

THE FRENCH GUNS & FORTS OF VUNG TAU

Compiled & Edited by Ern Marshall

An ongoing publication telling the story of
the Guns and Forts of Vung Tau
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 to go crawling around the old fortifications. Of course being young and 10ft tall 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 of research, I've collected as much information as possible (at this stage anyway) and then decided to put 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 19 forts (gun emplacements on the Vung Tau Peninsular) one of the 19 has been completely torn down to make way for a new road and I have not been able to locate any photos of it. So that leaves 18, and to be honest 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 theses 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

Chapter One

The history leading up to the establishment of the
Forts & Guns

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. My interpretations may not be accurate but like JJM 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 ordnates, 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 and 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.

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.

Japanese occupation in Vietnam



Japanese troops entering Saigon in 1941 - Source: Image from Wikipedia

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 head of the OSS in South Vietnam, 28 yr. 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.



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

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.

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 rallied Vietnamese people in the north to pillage rice warehouses 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 forces 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 belonged to France. At that time, the French did not retake Vietnam immediately, so Vietnam was divided into two parts: 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 same 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 - Source: Image from Wikimedia Commons

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. 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; at the same time, the French had 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.

However, at the same time, the Viet Minh started its guerrilla war against the French. This led the first Vietnam War in Indochina. Laos and Cambodia joined this war. Pathet Lao and Khmer 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 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 the Types of weapons used this era.

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.

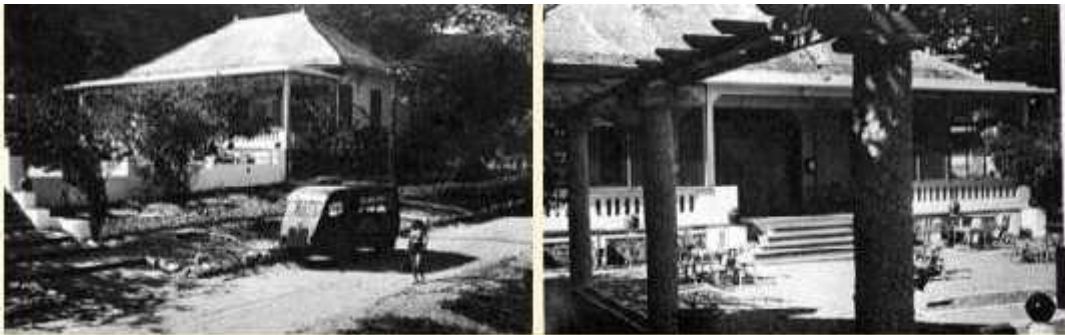
Viet Minh units remained active in various areas of the centre and the south of Vietnam. Terrorist attacks continued, none more brazen than one in late July on a group of French officers and their families at Cap St. Jacques, a resort town of palms and black sandy beaches at the mouth of the Saigon River.

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.

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.



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 into 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."

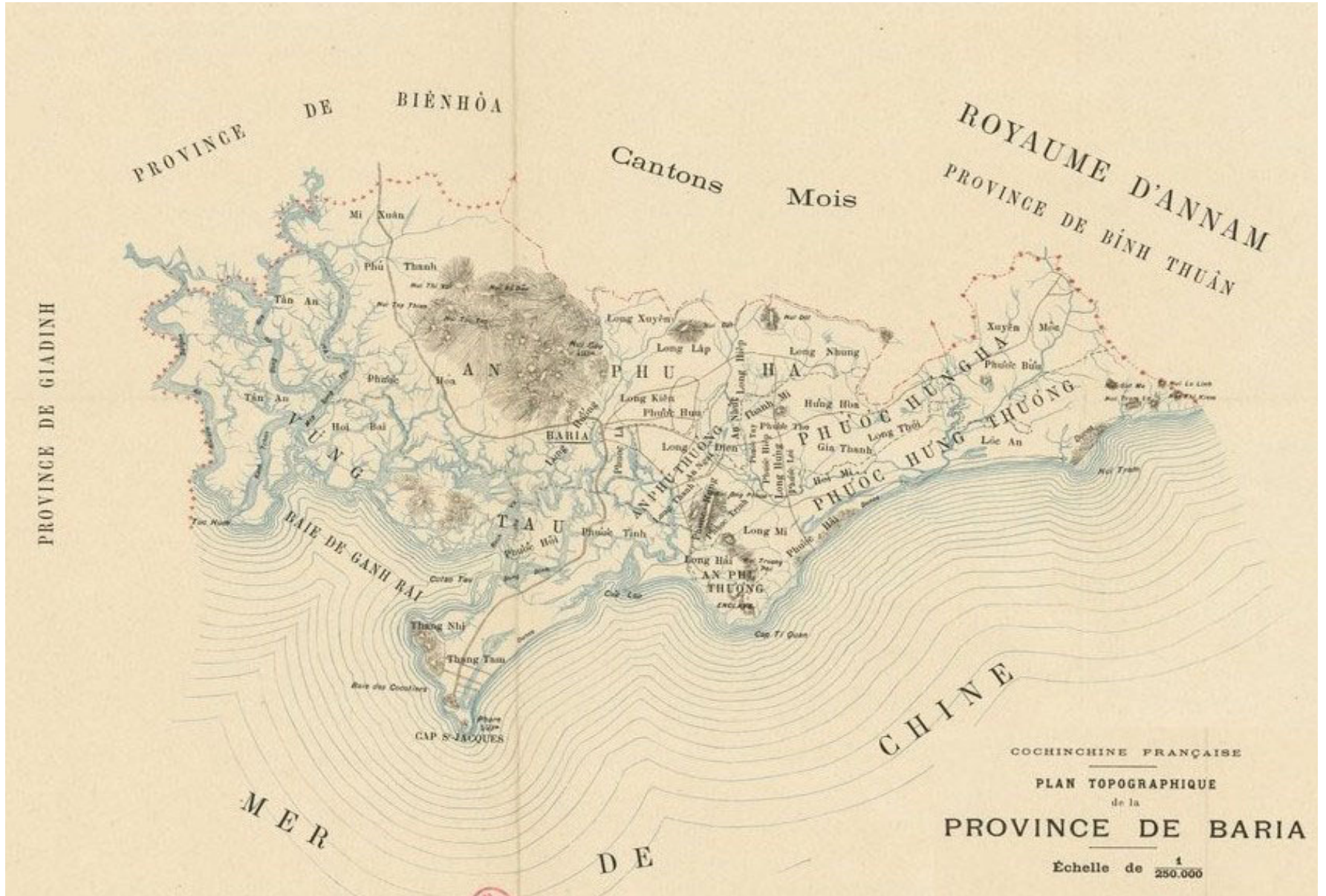
He lit a Gauloise Bleue cigarette, sucked in the acrid smoke and never once looked back.

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



This is a very old French map of the Province then called Gia Dinh, 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

These maps were sourced
from.....<http://www.archivesnationales.culture.gouv.fr/anom/en/index.html>

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 Old Pier - Breakwater.

Front Beach



The Light House.

The Two Forts.

The Military Camp.

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 points have 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 Marshal

The above is an extract from :-

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

The Guns

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.

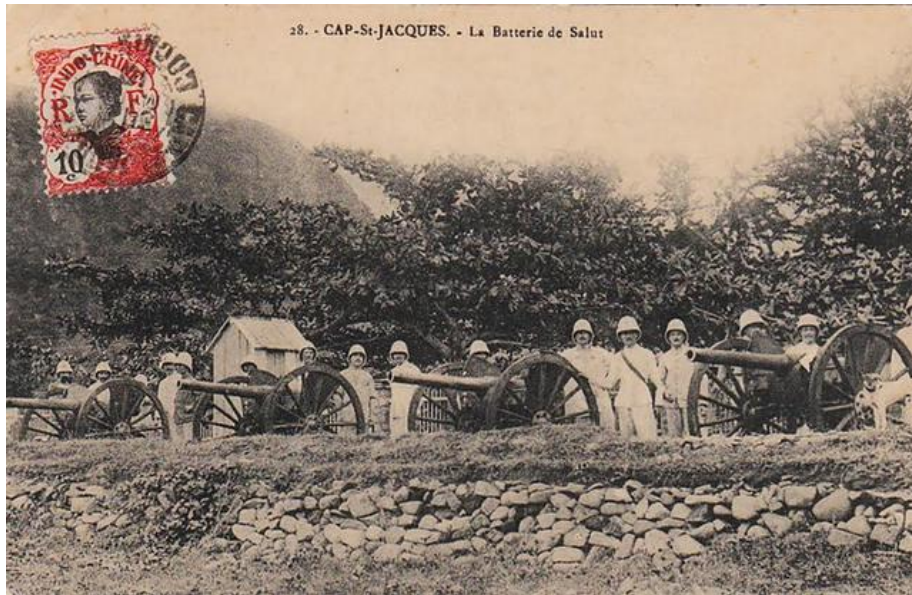
"The call of national resistance" is the handwritten draft of President Ho Chi Minh's appeal to the whole nation for the resistance war written at the end of 1946. It is being kept at the Viet Nam National Museum of History in Ha Noi. The draft, that was written on only two separate pages, has not only 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 and 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.

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

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.

Vietnamese.

You will read about **Nui Lon**, which is Vietnamese for Big Mountain.

Also, there is are referrals to **Nui Nho**, which is Vietnamese for **Small Mountain**.

Phare (French), means Lighthouse in English.

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 that constricts the movement of storming infantrymen to an enfilade alignment of greatest exposure and so prevents the enemy from establishing itself there.

In some types of bastioned fortifications, the caponier served only as a covered means of access to the outworks, with the bastion-trace allowing for the defence of the ditch by fire from the main parapets.

Originally the term referred to a covered passageway that traversed the ditch between the walls of a fortress and a ravelin outside the wall. This was more than simply a 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. Thus the passageway was equipped with musket ports and cannon ports that fired along the ditch.

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 Colonies 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 image



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 or fortress to the self-motorized weapons, from horse-driven to railway mountings, the artillery of 1914-1918 is declined, for each of the belligerents, in several categories, each one deploying a large variety of guns.

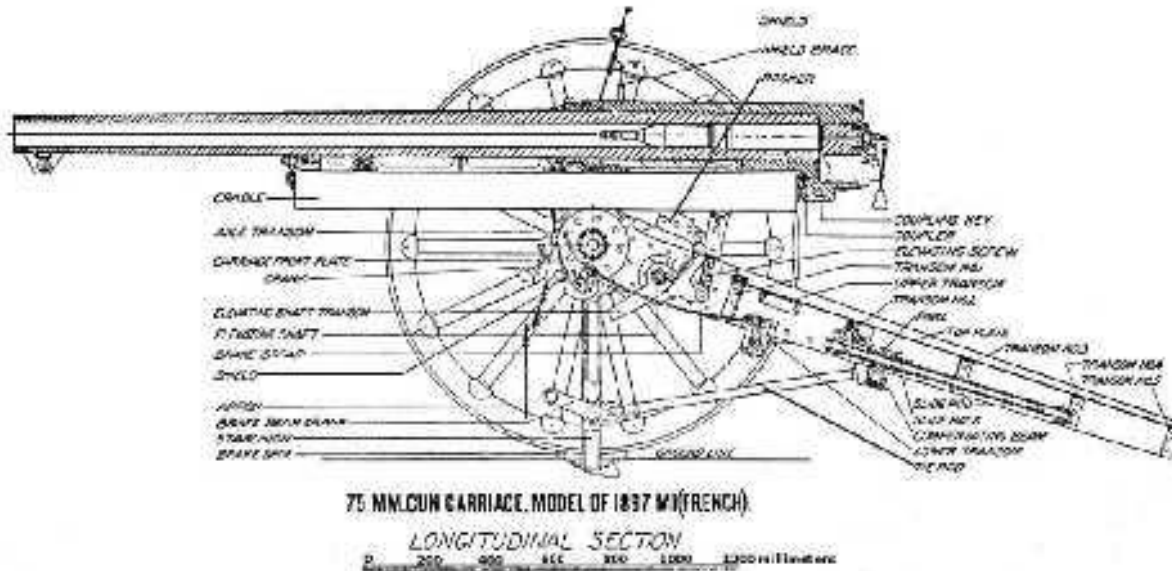
Some technical vocabulary can be needed before reviewing the weapons of that period. One will generally class the guns into about 3 main types :

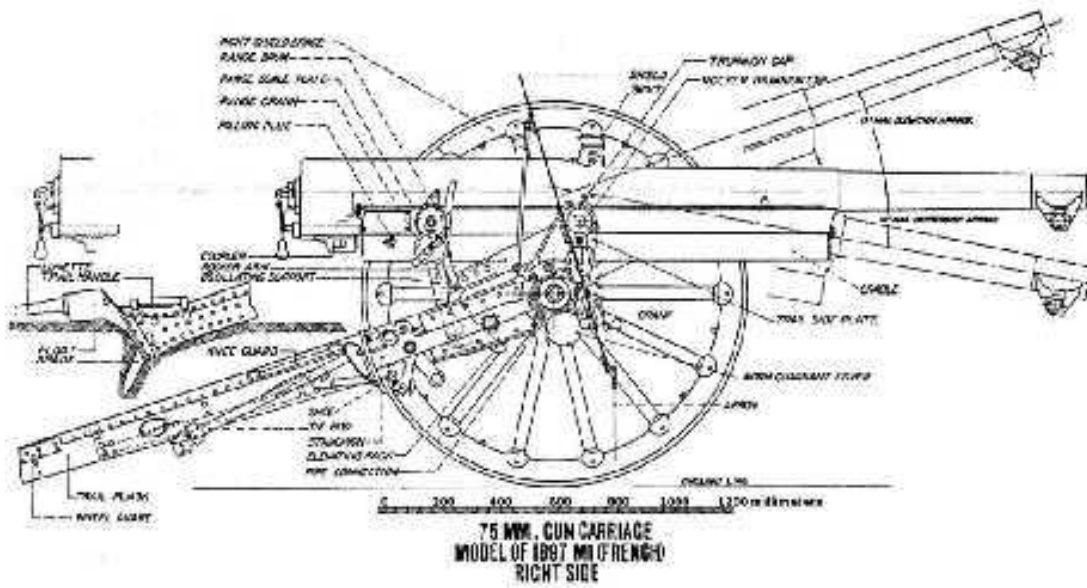
- o *Guns* (in French : 'Canon') - Weapons generally used in direct sight shooting (flat trajectory).
- o *Howitzers* (in French : 'Obusier') - Weapons generally used for the indirect shooting (curved trajectory).
- o *Mortars* (in French : 'Mortier') – Ancient name of the heavy guns used for the indirect 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.

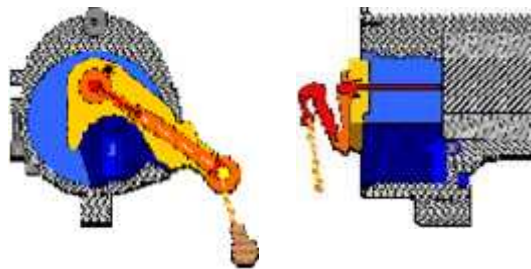




This a fine example of a 75mm gun being placed in a coastal defensive position.

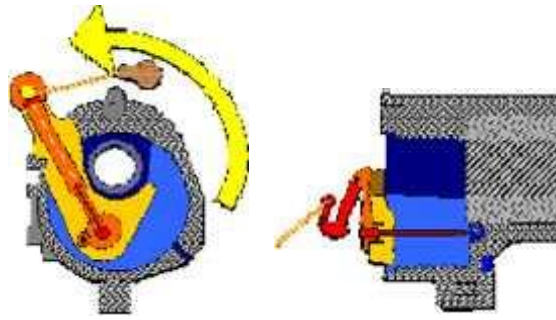
The Breech.

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



- Closed breech, ready for the firing cord.

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



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.

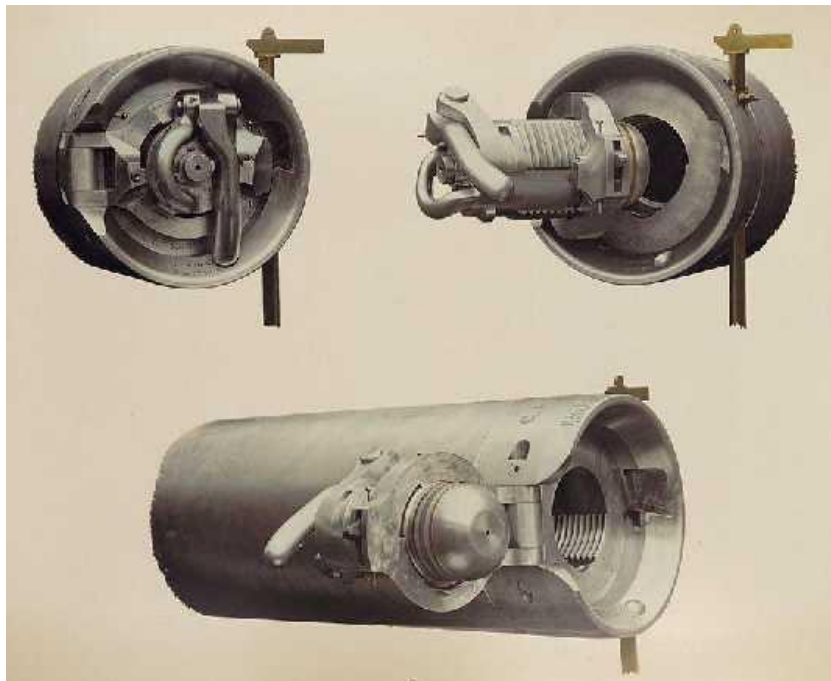
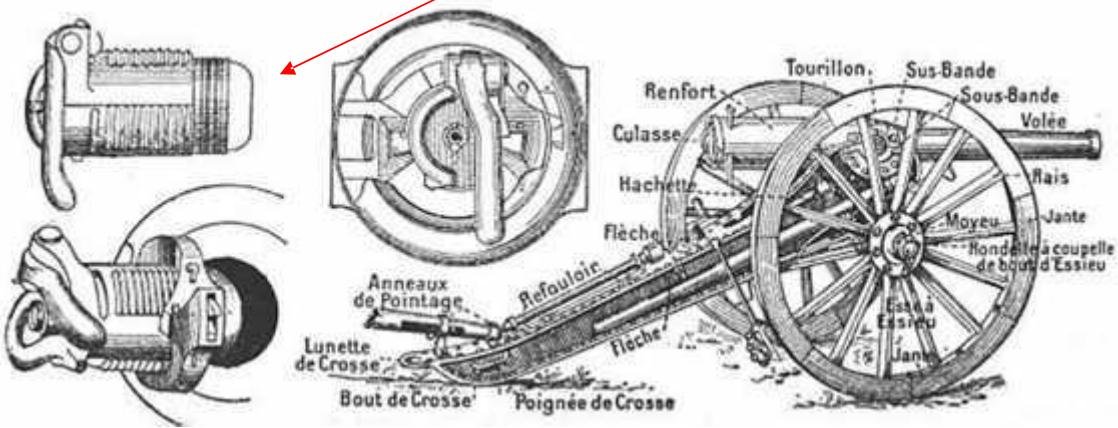
You will see this term often used on these pages.

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 I: the *Système de Bange*. -

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 rearward, 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**

The 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...)

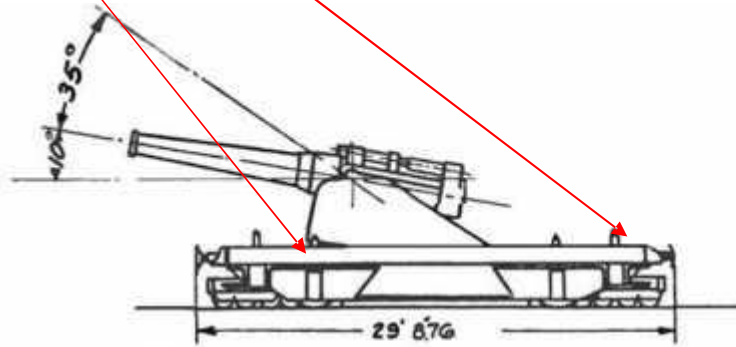
The contemporary guns had adopted the majority of the devices present on this one, with some modifications. In particular, certain models of recoiling systems were rather of hydro- mechanical type (oil + spring), and the breech closing mechanisms of the 'sliding breechblock' type (Germany), or of 'interrupted 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
Côtés album Photos.



Detail of the head of a barrel of 240
Cannet 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.



Replica of a Mougin casemate gun at the Fort du Mont Bart
Photo: Bresson Thomas

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

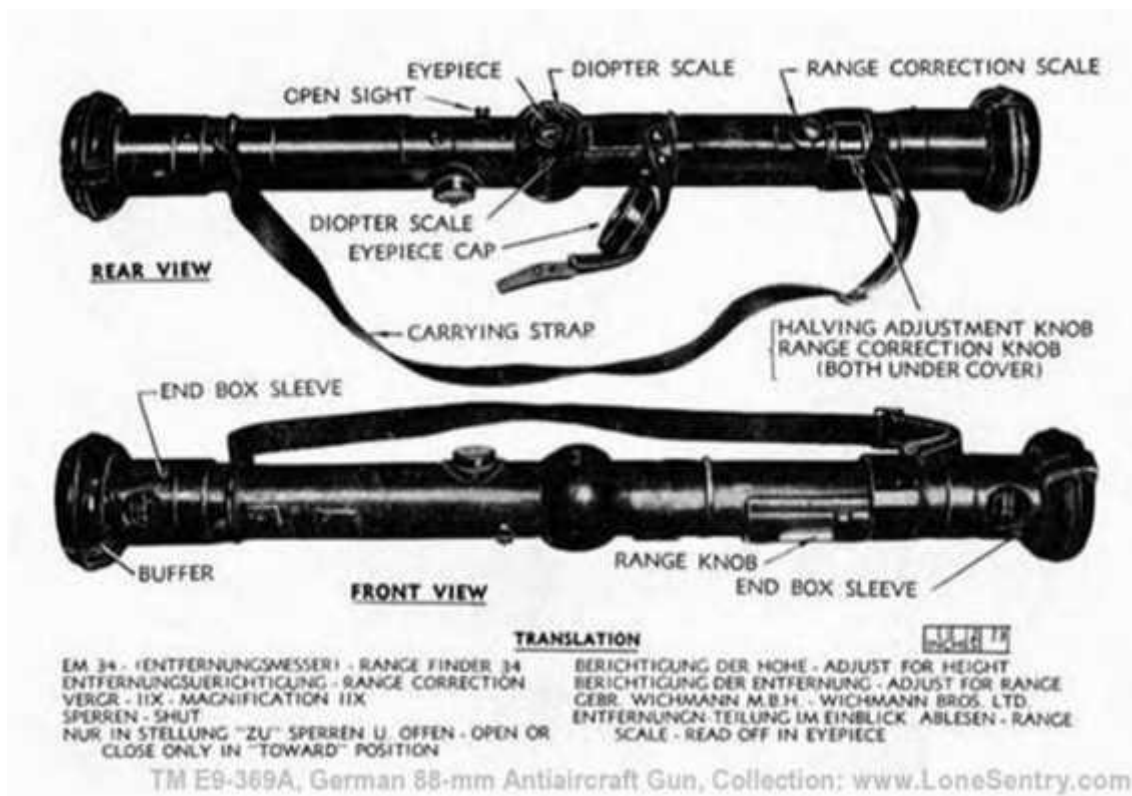
Telemetry is the automatic measurement and wireless transmission of data from remote sources. In general, telemetry works in the following way: Sensors at the source measure either electrical data (such as voltage or current) or physical data (such as temperature or pressure). These measurements are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



Used 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)



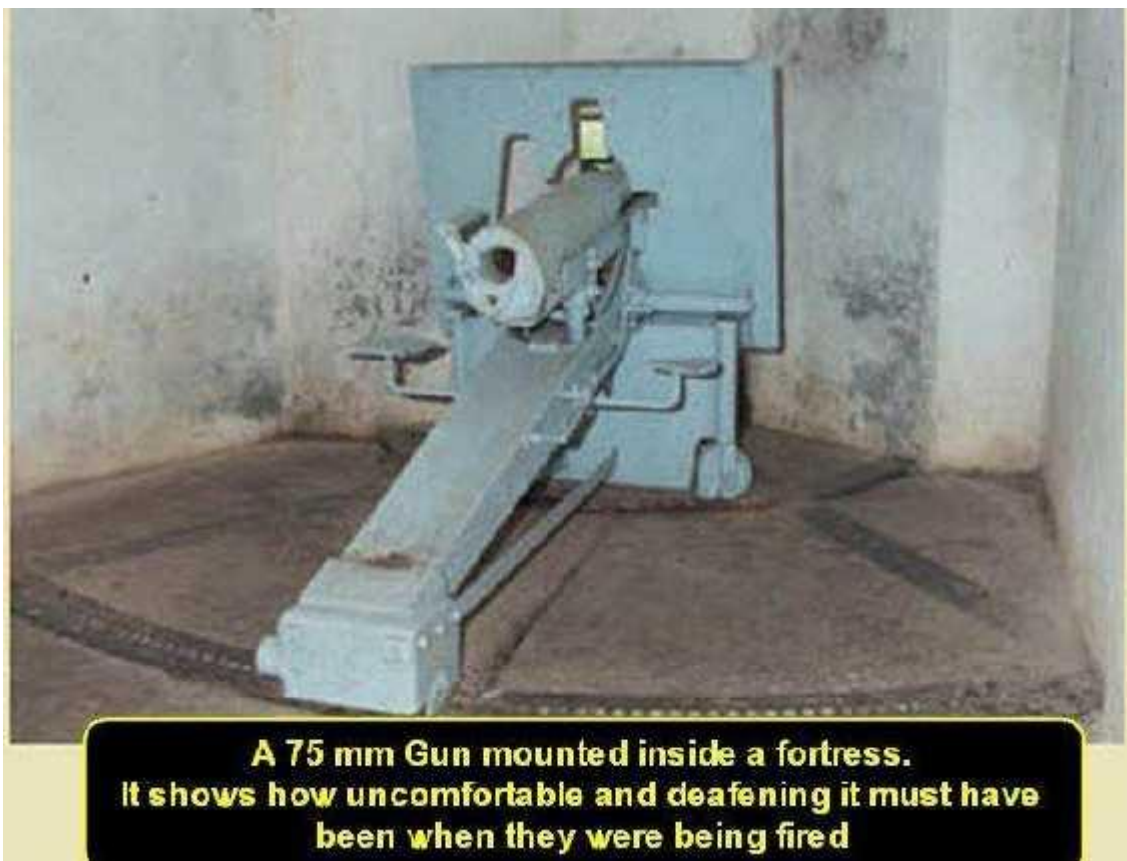
The urina (main Baracks)



latrines

Obviously, they would have been in a lot better condition than

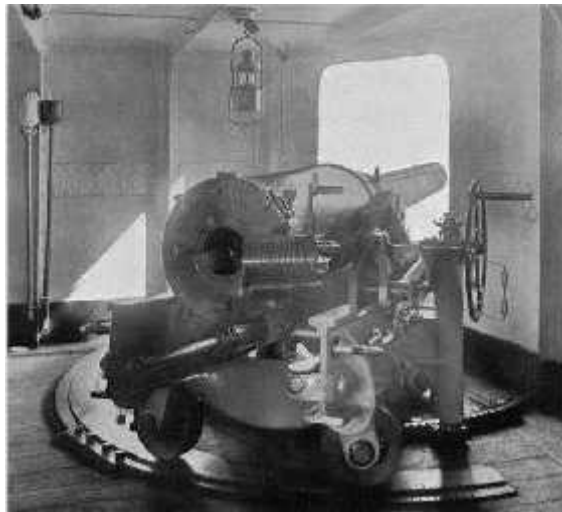
The working conditions were not much better than the living conditions. Very small area to work in and it must have been stifling hot, the noise when firing would have been horrific



**A 75 mm Gun mounted inside a fortress.
It shows how uncomfortable and deafening it must have
been when they were being fired**



Can you just imagine???? And this is only a reasonably small calibre weapon. What would it been like to step up to one this size



Some of the guns were fed from beneath the actual gun



Mechanism of the rotating turret



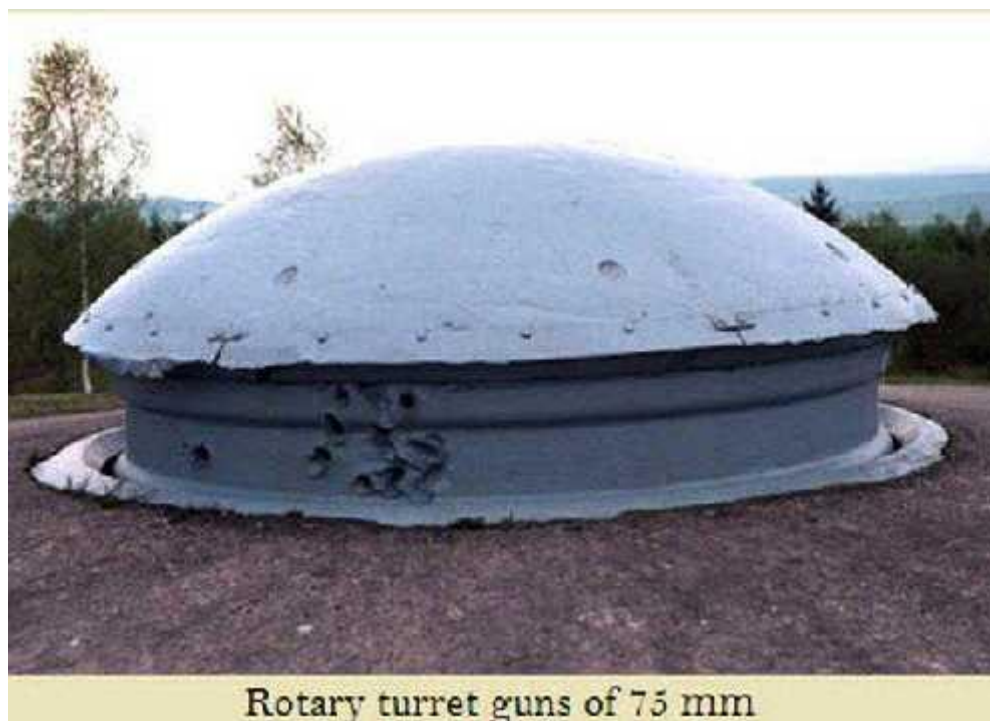
Mechanism of the rotating turret

Not much room to work in down here

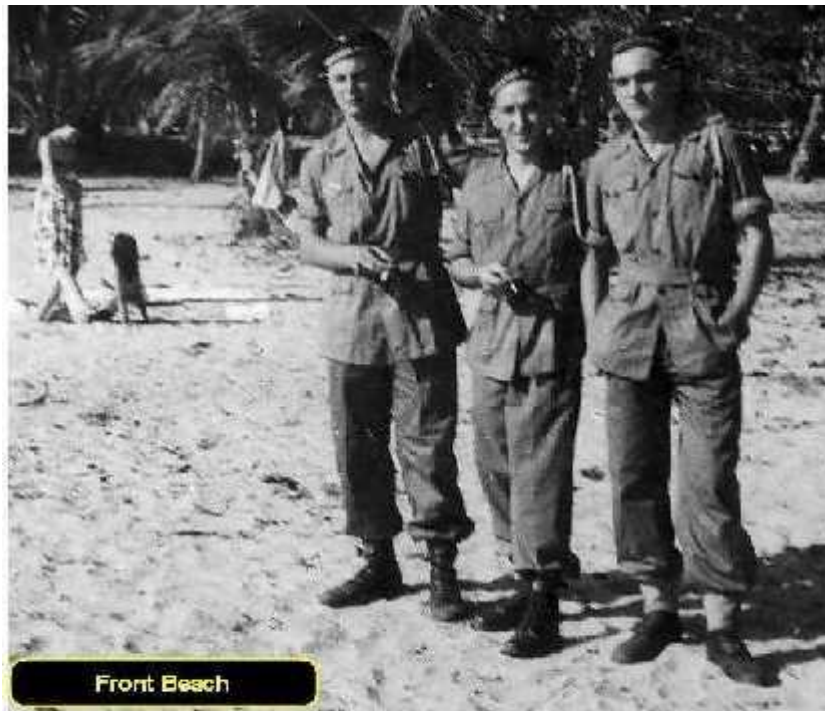
The twin 75mm Schneider turret is an example of the type used at the **Rach-Cat** Fortress at the entrance to the Saigon River.



This one seems to have had a bit of unwanted attention



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



IMG 1-610 - 1947 / 51 - + Cie Jaubert Jaubert Cù - Cape St Jacques: ???; THE MAOR John Raymond DROUTHAN - (Drouthans Raymond)



IMG 1-611 - 1953-1954 - Cap Saint Jacques: Pierre KEROUANTON, NOISIARD Francis RIEU, COTTON Michel, THE QUEN, DUVERGE, Vietnamese and Hurricane BARRY úú - (Marcel Fritsch)



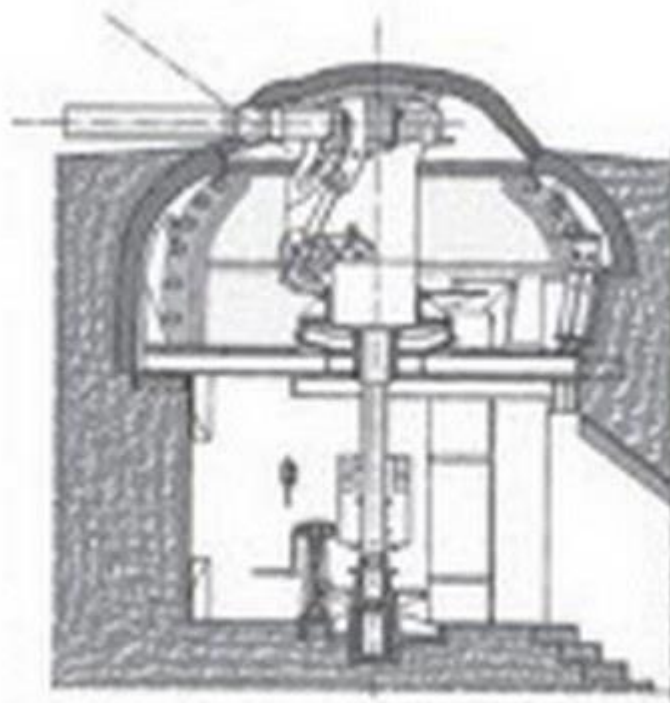
Grand Massif Abri DOUR proj ecte\Jr de 90 Mai2008

This Gun emplacement has been built over by local residents. This particular one looks over the bay area



A French *colon* (settler) and his Vietnamese wife and servants

Armoured Turret



**Armored Turret PT08 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.

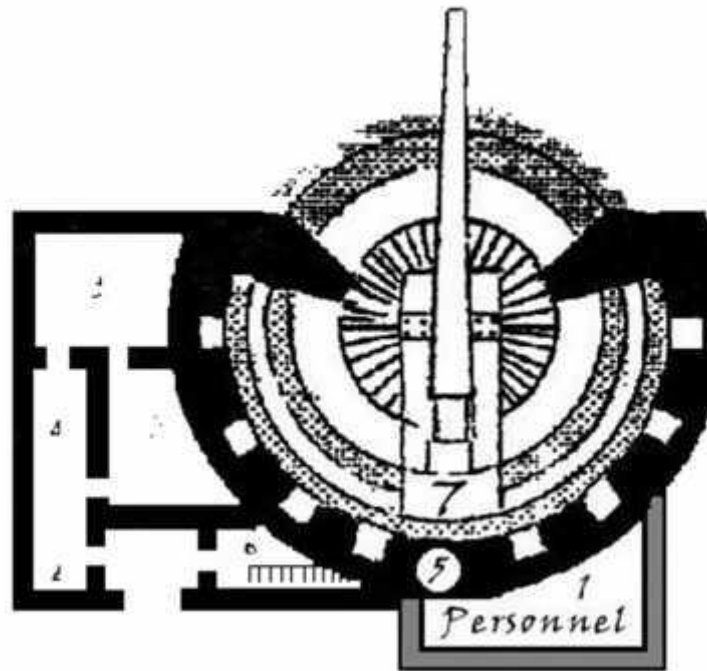


Here I am using the newly discovered section of the Lazaretto Battery as an example.

Plan of a bunker of the Battery

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

Plan of a bunker of the Battery



In 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.

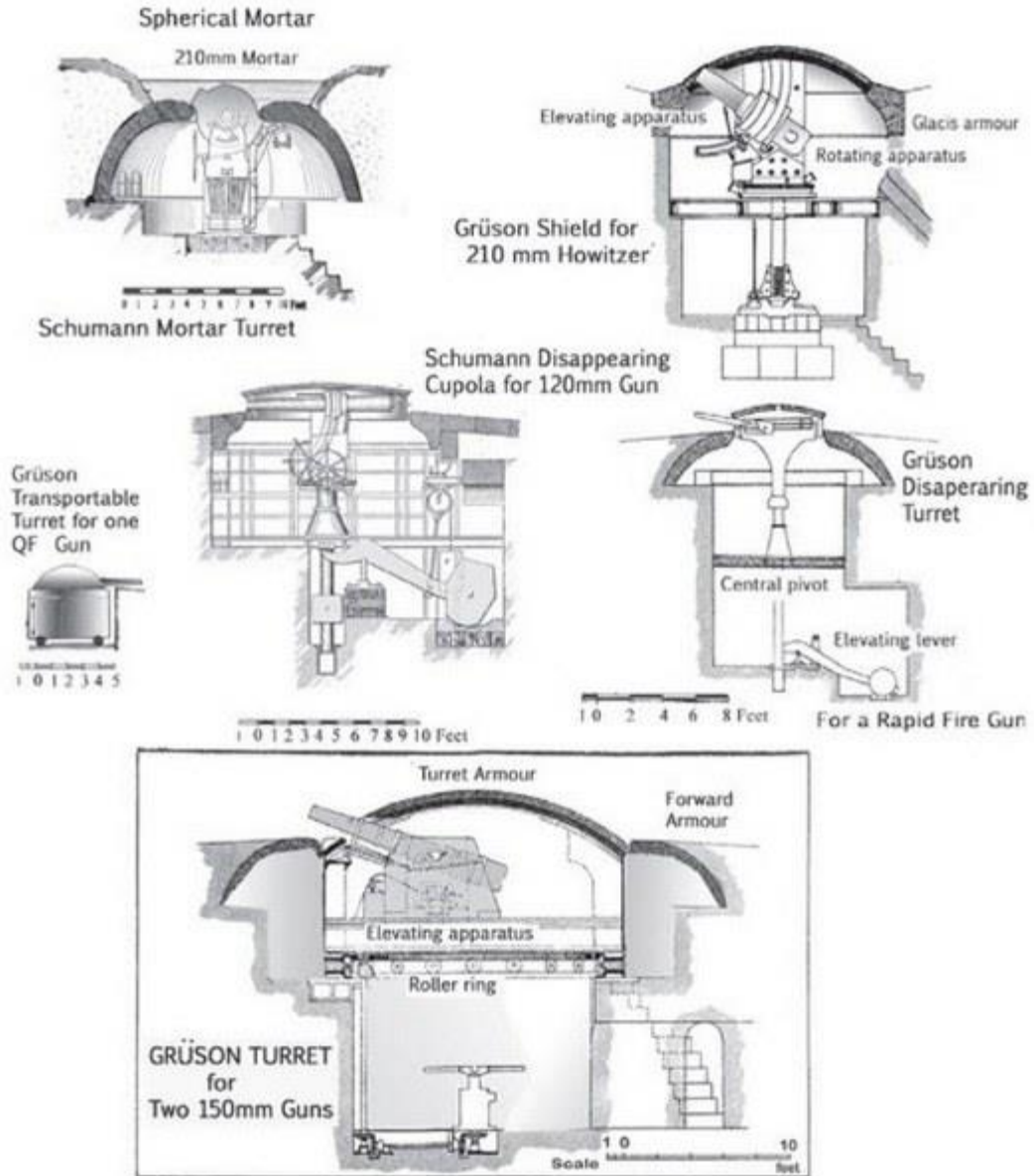
In Room 4: site of the power generating unit ensuring lighting and the driving force necessary to the displacement of the mounting and from where the ammunition were conveyed.

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 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.



Experiences 1886

With the arrival of the new 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.

Inside the "torpedo" round storage chamber.



Connecting Tunnels (passages)

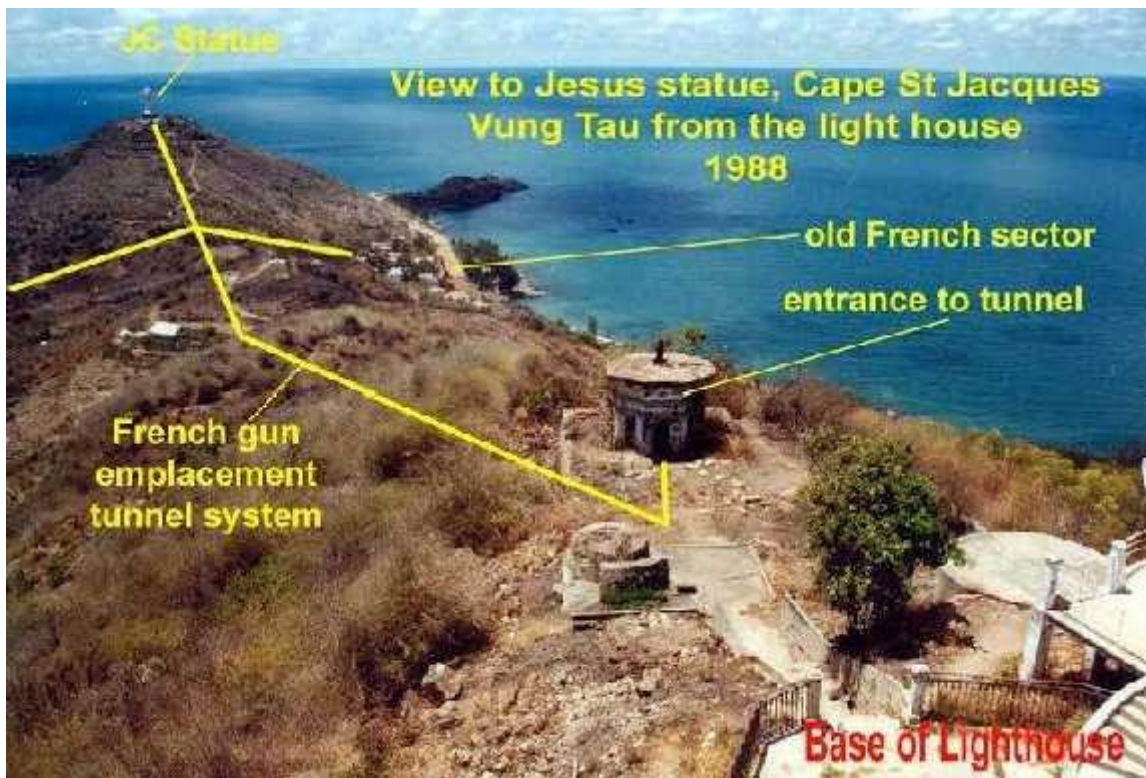
A quote from a previous passage..... There is a major tunnel system, built by the French, inside small mountain complete with its own rail system transforming the fortress into one similar to "Navarone"

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 is also an historical and political allegiance spelt out in the location. Would it make sense to use tunnels

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

- **The land front includes:**

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

189-1896 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.

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- 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

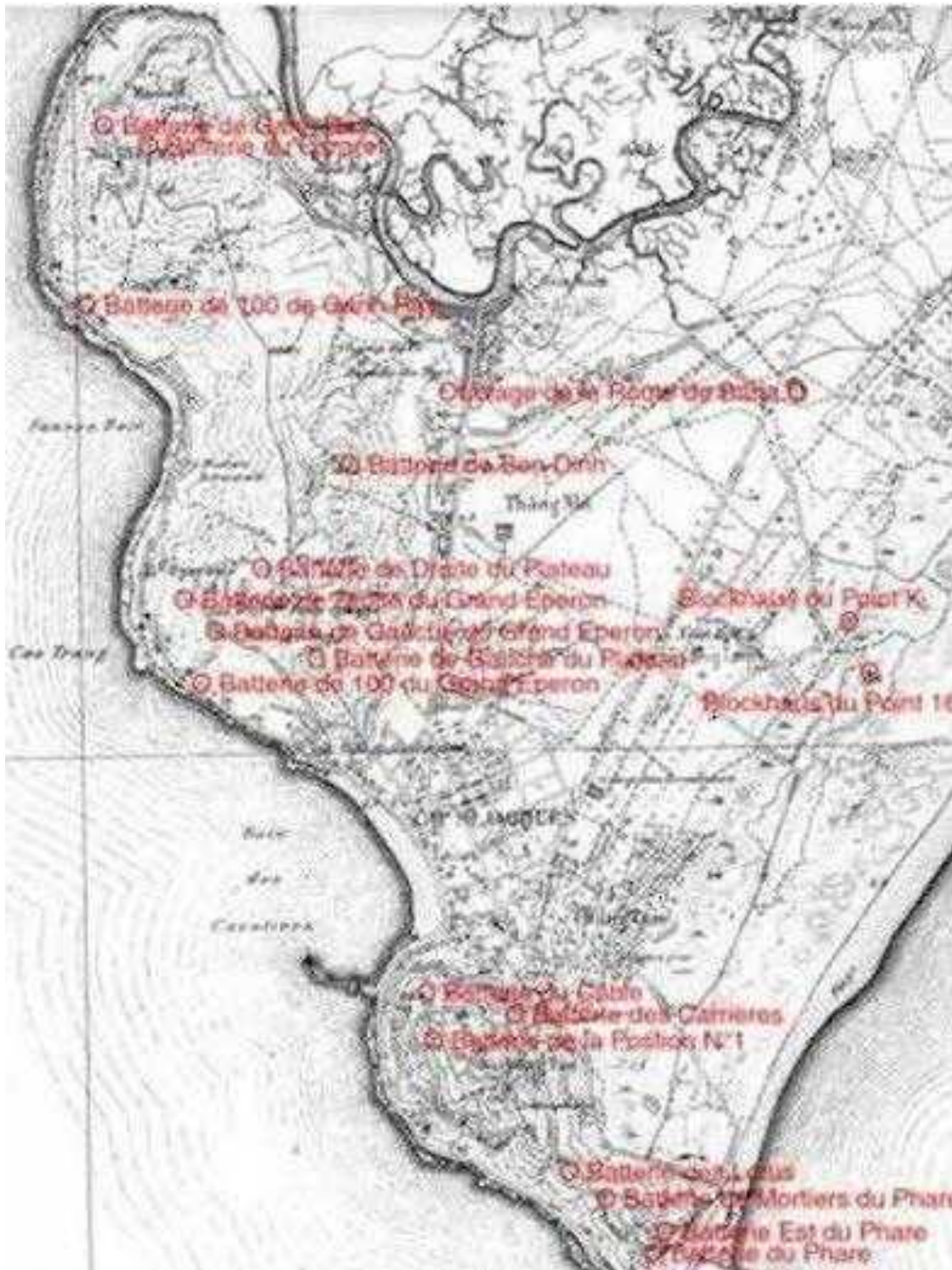
The land in front of the Saint-Jacques cap is reinforced by the construction of 28 blockhouses for machine guns and anti-tank guns. Part of materials, different generations, is still in place today, often in fairly good condition. They are located on sites with varying statutes often still military, 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



This is a very old French Map of the fort of Vung Tau. In the next couple of pages you can see an updated version. That newer map version is dated about 1967, translated into English for easier understanding.

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

- Gan-Ray Detachment

- Gan Ray Battery of 6 cannon 240mm M (modified in length) Model 1870 mounted on chassis model 1889 PC
- Lazaret Battery of 4 cannon 140mm model 1870 mounted on chassis model 1897 PA M
- Gan Ray Battery of 2 cannons 100 model 1897 mounted on chassis model M 1897 PC

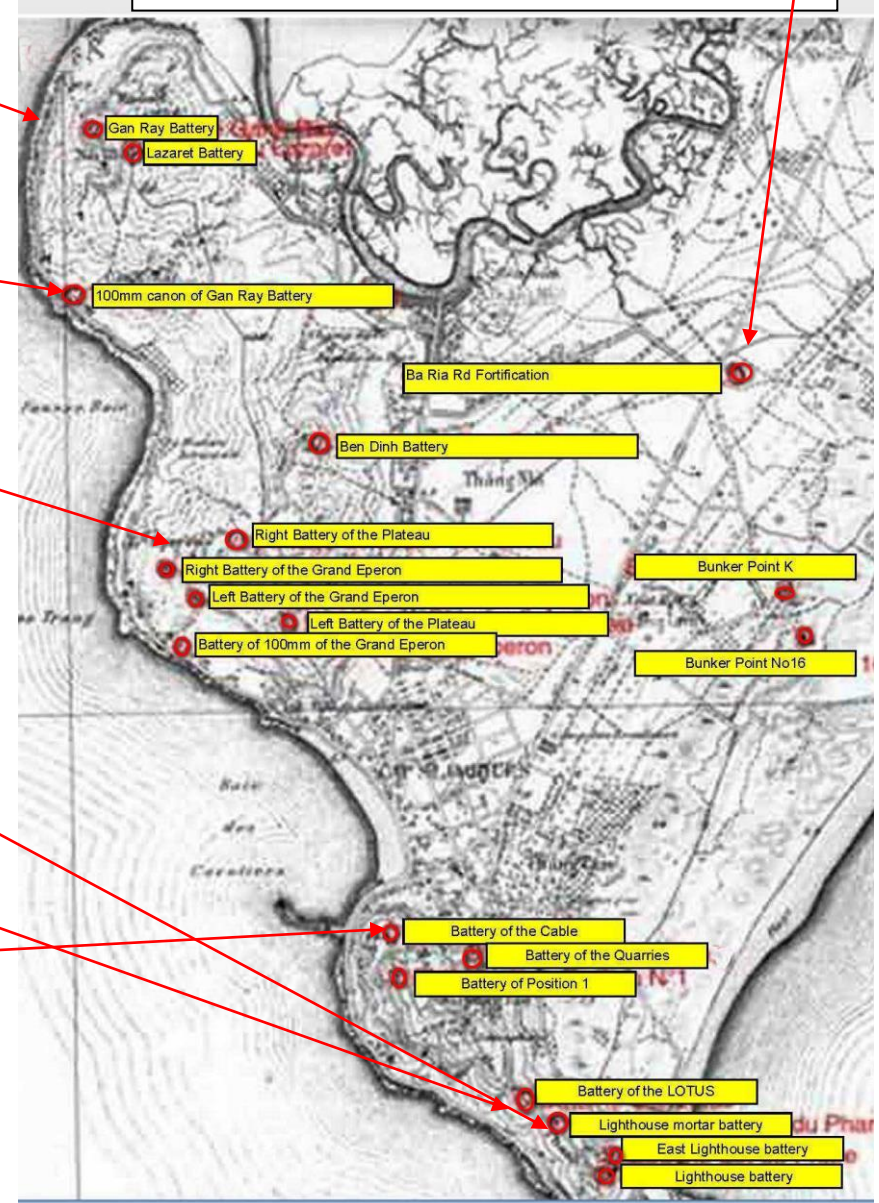
- Grand Eperon Detachment (also named Plateau or Centre)

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

Lighthouse

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

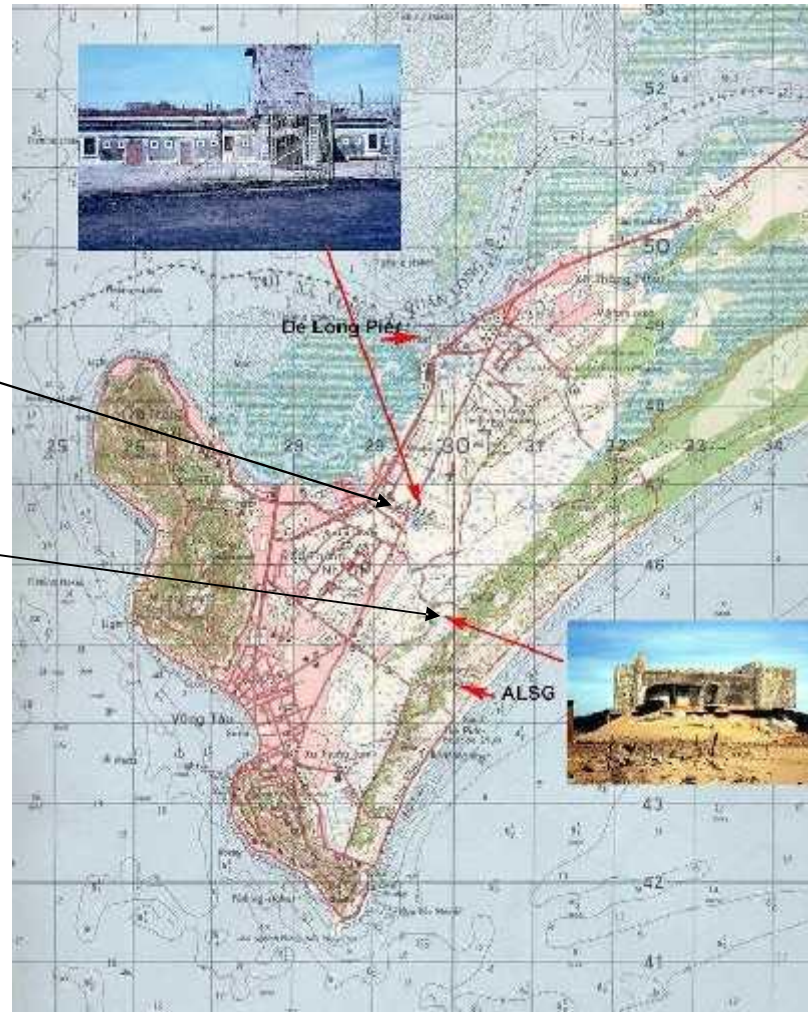
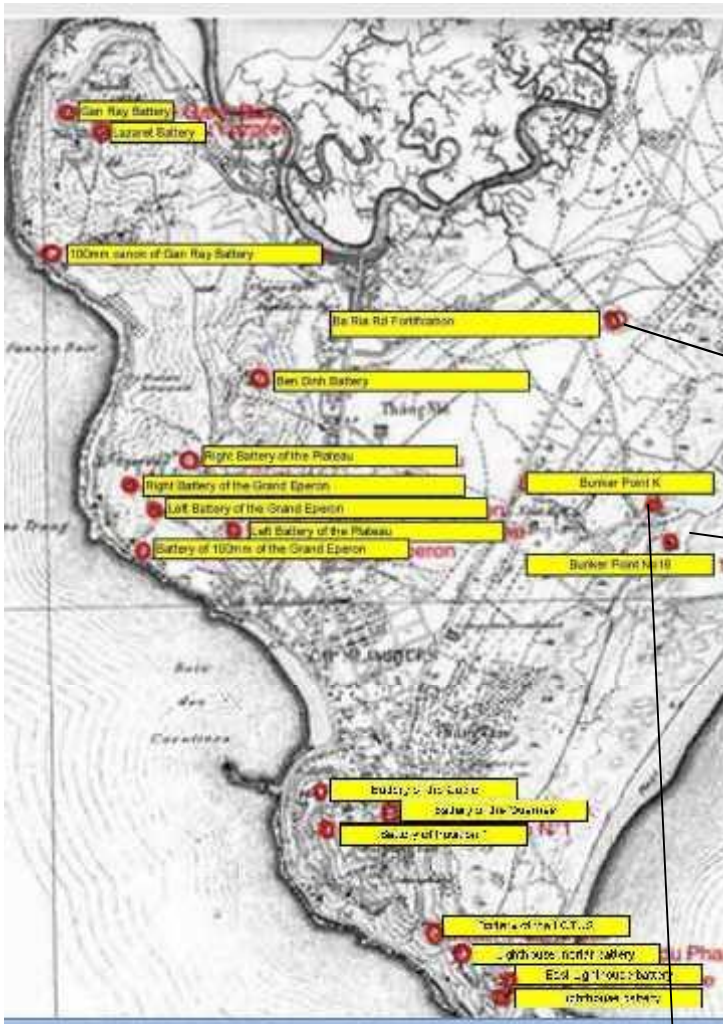




This a depiction looking down to the Jesus Statue.

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 old Forts or Bunkers of Vung Tau



Bunker point "K" was torn down to make way for a new road in 2015

Blockhouse Point K Blockhouse concrete for a section of land in front of Cape St Jacques, in 1912 armed with two machine guns of 8 mm. It still participated in the defence in 1939.

Bunker Point “K” was demolished when the new road into Vung Tau was built in 2015

Point “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. The old French Fort at The main entrance to Vung Tau airfield. They used the tower for a perimeter guard post. Very spooky place! It went several stories underground.



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.

(Photo by John Donald)



Old French Fort at Vung Tau 1971

Blockhouse Point 16 concrete bunkers of the land front of Cap St. Jacques, in 1912 armed with four guns of 8 mm. This is a relatively important block for 2 officers, 2 NCOs and 75 junior ranks. It still participated in the defence in 1939.



Old French Fort at Vung Tau (1968)

All the above photos are of point No 16



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 armored 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.

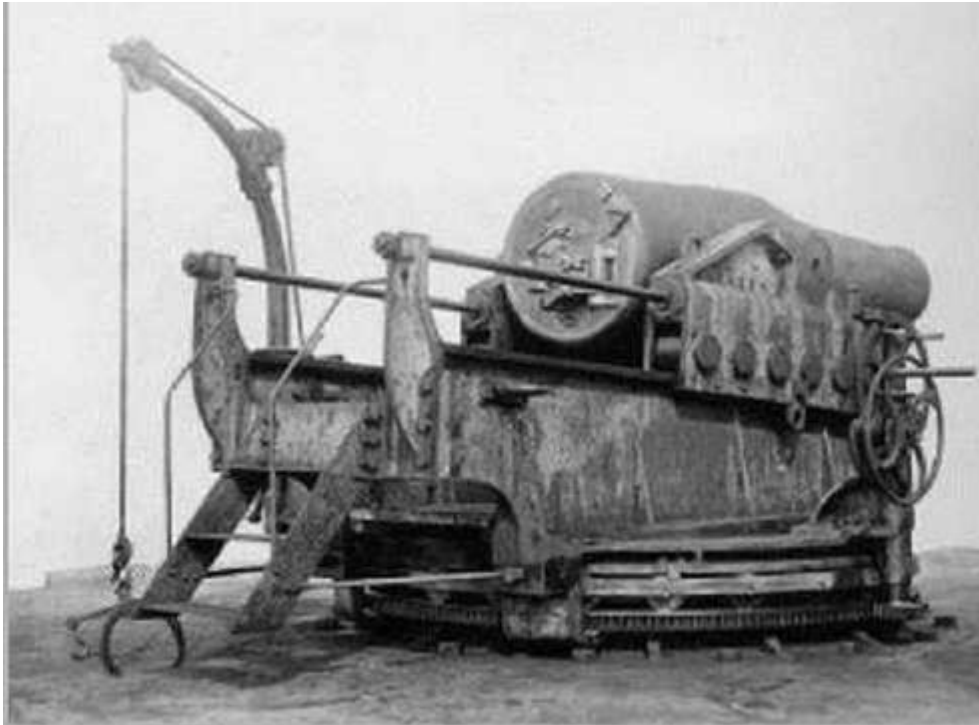
In view mobility, the muzzle is well below the 120L barrel .

Employment and role in defending strongholds

The gun of 138 mm can be used, failing piece newer models to contrebattre batteries small arms or placed in conditions of disadvantage struggle to flank a defense 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.



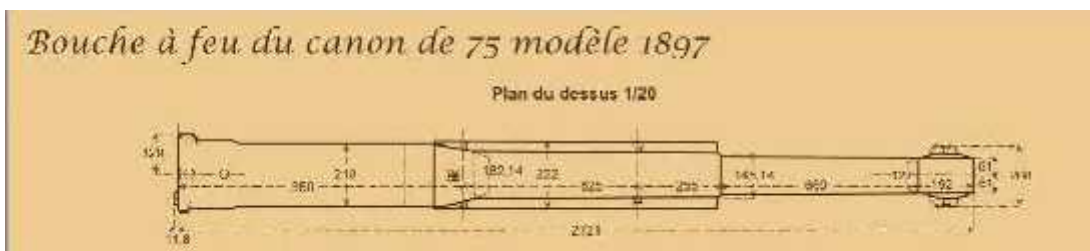
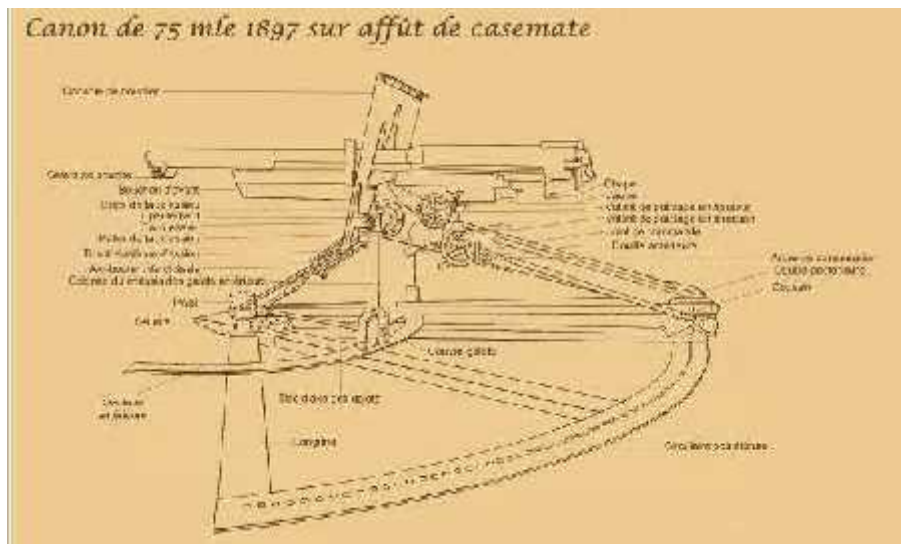
Un mortier de 30 cm modèle 1883-T-93
sur affût modèle 1889 PC

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

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

Piece	30 mortar steel Coast	
Date Model	1883 T 93	
Weight parts	10.200 kg	
calibre	30 mm	
Tube 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 forwards	360	200 °
Shooting range	Approximately 8000 m	Approximately 8000 m
Initial speed	178-265 m / s max	178-265 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 cannon

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 confronted 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.

In 1914. the canon of 90 on field carriage or seat and look up mle 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 75 1897 model which is much more efficient and more manageable.

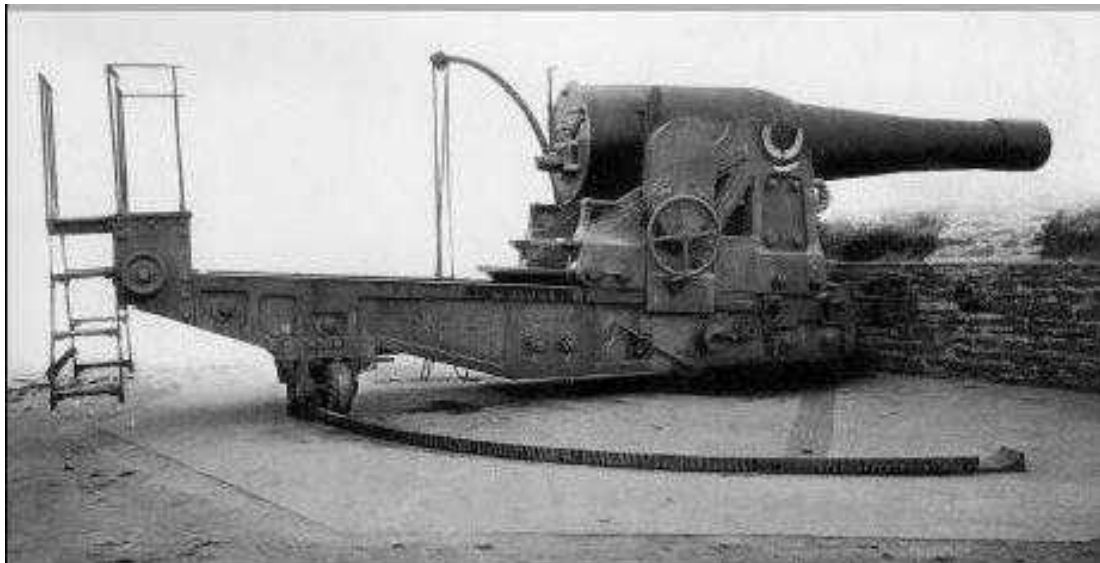


Canon 19 cm model 1870-1893
on lookout model 1886 PC

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 Bargo 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
Data 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	85 kg max
Unit Weight	26 tonnes



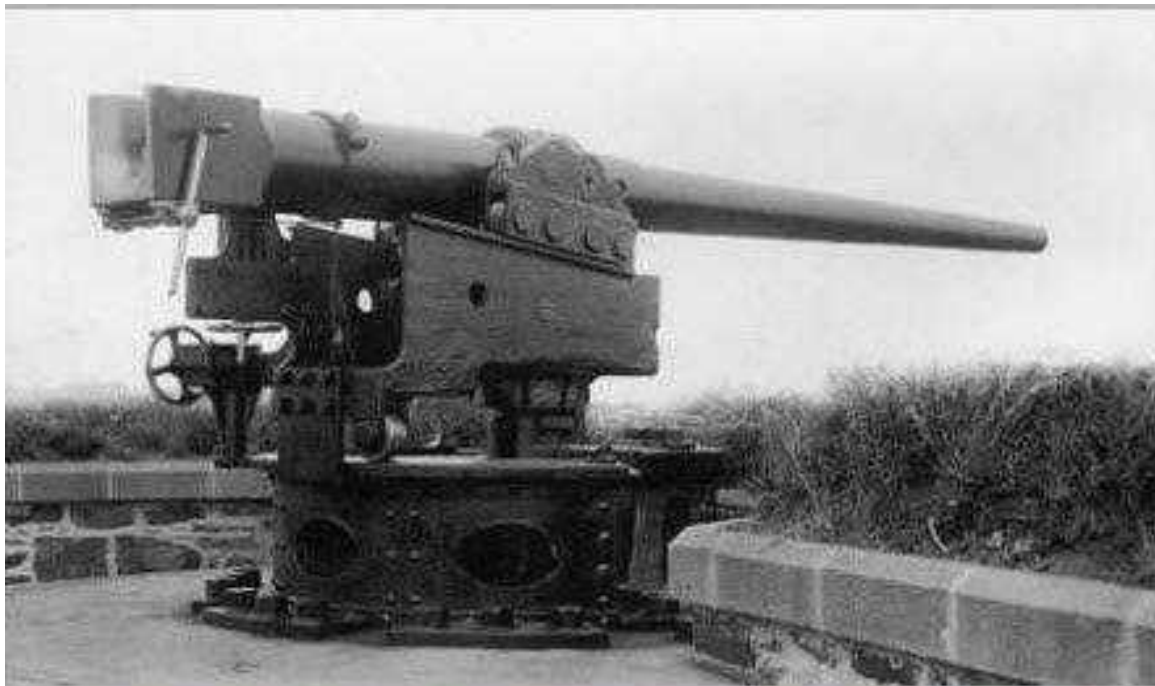
Canon 24 C model 1870 PC 1876-1883 lookout M model

The gun 24 1870-87 model on carriages models PC 1888 or PC 1886 is a cast part with the tube in 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

<p>Piece Date Model Weight parts calibre tube length Cylinder head</p>	<p>Canon 24 Shore cast iron with steel casing 1870-1887 20000 kg 240 mm 7.220 m Console and closing spring latch</p>	
<p>blind Weight lookout Shooting angle height Angle shot towards Shooting range Initial speed Weight of the shell Unit Weight</p>	<p>1000 central pivot model 33000 kg -6 ° / + 28 ° 360 18500 m 590 m / s max 162 kg max 53 tonnes</p>	<p>Model 1000 prior pivot 27000 kg -7 ° / + 30 ° 180 ° 18500 m 590 m / s max 162 kg max 47.9 tons</p>

The Model 100 TR 1881 some statistics



100 mm gun rapid fire lookout on model 1889 1891-T-97 model PA
Album of coastline

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



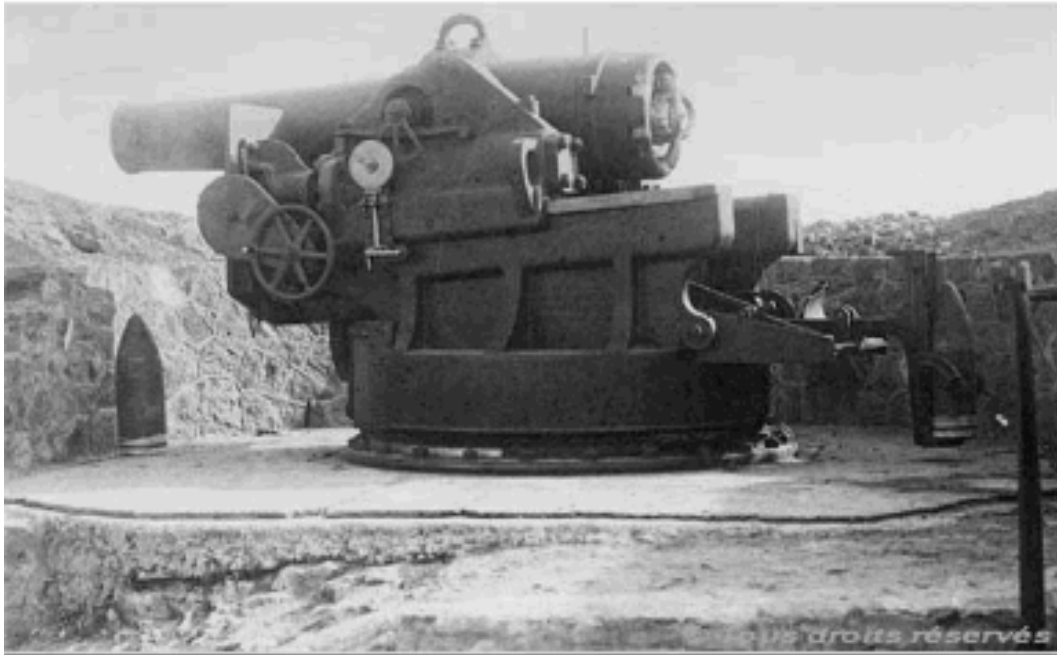
100 mm gun model 1881
on lookout model 1897. coasts Albur

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



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

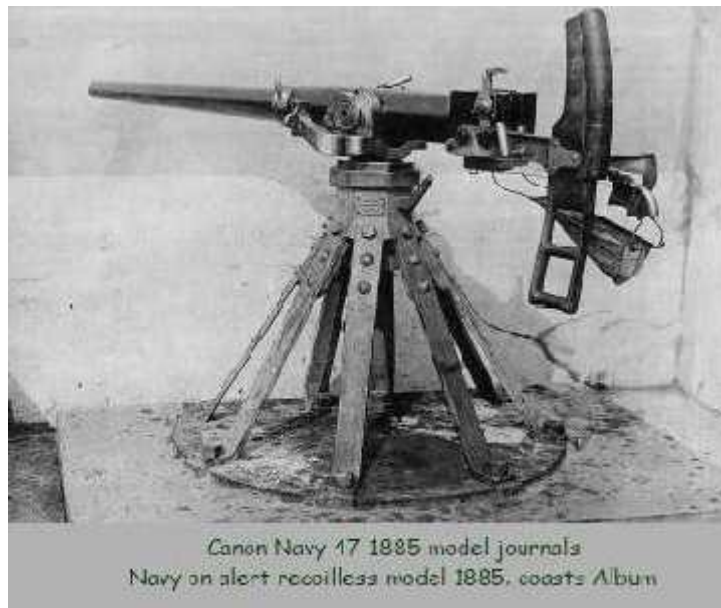
The model Mortar 270 mm mounted on a circular chassis

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

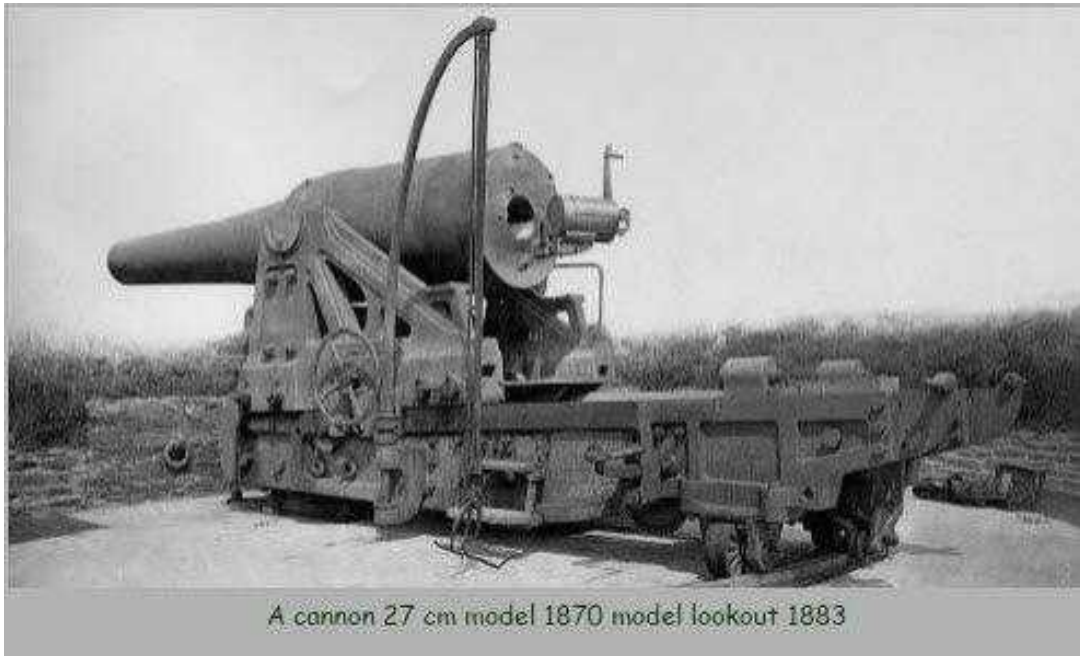
Piece	Canon steel 274
Date Mode	1876
Weight parts	20.600 kg
caliber	274.1 mm
Tube length	8.265 m
Cylinder head	console-closing and spring lock
Model	Model 1888 in central pivot
Weight lookout	43 tonnes
Shooting angle height	-6 ° ; + 25 °
Angle shot towards	350
Shooting range	18500 meters
Initial speed	500 m / s max
Weight of the shell	216-350 kg Maximum
Unit Weight	47 tonnes

The Hotchkiss gun rapid fire had a rate American 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 1870- 1888

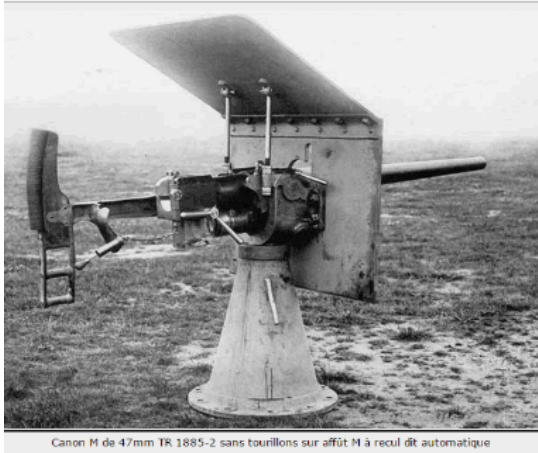


A cannon 27 cm model 1870 model lookout 1883

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.

Barrel 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 33,200 kg 274.4 mm 8.265 m console-loading and spring lock
blind Weight lookout Shooting angle height Angle shot towards Shooting range Initial speed Weight of the shell Unit Weight	Model 1000 prior pivot 45 tonnes -6 ° / + 20 ° 180 ° 13500 meters 590 m / s max 216-350 kg Maximum 47 tonnes



Canon 47 mm TR 1885 Rapid fire automatic



Canon 100 mm TR 1881 modified 1897



Image of a search light. This kind was used in many of the Gun positions

CHAPTER THREE

The gun emplacements

The White House (Bach Dinh) (Villa Blanche)



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 place of rest, recuperation

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



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



The White House circa
1905





One of the Very Old Guns at the White House.

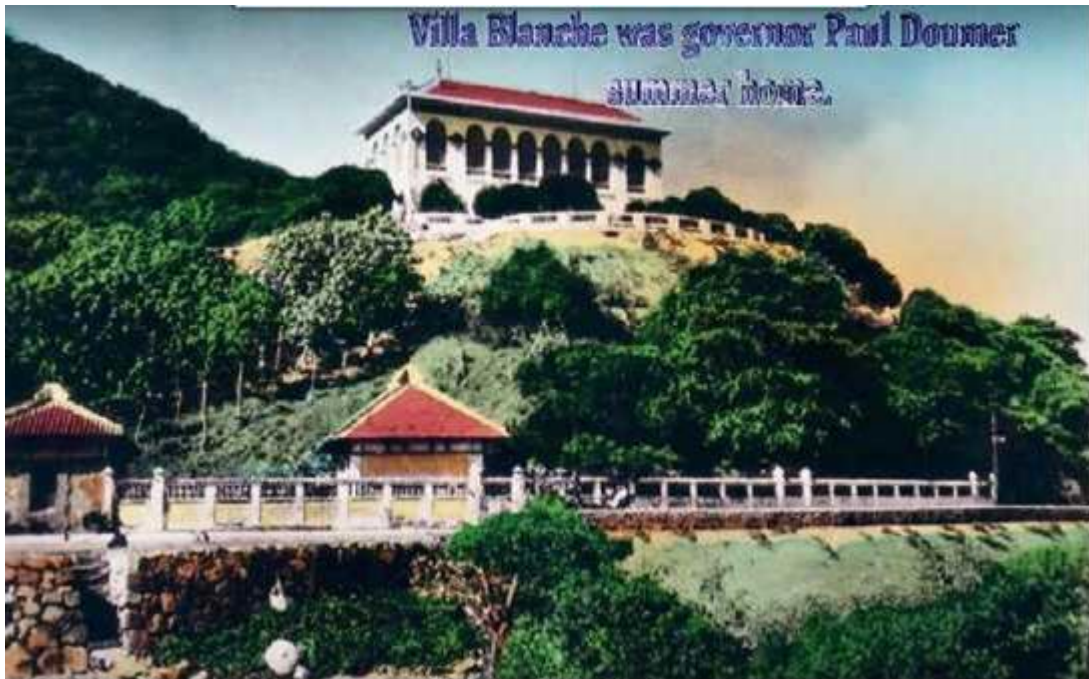


Firing Blanks from one of the canons for some celebration at the White house





Ham Tru An.....Safety TunnelShelter



***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. This project will not on. 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

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



Batterie de la Position N°1 Mai 2008





Batterie de la Position N°1 Mai 2009



Batterie de la Position N°1 PDT gauche Mai 2008



Batterie de la Position N°1 PCT gauche Mai 2008





Bottino de la Hoguer n°1, Mai 2018



Looking from above



Looking from Below



Batterie de la Position N°1 Mai 2008



Batterie de la Position N°1 Mai 2008



© Jean-Jacques MOULINS

Batterie de la Position N°1 PDT gauche Mai 2008





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

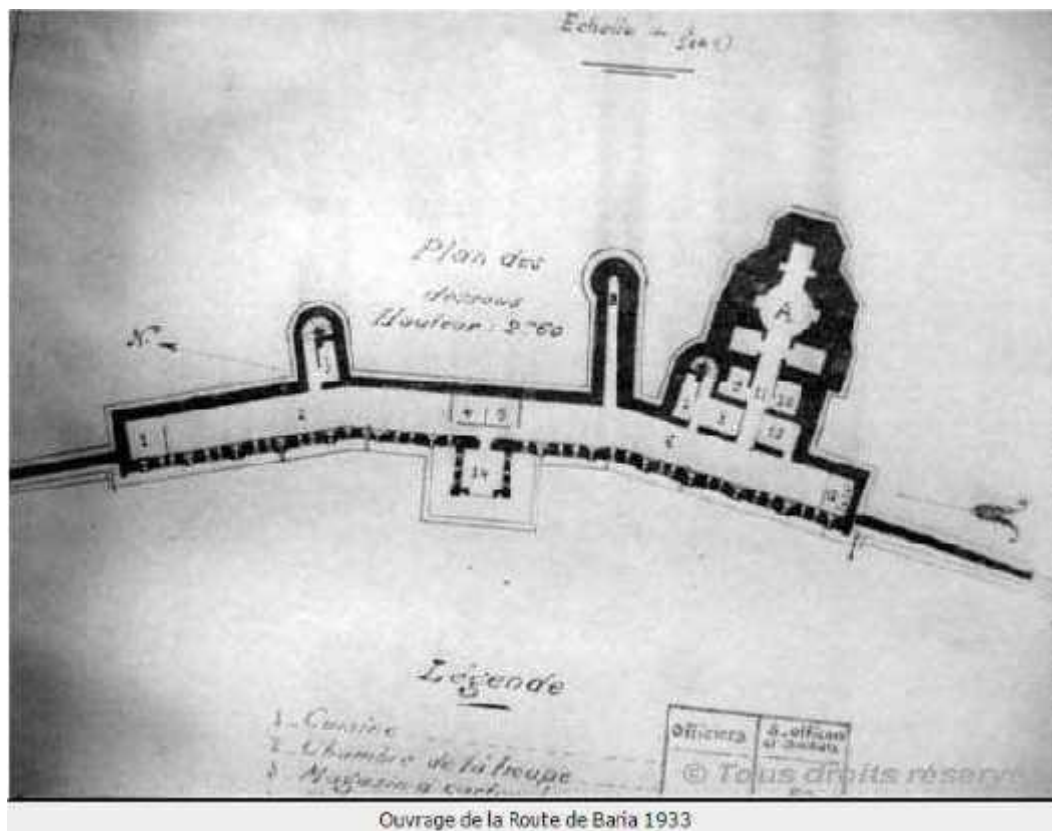
History and Details of the Baria Road (Block)



Baria Road (The Block)

Cap Saint-Jacques. This block, a pillar of the land defense of Cape St Jacques in 1914. has a turret eclipse DF 1905. Army 2 guns of 75 R. the only installed overseas, and a battleship observatory. It is quite similar to the intermediate structures of Verdun, with scarp in flowing ground, and dry moat crossed by a stone bridge. It is protected by a defensive grid. Admission is included in 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 breakthrough 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 invisible. We can therefore say that it is still in place. JJM03/07/2008





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 Mle 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 Mle 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)

Battery de Gauche Grand Eperon

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. He's armed like him with four mortars G 270 Model 1889 PC . Relatively simple design, it has a 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 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 command post .

Like her, it was disarmed during the First World War. and its equipment are returned France. The site is not reused in 1939. Today, he is free to access, but quite overgrown. JJM 03/07/2008





Barrière de Jausche au Grand Couren, Mai 2000



Barrière de Jausche au Grand Couren, Mai 2000



Barrière de Jausche au Grand Couren, Mai 2000



Batterie de Savoie de Ouziers - Juin 2018



Jean-Jacques MOULINS

Batterie de Savoie de Ouziers - Juin 2018

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. She's army in 1912. four million barrels of 14 cm Miss 1870 Miss 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. Its 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 Miss 1881 Miss lookout 1917. The pieces are placed in tanks of reinforced concrete, placed at both ends of the old battery. PDT solid reinforced concrete, with a Colonial conjugateur is made in front of the battery. A rangefinder Miss H 34 and projector 150 GP off the equipment. Today the site is squatted and unrecognisable to the point that we have gone through without realizing it. during a first pass. JJM 03/07/2008



Batterie du Lazaret Rue du rempart 1938



Batterie du Lazaret Mai 2008



Batterie du Lazaret Mai 2008

Jump forward now to July 2016, I has since done a lot more exploraton of the area. I have found some other Casements and Quarters in the area.

As I mentioned in the introduction, I will add more information as I find it, this then, is the first update to the page.

The Big MountainThe Lazretto 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 I will try and show you what has been discovered



Google Maps

While walking around the Lazaretto Battery, I met the family who have 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.



Google Earth



External views of the battery (known)



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



The top of the Bunker



The right-hand side of the Bunker



The Centre of the Bunker



The Left of the Bunker

Moving away from the battery, this is the next thing you see is this house which used to be the old barracks



This is the overall picture of the Quarters



The Old quarters

Go behind the Barracks and 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 are three latrines side by side, located behind the Barracks. All the walls and roofs are missing.



The three latrines; side by side.

The Old Museum; below



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

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



The Underground Storage

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 emplacement



The Entrance that gives the date of 1937

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



The Entrance, there are two, a left and right, both identical



Looking down to the bottom level



Storage room



The Old Gentleman with my friend



Inside the casemate



Two more views from inside



Panorama





Looking toward the top.



On top of the Casemate



The top of the Casemate



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

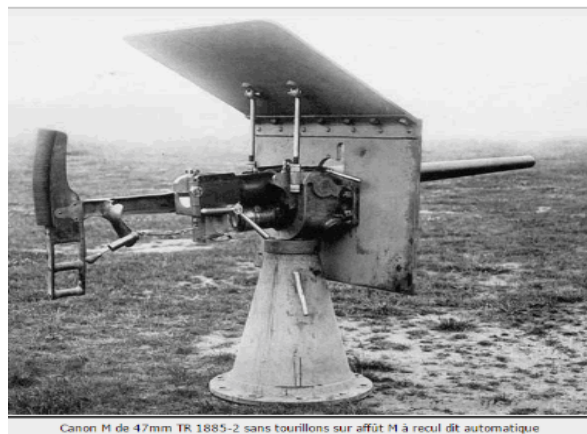


Climb these rocks and look down at your feet

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

***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 army, in 1912. Of five mortars M 30 cm Mie 1893 on M Mie 1889 PC. A The Generals Borgnis-Desbordes and Delambre. In a report of 26 February 1899. expressly ask for the realization of this block that they deem it essential for the Prohibition of anchorages, the Eastern Cape Saint-Jacques. They describe as it will be realized. 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 book, quite Summary, with two rectangular tanks. The A receives three pieces, which derive 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 derive to the SW. A building to use of quartering is located between the two tanks. The materials, obsolete, are not returned to the metropolis, 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 recognizable, freshly painted the same dark green color than those of the batteries of the Lighthouse and Ganh Ray. Baptism of parts: mortar of Mie 300 1893 R 1901 N° 1.2. 3 and 5. An underground to 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



1968- 1969



1968-1969



Batterie de mortiers de Bura-Mi 2003



© Jean-Jacques MOULINS

Batterie de mortiers du Phare Mai 2008



© Jean-Jacques MOULINS

Batterie de mortiers du Phare Mai 2008



Batterie de mortiers de Dhara Mai 2008



Batterie de mortiers du Phare Mai 2008



Batterie de mortiers du Phare Mai 2008



Batterie de mortiers du Phare Mai 2008



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Batterie de mortiers du Phare Mai 2008



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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 2000



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

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

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





One of the 300mm guns photographed on the 2-7-2016



The sign says

The vestige of the "Ancient Artillery Battlefield" on small mountain is a project of the Strategy Defense System, which was built by the French Colonialist from the ending of the century XIX to the beginning of XX, in order to master ship 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



Batterie de mortiers du Phare Mai 2008

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





Batterie du Phare Pièce 3 Mai 2008



Batterie du Phare Pièce 3 Mai 2008



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



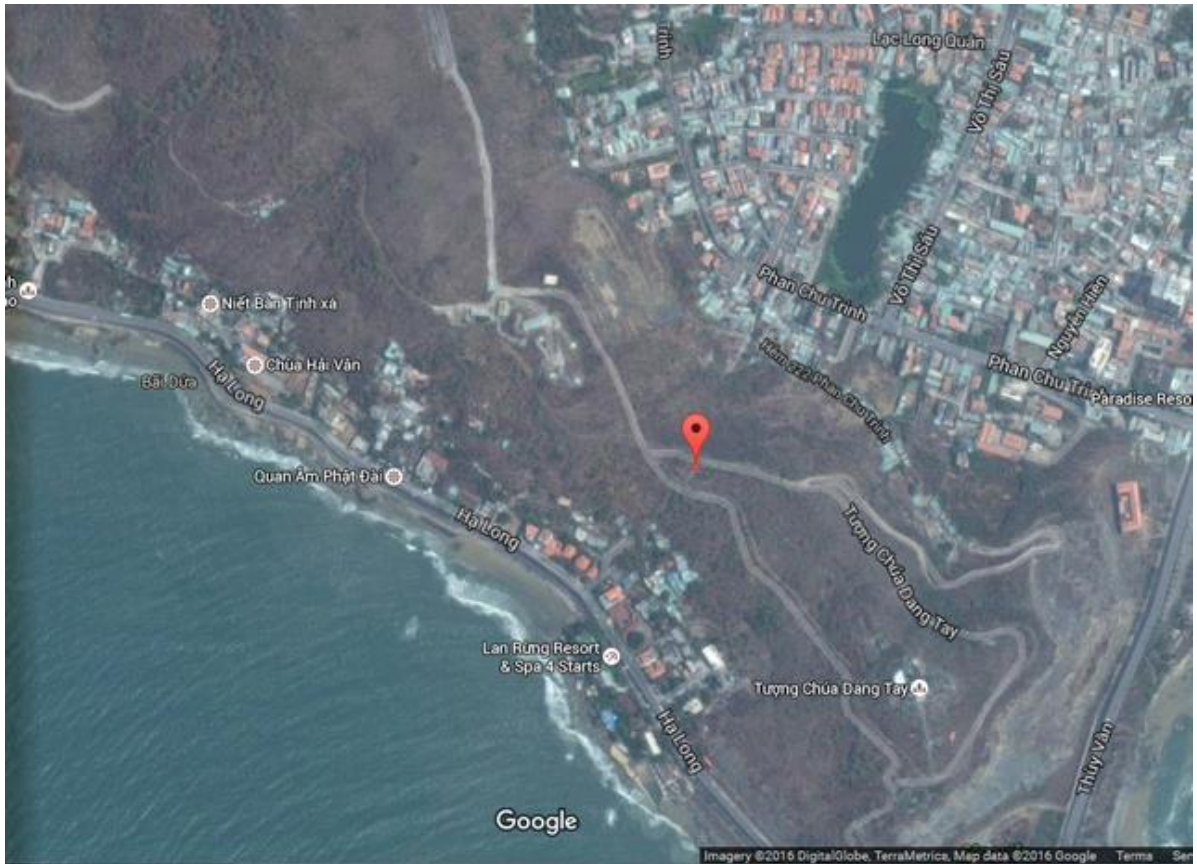
From inside the ammo this apparatus leads to the gun. I presume it was used for feeding the rounds to that particular gun.



Some one has had a go at removing this gun also



It is dark and dangerous inside these bunkers. It 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



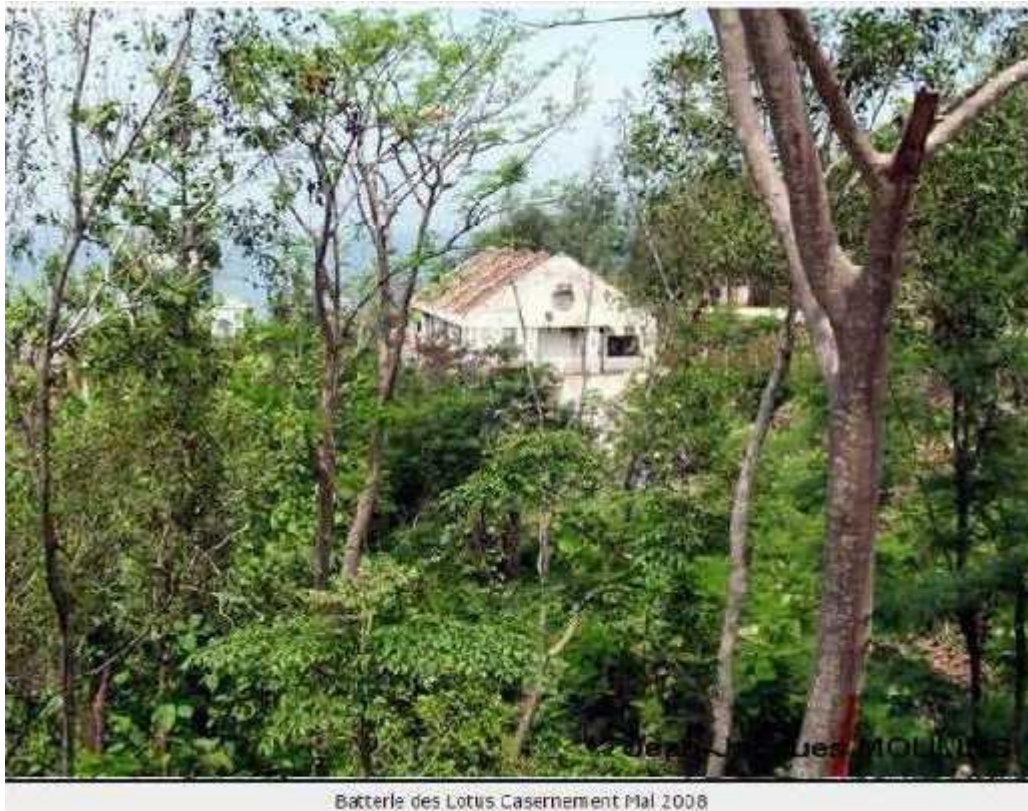
Taken from Google Earth this image shows the location of the Battery. Although it is spread out over a fair distance going right back to the Jesus statue.

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 him a double mission, defending the waterfront and support land front. To fulfill 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 modernized and rearmed since 1936. first with three and four guns 138 Model 1881 Model 1917. Its mission is no longer as coastal defense. The book 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 is performed, 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 03/07/2008





Batterie des Lacs. Vue vers la Pointe du 2008



Cap de Siquem Batterie des Lacs Canon de 136 Mm 1887 70 Mars 1941

Circa 1941



Cap de Siquem Batterie des Lacs Canon de 136 Mm 1887 70 Mars 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. Only immune projector 150 Battery Lighthouse, squatted, is clearly identifiable. JJM 03/07/2008







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Batterie de la Pointe PDT Mai 2008



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Batterie de la Pointe PDT Mai 2008

History and details of the Ben dinh(Battery)



Ben dinh(Battery)

Bendinh 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 MPC 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



Batterie de Ban Dinh Mai 2008



Batterie de Ban Dinh Mai 2008



Batterie de San Dinh Mai 2008



Batterie de Ban Dinh Mai 2008



Batterie de Ban Dinh Mai 2008



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Batterie de Ban Dinh Mai 2008



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Batterie de Ban Dinh Mai 2008



Batterie de Ban Dinh Mai 2008



Batterie de Ban Dinh Mai 2008

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 M1893-1896 PC inclined chassis. It is a reinforced concrete structure, absolutely identical to the Position No. 1. The materials were dismantled and returned in 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

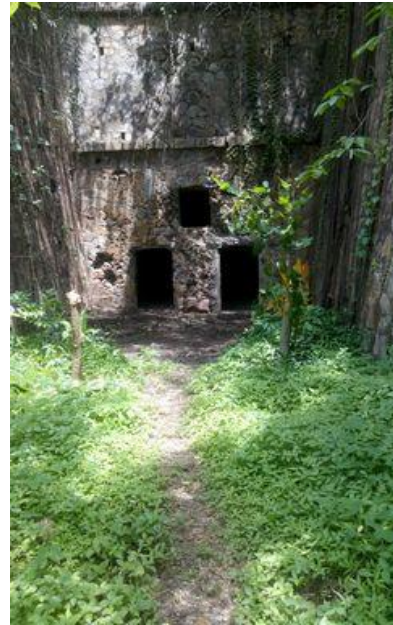


Batterie du Câble PDT gauche Mai 2008

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



Batterie du dible Entr@e du magasin tilai 2008



The same as at July 2016

July 2008





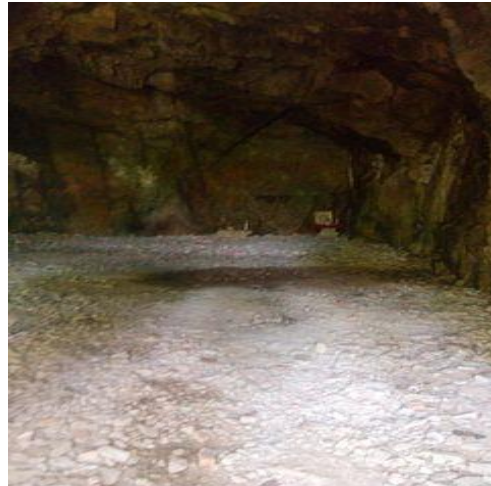
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Batterie du Câble Magasin à 2 entrées Mai 2008

Caves everywhere



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 Câble Mai 2008



Batterie du Câble 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. Here are a few updated pictures.



External Images





The picture on the right is looking up at the picture on the left

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



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

So I sent them off to a Japanese friend of mine to be translated. To my great surprise, when they came back to me and he told me that they were Chinese Graves. You can see the very detailed translation below. I numbered the images J01 and J02

So now the Guns and Forts of Vung Tau have thrown up another riddle

The location of the Graves



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 Leitchou), 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 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 sq mi).[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 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 Mie 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 axes 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 Modle 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 spare gun of the battery. JJM 03/07/2008

The gun below is now stored at the Museum in Hanoi







© Jean-Jacques MOULINS

Batterie de Ganhi Ray Mai 2005



Batterie de Ganh Ray Mai 2009



Batterie de Ganh Ray Mai 2008



Batterie de Gan h Rav Mai 2008



Batterie de Gan h Rav Mai 2008



© Jean-Jacques MOULINS

Batterie de Ganh Ray Mai 2003



© Jean-Jacques MOULINS

Batterie de Ganh Ray Mai 2003



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Batterie de Ganh Ray Mai 2008



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Batterie de Ganh Ray Mai 2008



Batterie de Ganh Fay Mai 2008



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Batterie de Ganh Fay Mai 2008



Batterie de Ganh Ray Mai 2008



Batterie de Ganh Ray Mai 2008



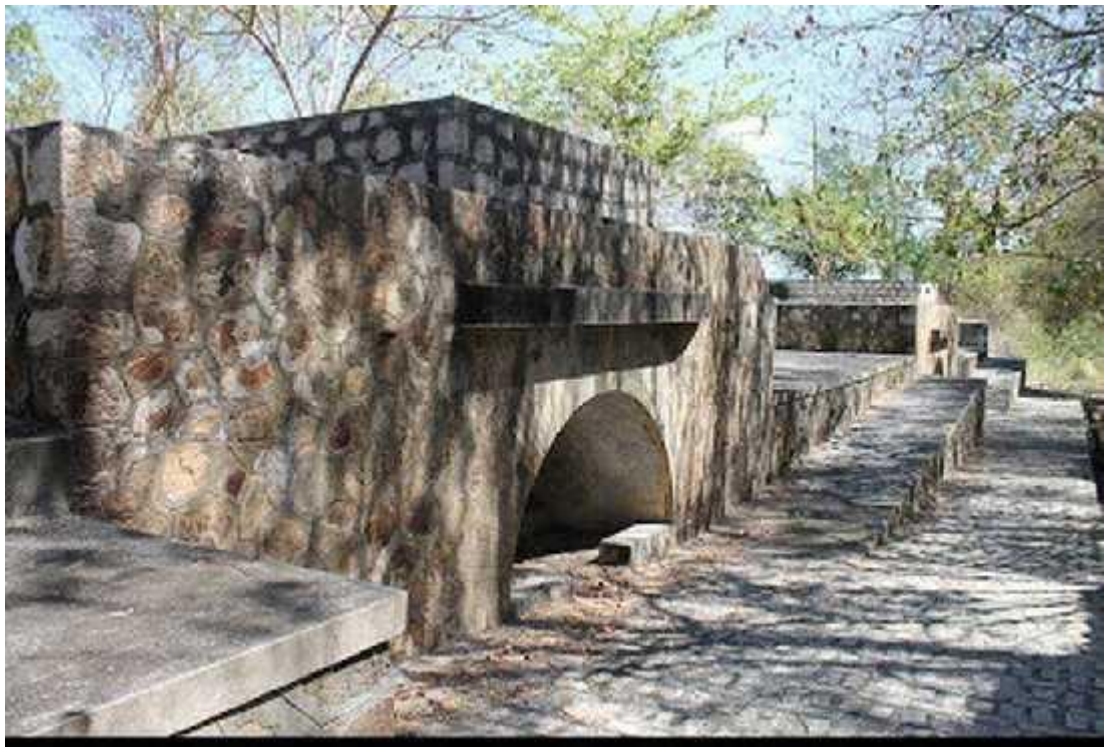




The old French fort with its gun batteries

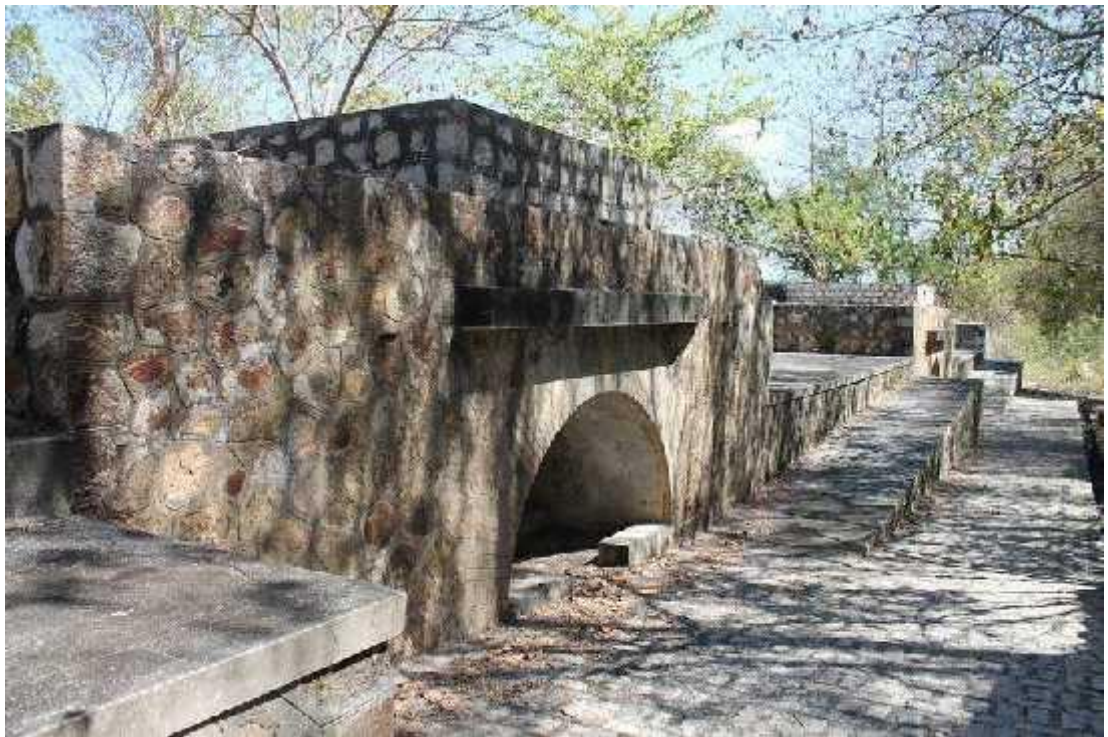




















I found this engraved on one of the Guns, it says "Canon Rebuté" Which on one translating site says "Canon irksome" on yet nother site it translates as "Canon put off". Anyway it seems like it was sombodies favourite Canon. Next to it you can see lines, I think these are "aiming/elevation" marks

Underground Torpedos



About 150 metres up from the actual canons you'll see this sign that points to the "Underground Torpedos"

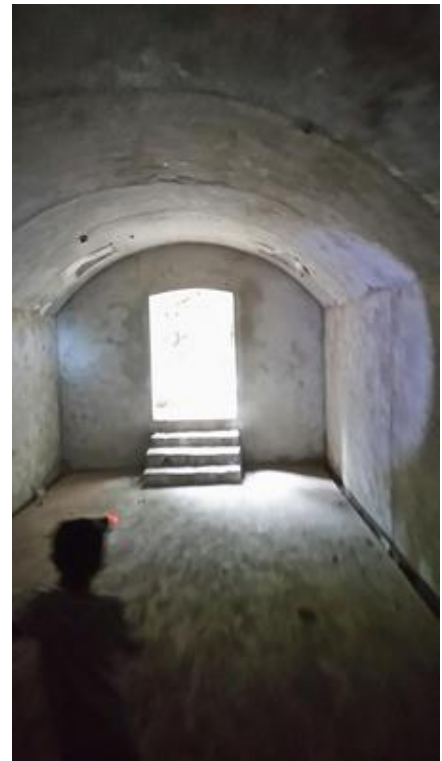
I am told that this was built by the Japanese, but I have yet to find conformation of this.



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 on 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



Center Left is an old WW II anti-aircraft position with the Hexagonal pillbox in the background



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.

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 daytime, 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 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 original turning system designed by the Henry Lepaute Company





Looking down at the tunnel from the Lighthouse



Inside the tunnel leading to the Lighthouse



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



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 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 are returned France. The site is not reused in 1939. Today, he is free to access, but quite overgrown. JJM 03/07/2008



Batterie de Gauthier, fin Troisième Millénaire







Batterie de Gauche du Plateau Mai 2008



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Batterie de Gauche du Plateau Mai 2008

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



Large Spur (right battery) Plateau

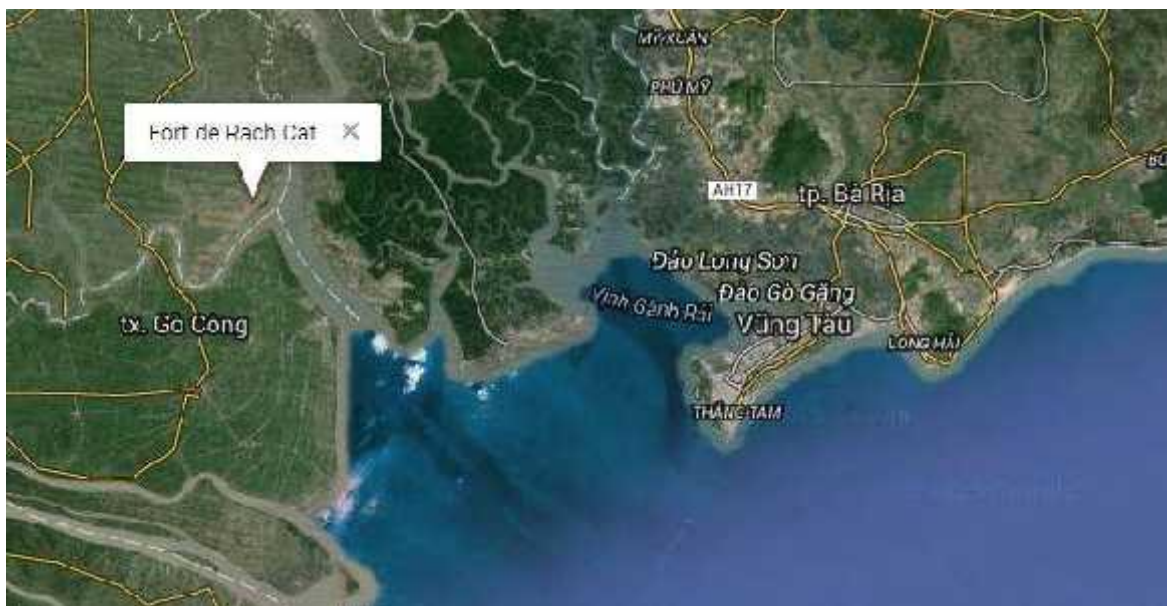
Old Battery A. Cap Saint-Jacques. A first battery was established in this location, since 1892. This block, part of the group of Plateau, is armed with mortars 4 G 270 Model 1889 PC .

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 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



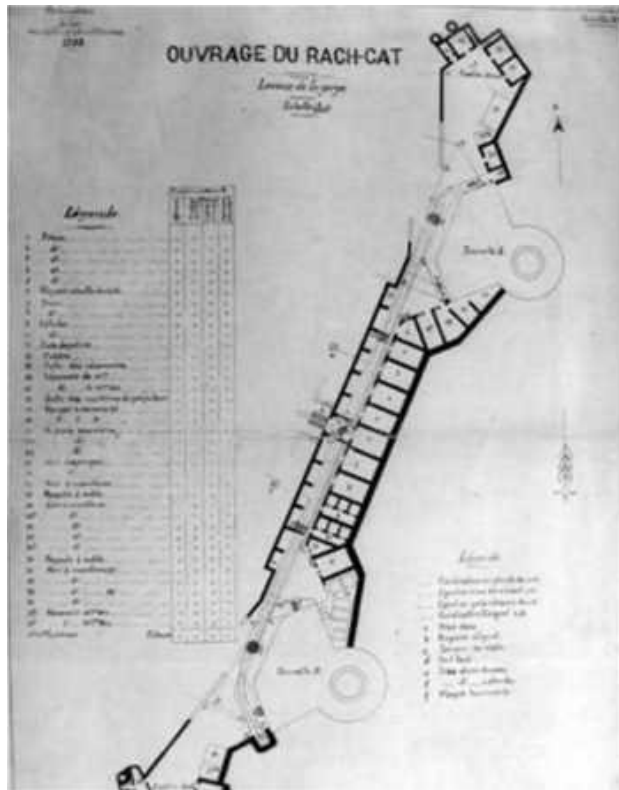
The Details and History of the Rach Cat Block

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 ships shallow draft, the Soirap. 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 book, 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 at 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 Miss 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 in 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 Mle 1897 lookout for suitable campaign to shore shooting, and two batteries of two guns G 95 Miss 1888 Miss lookout C 1904 G. The book 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 book 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 Mle 1916. But. ultimately, they are two parts of 138 Mle 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 Mle 1930. and a rangefinder SOM 5 meters, placed in the center of the book. It also has a battery of four pieces of 75 Miss 1897 Miss lookout 1916. also placed in concrete tanks, equipped with adjoining niches. This armament remain in service until 1945. but the Japanese recover 75 after their coup, unless it be the Vietminh Today, the book is still in military field, and we could not see. and for a short time, as the left side. Turret is still in place, and the barrel of 138 Mle 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 book is overgrown. There is no need. I think, to emphasize the historical importance of this exceptional book, its isolation and its military occupation were relatively preserved. Baptism of canon 138 of the left wing: M 138 1924 1927 R # 4. JJM 03/07/2008





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Ouvrage de Rach-Cat Canon de 138 Mle 24 Mai 2008



© Jean-Jacques MOULINS

Ouvrage de Rach-Cat Canon de 138 Mle 24 Mai 2008



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Ouvrage de Rach-Cat Canon de 138 Mle 24 Mai 2008



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Ouvrage de Rach-Cat Canon de 138 Mle 24 Mai 2008



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Ouvrage de Rach-Cat Caserne Mai 2008



Witacriq • Elgocentem Uluwasi • Atralt

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Ouvrage de Rach-Cat Massif de la tourelle A Mai 2008



Ouvrage de Rach-Cat Massif de la tourelle A Mai 2008



Ouvrage de Rach-Cat Tranchée de évacuation et aération de l'eau de charge Mai 2008



© Jean-Jacques MOULINS

Couvrage de Radj / Cot Toureils A Mai 2006



© Jean-Jacques MOULINS

Couvrage de Rich-Cat / Tourelle A Mai 2006



Looking over the rice paddy



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.



The History and details of the Quarry Battery



The Quarry Battery

A tiny road going all the way up to the Jesus statue through a small shanty town. After the shanty town you'll find yourself on this bumpy road. This road will eventually take you all the way up to the Jesus statue. 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 stairs on the right leads up to a huge cannon above the bunker and a water reservoir.









Water reservoirs?



This cannon was a little harder to find.. It's further down the road before you get to the bunker. Take a right at the fork in the road.



The History and details of the Archinard Battery



Cap Saint-Jacques

The battery island Archinard Battery 2 guns of 47 Mle 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.

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.

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.



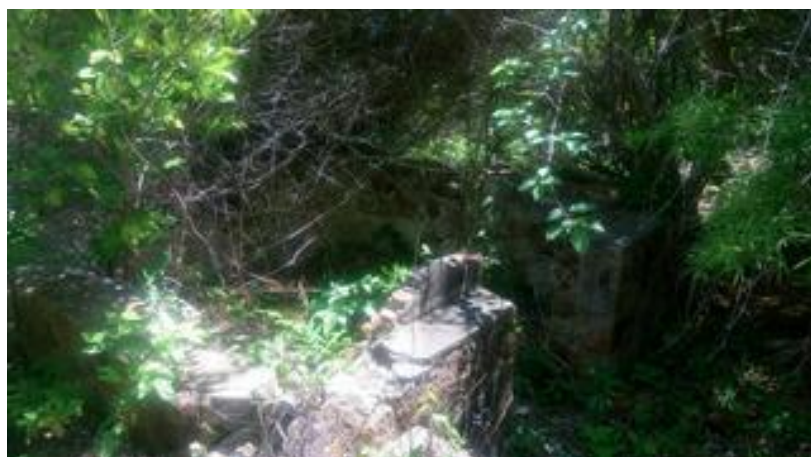
Chapter Three

Miscellaneous and further discoveries

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. Now I was shown another remains of an old lighthouse.

After we were shown around the above, he 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 Lazaretto Battery



Observation Post

Continuing back down the mountain, about 250 meters or so, we came to an old observation post that has been turned into a Buddhist Monastery by an old Monk who lives there. There are still more water tanks there.



See again another water storage point.



I also found this at the same place, it reads TM 1038. I have no idea what it represents.

Well by this time, I was very, very tired. So we talked a lot more. 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.





The French Officers Quarters on the B2 Position

Unnamed or unknown Gun Positions

There are still other positions that I want to get to. I have located them, but have yet to find how to get to them. They are located high up on the side of the mountain below the Ganh Ray position.

Main photo





Right-Hand side of the position



The right emplacement of the main photo



The left emplacement on the main photo

REFERENCES

First off, this book is not for sale !

A lot 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 disquingish his work from mine. Also, there has been a lot of myself gone into it also. I freely acknowledge that this is some of his work. I am in awe of this bloke, the amount of research is unbelievable.

I can be reached at ern.marshall@gmail.com

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