

Grain Wing Battery

Commenced	1895	Armament	
Completed	1895	1869 Proposed	10 x 9inch RMLs
Cost	£ 27,455 to June 1868	1895	2 x 11-inch RML
Map Reference	TQ 891764	1898	2 x 4.7-inch Q.F. 2 x 11-inch R.M.L.
Position	Medway Channel, Isle of Grain 1000 yards from Grain Fort	Proposed	2 x 9.2inch BL
Type	Barbette Sea battery	but not fitted	2 x 6inch BL
Ditch	None. Covered Way to Grain Fort	1911/12	Nil
Guns	4		
Barrack Accom.	In Grain Fort		
Present use	Destroyed		
History	Built to supplement armament of Grain Fort		
Disposal	Abandoned as obsolete by 1914		
Condition	Filled in 1962		
Access	open access to site <small>'The Isle of Grain Defences' Macdougall K.D.R.G. J.D. Wilson 'Later Nineteenth century defences of the Thames, including Grain Fort' Army Historical Research Coalhouse Fort Archives</small>		
Sources			

History and Description

An early work was constructed on the shore about 1,000 yards to the south of Grain Fort. Communication between the two was by a covered road. It was designed as an open earthen battery for 14 guns bearing on the entrance of the Medway and was about 900 yards from the nearest point of the deep water channel. Severe difficulties were experienced with the building of the rampart due to subsidence. It was therefore proposed to complete it as a barbette battery as a temporary measure pending conversion to a permanent one for 10 Moncrieff guns. The main magazine was also affected by failure to a lesser degree. It is known that the battery was still incomplete in 1890.

In R.A./R.E. Works report no.107, dated 1890 in connection with the re-arming of Grain Fort it is stated that Grain Wing Battery is under construction. As this report deals with the then current experiments with searchlights it would appear that the new battery was to supplement the guns at Grain and Garrison Point Fort, in connection with the new strategies being worked out for the defence of booms and minefields during the hours of darkness.

The battery was situated to the south of Grain Fort on a gradual slope towards the sea. Its armament consisted of two 4.7-inch QF guns to provide defence against fast moving destroyers and torpedo boats and a pair of 11-inch RMLs for use against heavier vessels. These emplacements formed a line along the east facing seaward side of the battery. The R.M.L.s occupied the northern half with the Q.F.s to the south. Both pairs of emplacements had the usual magazine arrangements for their type beneath. The battery had an outer defensive enceinte and a central linear hollow dug into the hillside for the gun emplacements, magazines and crew shelters. The outer defence consisted of an elongated irregular hexagonal earthwork with a ditch and unclimbable fence. On the western side was the military road connecting Grain Fort with Dummy Battery to the South. The main entrance was to the south-west with a second one at the north-west angle. To the east and south-east the ditch formed a counterscarp. The BC post incorporating one of two DRF positions was on a bank running along the inside of the western ditch. The second DRF was on the northern corner of the battery.

In 1911/12 the 2 x 4.7-inch Q.F. guns were removed and remounted on Grain Tower. Before this the 11-inch R.M.L.s had been removed. In WWI the battery was occupied by troops in temporary accommodation. In 1960 the battery was still in good condition and a tall observation tower stood on the right flank, which might indicate that the battery was rearmed in some way during World War Two. Today the battery is discernible amongst the scrub but the gun emplacements and magazines were filled in post 1961.

Grain Wing Battery

