

Tremlett's Pattern Fighting Lantern

Fighting lantern

Fighting lanterns used in casemates of land forts and sea batteries in the 1870s and 1880s were TREMLETT'S naval pattern. This is verified by an extract from "Permanent Fortification For English Engineers" by Lewis (1890). Brackets for these lanterns can be found in the caponiers of all of the forts on Portsdown Hill but no positively identified examples of the lantern have so far been found. The lanterns enabled the guns to be manned at night and were fitted with a movable reflector which could be angled so that no light shone out through the gun port and was visible to an enemy. The brackets were fitted to the piers beside the guns abreast of the front of the platform when it is in the centre of the emplacement. According to Lewis, a litho illustrating the lantern was prepared to accompany the Inspector General of Fortification's memo, dated 30th. October 1878 on Gen No.5/914 but no trace of this has been found. No positive indication of what the lamp looked like or of where an example of such a lantern is likely to be found has so far been determined. The following reference to fighting and tracing lamps can be found in the 'Garrison Artillery Drill' manual for 1899.

5 Lamps on Gun Floors :

The Following lamps were used :-

- 1) Fighting lanterns or lamps*
- 2) Tracing lamps*

A fighting lamp is on the pattern of a small carriage lamp and has a clutch at the back to hang on a loop, and burns a candle. Two of these are provided for every emplacement, 7-inch RML and upwards, one for each side. They are intended to give light for the service of the gun at night §8381 introduces a new pattern of fighting lamp which consumes oil.

These lamps should always be in their proper position on the gun floor, trimmed and ready for lighting.

WO33/ 25 in the P.R.O. Kew contains a reference - 'Special committee on stores and fitments for magazines'

30/09/72 minute 30,488

*Assistant D. of A. 20/09/72 directs secretary Woolwich to demand a lantern and candles as follows for trial with a view to ascertain whether the form is suitable for night firing in the new land service casemate batteries viz
Lantern, fighting, Tremletts (copper tinned and japanned) with brass socket and steel wire spring, glazed with plate glass complete.*

1. Candles styrene 1¼ inch diameter and four inches long from shoulder, solidifying point 130 degrees, wicks three threads, pounds one.

*The Army List of Changes is a source of information regarding sealed patterns for lanterns. An entry for 1873 describes the Tremletts lantern thus :-
List Of Changes 27th. October 1873 Gen No.5/83*

2556 : Lantern Copper Fighting Tremletts

A pattern of this lantern has been sealed to govern supplies for illuminating casemates.

It is made of copper, tinned and planished, is hexagonal in shape having plate glass squares on four sides and is furnished with a movable brass candle socket which is adapted to hold the same sized candle as that used with the new pattern magazine lamps.

It is fitted with a reflector made of copper, plated and fluted which may be turned by means of a strong stem at the bottom of the lantern so as to shut off or expose the light.

*The following references have been located at P.R.O. in WO33/43 - Abstracts of Proceedings of the Department of the Director of Artillery
Minute 31,635 Director of Artillery 16/02/74*

forwards full record of correspondence on the subject of the Tremlett fighting lanterns sealed 12/07/73 Inspector reports 15/07/73 that the Tremletts requires several modifications and improvements and that it is not adapted to the candle used in magazine lamps. Another pattern was therefore demanded 25/07/73 and the label transferred to it 27/10/73 (see 2,576 in the list of changes).

Committee on Proportions (no date) recommending two lanterns per gun mounted in casemates with two pounds of candles to each lantern. candles not to be expended in peace time except by special authority of the General Officer Commanding.

Deputy Adjutant General R.A. 31/12/73 and Director of Artillery 05/01/74 approve.

Director and Assistant Director of Artillery 05/01/74 orders twenty lanterns to be sent to Plymouth for trial and minutes 09/01/74 that no more be ordered at present.

An entry for 10/09/1883 is as follows :-

3783 Lantern, copper fighting

It has been decided that the reflector stops in lanterns of this description shall be discontinued, and removed from the existing store of lanterns, and also from those in use. This will be done by removing the brass stop fixed to the socket, and straightening the side edges of the reflector, thus giving free action to the reflector.

Officers having such lanterns in charge will take steps to have this alteration carried out locally.

The department of the Director of Artillery reported in minute 43,363WO33/47

Lantern, Fighting Mark II

Director of Artillery 10/05/86 directs sealing of Mark II Lantern, Fighting, with fluted reflector and movable candle socket. Sealed 15/05/86.

Again on 6/11/1886 :-

5201 Lanterns, fighting Mark I to be used up.

With reference to §5026 :- The pattern lantern therein described (Mark II) will guide future manufacture only, and lanterns of that description will replace those of Mark I pattern as the latter becomes unfit for service.

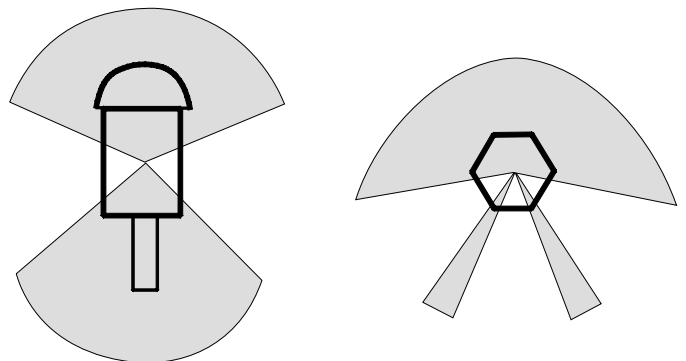
That portion of 5026 declaring Mark I lanterns to be obsolete is hereby cancelled.

On 13th. January 1896 a new pattern of fighting lamp was sealed, the fighting lantern Mark II. It was to replace the previous (Tremlett's?) "which is found to be unsuitable for modern requirements"

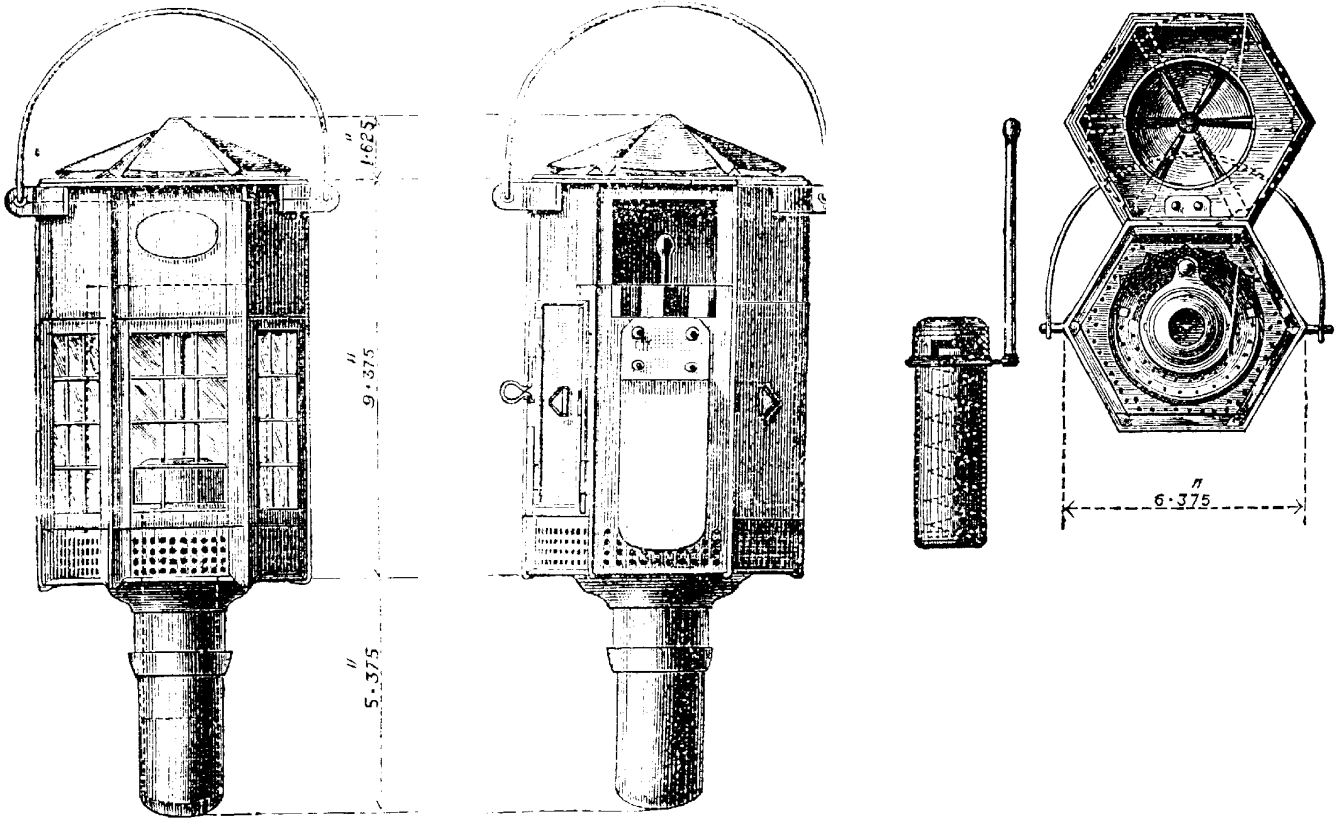
A report in the Journal of the Royal United Services Institute entitled 'The Lighting of Her Majesty's Ships' 1872 page 440 shows a fighting lamp (diagram below) which may be a Tremlett's Fighting Lamp. It is hexagonal in shape and has the required stem for adjusting the reflector.



**Bracket for Tremlett's pattern fighting lamp :
Fort Nelson**



**Diagram of Tremlett's Fighting lantern in
RUSI Journal**



2556 : Lantern Copper Fighting Tremletts

(Note - the litho shows that the lantern had glass on three sides, not four. This proved to be confusing.)

The PFS have arranged for the fabrication of two of these lamps for use in Fort Nelson. As a result the Landmark Trust at Crownhill Fort Plymouth were supplied with drawings which were used to produce lamps for use in the caponiers of the fort.



In August 2022 this Tremlett's Lamp was put up for auction on Ebay. It originates from Plymouth and has been altered to be used as an electrical lamp. The maker is Polkey, dated 1895. (The National Army Museum have bought this lamp for their representative military lamp collection.)



In August 2022 another lamp appeared at Auction. It was labelled as a WW1 Signalling lamp but is clearly a Tremlett's Fighting Lamp.

