

YOUR VIRTUAL DISCOVERY VISIT – 53 TO THE HERITAGE STORIES OF ROTTNEST ISLAND



The Virtual Visit series was initiated during the COVID-19 pandemic when Rottneest Island was closed to the public due to social distancing restrictions and periods of use for quarantine from March to June 2020.

Now that the Island is again open to visitors, these Virtual Visits are continuing in 2021 to enable a further enjoyment of stories introduced at the Wadjemup Museum, the Chapman Archives or sites around the Island.

Enjoy, reflect and share.

VULNERABILITY REVEALED FROM THE AIR



The use of aerial photography rapidly matured during World War One, as aircraft were outfitted with cameras to record enemy movements and defences. Royal Flying Corps pilots began to use cameras in 1914 and by the Battle of Neuve Chapelle in 1915 the entire system of German trenches was being photographed. The first purpose-built and practical aerial camera which could be inserted into the floor of the aircraft and triggered by the pilot at intervals, was invented in 1915 greatly enhancing the efficiency of aerial photography.

Before the end of the war, aerial cameras had dramatically increased in size and focal power. By 1918 both sides were photographing the entire front twice a day. In January 1918, General Allenby used Australian pilots from No. 1 Squadron AFC to photograph 1,620 km² in Palestine to correct and improve maps of the Turkish front. This was a pioneering use of aerial photography as an aid for cartography..

Operationally oriented to an attack from the sea, coast artillery installations sometimes lagged behind in their appreciation of the threat from the air. Open barbette installations had been upgraded to full overhead cover, but the rear of the 9.2 inch guns when installed on Rottneest were only covered with canvas screens. As the following photos show, the installations were often naked to aerial view until vegetation was re-established and camouflage installed.



Magazines, guns and command post a straight-line target at Bickley Battery



Aerial photos can be useful to locate and identify previous structures and layouts to guide archaeology and conservation projects. Artillery camp in Bickley Valley.



Bare sand surrounds H2 Gun, Plotting Room entrance and Artillery Camp at Oliver Hill



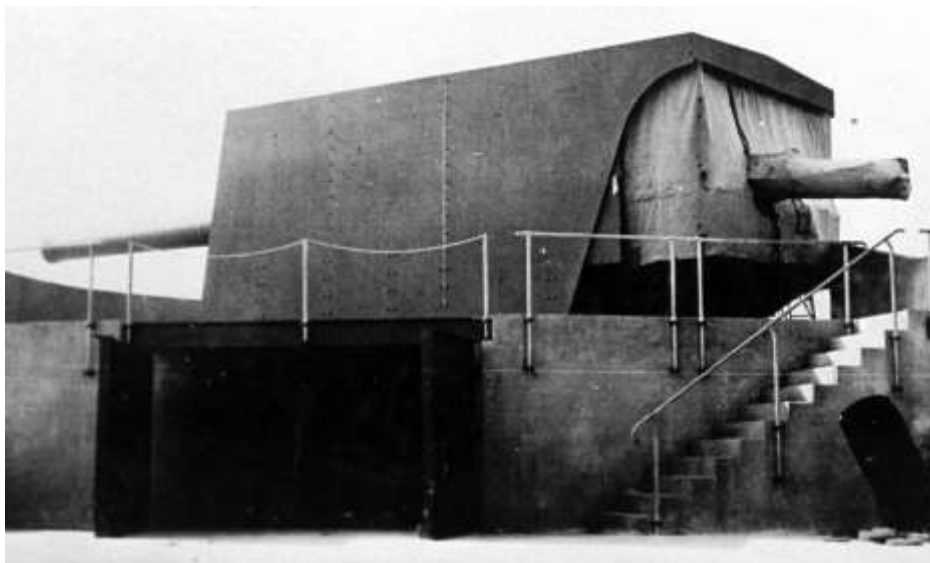
POL Store, Skedding Store, Workshop and Latrines at Oliver Hill



Shadows highlight the terrain features of Oliver Hill at H1,

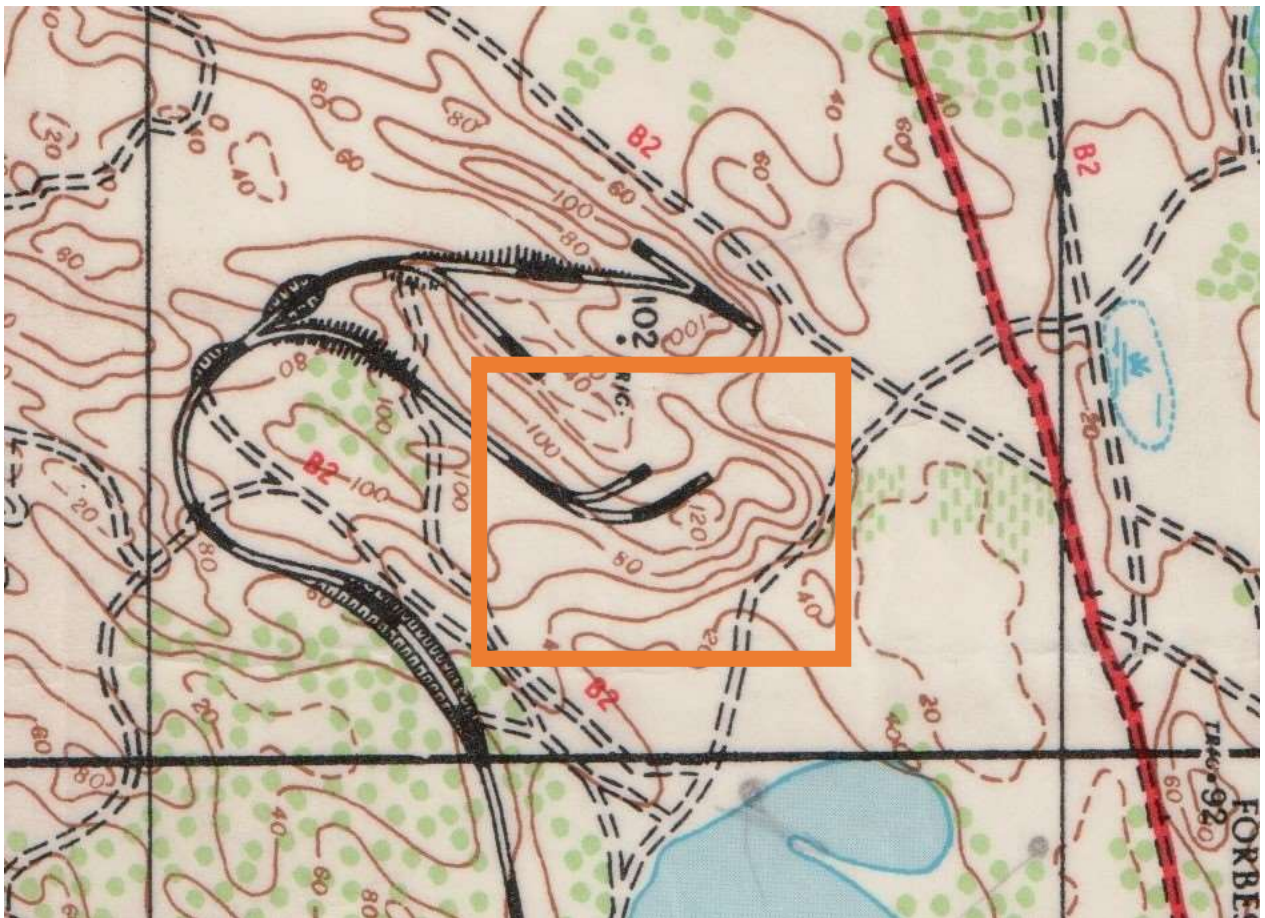
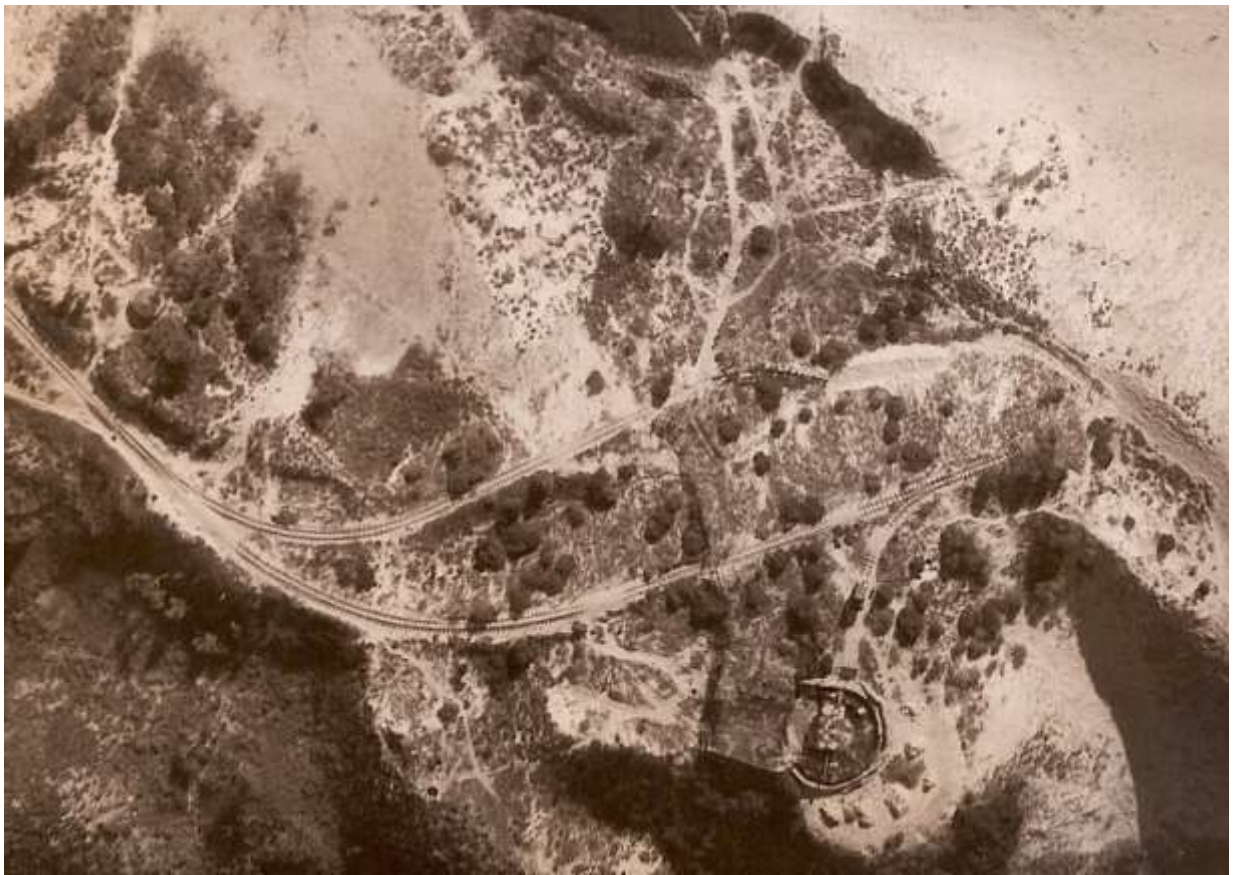
<https://blog.nationalarchives.gov.uk/aerial-photography-first-world-war/>
<https://airandspace.si.edu/exhibitions/looking-at-earth/online/the-sky-spies/>

Evolution of 9.2 inch Gun Mountings





Complete Oliver Hill aerial image



Comparison of aerial photo with 1943 1 inch:1 mile military map