

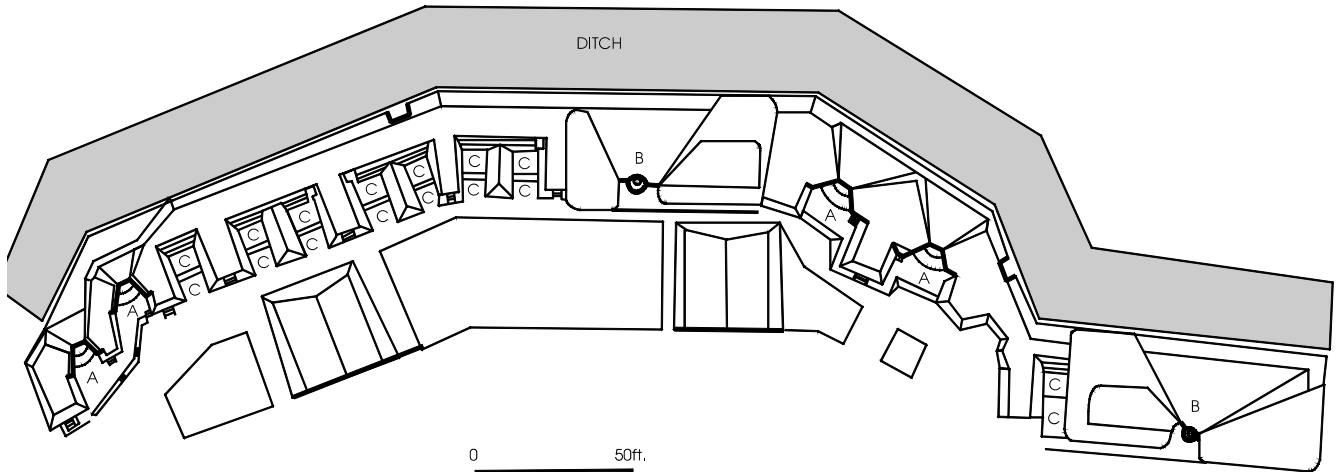
Puckpool Mortar Battery

Commenced	1863	Armament	
Completed	March 1865	1886	4 x 11-inch R.M.L. 30 x 13-inch mortars
Cost	£ 2,0864	1887	4 x 11-inch R.M.L. 22 x 13-inch mortars
Map Reference	SZ 615923	1895	4 x 11-inch R.M.L. 2 x 10.4-inch R.M.L. Protected Barbette 1 x 32pr. Drill, 4 x MG.
Position	Isle of Wight Puckpool Point /Spithead defences	1900	3 x 11-inch R.M.L. 1 x 10.4-inch P.B.
Type	Sea Battery / Mortar Battery	1901	3 x 11-inch 1 x 10.4-inch 2 x 6-inch B.L.
Ditch	Dry	1902	1 x 11-inch 1 x 10.4-inch R.M.L. 2 x 6-inch B.L. 4 x MG
Guns	30 mortars (final 4 guns)	1904	2 x 6-inch B.L. 2 x 9.2-inch B.L.
Barrack Accom.	4 officers 67 men	1907	2 x 9.2-inch B.L.
Present use	Recreation & gardens. Tea shop.	1910	1 x 9.2-inch B.L. (1 x 9.2-inch BL in reserve)
History	Modified many times. Armstrong Protected Barbette emplacements.	1927	Disarmed
Disposal	Sold 1928 to District Council	Caponiers	
Condition	Parts demolished. Some intact	Counterscarp galleries	
Access	Free all year	Haxo casemates	
Sources	Precis of correspondence relating to Portsmouth prior to 1898. "Puckpool Mortar Battery", A.	Moncrieff Pits	

History and Description

In 1862 the Defence Committee approved the construction of 'a battery for 27 guns and 30 mortars with necessary barrack accommodation' at Puckpool Point, Isle of Wight. Construction began in 1863 but in June 1864 they again considered the proposal and decided that the armament should be '50 of the heaviest mortars and it appeared that that number could be mounted without crowding if the work be considered as a battery wholly for vertical fire and not for part guns and part mortars as hitherto proposed. It was thought unnecessary to provide barrack accommodation'. The battery was supposedly completed in 1865 with seven rows of mortars, three to a row with five light guns to cover the beach, but in 1867 the Defence Committee again considered the battery. The proposal was to place the 13-inch mortars in two rows, one behind the other, with a traverse between each pair. The Royal Artillery Officers considered that there was no objection, provided that if both rows were fired simultaneously the front detachments should retire to the rear and fire their mortars by lanyards. The battery was reconstructed for thirty eight mortars (3 for practice). A barracks was built to the rear for 4 officers and 67 men (now the cafe). Four 11-inch R.M.L.s were fitted in 1873 to cover Spithead. In 1883 the mortars were test fired and in 1887 the number was reduced to twenty-two. In 1887 the Committee recommended that the remaining 22 mortars be removed and the 11-inch R.M.L. be made available for high angle fire by placing them on C pivot racers to command a larger arc and the parapet revised. The idea was abandoned and in 1888 under the provisions of the Imperial Defence Loan two 10.4-inch R.M.L. guns were proposed for Puckpool. These were in place by 1892 on protected barbette carriages. These were originally intended for Gibraltar and were the only examples of this type of mounting in the U.K. In 1901 the battery was upgraded with barbette positions for two 9.2-inch B.L. guns to counter battleships bombarding Portsmouth from Spithead. Two 6-inch B.L.s were fitted to engage cruisers and blockships. In 1909 the two 6-inch guns were transferred to Spitbank Fort and by 1910 one of the 9.2-inch guns was in reserve. The battery was manned in WW1 by RGA as a depot for coast gunners transferring to the Western Front. After the War the battery was put into Care and Maintenance. In 1927 the remaining gun was withdrawn. Puckpool was sold to the Council in 1928 and was opened as a public garden in June 1929. From 1939-1942 it became HMS Medina to train men for the Fleet Air Arm. After the War it became a public garden once more.

Puckpool Mortar Battery



Puckpool 1889 : Based on a plan in 'Puckpool Battery', (Cantwell & Sprack)

A - 11-inch R.M.L.

B- 10.4-inch R.M.L. (Protected Barbette)

C - Mortar Bay



6-inch B.L. emplacement



Protected Barbette emplacement