

Fort Scoveston

Commenced August 1861
Completed April 1864
Cost £ 45,462
Map Reference SM 944066
Position Northern line defences

Type Land Front polygonal
Ditch Dry
Guns 32
Barrack Accom. 128
Present use Derelict and overgrown

History Barracks

Disposal 1932
Condition Empty and overgrown.
Access With owner's permission

Sources 1858 & 1868 Committee Reports, Precis of
 Correspondence prior to 1893 National Archives.

Armament

Intended 32 guns.
1883: Proposed
 5 x 64pr R.M.L. on Disappearing carriages
 2 x 7inch R.B.L.
 24 x 32pr SBBL guns - Caponiers
Proposed movable armament stored in the fort:
 2 x 64pr R.M.L. Siege
 4 x 40pr R.B.L. Overbank
 4 x 8inch R.M.L. Howitzers Siege
 2 x 6.6inch R.M.L. Howitzers Siege
 No armament shown on 1886 and 1898 returns.
 Some reports state '*never armed*'.

Caponiers 5

Counterscarp galleries None

Haxo casemates None

Moncrieff Pits None

History and description

This fort was originally intended to be the central work of the Northern line defences of Milford Haven, consisting of six works covering the northern land approach. When the plans were examined by the Government the entire line was struck out, but after some deliberation, Scoveston was reinstated to cover likely approaches to Neyland and Milford Haven. It was commenced under contract in 1861 and continued under two more in November 1862 and April 1864. In 1880 it was described as an excellent work, in good order, only requiring minor modification of parapets for the reception of the standing portion of the armament. In 1883 it was proposed to store the movable armament for the land defences in Scoveston with 64prs on disappearing carriages and 7inch RBLs as the main armament and 32pr SBBLs in the caponiers. The Secretary of State for War did not approve this. They do not appear as mounted on any lists.

A hexagonal work with sides 130 yards in length, it is surrounded by a dry ditch 36 feet wide at the bottom with an escarp of masonry 22 feet high. The counterscarp is cut from natural rock. It is flanked with one double and four single caponiers on two storeys with access over a rolling bridge and tunnel through the gorge. The work is enclosed by a rampart with chemin des rondes, covered way and glacis. It was planned to mount 32 guns on the ramparts and had accommodation for 128 men in bomb proof barrack rooms, together with a main magazine and stores. The rear faces are protected from reverse fire by a parados and a traverse thrown across the interior parade. One source states that it was never armed and no armament is shown on the 1886 RA and RE Works Committee armament return.

For most of its life it served as barrack accommodation or stood empty under a caretaker. During WWI the fort became the main camp for troops manning extensive trenches and fieldworks between Weare point and Port Lion. A large number of hutments were constructed within and outside the fort to serve a training and transit camp. It was abandoned after WWI and was sold to the local farmer in October 1932 for £1,400. During WWII it saw active service once more as an AA gun battery was fitted and was used by the locals as an unofficial air raid shelter. It was used to store large quantities of ammunition during the build up to the Normandy landings. After WWII it was abandoned once more and is now empty, derelict and much overgrown. The caponiers are intact and relatively dry. Their intended armament appears to have been machine guns. The terreplein is devoid of gun emplacements but the expense magazines were constructed. The main magazine survives and shows signs of having been fitted with racking for ammunition.

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