

St Anthony Battery

Commenced	1895	Armament	
Completed	January 1897	1895	2 x 6inch B.L. Mk VI
Cost	£ 7,137	1903	Dismounted
Map Reference	SW848311	1904	2 x 6inch B.L. Mk VII
Position	St. Anthony Head: Roseland Peninsula	WWI	rearmed with 2 x 6inch B.L.
Type	Coast Defence	1924	Disarmed
Ditch	dry	1939	2 x 6inch B.L. Mk VII MkII mountings
Guns	2	1940	2 x 3pdr nearby below the battery
Barrack Accom.	yes	1941	2 x 3pdrs removed
Present use	National Trust property	1952	Disarmed
History	Used until 1952 as coast defence		
Disposal	1959 National Trust		
Condition	Good but overgrown in places		
Access	Open site St Anthony Battery - National Trust booklet. The Later Defences of Falmouth by Jeff Dorman.		
Sources	N.A. Armament returns, various reports in WO33		

History and Description

It was first suggested that a battery of two 10inch RML guns be fitted on St. Anthony Head in 1882 when Lord Morley reported on 'The Defence of the Principal Commercial Ports of Great Britain and Ireland' but this work was not carried out. The land was purchased in January 1895 and the battery was constructed to mount two 6-inch B.L. MkVII guns on 'slow' barbette mountings. The work was complete by January 1897. The battery consisted on two sea facing gun emplacements with the usual magazines for shells and cartridges between and beneath the gun emplacements, with shell and cartridge lifts emerging on the gun aprons. As the battery was isolated it required a defensible dry ditch revetted and protected by a loopholed wall to the seaward forming a sort of caponier. An unclimbable fence surrounded the battery. A military road was constructed to access the battery on the landward side with and a small stone jetty to the seaward. The battery was in sight of the other batteries at Pendennis and St Mawes with which it could communicate using semaphore. The battery was manned by 105 Company RGA.

In 1903 the MK VI 6-inch guns were stood down. The battery was rearmed with Mk VII guns by September 1904 and it served as a Port War Signal Station. In 1905 the Committee on the Armament of Home Ports decided that the searchlight below the battery should be converted into fighting lights. The battery was fully manned during World War One by the Cornwall RGA, the guns being withdrawn in 1924. The battery remained in care and maintenance until World War Two.

On 1st November 1939 two 6-inch B.L. MkVII guns were emplaced on MkII mountings. Overhead covers were fitted on both emplacements as a defence against strafing. A large hutted camp was built to the north of the battery. The quarters to the rear were re-appropriated as Officers' accommodation. A Battery Command Post was added to the rear of the guns. Two 3pdr guns were fitted nearby at War Grid 273548 on 26th August 1940. The battery cooperated with Half Moon Battery at Pendennis in an examination role. The old Port War Signal Station to the south east of the battery was brought back in to use. In 1941 it was proposed to re-arm the battery with 6inch Mk24 guns on long range mountings but Roseland Battery was to be built at Zone Point instead, although this was not completed. The guns remained at St. Anthony until December 1952, the year in which Coast Defence was disbanded.

The National Trust acquired the site in 1959 as part of its coastal acquisitions policy to enable public access, and it is now accessible to the public. The hutted camp has been demolished and the Officers' quarters converted to holiday cottages. The Armament Workshop has also been converted. The overhead cover for the guns has been removed. The shell lifts are still in place and in good order.

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