

Fort Nelson

Commenced	1861	Armament	
Completed	1870	1876	Approved 34 x 7-inch RBL; 2 x 64 pr. RML; 6 x rifled Howitzers; 16 x SB flank guns
Cost	£ 78,649	1893	Mounted 10 x 7-inch RBL; 6 x 64 pr. RML; 4 x 40 pr. RBL.
Map Reference	SU 607072		Required to complete 2 x 40 pr. RBL; 8 x 32 pr. SBBL.
Position	Portsdown Hill Northern Approaches	1898	to be added 10 x MG
Type	Land Front / Polygonal		Disarmed 1907
Ditch	Dry	Caponiers	1 full 2 demi
Guns	30	Counterscarp galleries	None
Barrack Accom.	172	Haxo casemates	4 (2 x double)
Present use	Royal Armouries Museum of Artillery / Hampshire C. C. Army barracks and training /Ammunition depot World War 2	Moncrieff Pits	3
History	Bought by H.C.C. 1978		
Disposal Condition	Actively conserved and restored		
Access	All year		
Sources	Solent Papers No 3 Garry Mitchell		

History and Description

Fort Nelson is 2000 yards east of Fort Wallington and is a six sided fort, built of brick, chalk and earth, protected by a deep dry ditch, revetted on the scarp but unrevetted on the counterscarp. This ditch is protected by a full fish tail shaped caponier in the salient of the main north rampart and two smaller demi caponiers at the shoulders. The main rampart has positions for 64 pr RMLs, 7-inch RBLs and 6.6-inch howitzers. Each flank also has a Haxo casemate for two 7-inch RBLs (the only one of the Portsdown forts to have this feature). The intermediate range defence of the fort is from three mortar batteries, one to the rear of each caponier, hidden within the rampart. Each contained three 13-inch mortars. The lower fighting levels consist of three separate tunnels running from the barrack block area through the chalk of the hill to the caponiers. The centre tunnel to the full caponier also passes through the main magazine forty feet beneath the parade ground. The centre of the gorge is closed with a barrack block and redan containing officers quarters. Access to the fort from the military road is on two levels each fitted with a Guthrie rolling bridge. Nelson was disarmed in 1907. It was occupied from 1905 to 1914 by 35 (Heavy) Battery Royal Garrison Artillery. From 1938 the fort was extensively altered to house an area magazine. Ten huge Anti-Aircraft shell storage magazines were constructed on the parade.

Hampshire County Council have completely restored the fort, with the exception of the two demi-caponiers and one mortar battery, and it is currently leased by the Royal Armouries as its Museum of Artillery. It is the home of the Palmerston Forts Society and the Society's uniformed section performs authentic gun drills on the fort's complement of Victorian armament.

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