22.7km. The thick steel Schneider-style artillery towers can rotate to fire in any direction. On top of the artillery, tower emerges a small tortoise shell-shaped turret with which to look out and adjust the cannon. If modern army cannons require that two iron shafts be planted into the ground behind it in order to withstand the shock of firing the cannon, then with this cannon emplacement, we can surmise just how stable and sturdy the fortress roof must be. To this day, despite the passage of over a hundred years, the artillery towers of Rach Cat Fortress are still quite sturdy, especially in that they have not rusted. It's a pity that the cannons have already been removed; only two gaping oval holes remain on the body of the artillery tower.

Besides the main firepower of the two artillery towers above, Rach Cat Fortress also has installed six 75mm anti-aircraft cannons and four 95mm cannons from 1888. The First World War concluded, and the Rach Cat Fortress defensive fortifications held without incident. Hence, the French colonialists transferred four 240mm heavy artillery cannons to other battlegrounds as reinforcements. Only small cannons were left. When World War II erupted, faced with the threat of Japanese Fascists occupying Indochina, the French restored Rach Cat Fortress and built two additional open artillery platforms at the two gable ends to position two 138mm cannons, which were produced in 1924 and 1927. Each of them weighed 5.5 tons. To this day, these two cannons still lie there, although they are no longer functional

In March 1945, the Japanese overtook the French, seized the fortress, and carried the 75mm cannons away. In August of the same year, Japan surrendered to the Allies. Rach Cat Fortress fell into the hands of the revolutionaries, but they only held it for three months before they retreated when the British army assisted the French in reclaiming the fortress. From then until April 1975 when the Vietnam War ended, the Saigonese army and American troops took turns defending the fortress



138 mm Canon Model produced in 1924 and 1927. They each weigh 5.5 tons



Rach Cat

Yesterday (30-8 2016) I and Friends went over to Rach Cat for a look. It took about 2 ½ hours drive from Saigon. When we arrived we were greeted by a young Vietnamese Army Officer who told us that we could not come into the fort. Well, that certainly was a setback. He was nice and polite but was adamant that we could not gain entry. So I asked to talk with the Commanding Officer and was told that He was the CO. So after a few more words he said that only Vietnamese Nationals could enter. So I suggested that my friend Thanh is a Vietnamese National, would he be allowed to enter. He replied, “ of course”. So I gave Thanh my phone camera and off he went. I and Reece stayed outside and had a look at the few remaining relics outside the fort. Thanh managed to get quite a few shots before he had to finish.



The Officer about to tell us we could not enter.



The entrance with a young Soldier posing for us.



Close up of the sign at the entrance.



The courtyard inside the gate

Another shot of the courtyard



Moving up to the Guns



Looking down to another type of casemate



Thanh admiring the casemate



Looking at the building under the guns



Another emplacement



The 75 mm rapid-fire cannon



Under the Guns looking at the feeder hole to the guns



Inside the ammunition Bunkers



General view of the barrack area



Very wet in the rainy season



The mandatory Volleyball court







In one of the storerooms, we found these under wraps couldn't make out what type they were



Part of the external wall (right-hand side)



Part of the external wall (left-hand side)



External bunkers





Bunker with a gun mounts on the left of the picture





This used to sit on top of the previous photo.

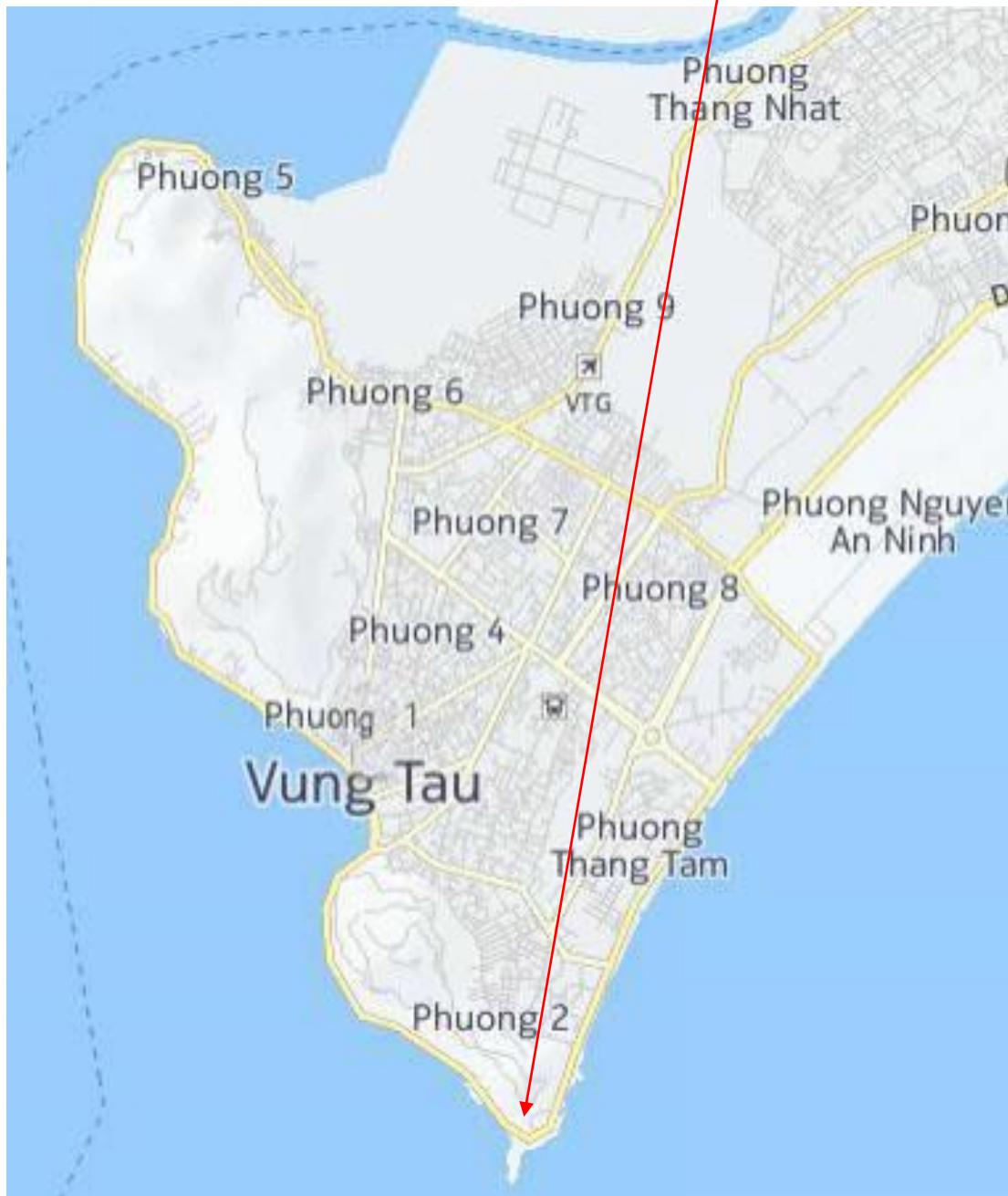


Drum Song-Long-Tac occasional battery

Drum Song-Long-Tac occasional battery, armed with two guns of 75 Models 1897 Models lookout 1916, performed in 1940. This is a second line of position, intended to prohibit access to Saigon by Soirap, an enemy who managed overcome the obstacle of Rach-Cat. The battery remains army until 1945. Because it was only a temporary battery it has long since gone and no trace of it remains. Unfortunately I have been unable to find any photographs of it.

The History and Details of the Lighthouse Battery

This can be a little confusing, there are a number of Gun positions around this area. So it can be a little hard to define what position you are actually visiting. This position is where the Old Lighthouse was situated, of course, it has now been moved.



The Lighthouse Battery

Cap Saint-Jacques. Built at an average altitude of 125 meters, the Lighthouse of the battery, with the battery Is the Lighthouse, the centrepiece of the waterfront of Cape St Jacques. It is part of the Lighthouse Group. It is a modern structure, reinforced concrete, made shortly before the First World War.

It has three compartments, armed in 1914 of three guns 240 1893-1896 Model M 'Colonies' PC lookout inclined chassis, the same model as those arming batteries Udders and Madeleines in Dakar.

No documentation on this battery being reached us. and the site had been disrupted by the construction of the new battery in 1937 and by that of Christ giant, more recently, we can only imagine its appearance and organisation.

It seems logical that it should resemble the batteries of the Position # 1 and Cable, performed at the same time nearby, with an almost identical weapons, though of a slightly lower rating.

The materials are deposited during World War II and returned to the city. The battery is reset, from 1937. with three guns 240 Model 1902-1906 PC lookout cradle. The materials and their cribs come disarmament battleship Danton class, armed with 4 guns of 305 in 2 turrets two, and 12 guns of 240. 6 turrets two. They are the same model as those arming battery Mamelles in Dakar, at the same time. Parts 1 and 2 are placed in tanks built at the location of extreme cells of the old battery, and part 3 in a tank carried on the location of the room is the old battery East Lighthouse. A modern PDT connected by underground to the battery is made.

It has a conjugateur Colonies and a rangefinder H Model 34. A projector 150 GP. whose combat location and safe day are placed on the tip located below, complete the equipment. The battery remains army until 1945. and even after certainly.

Today the guns are still in place, although they were scuttled, presumably the departure of French troops in 1954 or 55. They are painted dark green and still look great. Parts 1 and 2 are placed on either side of the giant Christ. 30 meters high, erected in 1974 on the site of the old lighthouse.

The underground infrastructure is not available, but we guess the entrance. An outside barracks, now in ruins, is located close to it. The TDP placed in front of the battery, disappeared during the construction of the staircase that leads to Christ, from the coast road. Exhibit 3 is the one that is in the best condition, though a bit overgrown.

You can see the outside barracks, access its underground infrastructure, and see the vertical shaft beneath the lookout, which was by the projectiles and cartridge bags supply of the part, from the distribution chamber. Baptism of rooms: 24 cm Model 1902-1906 R 1908 No. 12.17 and 24. JJM 03/07/2008.

A small road going up to the Jesus statue through a shanty town. After the shanty town, you'll find yourself on a rough road. There are several spots on this mountain where you can find old French bunkers, forts, and cannons. Most in really bad shape, and none listed as tourist attractions. There's not even any signs or indications that any of it's there. You won't find it unless you look around and explore.



The first image shows the Barracks. The stairs on the right lead up to a large canon above the bunker and a water reservoir. To the left of these Barracks is the bunker that supplies the gun directly above it.



This is the entrance to the Bunker that supplies the Gun above.



The cylinder feeds the ammunition directly to the gun above it.



The image on the left shows the aperture from which the ammunition is fed from the storage room to the “Cylinder”. The next image shows the huge nut and bolt that secures the gun to the casemate.



The caption above reads, “Battery of the Lighthouse piece No 3 Magasins” which translates to store, shop, magazine, warehouse.



The water storage tank that supplies the casemate.

Outside this complex, there is a small set of stairs which you follow up to this Casemate. It looks like it was placed there to help defend the actual Guns and act as a command post.



Looking to the outside.



This reads 240 mm Model 1902-06
R ???8 No 17 29400



The Barrel with the breech removed on Gun Number 17

Moving on up to the Jesus statue surrounds the are two more guns to view.



Gun Number 12



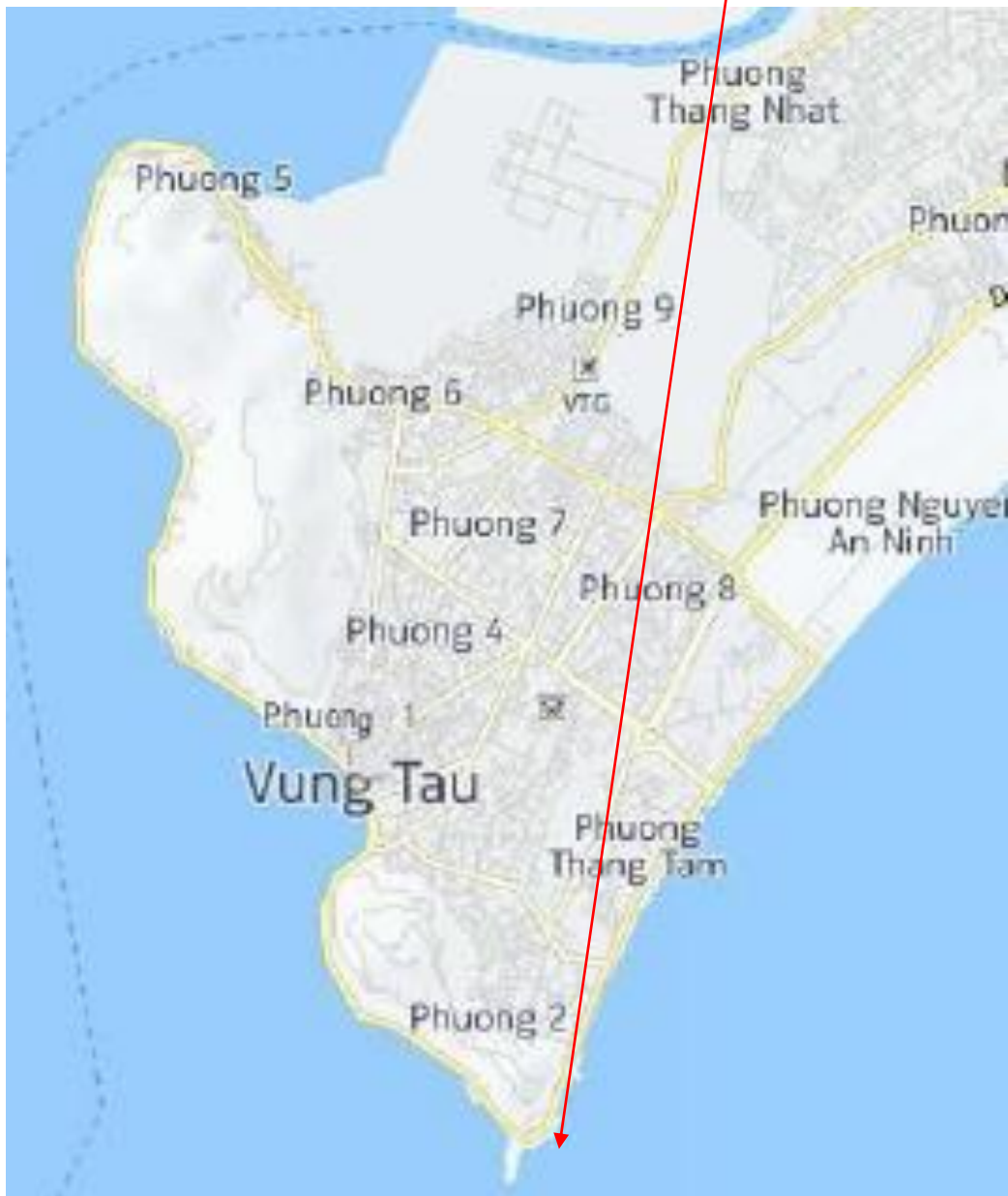
Batterie du Phare Canon de 240 Mle 1902-06 Mars 1948

The battery of the Lighthouse Canon 240 mm Model 1902 - 1906 pictures taken March 1948.



Batterie du Phare Canon de 240 Mle 1902-06 Mars 1948

The History and details of the Archinard Battery



Hon Ba, or Archinard Island emplacement

The battery island Archinard Battery 2 guns of 47 Model 1885 TR, established in 1939 on the Archinard island at the southern tip of Cape St Jacques. Nowadays, a pagoda occupies the site. Mieu Ba (Lady Temple), which was founded in 1781.

In 1939 a French officer named Archinard to friends was accidentally killed. So the French named it the Archinard island, but people familiar Vung Tau still called shrines Hon Ba. It has a basement beneath 6m long, 3m wide. It served as a secret meeting place of fellow Viet Minh - Viet Cong soldiers during the war.

The mystery of Hon Ba Island in Vung Tau begins with its location. The only way to get there is taking the path which can only be seen during the low tide.

The first thing that attracts your attention as soon as you reach the island is the concrete bunkers with the signs of battles. They are the reminders of hard times for older generation in Vietnam.



CHAPTER FIVE

Miscellaneous and further discoveries plus updates and any other interesting information that I come across.

Another old Lighthouse ruins

I don't know how many lighthouses were built on the peninsula. The was the original built where the Jesus statue now stands. Before it was moved to its current position. The gentleman that I met at the Lazaret battery then took us on a trek to see the ruins of an old French Lighthouse about 750 meters further up the mountain.



Unfortunately, that is all that is left, the locals demolished the lighthouse so they could reuse the granite bricks in local construction.

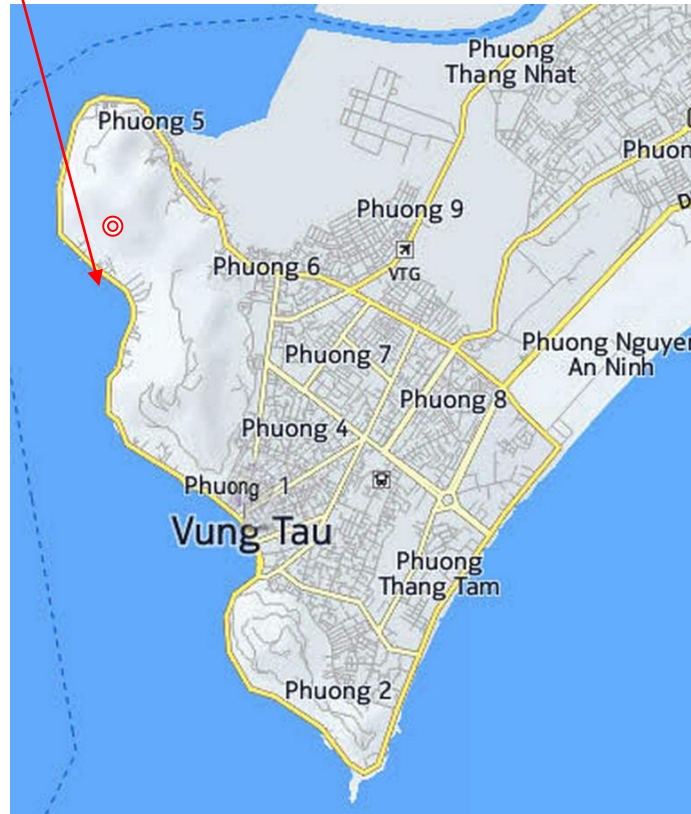
Old French Barracks

He then took us to another location that looked to me to be a barracks of some description with another water storage facility. Must have trouble with obtaining water on the mountain. This is located about 500 meters before you get to the Lazaret. These buildings have also been converted into a home for a Vietnamese family.



Observation points with Monastery

This is fairly easy to get to, up a slight incline to a dead end. I found this post purely by accident. I saw this track leading off the main road with what looked like the remains of some kind of building on the left, so I decided to follow it reasoning that it had to lead somewhere.



Here is an image of the start of the path that leads to the observation point. An old Buddhist Monk now looks after the place and also lives there.



On the left-hand side, you can see what remains of what must have been an old Guardhouse. The track to the post begins at a place where the main road turns sharply to the left.



This is a couple of images looking into the post,



This is looking at the entrance to the observation post, looking back towards the incoming track.



The Monk has made one of the rooms into a temple. This is a photo of the Monk and his temple.

As I have mentioned before, they have built a lot of water storage tanks around all of the casemates, this post one is no different. It has several of them located on the edge of the post. The original coverings have been removed (fallen into disrepair) and replaced with old 44-gallon drums that have been flattened for the purpose.

This is an image of the author looking at the water tanks, which are located on the edge of the structure.





This is the upper part/roof of the structure.



Unfortunately, there is not much left of the place, despite the Monks best efforts, time has taken its toll.

Looking out at the very end of the property, at a straight drop.



This view is looking up at the post from below on another walking track.



I also found this at the same place, it reads TM 1038. I have no idea what it represents. The only think that I can think of is that in Australia, we use TBM which means Temporary Bench Mark. It is used a part of a Trig point, for measuring distances from a known point. Maybe it is the French way of using the same system.

The New Casemate

One of the most exciting treks we have done. My mate Paul Rowe who originally found these about one month before.....7-2016... I first went looking for them myself on about 28-7-016, but I had my son with me who is only 6 years old. I got to the cliff face (only about 20 meters away from the casemate, I had no idea at the time.) and decided it was too dangerous and did not go any further.

Then on the 10-8-2016 I and my mate Reece decided to have another crack at finding them. Reece does rock climbing as a hobby and is bloody good at it, a perfect partner, me with my military background and his rock climbing skills make a good team.

We got to the place where I had been before, sat down and had a good look around us. Behind us were some buildings that could have been kitchens or some other outdoor place of rest. We also noticed a water storage facility there. So that gave us some idea of where we were and the gun position would have to be in front of these. They would never build the Gun Casemates behind these places.

So now we were looking in a south-easterly direction toward the Ganh Ray Bay, yes they had to be in front of us, but there is a cliff face there.

So Reece went over the edge, after about 10 minutes I heard Reece call out “I think I’ve found them mate” So he came back and showed me a safe way down.

Amazing! It is the middle of the wet season and there is rampant jungle growing everywhere. If you stood about 5 meters away you could not see them and they are not small!

Reece showed me the Barracks, a small underground room which looks to me a sleeping place for about 8 men.

I have called this **Section Four**. Also, there is another small room that looks to me like a toilet was there. In the toilet there were some nets, They are not fishnets, I think they were being used for bird poaching. It is interesting what you can find in these out of the way places.

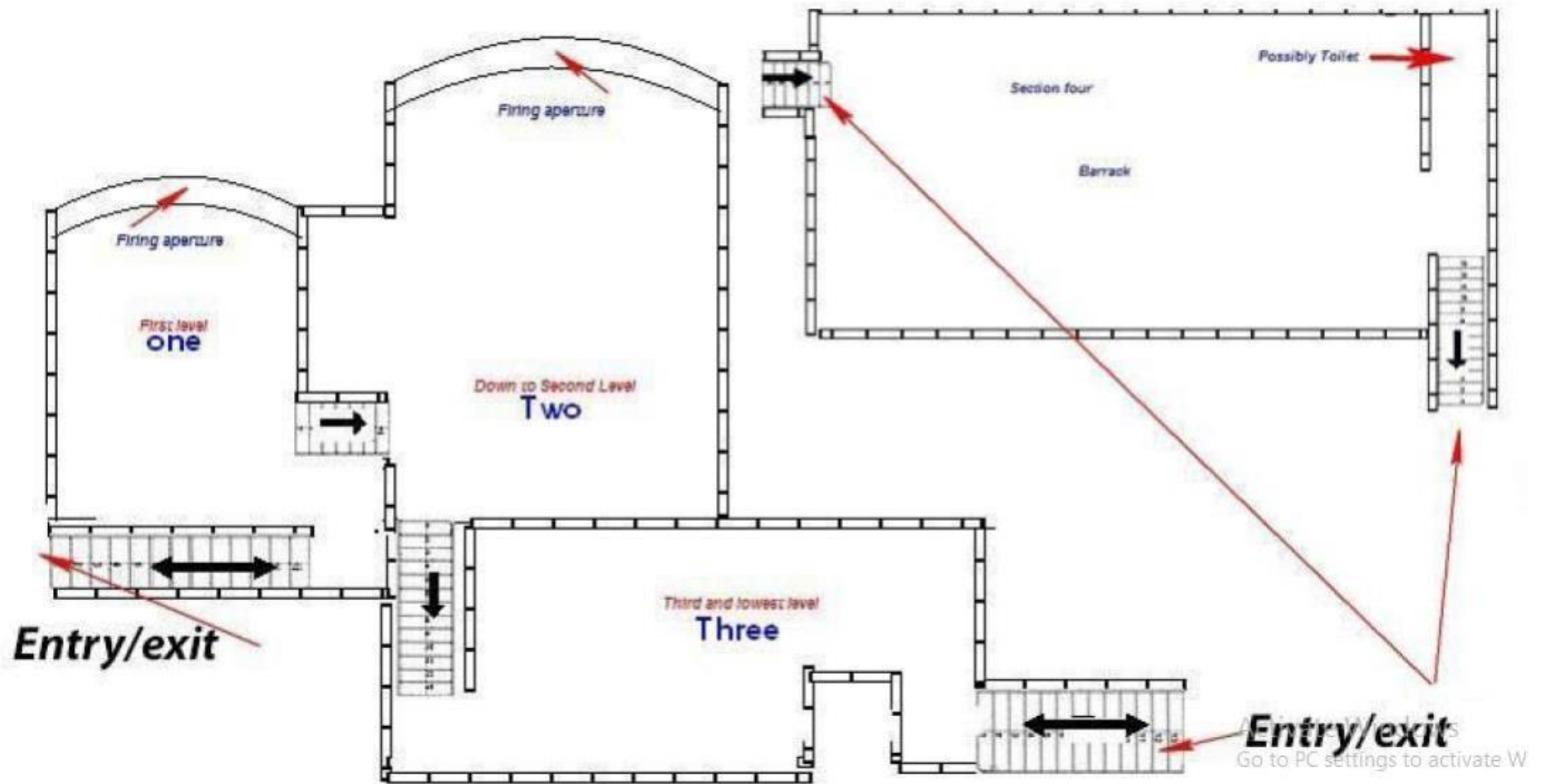


Looking down into **Section 4**



Looking up from **Section 4**

This section is about another section found on the side of the Ganh Ray peninsular. I have not been able to establish the name of it as yet



Level **four** is the barracks established about 10 meters away to the right and on the same plane as level **one**. Unfortunately, we haven't been able to discover the Calibre or the type of guns used.



The entrance



The Barrack room



The toilet ???

Moving around to the left about 10 to 15 meters we came across the actual gun casemate. We carefully went down to the stairs to the first level which I have named **Section One**. This consisted of one small storage room and a gun case.



Looking down from the cliff and over the top of boulders at the water tank. This position cannot be seen from any other place on the mountain.



The entrance to [Section one](#)



The first Casemate



Looking at the top of [Section Two](#).

Then down more stairs to the next level which I have named [Section Two](#). This was a larger room with a larger Gun Casemate.



Looking down from [Section one](#) to [Section two](#).



[Section two](#) gun aperture the front.



Section two gun aperture, the rear.



Looking up at the air vents

Down another staircase to what I named **Section Three**, which I think is a storage room, From there up a flight of stairs to come out on a large area covered with massive boulders. We are only about 10 meters from the Barrack but you cannot see them.



The storage room of Section three.



The exit from Section three.



Treacherous when wet



The area outside the casemate and barracks. They are so well camouflaged they are extremely hard to find, the edge of the cliff where the casemates have been dug in.

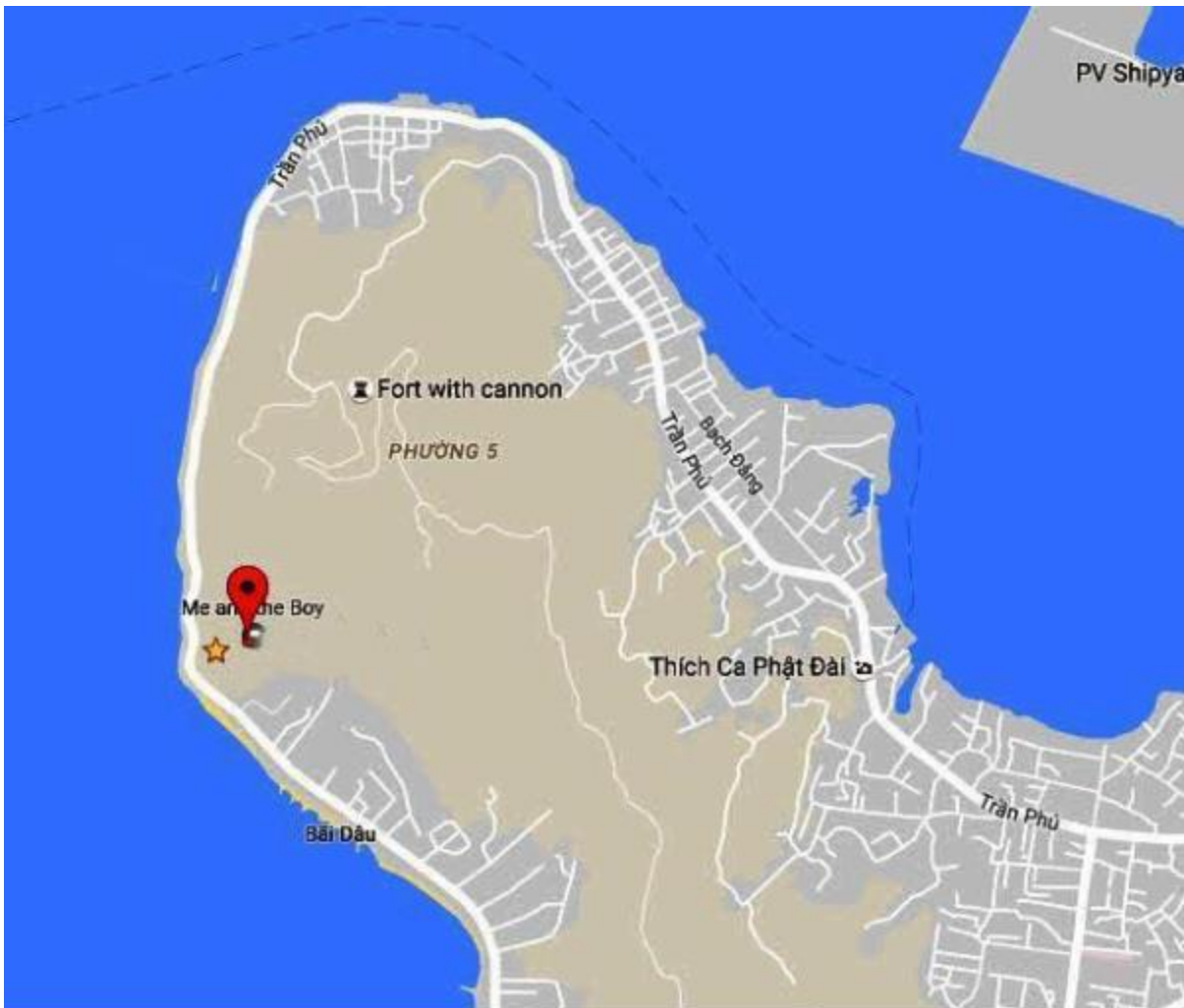


This is before you get to the gunn emplacement. It looks like an out door recreation area with a water tank beside it.



These are two overhead aerial shots, showing the different levels of the construction along with its water tank





The Location of the casemate

Line of emplacements, including a searchlight position and more on the Ganh Ray Battery

These buildings appear to be a line of fortifications beginning down from the Guns at Ganh Ray heading towards the sea. We approached this area from the seaward direction. Which meant climbing directly up the mountain. So these building would technically belong to the Ganh Ray group

One of the points of the Ganh Ray Battery



Long hard climb up to this position



The first look at the objective. On closer inspection and further examination of maps, we discovered that this is actually a **Searchlight emplacement**. This was used to illuminate the Ganh Ray Bay area.



Now moving up the Mountain toward the Ganh Ray position, continue directly up from this position and you'll come to a paved road. On the other side of the road, you'll see another building, some kind of storage room.



An external shot.



The internal shot.

This room appears to be an ammunition bunker for the gun emplacement that is at the front, it is around 10 metres to the rear of the emplacement and dug into the hill to the right (if looking away from the ocean) At a rough guess, the room would be 10m x 5m with a height of around 3m.



What is interesting about this storage room is that it faces uphill with the opening facing toward the Guns.

Move to the right of this building you'll come across another fortification.



I think it is just another line of defence for the guns of Ganh Ray.

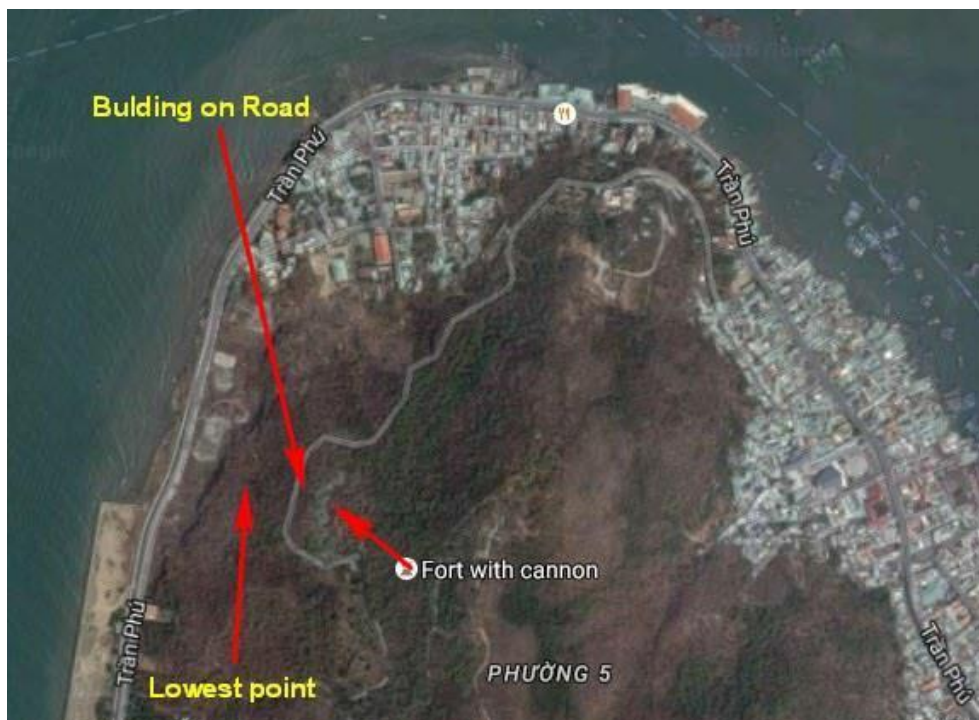


Another storage room for ammo by the look of it.
Directly behind both of these building, there is a set of steps leading up to the main Ganh Ray Gun position.





So we can now see a definite plan for these emplacements, a straight line from the Guns of Ganh Ray to the forward defence positions.



Here you can see all the positions marked on the map.

The French Officers Quarters on the B2 Position



What a great day. The old gentleman told me that he knew a little more. He told me that he knew of a French PRISON on the mountain, but that we were all too tired to visit that day because it is a long hard climb. We would do it another day. Also, he told me that he knew of a French dam that supplied the water to Yung Tau. He also mentioned the location of the Officer's quarters on the site of B2 battery. That was turned into a bar called the "Eagles Nest" in the late 1990's as it turned out I had been to that bar in about 2002. So while I was travelling I snapped a quick couple of pictures of it. It is now a private residence.



French Water Reservoir



This is an interesting place;

An old French reservoir that was built to supply the French Hospital and the two barracks. As you can see it is very overgrown and one of the locals told me NOT to climb inside, as the snakes that climb on the roof fall in. They live and breed inside and live off whatever happens to enter there. There is no water in it and is heavily overgrown with vegetation





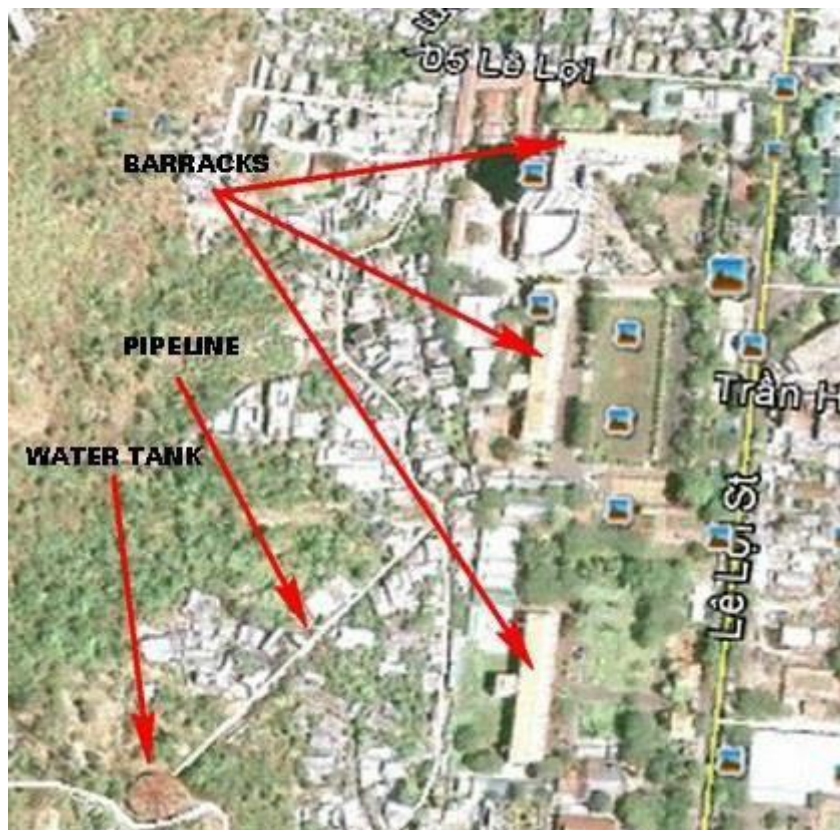
One of the Barracks



The roof of the tank



Side view of the tank



Of course, it is no longer in use, just another piece of history of the French occupation. Tucked away on the side of a hill that hardly anyone remembers.

The Cave in the side of the mountain

This an interesting one. When the new road was being built around the coast of Vung Tau there, of course, was a need for a lot of excavation. The point that we are talking about here is the shaving off of part of a spur that ran down to the sea.

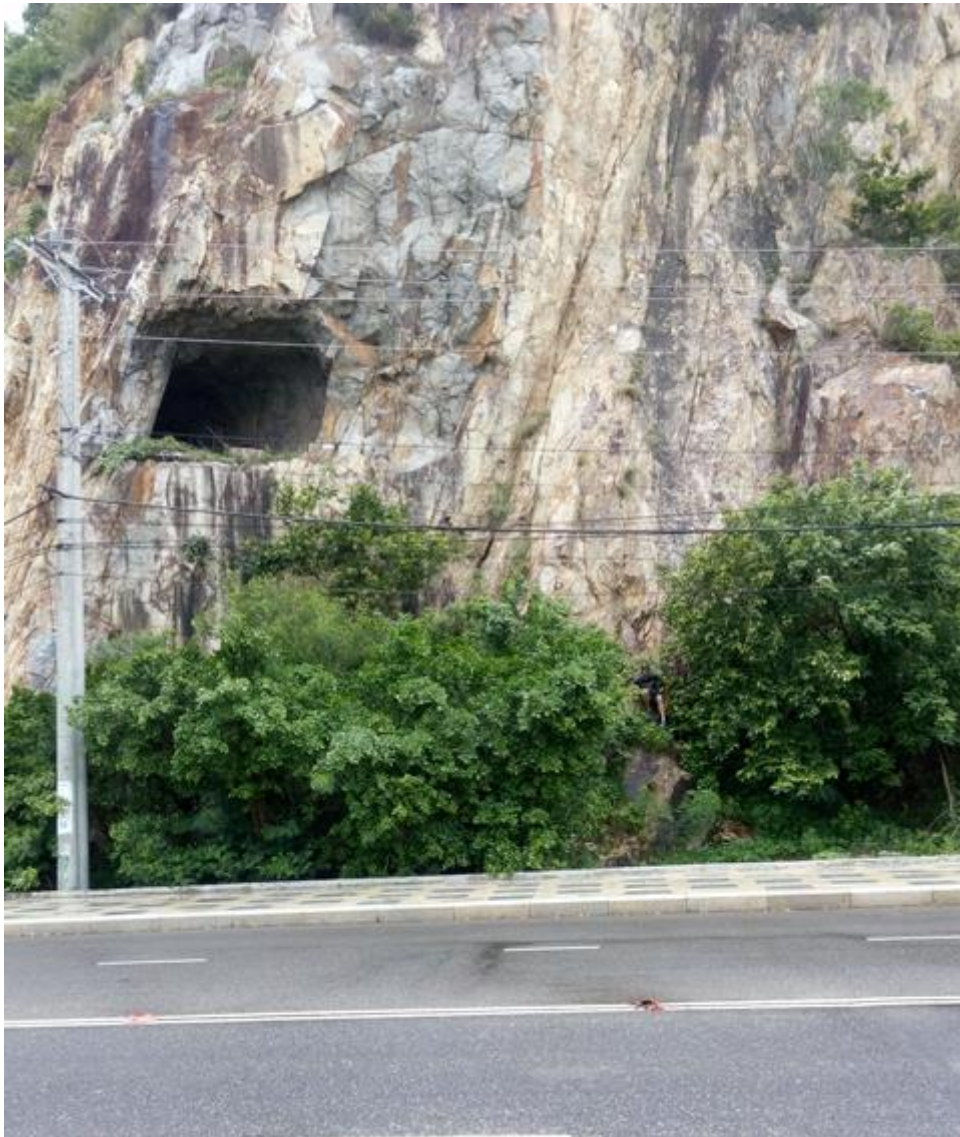


This is a picture of the spur in 1967. The arrow points to a French Command post. This was all destroyed when they widened the road.

This image below shows the road on completion.



When constructing the road they exposed a cave on the side of the mountain.



Well, there were all kinds of rumours about this cave. Some of the more outlandish ones were. That it was a Viet Cong Tunnel that went all the way up to the American Radar station above.

I have even spoken to one chap that told me that he had climbed it and followed it all the way to the top.

As part of the investigation into the French Guns and Forts, it was decided to clear this story up one way or the other.

We tried climbing up to the cave, but the cliff face is very unstable granite caused probably by the blasting of the rock during construction.

So for safety reasons, we ditched that approach. Instead, we employed the use of a drone with a camera attached to it.



Attempting to climb up to the cave. Very unstable, flaky granite. So we abandoned that approach.

The drone proved a great asset to exploration being able to see into the cave in absolute safety. So after all these years; the cave story has nearly been answered.



This is an aerial shot of the new road with the arrow showing the cave. This shot was taken in 2010.

Comparing that to the first image of the old road in 1967 (above) You can see that the Command Post would have been very near or even on top of the cave. This observation will make more sense when you view the pictures of the actual cave.

Here is the view from the drone camera.



This is the first glimpse of the interior of the cave.



A more detailed picture of the inside of the cave. Inside you can see that the cave goes in no deeper than a few meters. You can also see some construction works.

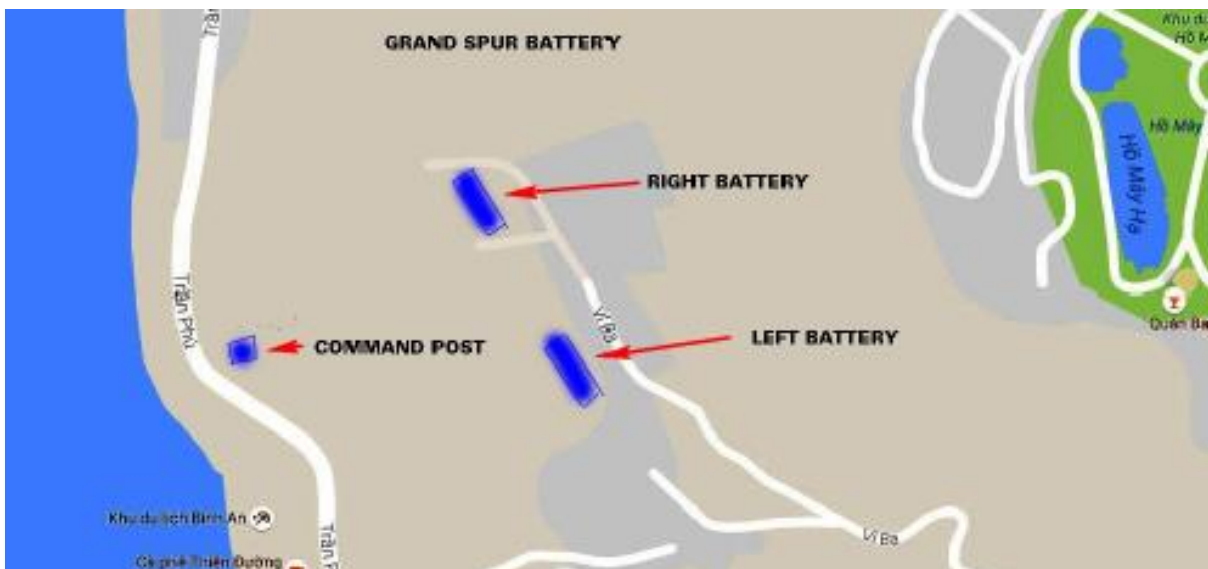


I have lightened this picture a little for a clear look inside, you can see a rear wall and two side walls. Could this be a storage room or maybe a bunker for the men who manned the Command post?

By looking at the construction methods you can tell that they are French. The same methods used during that period in time

At last, it has proven, once and for all, that the cave does not extend all the way up to the American Radar Station on top of the hill.

It shows that it was part of the French Guns and Forts of Vung Tau that encircle both mountains on the Vung Tau Peninsula. It also proves that this was the position of the command post that controlled both the Left and right Spur Batteries of the Grand Spur.



The Water Works Area Monument.

This is an interesting little side trek. This is what has been called the Water Works Area Monument. Why have I included it here? I have included this because it was a defence point the French built. It was built as part of the protection of the Airport also for the defence of the water plants.

It is related to the Airfield Fort “K” and the destroyed position “Point 16”. They would have been in almost in a straight line. But the people's committee of Vung Tau moved this building 13 meters to its left of the original position when the road was widened past the airfield in 2010.



From its design, you can tell that it is French built, but upon closer inspection, you will notice that it has been added too. This reportedly happened in 1949 by the Viet Minh. I am not sure when the above photo was taken but it would have been before it was moved in 2007 - 2010.



This photo would have been taken in the early 2000's in it's original position.

You can see in the next image how the three forts are lined up. In what was then called, by the French, a Porcupine (Hedgehog) defence.



This is a later image of an unknown date, it was taken after 2010 because it is shown as a monument.

The Monuments Plaque



The Victorious Destruction Of the Enemy in the Water Works Area. (Water Well Crossroads)

In May 1949 and 20 December 1949 was the start of a number of battles that caused great pain for the enemy, coordinating with a number of large campaigns the armed forces of Vung Tau (Operations Command) continuously destroyed the enemy in this place, raising to fever pitch the revolutionary spirit of the people's forces of Vung Tau to advance and destroy the enemy.

This vestige has been made official by the Ministry of Culture and Information in Decree No 983 - VHQP 4 August 1992.

The Vestige marker has been moved to the left in order to widen the 30-4 Road, about 13 metres in line with Works Number 1040/BVHHT DSVH date 28 March 2007 of the Ministry of Culture and Information and Decision Number 4066/QD-UBND dated 14 November 2007 of the Ba Ria - Vung Tau People's Committee.

Monument Built and Completed April to June 2010

The text on the Monument has been translated for me by a very good friend :- Walter Pearson.

Pham Van HY, CHAIRMAN OF SCIENCE HISTORY: " WE SUPPORT THE RELOCATION "

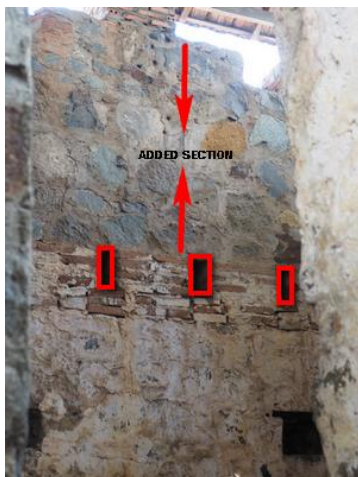
Monument Station Water Treatment Plant located in the outer defenses of the French colonialists in Vung Tau, has the task of protecting the airport and water plants; This station by security forces with troops occupied about a company, equipped firepower. Here erupted destroy two enemy fighting in 1949, marking a historical stage for the revolutionary struggle of the people of Ba Ria - Vung Tau in the war against France.



If you look closely you can see where about 2 meters have been added. Shots were taken in September 2016



On the left, the rear left-hand side of the building and to the right is the entrance which is placed at the rear of it.



Looking inside, you can see clearly where the top section has been added. The rectangular sections shown in the building wall are not firing loopholes they do not go right through. Perhaps they were bearers for some kind of floor or support for a Machine gun.

CHAPTER SIX

REFERENCES AND END-NOTES

REFERENCES

FIRST OFF THIS BOOK IS **NOT FOR SALE !!!**.

IT CANNOT BE COPIED OR DUPLICATED IN ANY FORM WHAT SO EVER
WITHOUT MY WRITTEN
PERMISSION

Some of this work has been openly plagiarised from a bloke called Jean-Jacque Moulins, I have left his copyright notices on his work, sometimes he has also signed it as JJM. I have done this to acknowledge and to distinguish his work from mine. Also, there has been a lot of myself gone into it. I freely acknowledge that this is some of his work. I am in awe of this bloke, the amount of research is unbelievable.

ern.marshall@gmail.com

Google Maps

Google Earth

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A._Peter_Dewey

<http://paulsvungtauhistoryclub.weebly.com> Paul Rowe

<https://www.wikipedia.org/>

<http://www.passioncompassion1418.com/>

<http://www.fortiffere.fr/>

<http://saigonvietnamvungtau.en.php>

Street Without Joy... Bernard Fall

Wikimedia Commons

Nico Fourie

Hideaki Suzuki

Kaufmann, J.E.; Kaufmann, H.W. The Forts and Fortifications of Europe 1815-1945: The Central

States: Germany, Austria-Hungary and Czechoslovakia (Kindle Location 369). Pen and Sword. Kindle Edition.

Walter Pearson

Tim Doling

Reece Ireland

Adrian Hurley

Logevall, Fredrik. Embers of War: The Fall of an Empire and the Making of America's Vietnam

(Kindle Locations 5685-5689). Random House Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

<http://www.vietnamheritage.com.vn>

Lastly but importantly I would like to thank the local Vietnamese people, without their generous help and courtesy I may have never been able to find some of these places.