

World Situation, May 1943

Here at home, wartime rationing continues as shoes and canned goods were recently added to the list of rationed items. Also, bread will no longer come pre-sliced from local markets.

The Yankees continue to lead the American League by one game over the Cleveland Indians while in the National League the Brooklyn Dodgers lead the Boston Braves by three games.

The United Mine Workers, lead by John L. Lewis, returned to work after a nation wide strike reduced coal reserves to less than one week for all war industries. John Lewis agreed to deal with Harold Ickes (Solid Fuels Coordinator) to return to work on Tuesday 4 May. (*TIME, 10 May, page 19-20*)

This month Lieutenant General Brehon Somervell stated before congress that the US Army would not be fully equipped until late 1944. (*TIME, 10 May, page 22*)

The upsurge of U-Boat attacks against Allied shipping continues. So serious is the threat that Admiral Doenitz, Nazi Germany's U-boat commander, graces the cover of the 10 May edition of *TIME* Magazine. Admiral King stated the first week of May "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*)

German 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. (*TIME, 10 May, page 28-30*) They could break out into the Atlantic at any time. 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 forces to Europe and the Mediterranean theaters.

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

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



Guard at Entrance to HDCP, Ft. Hancock



HDCP Entrance (Mortar Battery)

Major Fort Hancock Gun Batteries (abbreviated listing)

Tactical Number	Name	CAL Inch	No & Model	Mount	Notes
2	Lewis (Const. number 116)	16"	2-MK2M1	BC	Located at Navesink Highlands. Range 44,000 yards. Under construction 1 June 1942. Proof firing scheduled for December 1943.
4	Kingman (c)	12"	2-M1895M1	BC	Range 29,300 yards. Work on casemating started 12 August 1941. Casemating is completed by 30 April 1942. In Class "B" 14 November 1942.
3	Mills (c)	12"	2-M1895M1	BC	Range 29,300 yards. Work on casemating started 13 April 1942. Casemating completed 31 October 1942. In Class "B" 14 November 1942.
	Richardson (O)	12"	2-M1895M1	DC	Restored to Class "A" 1 June 1941. In rust preventative August 1942. In Class "C" 3 November 1942.
	Bloomfield (O)	12"	2-M888M1	DC	Reverted from Class "C" to Class "A" 12 June 1941. In rust preventative Aug. 1942. In Class "C" 3 November 1942.
1	CONST. 219 (NC)	6"	2-M1903A2	BC	Located at Navesink Highlands. Range 27,500 yards. Under construction by 8 July 1942. Scheduled to be proof fired August 1943.
5	Peck (s)	6"	2-M1900	BC	Range 17,000 Yards. In Class "A" in 1941. Gun #1 relocated 8 April 1943 and Gun #2 is relocated 21 May. Initial operations May 1943.
	Gunnison (O)	6"	2-M1903	DC	Class "A" in 1941. Placed in Class "C" 3 November 1942. Dismantling started 8 March 1943.
6	Urmston (s)	3"	2-M1903	RF	Range 11,000 yards. In Class "A" in 1941. Relocated at Ft. Hancock end of 1942.
	Morris (s)	3"	4-M1903	RF	Range 11,000 yards. In Class "A" in 1941.

BC = Barbette Carriage; DC = Disappearing Carriage; RF = Rapid Fire



Battery Bloomfield - 2x12-inch DC guns 1941



Battery Kingman - 2x12-inch Long Range Guns in casemate firing 1943

Harbor Entrance Control Post (HECP)

On February 24, 1943 at a meeting of the Joint Army and Navy Planning Committee at Governors Island, it was decided to activate an additional two HECPs.

The first HECP activated on 1 May 1943 at Fort Hancock on top of Battery Potter. The second will activate in August 1943 at Fort Tilden.

The relationship between the three (3) Harbor Entrance Control Posts was that of three (3) separate stations, each maintaining local shipping plot and full control of shipping in contiguous waters.

Army personnel assigned to the HECP #1 were as follows (Navy and Coast Guard had similar manning in the HECP and the officer in charge was a Navy Captain - same rank as an Army Colonel):

- Senior Officer - Lieutenant Colonel
- Four (4) Duty Officers - Majors
- One (1) Sergeant Major - Technical Sergeant
- Four (4) Chief of Sections - Sergeants
- Four (4) Clerk Typists - Corporals
- Four (4) Switchboard Operators - Private First Class
- Four (4) Signalman Observers - Corporals
- Four (4) Plotters - Corporals
- Four (4) Messengers - Privates First Class

The mission of the Harbor Entrance Control Post is to collect, evaluate and disseminate information of activities in the defensive sea area, control of merchant ships in the defensive coastal area, and to take prompt and decisive action to operate elements of the Harbor Defenses to deny enemy action within the defensive coastal area.

Major Duties and Standing Operating Procedures included:

Action on Submarines

Action on Vessels in Prohibited Areas

Action on Mine Arming and Hydrophone Signatures

Action on Sound Searches

Challenging Procedure for Ships entering New York Harbor.

Radar Procedure for Plotting and Tracking Vessels entering New York Harbor

Ships Anchored in Ulna Field and Submarine Telephone Cable area

Duties of Army Signalman Observer

Duties of Army Plotter

Examination Battery Employment



HECP #1 (Btry Potter), Ft. Hancock



Switchboard Room, HDCEP, Ft. Hancock

Exam Battery Duties

1. Alerting of Batteries - The Examination Battery Maintains one (1) gun crew and, sufficient range personnel to secure necessary firing data on a twenty-four (24) hour alert basis. The gun crew remains at ease in tents or surrounding area of the Gun emplacement. If the Harbor Entrance Control Post (HECP) Duty Officer observes that the Navy is having difficulty during challenging operations, he will order the range crew to track the ship being challenged. When the Navy gives the ship orders to halt, the gun crew will be alerted to man the gun.

2. Assignment of Target - the Guardship notifies the HECP at Ft. Wadsworth and Advanced HECP #1 by radio of ships failing to stop when ordered. A brevity code is used giving the class of ship and its location (Local rid code). The HECP #1 Duty Officer immediately relocates the target and gives the position to the battery in azimuth and range. When possible, by observation, the following additional information is given;

a) Hoist being flown, direction of sailing, if there is more than one (1) ship in the area, and the position of the ship in the column. In order to assist other personnel of the battery not having oriented instruments, the number of the nearest buoy to the ship is also given. A typical order is as follows:

“Target 1 YMS azimuth 3600 mills, Range 6000 yards as of 1300, inbound Ambrose Channel, near buoy #7, Hoist JAS, fire 1 bring-to shot with inert ammunition”.

b) In the event the target has previously been assigned to the range crew, the description and location of the target are not repeated. For destruction fire, the order given is:

“Destruction fire with armor piercing (high explosive) ammunition, begin firing”.

3. During the process of tracking, the position of the target was verified by securing simultaneously plots from Advanced HECP #1, the Examination Battery, and if possible, the Guard Ship.

4. The Battery has a standing order to immediately track fast moving targets, PT's, submarines and amphibious craft. The observer must keep the Guardship under surveillance for any type of signal at all times.

Exam Battery Gunnison/New Peck Activates May 1943

Beginning 8 March 1943, Battery Gunnison is transformed into Battery Gunnison/New Peck. The 6-inch Disappearing guns of Battery Gunnison were removed and new gun platforms built. Battery Peck's Gun #1 moved 8 April 1943, and Gun #2 moves 21 May 1943. The battery is partially operational with a new plotting room and fire control system in May 1943. (Dates of gun installation from Battery Emplacement Book as revised in 1946)



Assembling 6-inch M1900 rifle



6-inch M1900 rifle, Old Battery Peck

ROOM SCHEDULE

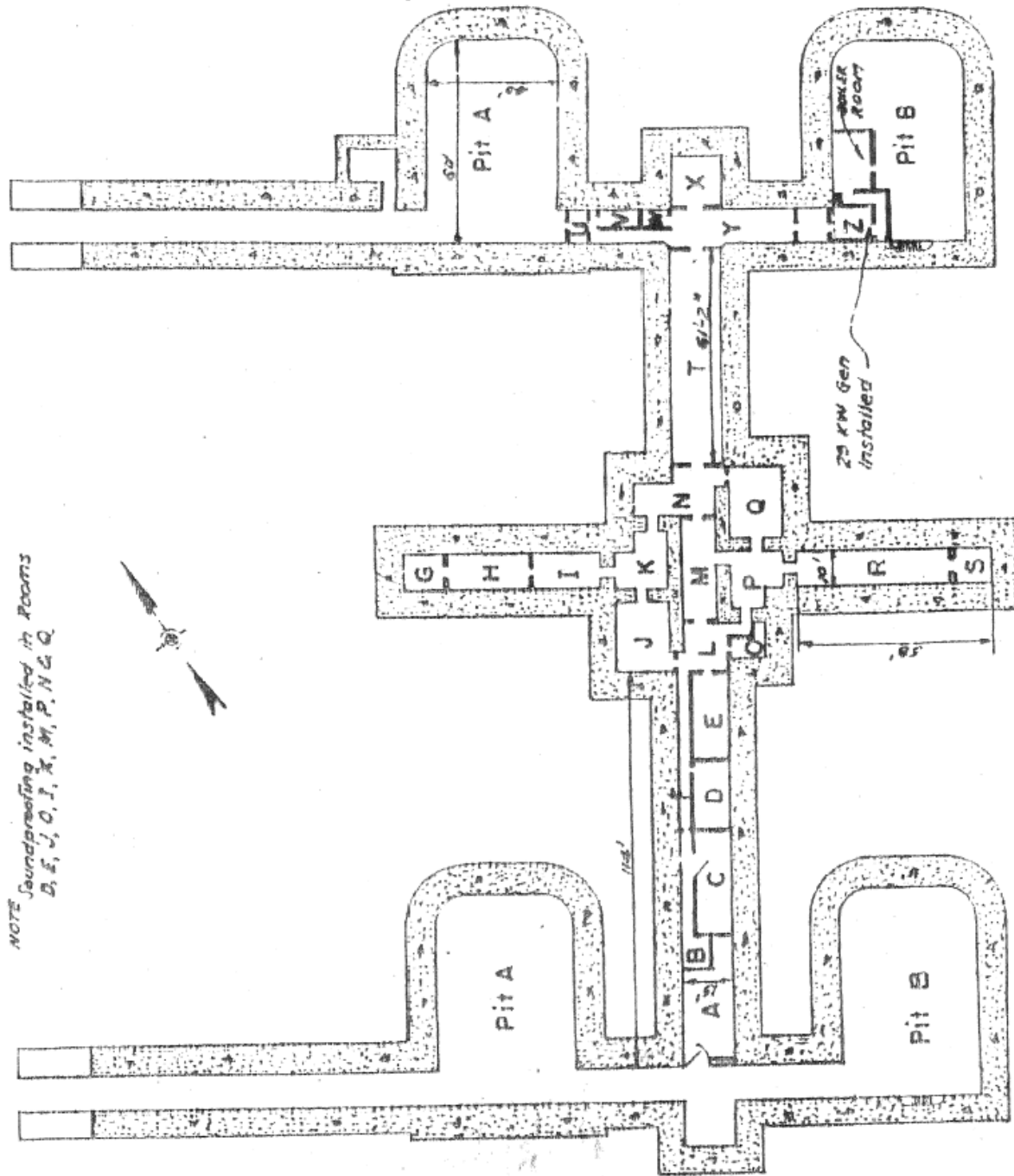
A	ENLISTED MEN'S ROOM	
B	SOUTH AIR LOCK	
C	MESSAGE CENTER	30' x 10 1/2'
D	P & D NAVY LIAISON	20' x 10 1/2'
E	S-4	
F	CORRIDOR	
G	COMMANDING GENERALS' ROOM	
H	COMMANDING GENERALS' OFFICE	
I	EXECUTIVE OFFICER	
J	SQX MAJOR'S OFFICE	20' x 16 1/2'
K	S-1	
L	CORRIDOR	
M	CLASSIFICATION SECTION	
N	S-1 FILE	
O	RADIO ROOM	
P	S-2	20' x 16'
Q	S-3	
R	CHART ROOM	
S	STORAGE VAULT	
T	FIRE CONTROL & POST TELEPHONE SWITCHBOARD	
U	NORTH AIR LOCK	
V	ENLISTED MENS LATRINE	
W	OFFICERS LATRINE	15' x 15'
X	BATTERY ROOM	
Y	CORRIDOR	
Z	GENERATOR ROOM	

HARBOR DEFENSES OF NEW YORK

HARBOR DEFENSE COMMAND POST

MSCOOK REYNOLDS

9 20' 40'



NOTE Soundproofing installed in Rooms
D, E, J, O, I, X, M, P, N, G, Q.

GENERAL LAYOUT