

BATTERY IMPERIAL'S PANAMA MOUNTS DISCOVERED

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The four concrete Panama mount emplacements of Fort Emory's World War II Battery Imperial at the Naval Radio Receiving Facility, Imperial Beach, California were "discovered" in November 1990, perhaps for the first time since they were covered over in the 1940s.

At the prompting of CDSG News editor Bob Zink to find the battery site, the author contacted the Facility's officer-in-charge who has an unusual interest in the history of the gun emplacements on the station and who greatly facilitated locating the Panama mounts. Using a metal detector station personnel first found number three mount's circular ring. The entire area is covered with a three to four inch mat of mostly dead iceplant. The numerous concrete antenna pads, etc. in the area make it difficult to detect which is a Panama mount since they are all covered by eight to twelve inches of soil plus the ice plant. However the 6½ foot diameter center block, once recognized, greatly assisted in locating the 35 foot diameter concrete rings with their two metal bands. Only about a foot of each circular ring was unearthed, as to clear a complete ring would be a major task.

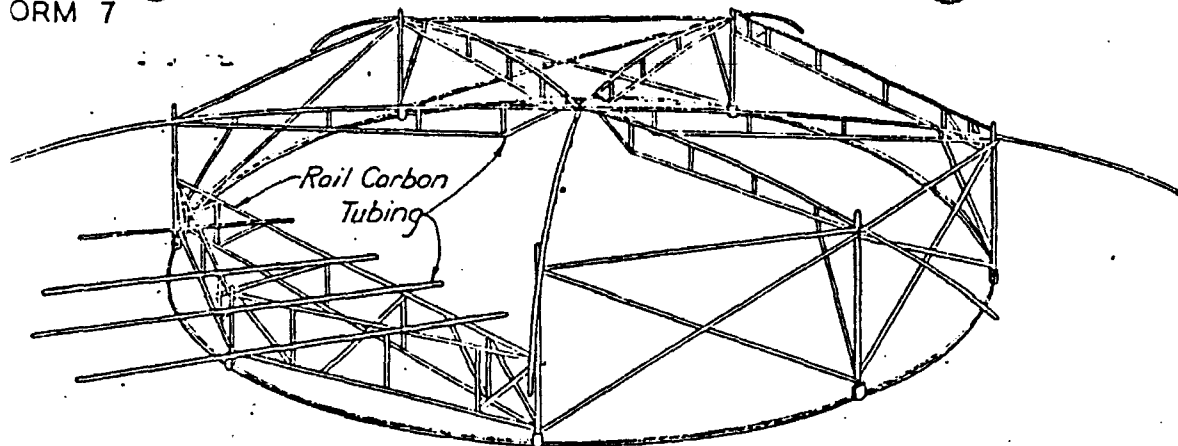
Battery Imperial was constructed from December 1941-January 30, 1942 for \$19,102 which included camouflage supports, underground shelters and magazines constructed by troop labor. The 155mm guns were moved from Fort Roscecrans to Coronado Heights M.R. during December 9-14, 1941. They were located near the shoreline and NW of Battery 134 and faced SW rather than W along the N-S shore. Having served as an interim/emergency battery, it was abandoned on the completion of Battery Grant (239) in December 1943.

The foundation of the battery commander's station to the north of the battery could not be found. The BC station was on a 50 foot tower made of redwood sheathing and wood supports on concrete piers, built to simulate a water storage tank. However, the foundations of a two-level combined base end station and SCR-296 radar on a 125 foot steel tower and the concrete powerhouse floor remain well preserved to the rear of Battery Grant. (This SCR-296 was the fire control radar for Battery Grant and was activated in June 1944.) Only the four concrete cornerposts of a second BES steel tower of 108 feet remain, being flush with the ground in what is now a baseball field to the rear of Battery 134. Not far away is the U-shaped concrete floor of the fort CO's house and its ornamental water fountain in the center of what was a concrete-lined lily pond.

The remnants of old Fort Emory have changed little from when the Navy acquired them in 1947 and at the present rate should remain for another four-plus decades in what is for the most part an undisturbed, restricted-access area. The earth covered PSR, Battery 134 and Battery Grant structures continue to be used by the Naval Radio Receiving Facility. The Navy has had a radio direction finder station (formerly a radio compass station) on the site at Imperial Beach since the 1920s. The size of the Navy property was significantly increased in 1947 when the Navy took over the total Fort Emory/Coronado Heights Military Reservation property.

CORONADO HEIGHTS BATTERY IMPERIAL

U. S. ENGINEER OFFICE,
LOS ANGELES, CALIF., DECEMBER, 1942

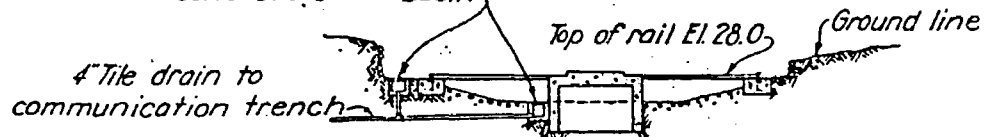


TUBULAR STEEL "UMBRELLA"

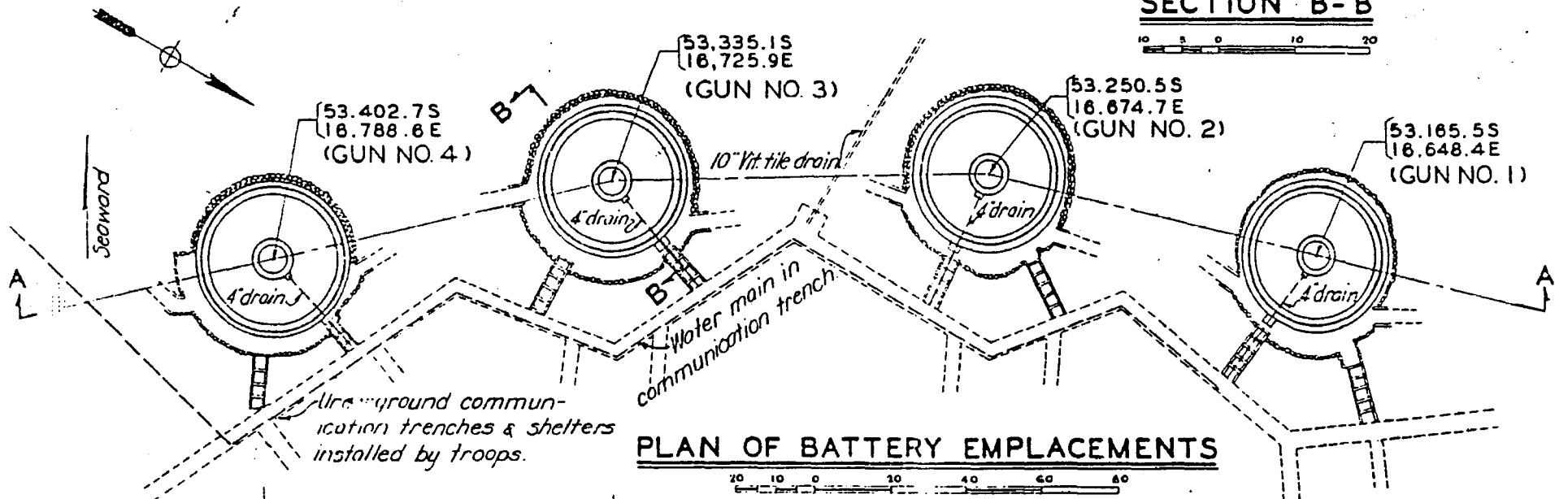
CAMOUFLAGE SUPPORT

4 INSTALLED

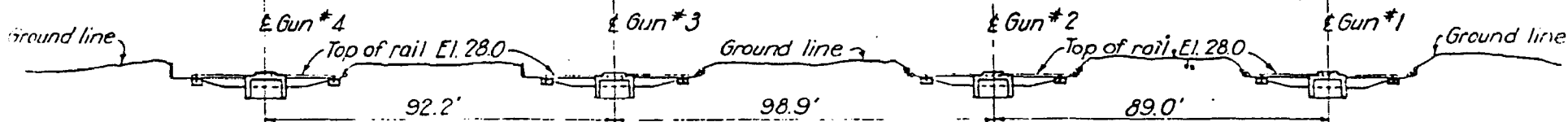
Concrete catch basin



SECTION B-B



PLAN OF BATTERY EMPLACEMENTS



SECTION A-A