

## U.S. ARMY FORTS AROUND SAN DIEGO BAY

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The U.S. Army military installations that existed in San Diego in 1941 were de-activated posts from World War I and earlier. Fort Rosecrans, Fort Pio Pico, Fort Emory, Camp Callan, and Camp Lockett were involved in World War II.

### Fort Rosecrans

Designed in the 19th century to repel naval and marine assaults to the shores of San Diego, the fort on Point Loma was named after Brigadier General William S. Rosecrans, U.S. Army. General Rosecrans had received a "Thanks of Congress" for a signal victory at the Battle of Murfreesboro, Tennessee and was breveted Major General in 1865. General Order 134, July 22, 1899, authorized the honor.

The defense system consisted of flat trajectory artillery, harbor mine fields, and a garrison of troops. Mortars and mobile artillery were added in World War I. The Washington Naval Treaty of 1922 led to closure of Fort Rosecrans to a caretaker status.

In 1888, the bodies of eighteen soldiers that died at the 1846 Battle of San Pasqual were buried near the breakwater at Ballast Point. They were later moved up to the Bennington Monument at the top of Point Loma. War Department General Order 7 designated 8.01 acres around the monument as the Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery in 1934.

During the Great Depression, thousands of troops were billeted at Fort Rosecrans for training. Various units were assigned to demonstrate their skills and equipment at the 1935 San Diego Exposition. At that time, however, only one non-commissioned officer and twenty enlisted men occupied Fort Rosecrans (San Diego Union, October 29, 1935).

War in Europe and Southeast Asia spurred defense interests on the west coast. In March of 1935, a Japanese spy was caught with a 250 page notebook full of maps and descriptions of military installations in his possession (Daily News, March 7, 1935). Later that year, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers began dredging the harbor and filled in the bay north of Ballast Point. Barracks were installed on the fill, and by 1940, there were 21,000 soldiers living at Fort Rosecrans (San Diego Union, October 17, 1940).

Between June of 1940 and April of 1941, sophisticated electronic facilities were developed atop Point Loma. These were under the auspices of either the U.S. Navy Radio and Sound Laboratory or the University of California Department of War Research. These expanded the Navy Radio Point Loma facility, which for sixty hours between December 7 and 9, 1941 held the distinction of being the primary communication station for the Pacific Fleet after the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Fort Rosecrans expanded territory over all of the military reservation on Point Loma during the Second World War. The "upper cantonment" eventually involved 240,000 acres. In 1942, the U.S. Navy Small Craft Facility replaced the Department of Health Quarantine Station.

After the war, troop reductions vacated the facilities, and military research and development assumed the space. The Naval Electronics Laboratories, University of California Marine Physical Laboratory, and Scripps Institution of Oceanography used the old barracks and warehouses for research. On December 31, 1949, the U.S. Army declared Fort Rosecrans to be surplus property, and discontinued use of the property on March 12, 1959. Today, it is divided into numerous U.S. Navy commands.

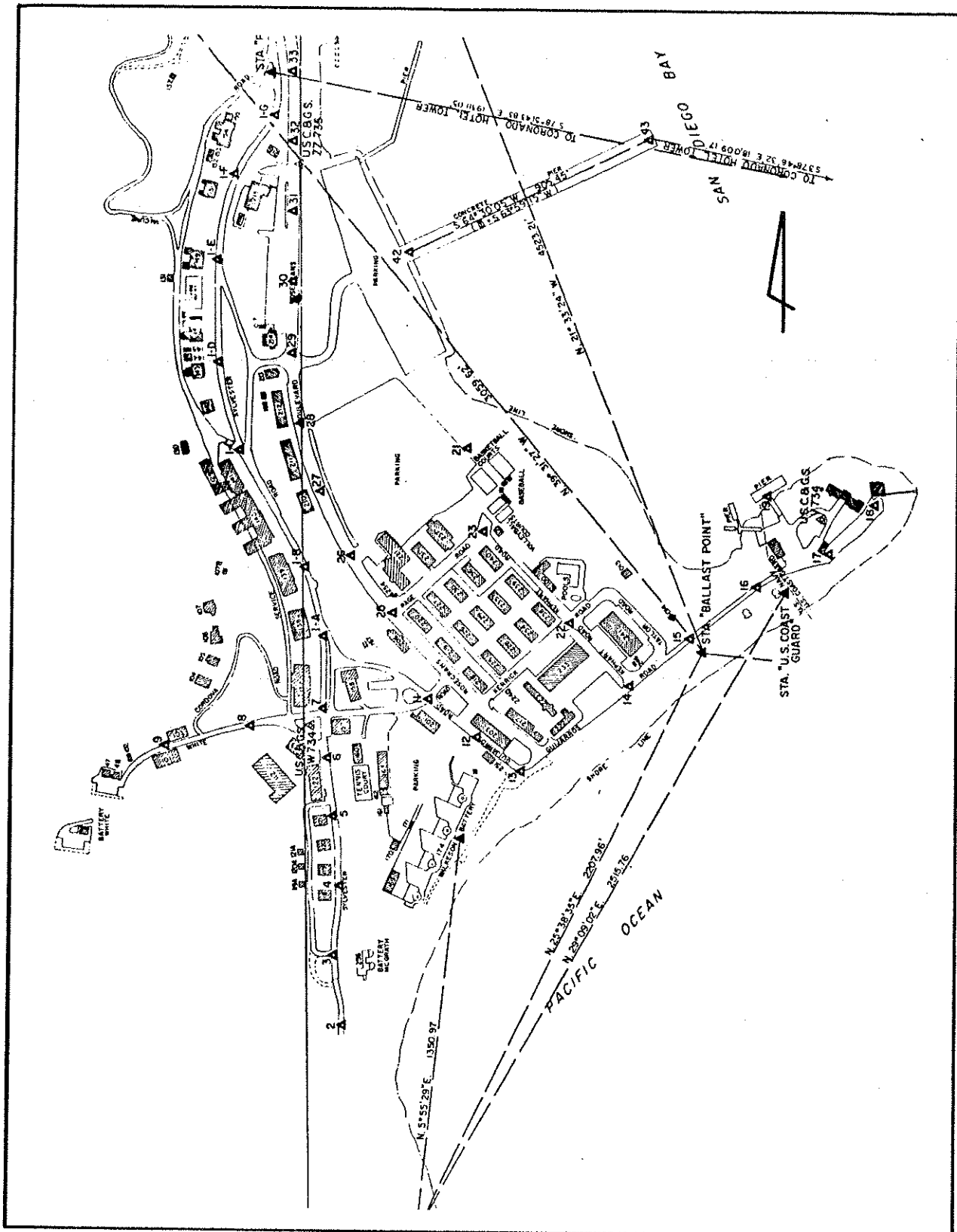


Figure 1. This plot plan illustrates the layout of facilities at the Lower Cantonment of Fort Rosecrans as they existed in World War II. A landfill operation in 1942 created the area east of Rosecrans Boulevard. Many of the buildings west of Rosecrans remain on the U.S. Naval Submarine Base today.

On July 1, 1963, 341 acres of the original 1899 Fort Rosecrans site were transferred to the Navy Public Works Center. By October of 1963, it became the U.S. Naval Submarine Support Facility and in 1982 it became U.S. Naval Submarine Base.

#### Fort Pio Pico

Following completion of the harbor defense system at Fort Rosecrans, the Artillery District of San Diego convinced their superiors that additional facilities were needed opposite Ballast Point on North Island. In 1906, Fort Pio Pico was established as an extension of Fort Rosecrans. This outpost consisted of one gun battery, several search-lights, and various small sand bunkers to house the troops. It was named in honor of the last Mexican Governor in California. Storm damage in 1914 inspired the U.S. Army to store the guns at that time. In World War I, searchlights were installed and Fort Pio Pico was transferred to the U.S. Army Air Corps. It has since become the North Island Naval Air Station.

#### Battery Meed

Installed in 1906, this twin 3 inch gun battery provided cross-fire at the entrance to San Diego Bay. After World War I, the guns were transferred to Battery McGrath at Fort Rosecrans in 1919.

#### Fort Emory

In order to command a wide field of fire south of San Diego, the Coast Artillery designed Fort Emory mid point along Silver Strand at Coronado Heights, just west of Imperial Beach. Named for Brigadier General William Helmsley Emory, it was dedicated on December 14, 1942. Four batteries were designed for Fort Emory, of which three were completed. The U.S. Army decommissioned Fort Emory in 1947 and the U.S. Navy is custodian of the property.

#### Battery Imperial

The four 155 mm G.P.F. guns from Battery Point Loma were hauled around San Diego Bay to form Battery Imperial in January of 1942. These were replaced by Battery Grant in November of 1943.

#### Battery Grant

Constructed between 1942 and 1943, Battery Grant was numbered #239 by the Coast Artillery. It consisted of two six inch guns in an open pit. It was atop a hill west of the highway.

#### Battery Cortez

In August of 1943, Battery Cortez was constructed on the Silver Strand. It was an AMTB (anti-aircraft) battery with two fixed 90 mm guns in concrete houses, two mobile 90 mm guns, two 37 mm guns with two .50 caliber machine guns mounted on each 37 mm carriage. These were anti-aircraft systems.

#### Battery Gatchell

Named in honor of Brigadier General George Washington Gatchell, who was commanding officer at Fort Rosecrans from 1908 to 1910, Battery Gatchell was neither completed nor dedicated. Identified in the U.S. National Archives as #134, Battery Gatchell was designed to house two 16 inch guns that would have matched Battery Ashburn at Fort Rosecrans. The work on this emplacement were cancelled in February of 1944 when the war no longer threatened American soil. It was about 1200 feet north of Grant on a hill about 30 feet high and 600 feet long.

FORT ROSECRANS, U.S. ARMY COAST ARTILLERY CORPS,  
BATTERIES FROM 1902 TO 1943

Editor's Introduction

The late Col. George Ruhlen, U.S. Army (ret.) served as Commanding Officer of the San Diego Artillery District, Fort Rosecrans just prior to World War II. This article was supplemented with information from the Naval Electronic Laboratory Master Shore Station Development Plan and various materials from Record Groups 165 and 407 in the United States National Archives.

Fort Rosecrans, California

Data from Fort Record Book. Extracted by Col. George Ruhlen, U.S. Army, (ret.).

Batteries White and Whistler.

These each had four 12 inch mortars. Battery White is located in the ravine west of the post. They were both built between 1915 and 1916. The mortars were not installed until 1920. One was named to honor Colonel John Vassar White, Coast Artillery Corps. Battery Whistler is on top of a ridge near the upper gate. It was named to honor Colonel John Garland Nelson Whistler, Coast Artillery Corps. The mortars were scrapped in 1942, but the pits remained in use as storage areas.

Battery Ashburn. Two 16 inch guns in concrete casemates (enclosed bunkers below the ground surface) are on top of the ridge north of the 1853 lighthouse. Battery Ashburn was named after Major General Thomas Quinn Ashburn, U.S. Army, who had been an artillery officer. Installed in 1943, these guns were proof-fired in July of 1944. They were the largest guns ever installed in San Diego. After the Korean War, these guns were cut up for scrap and the bunkers used for storage.

Battery Strong. Two 8 inch guns

with barbette (elevated, rotating) carriages were on the west ridge, north of the Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery. They were named for Major General Frederick Smith Strong, U.S. Army, a former artillery officer who had organized the 40th Division at Camp Kearny, California in 1917 and commanded it in France in World War I. The emplacement at Battery Strong was completed in 1937, and the guns were installed in April of 1941. The guns were open mounts without shields.

Battery Humphreys. Two 6 inch guns with barbette carriages were installed on the east side of the Peninsula in July of 1943 to replace Battery Point Loma. It was named for Colonel Charles Humphreys, Coast Artillery Corps, among the first commanding officers of Fort Rosecrans.

Battery McGrath. Originally installed were two 5 inch guns on Balanced Pillar Mounts (rotating and elevating from a pivot on a pillar for swift aim) in a concrete casemated battery. It was constructed in 1900 to the north and contemporary with Battery Wilkeson. Battery McGrath was named after Major Hugh Jocelyn McGrath, Major Engineer Volunteers (Captain 4th Cavalry), who received the Medal of Honor for action at Noveleta, Philippine Islands on October 8, 1898, but died on November 7, 1898. The guns were removed on September 23, 1917 to be used in France in World War I and replaced by two 3 inch guns on barbette mounts shipped from Battery Meed across San Diego Bay from Fort Pio Pico (North Island) and installed on February 28, 1919.

Battery Fetterman. Two 3 inch guns on Balanced Pillar Mounts, Model 1898, were installed in a concrete casemate emplacement located just

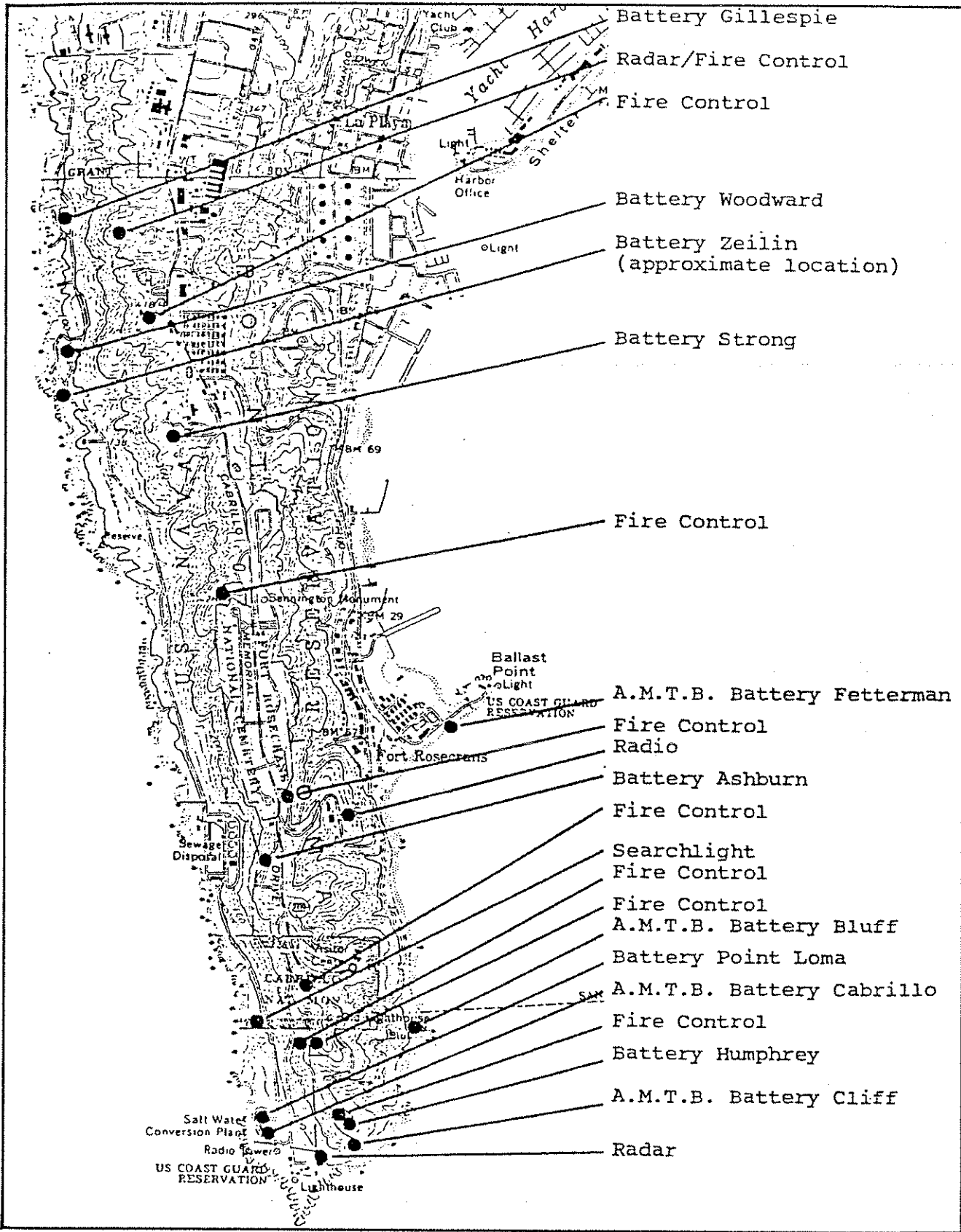


Figure 1. Artillery batteries and fire control structures constructed at Fort Rosecrans 1930-1945.

east of Battery Wilkeson. This battery was named for Brevet Lieutenant Colonel William Judd Fetterman, Captain of the 27th Infantry, who was killed December 21, 1866, in action with Sioux Indians near Fort Phil Kearny, Dakota (Wyoming). This battery was declared obsolete in 1942, the guns removed, and the emplacement demolished. Pieces of Battery Fetterman form the sea wall along the south side of Ballast Point.

Battery Wilkeson. Battery Wilkeson was named for Brevet Lieutenant Colonel and 1st Lieutenant Bayard Wilkeson, 4th Artillery, who was killed July 1, 1863 at the Battle of Gettysburg. The four gun emplacements of Battery Wilkeson were constructed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers between 1898 and June of 1899. Lt. Patterson brought the first garrison of Battery B, 3rd Artillery, from the San Diego Barracks in downtown San Diego February 2, 1898 to stay in the old 1873 barracks at Ballast Point/Point Loma. Battery Wilkeson was turned over to Lt. Patterson on February 13, 1900. In 1902, four 10 inch guns were installed on disappearing carriages. Upon firing, the gun's recoil swung them down behind the battery.

In 1915, an administrative change divided the command of this battery and emplacements Nos. 1 and 2 retained the name Wilkeson, but Nos. 2 and 3 were named Battery Calef. This honor was in given to Colonel John Haskell Calef, 3rd Artillery, who died January 4, 1912. During World War II, these guns were deemed vulnerable to aerial bombing and in 1942 the artillery was scrapped.

Battery Zeilin. Two 7 inch U.S. Navy guns were installed on the west side of Point Loma. This battery was installed in the late 1930s and was replaced in 1943 by Battery Woodward.

Battery Gillespie. Three 5 inch U.S. Navy guns were installed on the west side of Point Loma in June of

1942. The actual emplacement had been installed in the late 1930s. The guns had been used for training by the United States Marine Corps, but were transferred to the Coast Artillery during World War II. It was replaced in 1943 by Battery Woodward.

Battery Woodward. Two 6 inch guns were installed in November of 1943 on the west side of Point Loma. These replaced Batteries Zeilin and Gillespie.

Battery Point Loma. Two batteries of four 155 mm G.P.F. guns were located on Point Loma on the west side of Fort Rosecrans. They had been under construction in the 1930s, but were not activated until 1941. One was placed on the southwest and the other on the northwest part of the reservation. These were replaced by Battery Humphreys in 1943. The guns were then transferred to Coronado Heights, Fort Emory, which had been established on December 14, 1942.

AMT Batteries. Three AMT batteries were installed with 90 mm guns. Battery Fetterman was installed near the tip of Ballast Point (It is not to be confused with the two 3 inch guns installed in 1900 east of Battery Wilkeson.) Battery Cabrillo was installed in front of Battery Point Loma. The third battery location was not identified. Each battery contained two 90 mm guns in emplacements, two mobile 90 mm guns, and two 37 mm guns with two .50 caliber machine guns.

37 mm position. Three positions with 37 mm guns were installed on Point Loma. On the east side were "Channel" and "Bluff". Just above the Point Loma Lighthouse was "Cliff".

All the batteries in the San Diego Artillery District in World War II were manned by the 19th Coast Artillery.