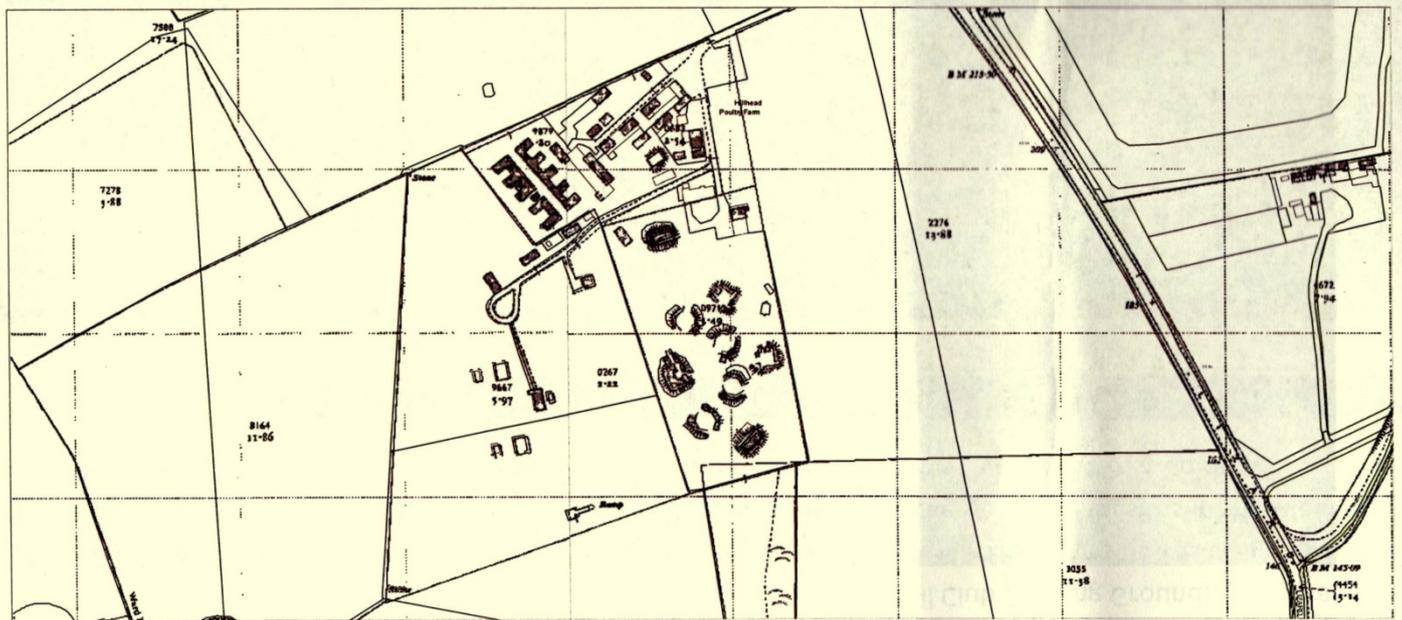




BOLDON CAMP HERITAGE GROUP

Lizard Lane Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery “Tyne S” (HER1795) English Heritage “Scheduled Monument 1419998”



Outline plan of the Lizard Lane Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery Site circa 1954

Summary

The remains of Lizard Lane Heavy Anti-Aircraft Gun Battery “Tyne S” (HER1795) occupies a level site within view of the North Sea. The battery site has been designated as a scheduled monument by English Heritage.

The Legal Status

This monument is scheduled under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 as recognised by the Secretary of State to be of national importance.

What is covered by the status as a Scheduled Monument

The Lizard Lane Heavy Anti-Aircraft Gun Battery “Tyne S” (HER1795) scheduled monument has been designated a reference number :- 1419998 which covers the buried, earthwork and standing remains of a multi-phase Second World War heavy anti-aircraft gun battery and radar site, as well as a Cold War heavy anti-aircraft gun and radar site.

Reasons for Designation

This multi-phase Second World War heavy anti-aircraft gun battery and radar site, and Cold War heavy anti-aircraft gun site and radar site is classified as a rarity by English Heritage as it is one of only a handful of complete or near complete Second World War gun batteries that were adapted for continued service during the Cold War; and classed as having generally good survival of all component parts in a variety of forms which include buried features, associated earthworks and standing remains, the latter retaining evidence of their original fittings. The survival of the radar ramp is particularly unusual. The remains enhance the

detailed understanding of the construction, function and use of this type of military site in Britain as well as serving as a tangible symbol of the threat of mutually assured nuclear destruction. It is of historic interest as it is an important and evocative witness to national defense policy both during the Second World War and the Cold War. The site is a multi-phase but legible ensemble, in which the functioning of the various parts is strongly sensed and where the military experience is readily captured. It is a multi-phase gun site that is strongly representative of those constructed during the Second World War, and whose continued use during the Cold War illustrates the physical manifestation of the global division between capitalism and communism that shaped the history of the late 20th century.

History

Once the likelihood of invasion by sea or air had passed by the end of 1940, aerial bombardment posed the greatest threat to the United Kingdom during the Second World War. To combat this threat, major installations and ports were provided with heavy anti-aircraft (HAA) gun sites and almost 1000 were constructed nationally. The standard weapons deployed at these sites were 4.5 and 3.7-inch calibre heavy anti-aircraft guns, manned by almost 275,000 men, supplemented by women soldiers from the Auxiliary Territorial Service from 1941 onwards. As well as gun emplacements, which were usually in groups of either two, four or eight, heavy anti-aircraft gun sites had other related structures such as a command post, sometimes radar platforms, magazines for storing reserve ammunition, gun stores and power generation huts. Sites were also provided with structures for their close defence, with pillboxes and trench works being common. Due to their inflexibility, the majority of Second World War HAA sites were abandoned during the course of the war, with a few retained as part of the Nucleus Force and adapted for Cold War use.

Early in the Second World War, and in common with a similar HAA battery at Gloucester Lodge, Northumberland, there may have been a mobile anti-aircraft battery at Lizard Farm, accompanied by associated defenses such as shelter trenches. However, by the end of 1941 a heavy anti-aircraft gun site equipped with four 4.5-inch calibre guns set in earthwork emplacements and focused on a central command post had been established; the battery was known as Tyne South and was probably manned by the Territorial Army. The installation of a Gun Laying (GL) Mark II radar soon followed. The battery underwent wartime adaptation (probably in 1943) when two square emplacements housing semi-automatic 3.7 inch Mk.IIC guns were added giving an increased rate of fire and magazines were constructed. The battery remained in use throughout the Second World War and formed a key part of the defence of Newcastle and Tyneside.

After the Second World War, Lizard Farm was selected for retention as part of the Cold War Nucleus Force and was run by the Territorial Army. The site was modified to serve its Cold War use and new features constructed included a new command post, paired mobile radar positions, tractor sheds and a generator house. It is uncertain whether the existing gun emplacements were modified at this point to house the newly developed automatic firing guns to serve its Cold War purpose. The command headquarters for this site in 1952 was Melton Park in Gosforth. The site was abandoned in about 1954.

Details

Command Posts: the operational core of the site was the command post. The Second World War command post is situated near the center of the site (NZ40064 63676) and is visible as a roughly square earthwork about 25m across, which contains a single storey, semi-sunken structure with a flat reinforced concrete roof; it has been infilled and encased in soil, though the outline of the walls are visible; a semi-circular projection to the center of the east wall is interpreted as a platform to house a spotting telescope. The building has a small rectangular shelter attached to the rear.

The Cold War command post is situated approximately 85m to the west of the earlier control room. This is a single-storey, rectangular reinforced concrete structure with a flat roof measuring about 12m by 8m; to the rear there is a small rectangular double chambered structure. The south end contains an original entrance (partially blocked) reached by a set of concrete steps; the iron door frame remains but the door is missing. The doorway is flanked by a pair of small metal grilles and there is a single window opening in the east side, fitted with a six-pane crittal window and retaining its original iron shutters. There is a later inserted entrance to the north end accessed by a shallow concrete ramp. Cable ducting emerges from the north and south sides of the structure and runs into the ground. The ceiling of the interior retains metal

fixings for a form of ceiling lining, now removed. A hollow-walled rectangular feature lies immediately to the east and is considered to be the possible housing for an oil tank, and an adjacent rectangular hard standing is interpreted as a platform for a generator.

Gun Emplacements: forming a shallow arc around the eastern side of the Second World War command post are four gun emplacements. Each emplacement is visible as a roughly circular earthwork about 20m across and up to 2m high, which contains an infilled, hexagonal gun emplacement for a 4.5 inch gun; the tops of the emplacement walls are visible, as are the projecting rectangular concrete metadyne generators for each emplacement. Situated immediately to the rear of the second and third gun emplacements is a substantial rectangular earthwork platform standing to a maximum height of 1m. This earthwork feature contains a square gun emplacement added to the site in around 1943 for a 3.7 inch MK. IIC gun. The remains of a second gun emplacement of identical form is visible on aerial photographs to the rear of the first and second gun emplacement and its foundations are considered to survive below ground level as buried features. The remains of concrete loop roads linking the command post and the gun emplacements are partially visible and partially survive below ground level as buried features. Low concrete features immediately to the north east of the emplacements are the remains of the site sewerage system.

Magazines: set to the north and south of the gun emplacements there is a magazine used to store reserve ammunition. These conform to a type of magazine known as the '1938 pattern' and comprise a rectangular single storey concrete building about 16m by 8m divided into five bays forming storage bins, each with a roof vent. The line of bins is lit by two windows and entry is through double doors at each end and in the centre bay. The whole structure is protected by a 10ft (3.05m) blast wall. The remains of iron hinges, door fittings, electric light switches and light fittings are retained.

Gun Store: a rectangular, flat-roofed building in which instruments and spare parts were housed is situated at the north east corner of the site. The north facing long wall has a pair of critical windows, which retain their metal shutters, flanked by narrower similar windows with shutters removed and now blocked. The west side facing onto the road has a double entrance with replaced double doors. The small projection to the north east corner formed a paint store. Internally, the angle-irons for its former steel tables are visible within the concrete floor.

Standby Power House: this is situated towards the northern side of the site. It is visible as a flat-roofed rectangular concrete building with multiple rectangular ventilators set high in the walls and retaining metal hooks around the tops of all walls interpreted as camouflage fixings. There is an entrance in the west side fitted with replacement timber doors and there are three blocked openings low down in the in the north side for three generators, each with a small, square blocked opening above. Internally, the original electrical supply remains complete with switches and light fittings and there are original metal frames to the upper ventilation holes, many with sliding metal shutters in place.

Radar Site: to the south and west of the Cold War control room is the radar site. A Second World War period GL Mk.II radar receiver plinth comprising a low brick-built square platform about 6m across, with a concrete surface, upon which a mobile radar caravan was tethered down. The plinth is accessed by a brick-built ramp with a concrete surface at the eastern side about 8m in length. To the north west of this radar plinth and immediately to the rear of the Cold War command post there are a pair of identical concrete Cold War period structures; the un-roofed and hollow-walled emplacements are radar caravan sheds with a personal entrance and a larger vehicular entrance; the interior retains cable slots. The adjacent buildings are thought to be tractor sheds to house the vehicles that pulled the mobile radar caravan into position.

Extent of monument: the full extent of the Second World War and Cold War Heavy Anti-Aircraft batteries, including the buried concrete structures and earthwork remains. There are two separate areas of protection: the first and largest is defined to enclose most of the surviving features. The remains of the former domestic camp lie outside of the monument to the north and are considered too fragmentary to be included. The second area of protection lies immediately to the north east of the first and encloses the former gun store.

Exclusions: the modern farm building constructed against the more southerly magazine and the wooden mangers affixed to the Powerhouse are excluded from the scheduling.