

Landguard Minefield/Darrell's Battery

Commenced	1900	Armament	
Completed	1901	1901	2 x 4.7-inch Q.F.
Cost	£ 2,798	1940	Nil
Map Reference	TM 283319		Temporary 2 x 12pdr. Q.F.
Position	West of Landguard Fort	1940	2 x twin 6pdr. Q.F.
Type	Barbette battery	1956	2 x twin 6pdr. Q.F.
Ditch	None		
Guns	2		
Barrack Accom.	Inside Landguard Fort		
Present use	None		
History	Coast Battery to 1956		
Disposal	Crown Land - E.H. lease		
Condition	Overgrown		
Access	Via gate		
Sources	WO plans 5/351, WO192,		

History and Description

Construction of the New Minefield Battery started in 1900. The fortification being designed for protection of the Estuary entrance. It was armed in 1901 with two Q.F. 4.7-inch guns on central pivot mounts, firing a 45lb. common point Lyddite shell, range 11,800 yards. It occupies the right of the old position of Beauclerk's Battery.

Provided for anti-torpedo boat defence, manned in 1914 by No. 13 Coy. R.G.A. to cover the minefield, re-laid by the Navy. In or about 1919 dismantled, serviced and greased. Remounted soon after, now in the care of the TA.

The second world war saw the manning of the guns again. The plans to re-arm with Twin-six pounders allowing the dismantling of both guns. In early 1940 they were sent with a detachment of 166 (Ipswich) Battery to Norway. The Luftwaffe bombed the transport and sunk it while the detachment was digging gun pits on shore, the guns and all equipment being lost. While the rebuilding was under way, as a temporary measure, two 12 pounder Q.F. were mounted to the north of the battery on the top of the river wall bank. The platform for the northern most can still be seen clearly. The southern platform is thought to be buried between the northern two of the coastal defence searchlights. At the north of the bank between the battery and the searchlight emplacements, the remains of the Victorian minefield narrow gauge railway cutting the bank can be seen.

In 1940 the two Twin-Six's were built over the position using the old battery as foundations. The Mk I rate of fire was 72 rounds per minute, guns in low angle use only. Just after the war, all 6pdr. twins were converted for dual purpose AA use, with an improved rate of fire of 96 rpm.

Post War they remained part of the main armament to 1956 when the coast artillery disbanded, in the care of 233 Independent Maintenance. Battery. Royal Artillery, and 419th Coast Regiment Royal Artillery (TA). Good photographs exist of them in 1953.

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