

Page 39 - "Fortress Sydney" Manning the Guns on the C.B. Coast

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have. You always aim for the bow waterline of the first target and it's supposed to go in between the first and second target because the deflection would be just right. He blew one out of the water and the Master Gunner raised hell because it cost \$600 to fix it. George M. Fraser: (The active service men were often mistaken for soldiers who had refused to go overseas.) Some of the neigh? bours, you know, they would make a few snide remarks: "You still here? I see so- and-so's gone overseas. How come you never gone over?" and so on. We had a job to do here and it had to be done. You're subject to military discipline and military disci? pline it is. Not everybody understood; there were a lot of people didn't care. But some of the people, particularly right in the neighborhood, when I would come home on leave, there'd be a few remarks. Of course, I would try to put them in their place. Most of the boys at Fort Petrie were local boys, whereas at Fort Lingan they were mostly from way out west. And there was no chance in hell for them ever to get a furby Peter Moogk In most other places development has over? run these areas and the fortifications have largely been demolished • and it's here in Sydney that I'm struck that the complete system is more or less still there, still apparent. There is no other place with a comparable survival • and it's a survival of something that has not been preserved else%diere. I think this is because people find it very hard to think of what happened in the 1940s as yet being part of history. I think it's a great pity that one of these places hasn't been saved. It's an occa? sion to commeraorate Sydney as both a convoy asserably port and as a defended harbour. Having grown up with them people tend to take them for granted, and I think they do have great tourist poten? tial. I think if no one seizes the opportunity now to both record the history of Cape Breton in the Second World War and pre? serve at least one site, there's going to be no chance to do it within 10 years. Right now there's lots of documentation, lots of living informants and lots of photographs. The underground raagazines • very large rooms • would serve as a chance to create a panoramic display on Sydney Harbour as it was in the Second World War and how it functioned as a convoy assemply port and how the defence system worked. But people are dying. The sites are going into the ground. I'ra sure 40 years from now people are going to want to reproduce the whole thii' from scratch • and it'll take buckets of money. But you can fabricate the appearance but you can't recreate the substance. There's no substitute for the real thing, lough of 14 days and get home and back; there wasn't enough time. So they would be satisfied with just an evening's pass up town in New Waterford. And the people in New Waterford were very good to us. Ihey put lots of entertainments on. But there's always someone who will spoil everything. I remeraber in a church hall one night one of our lads was eating sandwiches and cake and drinking "raoonshine" out of a bottle at the same time. And they took a kind of dim view of the situation. I remeraber another time • the O.C. sent myself and one of the lieu? tenants to a firemen's lobster supper. Now the way this supper was served was one for the books. There was a dozen quarts of beer to every four men. And we were shucking these lobsters



and drinking beer when the fire alarm went. And of course they all took off to fight the fire. It was a false alarm. I guess somebody knew this thing was going on, and pulled the alarm. And once a week we'd have a dance and ladies from Glace Bay, Sydney or New Waterford would come. And we used to employ an or? chestra and pay them from the canteen funds. And some of our neighbours would like to come these nights and dance with us. 1941-19 THE COASTAL DEFENCES OF SYDNEY Fire Command Post A Forward Observation Post • EmplacementB (15) O Oun Battery I5> Radar (RDP) Station . Anti-BUbmarine/torpedo booms "RCN Examination vessels [amalgamated in the i6th Coast Regiment in 1942] 23rd Anti-Aircraft Reg't," RCA Lt.Ool. K.J.B, Partington, Col. H.H. Bobbie, CO., Defended Port of Sydney [Headquarters, Victoria Park] s Point (1941-1945) - f Two 6-pounder Hotohk' duplex 6-pounder gun Edward (1939-1943) -'Two 4.7-inoh guns in Bar (1940-1951) - for Lingan (1941-1945) - for c Three 6-inch guns o One Hispano 20-iDm. ., o.d., and examination laced by two twin 4-inch ring-to" gun added in 1943 Our thanks to Peter Moogk who gathered all the raaterials for this article on Fortress Sydney. He wishes to dedicate this article to the memory of Major Roy R. Ward. 16th Coast Regiment, Royal Canadian Artillery. Our thanks to Ambrose MacNeil for aid and advice with old photographs, the Old Sydney Society for photographs, and to David Dow who has always been generous with informa? tion and helped everyone interested m Sydney Harbour during the Second World War.