

# Fast Facts: HDNY in WWII

From 1940 to 1945, each month between 40% to 60% of all US Shipping to Europe left from New York Harbor. The other key harbors were Portland, ME; Boston, MA; Chesapeake Bay, VA; Sonny Point (Charleston), SC.

Over 5,000 ships were sunk in the Atlantic by German U-Boats, aircraft and surface ships

In March 1943, approximately 926,000 tons of Allied shipping was sunk in the Atlantic - about half of that was fuel - about two Exxon Valdese tankers

German U-Boats landed saboteurs on US shores on two occasions in 1942.

German U-Boats mined entrance to NY Harbor once, possibly twice in 1942.

A gun strike on substations of the fledgling US electric grid was feasible - a serious threat to NYC and Philadelphia industrial capability

There were approximately 13,000 combat soldiers assigned to the HDNY - approximately 5,500 of them at Fort Hancock.

## HDNY Harbor Defense Forts (and sub-forts)

Fort Hancock (HQ)  
Navesink Military Reservation (Highlands)

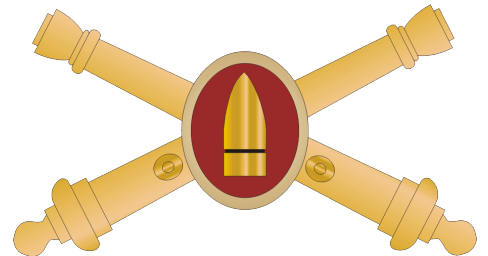
Fort Wadsworth (Staten Island)  
Miller Field  
Swineburne Island

Fort Hamilton (Brooklyn)

Fort Tilden (Long Island)  
Norton Point

Fort Totten (Queens)

Fort Jay - Governor's Island (Forts Schyler and Slocom were removed late 1920s)



Army Coast Artillery Branch Insignia

## HDNY Key Headquarters Organizations

Harbor Defense Command Post (HDCP) - Located at Fort Hancock in Mortar Battery  
Joint Army/Navy operations - Army Brigadier General in command

Harbor Entrance Control Post (HECP) - Main HECP at Fort Wadsworth  
Advance HECP #1 at Fort Hancock at Battery Potter (incoming shipping)  
Advance HECP #2 at Fort Tilden (exiting shipping)  
Joint Army/Navy operations - Navy Captain in command

Battery Gunnison/New Peck primary mission is HECP and secondary is Gun Group 1

# Fast Facts: HDNY in WWII

## Battery Gunnison/New Battery Peck Conversion

*(Source: Battery Emplacement Book)*

November 1942 - New York Harbor Defense Board recommends moving Battery Peck guns to Battery Gunnison and modernizing both Batteries.

Conversion of both Batteries ordered on 22 Feb 1943.

Battery Gunnison becomes "Battery Peck" and old Battery Peck becomes "Battery #8".

Gun #1 (M1900 6-inch #27 - now #23) relocated to "New Battery Peck" - 8 April 1943

Operations begin transitioning from Old Battery Peck to New Battery Peck.

Gun #2 (M1900 6-inch #28 - now #22) relocated to "New Battery Peck" - 21 May 1943

Battery Peck becomes fully operational in June 1943

Gun barrels #27 and #28 scrapped and replaced by M1900 6-inch Guns #22 and #23 from Battery Livingston (Fort Hamilton) installed June 1948

"Battery #8" receives two barbette mounted 90mm guns and two mobile 90mm guns for use against aircraft and shipping.

## Sinkings in the Atlantic during WWII

Miller, Nathan. *War at Sea - A Naval History of World War II*, New York: Scribner, 1995

Year	Battle of Atlantic Total Allied Sinkings	Battle of Atlantic Allied Sinkings By Submarine
1939	222	114
1940	1,059	471
1941	1,299	432
1942	1,664	1,160
1943	597	377
1944	205	132
1945	105	56
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,151</b>	<b>2,742</b>

Terraine, John. *Business in Great Waters: The U-Boat Wars, 1916-1945*, London: Leo Cooper, 1989

Year	Total Allied Sinkings	North Atlantic Sinkings
1939	221	19
1940	1,059	349
1941	1,299	496
1942	1,662	1,066
1943	597	285
1944	205	31
1945	97	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,140</b>	<b>2,265</b>

# New York-Philadelphia Sector

## The Harbor Defenses of New York

*"I am responsible for the safety of twenty-million people  
and the industrial heart of the nation"*

BG Philip Gage, Commanding, HD NY

### Chain of Command

President of the US - Franklin Delano Roosevelt  
Secretary of War - Henry Lewis Stimson  
Army Chief of Staff - General George C Marshall  
Eastern Defense Command Commander - LTG George Grunert  
NY-Phila Sector Commander - MG Homer  
NY Sub Sector/HDNY Commander - BG Phillip S Gage  
Fort Hancock & 245<sup>th</sup> Coast Arty Regiment Commander - COL Joseph Haw

### Major Army Units at Fort Hancock - MAY 1943: *(approximately 5,500 officers and Enlisted personnel)*

HQ and HQ Btry, Harbor Defenses of New York  
7<sup>th</sup> Coast Artillery Regiment (less 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion)  
245<sup>th</sup> Coast Artillery Regiment (HD) (Less Battery L)  
265<sup>th</sup> Coast Artillery Regiment (HD)  
287<sup>th</sup> Coast Artillery Battalion (Railway) (Apr 1943 was 2<sup>nd</sup> BN, 52<sup>nd</sup> Coast Arty)  
5<sup>th</sup> Mine Planter Battery (US Army Mine Planter - USMP Ord)  
20<sup>th</sup> Mine Planter Battery (USMP Maybank) (arrived 13 May)  
1225<sup>th</sup> Army Service Unit  
    Fort Hancock Medical Detachment (Hospital)  
    95<sup>th</sup> Ordnance Company (Railway Artillery)  
    22<sup>nd</sup> Quartermaster Company (Truck)  
113<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment (HHC moved to Ft. Hamilton 19 Mar, 3<sup>rd</sup> BN in Eatontown)

## Fort Hancock, NJ

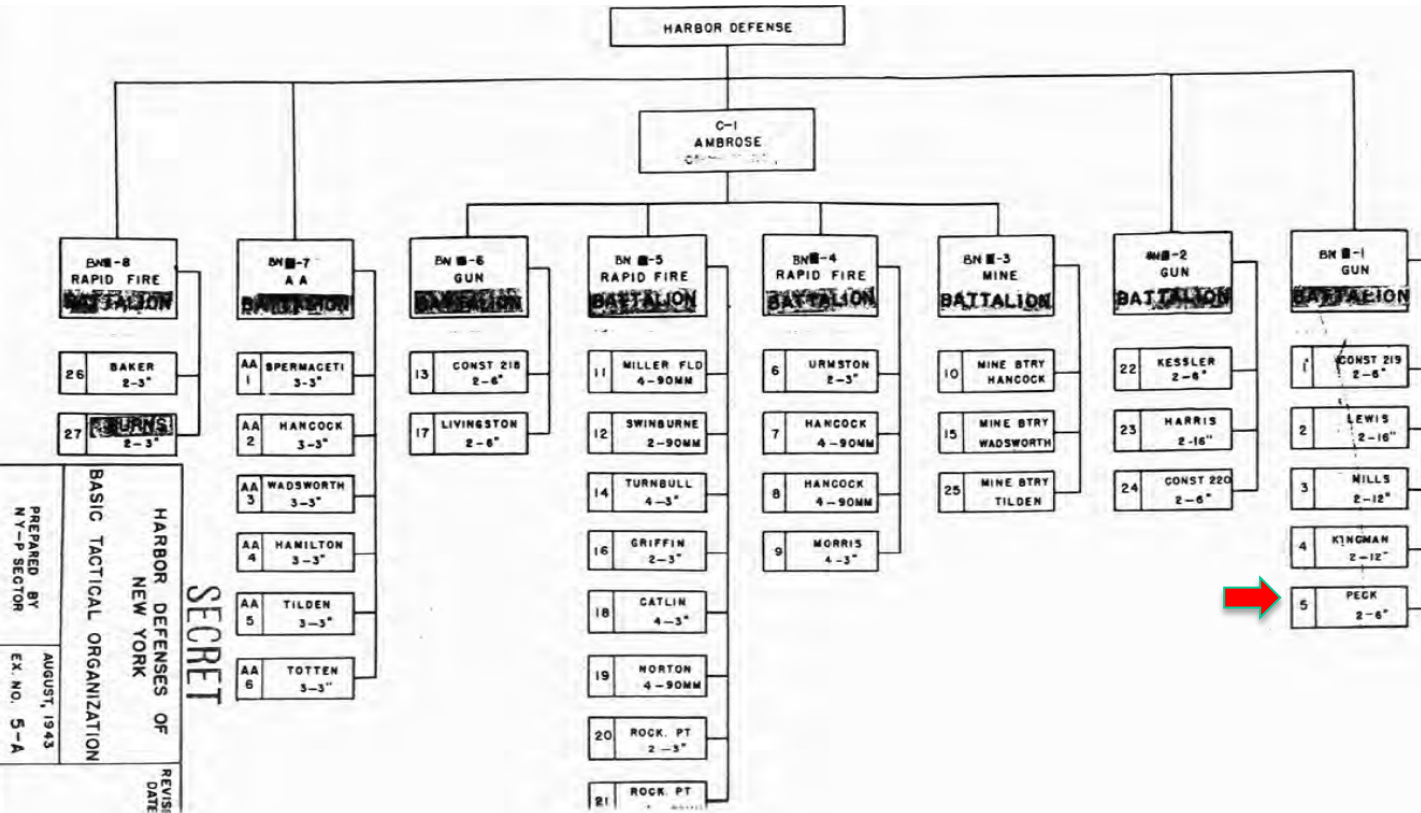
Fort Hancock is named in honor of Major General Winfield Scott Hancock, who served with distinction in the Mexican War and the Civil War. He died 9 February 1886. The installation was officially renamed Fort Hancock 30 October 1895, having previously been known as the Fortifications of Sandy Hook. The Fort is situated on the Sandy Hook peninsula, located in Monmouth County, New Jersey, and guards the outer entrance to New York Harbor. The first parcel of land for the site was acquired by the Colony of New York in 1762 at that time for a lighthouse, and additional parcels were subsequently acquired until the entire peninsula was purchased outright by the Federal government during the War of 1812 and the entire peninsula was purchased by the Federal Government by 1814. Construction of the modern fortifications began in 1890 on the site of the old mine casemate that dated from 1880. This was followed with the first all concrete gun and mortar emplacements in the nation. Construction of the Main Post cantonment began in 1896. The permanent Coast Artillery garrison was established in 1898 under command of Lieutenant Colonel Tully McCrea of the Fifth Artillery.

Battery McCrea at Ft. Drum, Philippine Islands, was named after LTC McCrea.

# New York Sub-Sector Organization

Effective 4 May 1943

The organization chart below shows the full combat organization by "Battery" of the Harbor Defense of New York. The chart shows that "groups" have become "battalions". The red arrow below points to Battery Peck (formerly Gunnison)



The two insignia to the left are shoulder sleeve patches. They signify the major commands within HDNY.

2nd Coast Artillery District (New York-Philly Sector)

2nd Service Command

The five insignia below are unit distinctive insignia and are metal pins to be worn on service uniforms and hats.



Harbor Defenses New York

7th Coast Artillery Regiment (HD)

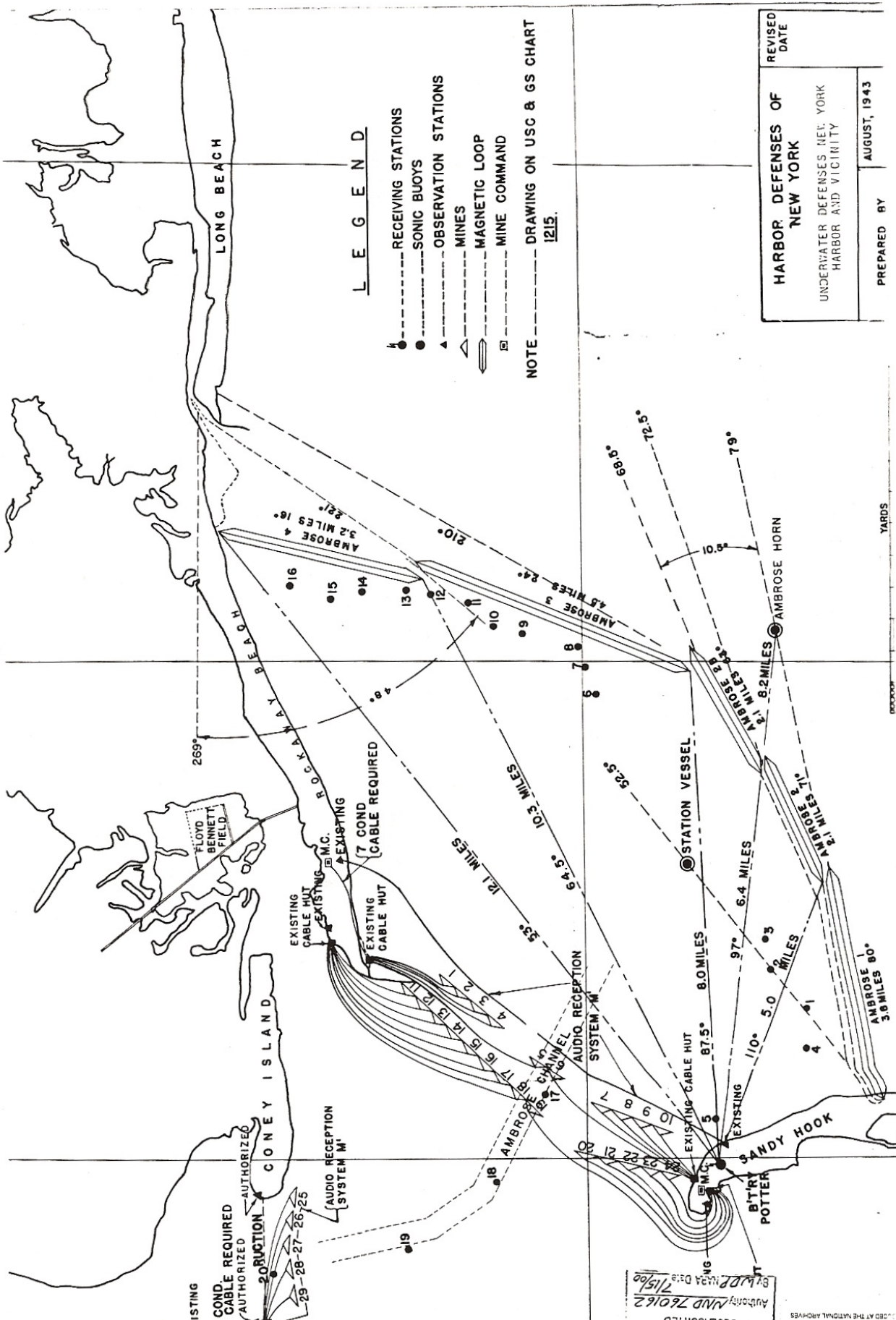
52nd Coast Artillery Regiment (Railway) (became 287th Coast Artillery Railway Battalion in 1943)

245th Coast Artillery Regiment (HD)

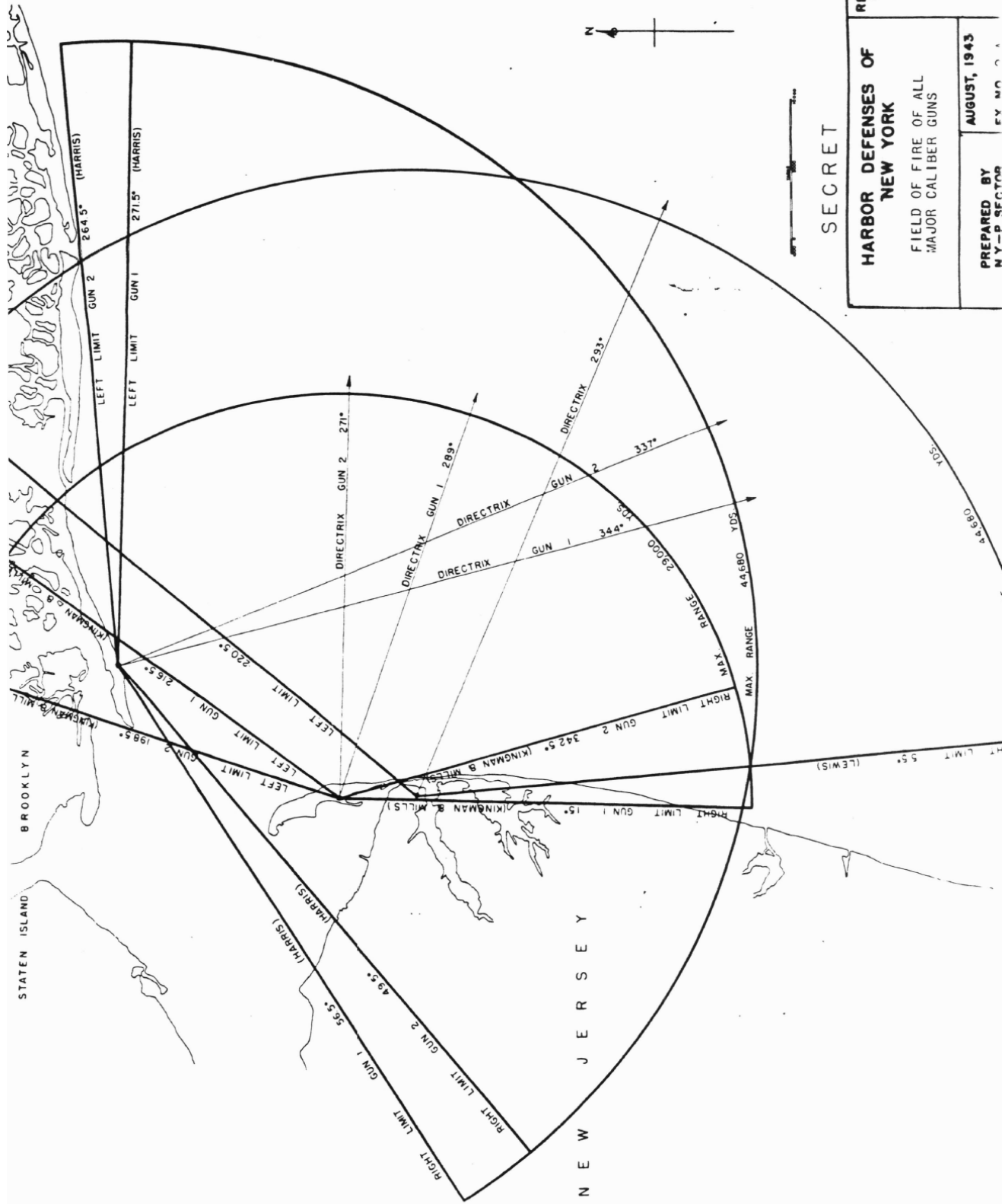
265th Coast Artillery Regiment (HD)



# Entrance to HDNY



# Major Caliber Guns - New York Harbor



SECRET

HARBOR DEFENSES OF  
NEW YORK

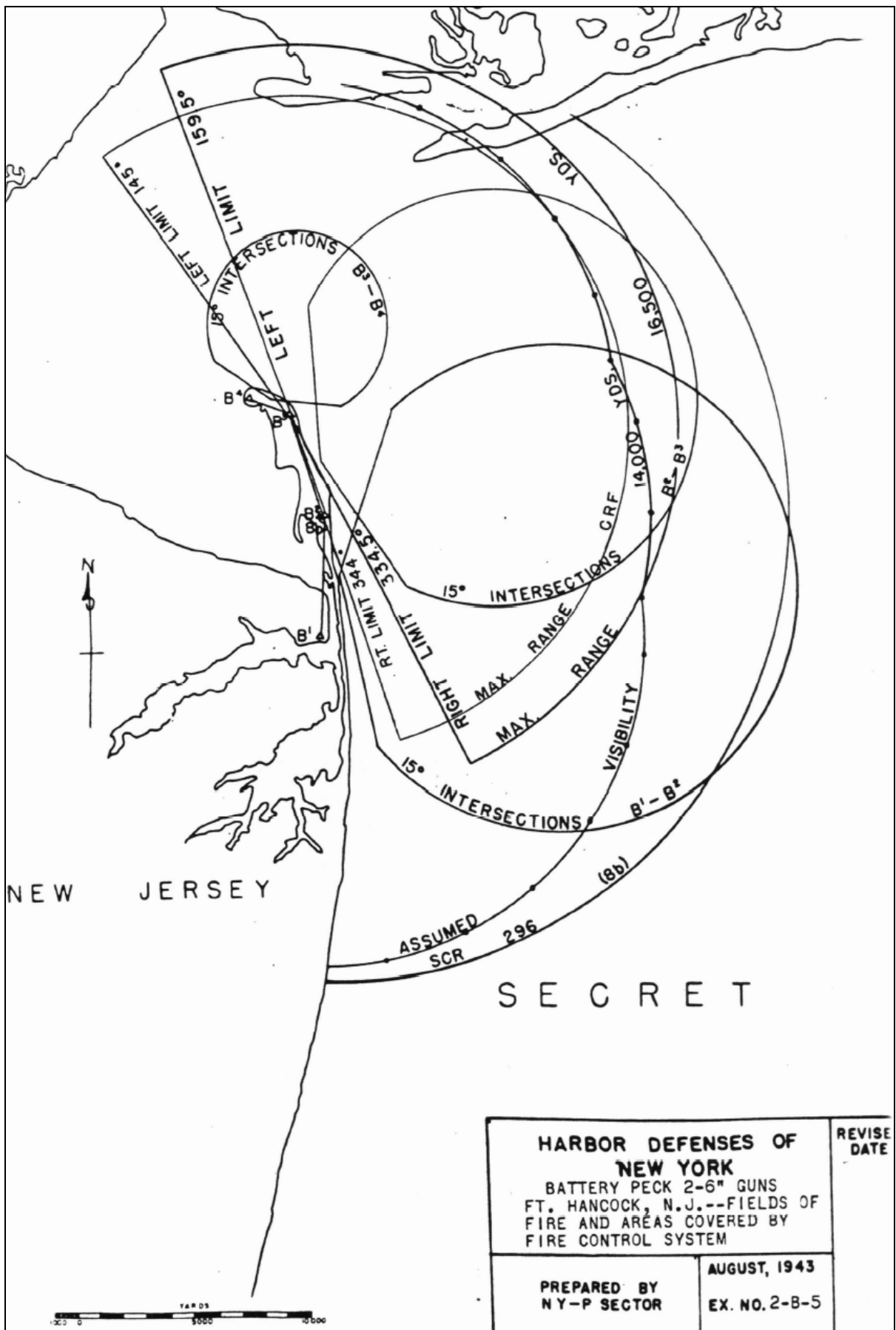
FIELD OF FIRE OF ALL  
MAJOR CALIBER GUNS

REVISED  
DATE

PREPARED BY  
N.Y. - P. SECTOR

AUGUST, 1943

# Battery Gunnison/New Battery Peck



# Fast Facts: HDNY in May 1943

## HDNY SPECIFIC NEWS

Fort Hancock forms "Decontamination Squad" for facility chemical decontamination - "Zoot Suits with a Zombie Pleat" (Sandy Hook Foghorn, 2 Apr 1943, pg 1)

Baseball - NY Giants beat Fort Hancock 23-0 in five innings on 6 Apr 43. The NY Yankees were kinder, winning 7-2 in five innings on 5 Apr 43 (Sandy Hook Foghorn, 9 Apr 1943, pg 1)

British Navy boxers fought Fort Hancock boxers on 28 April to a crowd of 2,000 - the and the Coast Artillerymen won all bouts (Sandy Hook Foghorn, 29 Apr 1943, pg 1)

COL JC Haw's wife Miriam receives Red Cross recognition for trying to save the life of Mrs. Augusta McGongel who was fatally injured in a kitchen grease fire (Sandy Hook Foghorn, 29 Apr 1943, pg 1)

WAAC detachment of 60 due at Fort Hancock to work in Post HQ, HDNY HQ, Post Exchange, Quartermaster office, Ordnance Office and Post Hospital (Sandy Hook Foghorn, 13 May 1943, pg 1)

NY Metropolitan Opera singers to bring programs in June at Fort Hancock. Singers include Gladys Swarthout, Lilly Pons, Marjorie Lawrence and Giovanni Martinelli (Sandy Hook Foghorn, 20 May 1943, pg 4)

## GENERAL WAR NEWS NEWS

On 11 May the US began to recapture the Aleutian Islands in Alaska from Japan by announcing that it had occupied Amchitka Island in the Aleutians - 70 miles from Japanese held Kiska Island. (NEWSWEEK, 17 May, page 27)

At 7:52 PM on 12 May, Allied HQ North Africa announced Axis surrender in North Africa. Over 175,000 Axis Prisoners of War were captured. (NEWSWEEK, 24 May, page 23)

Of 1,150 American merchant ships at the wars start, 700 are unofficially reported sunk by May 1943. (TIME, 10 May, page 30)

Lieutenant General Brehon Somervell stated before Congress that the US Army won't be fully equipped until late 1944. (TIME, 10 May, page 22)

The Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) will be 1 year old as of the week of 17 May 1943. (TIME, 10 May, page 55)

Nazi Germany's U-Boat fleet commander, Admiral Karl Doenitz, is on the cover of the 10 May edition of TIME Magazine. Admiral King stated in the first week of May that "The submarine menace...is being dealt with...we expect to bring it under control in four to six months." April's losses were the lowest of the year so far (TIME, 10 May, page 30)

Germany's surface fleet has one battleship (*Tirpitz*), two battle cruisers (*Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*), two pocket battleships (*Admiral Scheer* and *Lutzow*), two heavy cruisers, and at least 10 destroyers in either home or Norwegian waters. They could break out into the Atlantic at any time. (TIME, 10 May, page 28-30) (The modern fast battleships *USS South Dakota* and *USS Alabama* are stationed with the British Home Fleet to guard against Nazi surface ships. The oldest US battleships, *USS Texas*, *USS New York* and *USS Arkansas* escort Allied convoys.