

New Needles Battery

Commenced	1893	Armament	
Completed	1895	Approved 1898	3 x 9.2-inch B.L.
Cost	£	Proposed 1898	2 x 9.2-inch B.L.
Map Reference	SZ 300848	Mounted 1900	2 x 9.2-inch B.L. 'C' IX on barbette III
Position	Isle of Wight / West / Needles passage	Mounted 1903	3 x 9.2-inch B.L. IX
Type	Coast Defence Battery	1904-1907	2 x 3pr. QF for practice
Ditch	None	1915	3 x 9.2-inch B.L. IX 1 x 6pr. QF
Guns	3	1928	2 x 9.2-inch B.L.
Barrack Accom.	23	1942	2 x 40mm bofors (one soon removed)
Present use	National Trust (Coast guard use one pit)	1954	guns scrapped
History	Saunders Roe Rocket Test site 1956-71		
Disposal	Moth-balled 1945. N.Trust 1975		
Condition	Pits, magazines and BC post remain		
Access	Open access - magazines sealed		
Sources	Solent Papers No 2		

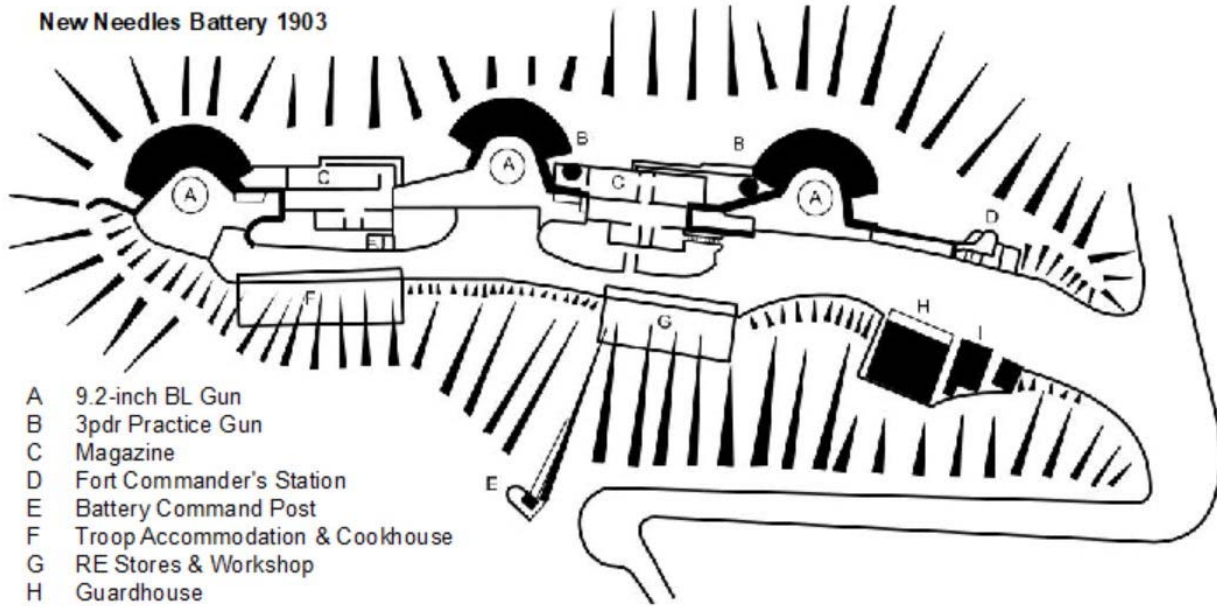
History and Description

The New Needles battery was proposed as a replacement for the Old battery, which is close by, to take three of the new 9.2-inch BL guns en-barbette which would give greater range and accuracy. This new battery was constructed on higher ground overlooking the old battery 390ft. above sea level facing north-west. Administrative buildings were sited behind the battery and underground magazines were fitted between the gun emplacements. Two 9.2-inch BL Mark IX were fitted in 1900 and the third was considered unnecessary. It was in place by 1904. Two 3pr. QF guns were fitted between the centre and northern emplacements for practice use but were removed in 1907. In 1900-02 a battery Command post was built on the down above the battery. A cookhouse and shelter for 23 men were built behind the southern emplacement. A Port War Signal Station was built east of the battery, together with coastguard cottages. In 1911-14 the gun emplacements were adapted for Mark VB mountings and the new guns were in place in 1914 although one was dismantled leaving two in use. A 6pr. QF was fitted south of the left emplacement for 'examination service'.

The battery was placed in care and maintenance in 1918 and was reactivated in 1926 for Territorial use. The battery was used again in 1939 for counter bombardment against blockships attempting to close the Needles passage. In 1941 a Radar was installed. In 1942 two 40mm bofors were added but one was soon removed. In 1945 the battery was moth-balled again and was put up for disposal in 1952. The guns were scrapped in 1954 and from 1956 to 1971 the site was used by Saunders Roe for testing Black Knight and Black Arrow space rockets with two test gantries constructed on the cliffs to the south of the battery. The National Trust bought the site in 1975 and demolished most of the buildings. The gun emplacements and associated magazines remain. The right emplacement now has a coast guard station built into it. In Summer 2005 the magazines were opening for visitors with displays on the history of the Black Night missile site.

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- A 9.2-inch BL Gun
- B 3pdr Practice Gun
- C Magazine
- D Fort Commander's Station
- E Battery Command Post
- F Troop Accommodation & Cookhouse
- G RE Stores & Workshop
- H Guardhouse
- I R.A. Store
- J Latrines

