

Fort Moultrie, Harbor Defenses of Charleston, SC **October 2009**

On 2-4 October 2009, The National Park Service hosted a 200th Anniversary of Fort Moultrie. The Army Ground Forces Association (AGFA) provided direct support to the NPS by interpreting a 3-inch gun battery, medical aid station and the Harbor Entrance Control Post/Harbor Defense Command Post (HECP/HDCP). Many other groups of local historians, reenactors and interpreters also supported the event and provided a link to military time periods at Ft Moultrie from the 1700's through the 1940's.

The members of AGFA participating were: Andy Grant, Doug Houck, Anne Lutkenhouse, Tom Minton, Gary Weaver, Shawn Welch, Eric Meiselman, Kieren Fletcher and Peter Morrill. Robert Score joined us as a guest. His Grandfather served in the 263rd Coast Artillery Regiment at Ft. Sumter and Ft. Moultrie during WWII.

The photo below shows the participating AGFA members on the signal platform of the restored Harbor Entrance Control Post/Harbor Defense Command Post (HECP/HDCP) as it was configured in 1944.



There were two major sites for interpretation for AGFA, the combined Harbor Entrance Control Post/Harbor Defense Command Post (HECP/HDCP) and the 3-inch gun of Battery McCorkle. Below is the three-story structure of the HECP/HDCP. One story is underground. The structure is painted in a 1944 camouflage scheme. Notice the Navy Signal Light on the signal deck of the HECP portion of the structure.



Below is another picture of the HECP/HDCP at dawn. Notice the full lighting and the entrance to the lower level on the right



SSG Weaver descends the stairs from the upper observation station of the HECP/HDCP.



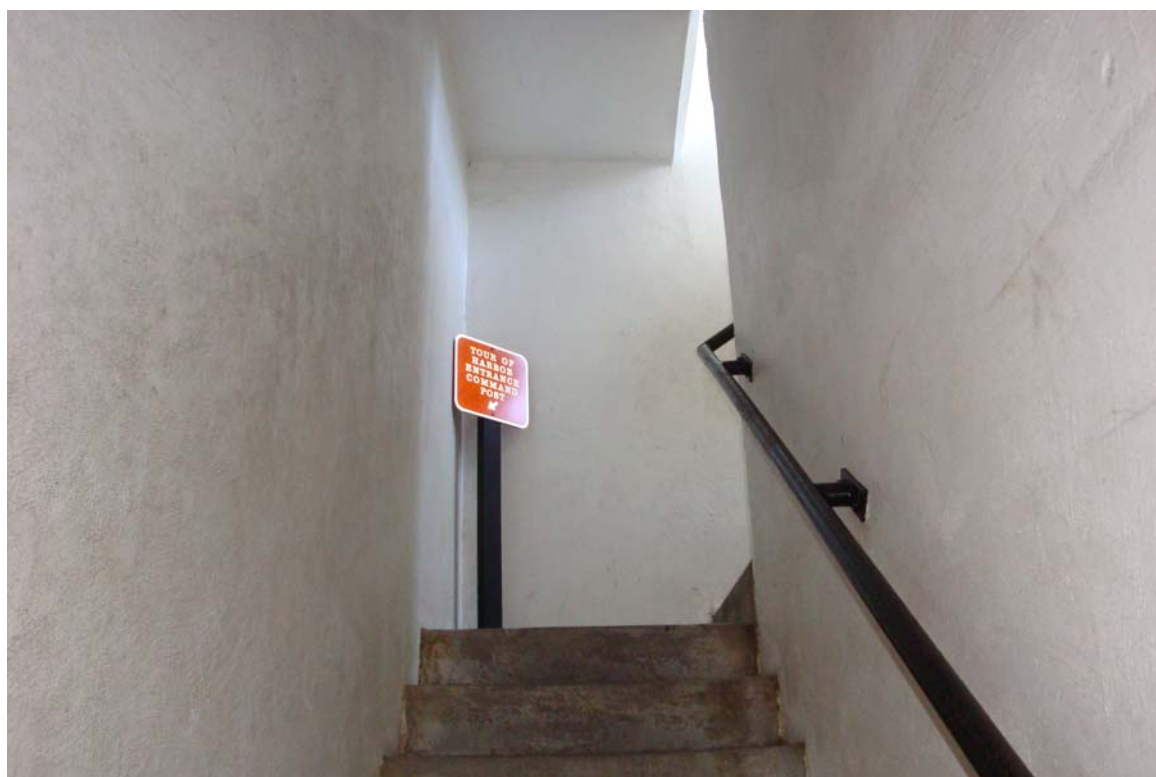
The photo below shows SSG Weaver standing at the entrance to the second level to the HECP/HDCP. SSG Houck stands in the front of the photo at the entrance to the lower level of the HECP/HDCP.



The entrance to the lower level of the HECP/HDCP is a left turn staircase. The door into the HECP/HDCP lower level is shown in the photograph on bottom of page 2 on the right side of the photo. The photo below shows SSG Houck descending the first flight of the staircase.



The photo below shows the landing and the second flight of stairs into the lower level of the HECP/HDCP.



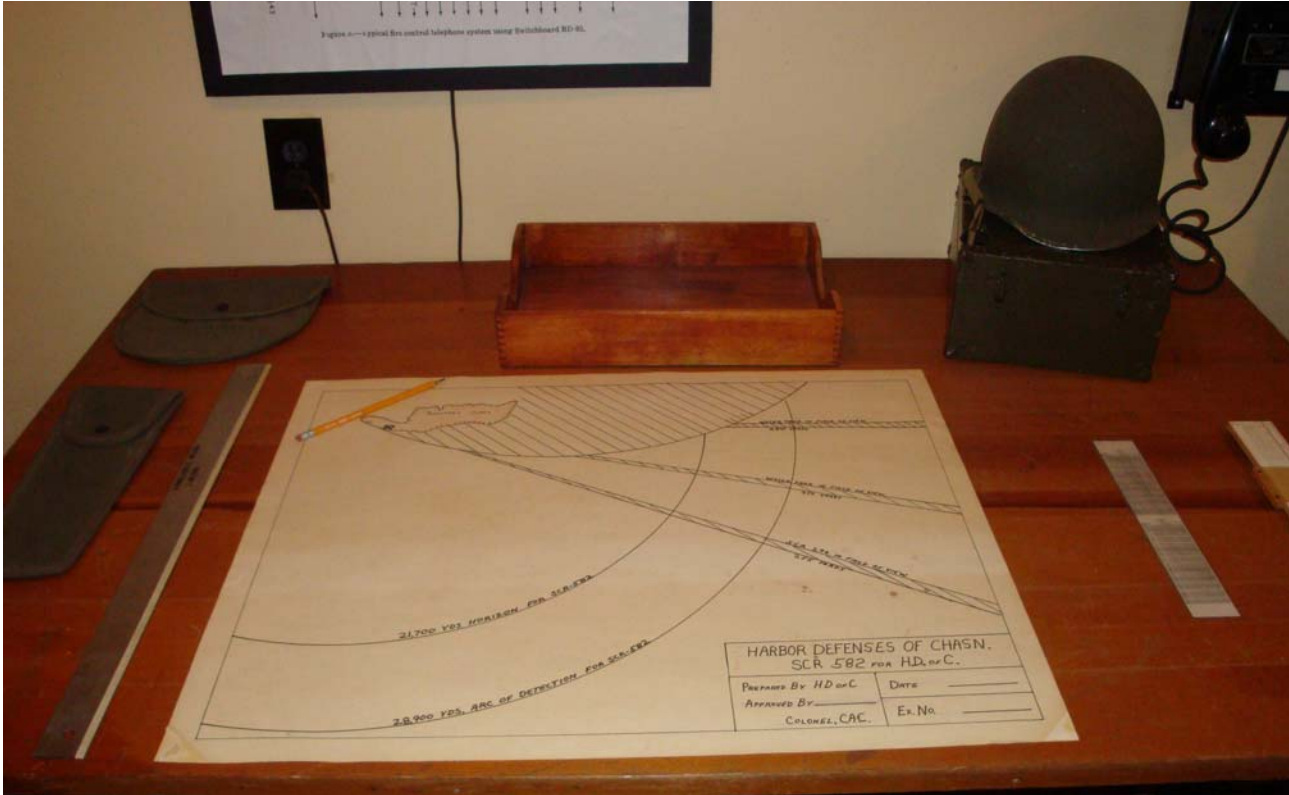
In the photo below, SSG Houck opens the door to the lower level of the HECP/HDCP. The ventilation system and chemical warfare overpressure system is shown clearly.



The Harbor Entrance Control Post was a Navy-lead operation. As such, Lieutenant Commander (LtCdr) Grant sits at the Navy Watch desk inside the restored HECP. This is the lower level, which is underground inside the old brick fort. This office is the first door on the left in the photo on page 5.



Within the office area with LtCdr Grant were several excellent displays to include the one below with authentic and vintage coast artillery slide rules and a map of the radar search area. A EE-91 phone is to the right on the wall.



Another excellent display was this drafting table with T-Square, binoculars and the ubiquitous Vargas Pin-Up girls. Notice in all the displays an M1 Helmet is at the ready for the troops.



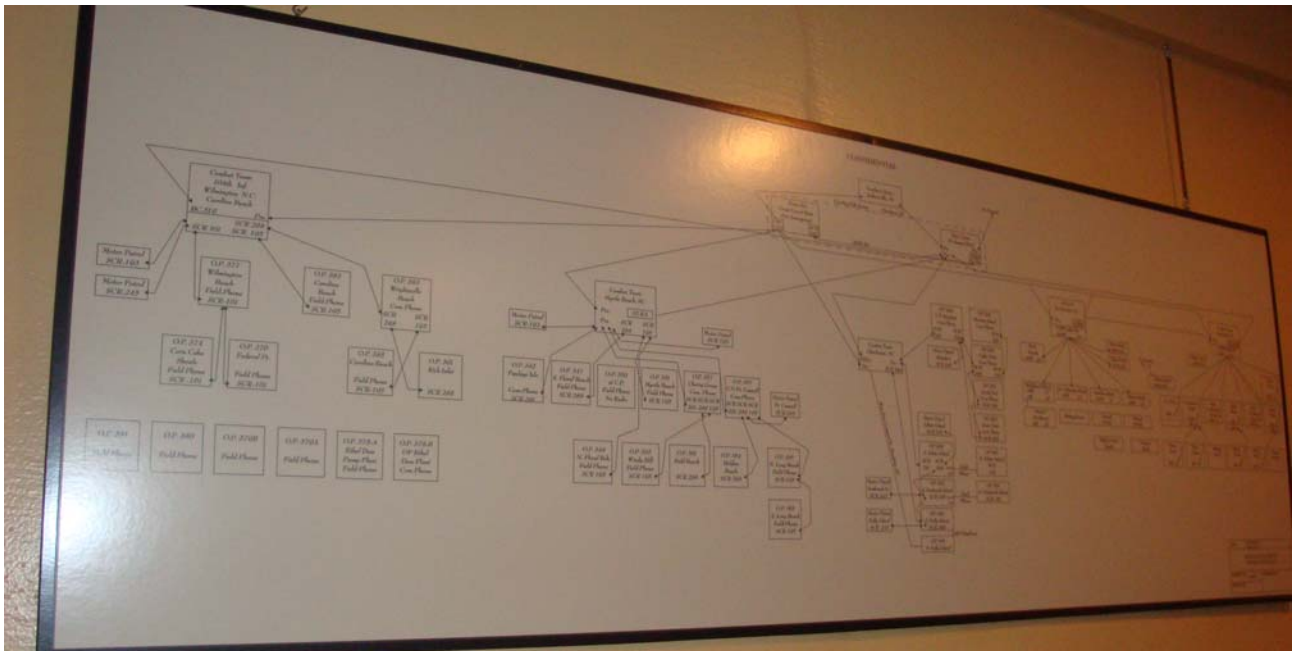
The photo below shows a map of the entire defensive area of Charleston Harbor. This map is in the office area where LtCdr Grant was sitting.



Within the HECP/HDCP is a full communications suite to include radio control room. Below shows the radio suite and two vintage typewriters.



The communications room also has a wiring diagram of the radio communications net.



A bookshelf and Special Orders desk is below the radio net diagram.



To the left of the Special Orders desk is a vintage safe where sensitive classified orders and plans were maintained.



Within the Navy Watch office is a desk with various period documents.



The book open on the watch officer's desk is a ship recognition manual.



There were also additional filing cabinets, and two very unique combination lock filing cabinets. This was a high security office and the number of safes was noticeable.



Across from the desk is the ubiquitous “coffee station” with vintage percolator.



The HECP/HDCP had its own power source. Below is the single generator within the power room. This is the original generator from 1943. The Plexiglas panel in the doorframe causes the haze in the picture.



The HECP also had a coal-fired heater that provided steam for the radiators in the various offices and rooms. The haze in the picture is from the camera flash being captured by the Plexiglas door panel.



The back entrance to the HECF/HDCP is outside the old masonry fort and is pictured below. AGFA cooked several meals on a table outside this entrance.



The photo below shows the HECP/HDCP (top two levels) as they would be seen from the sea. Notice the camouflage scheme and the tall ventilation shafts for the underground portion of the HECP/HDCP. The structure was built into the old masonry fort with construction beginning in the fall of 1943 and the structure completely operational in the hands of Coast Artillery troops and Navy personnel by March 1944. To the left of the HECP/HDCP a partially restored 4.7-inch Armstrong gun may be seen. This weapon was restored in the 1960's. The original gun was removed before WWI.



The 4.7-inch gun is shown clearer in the photo below taken from the signal platform of the HECP/HDCP. This is gun SN 12124, manufactured by W.G. Armstrong, Whitworth and Company in 1898. Several of these guns were purchased by the US Army for installation at various seacoast fortifications through out the USA.



Below PVT Meiselman stands by at the 3-inch gun of Battery McCorkle.



The gun and exhibits had steady traffic throughout the day. CPL Minton and PVT Meiselman provide information to the public



On the main observation level of the HECP, SSG Weaver provided interpretation and instruction on the M1910A1 azimuth instrument. This station provided excellent observation of the harbor entrance and an outstanding view of Fort Sumter – the location of the first shots of the Civil War.



The photo below shows the entrance to the main observation level of the HECP. 1LT Grant, SSG Houck and SSG Weaver are observing activity on Ft. Sumter using the M1910A1 Azimuth Instrument as a large container ship passes between Ft. Moultrie and Ft Sumter.



Below is the view of Ft. Sumter through the M1910A1 Azimuth Instrument.



At the other end of the main observation level, LtCdr Grant spent some time explaining the operation of the HECP. With him is PVT Morrill in a WWI vintage uniform.



In one of the main laterals of the old masonry fort, 2LT Lutkenhouse and PVT Fletcher provided interpretation of medical care in a field environment for the Coast Artillery troops.



The main table display showed bandages of many types as well as other critical medical materials.



In the photo below 2LT Lutkenhouse provides interpretation to the public as SSG Houck looks on to the left.



One of the unique opportunities for AGFA members was the ability to participate in blank firing demonstrations of various period weapons. Weapons such as Brown Bess Muskets, 3-band Enfields, M1898 Krag, M1903 Springfields and M1 Garands were demonstrated. PVT Morrill, CPL Minton and PVT Meiselman participated in these demonstrations along with our guest Bob Score.



Below is another photo of the blank firing demonstration.



Below, CPL Minton and PVT Meiselman head towards the entrance tunnel to old Ft. Moultrie.



In the photo below, LtCdr Grant steps out on the parade field on his way to a restored WWII jeep.



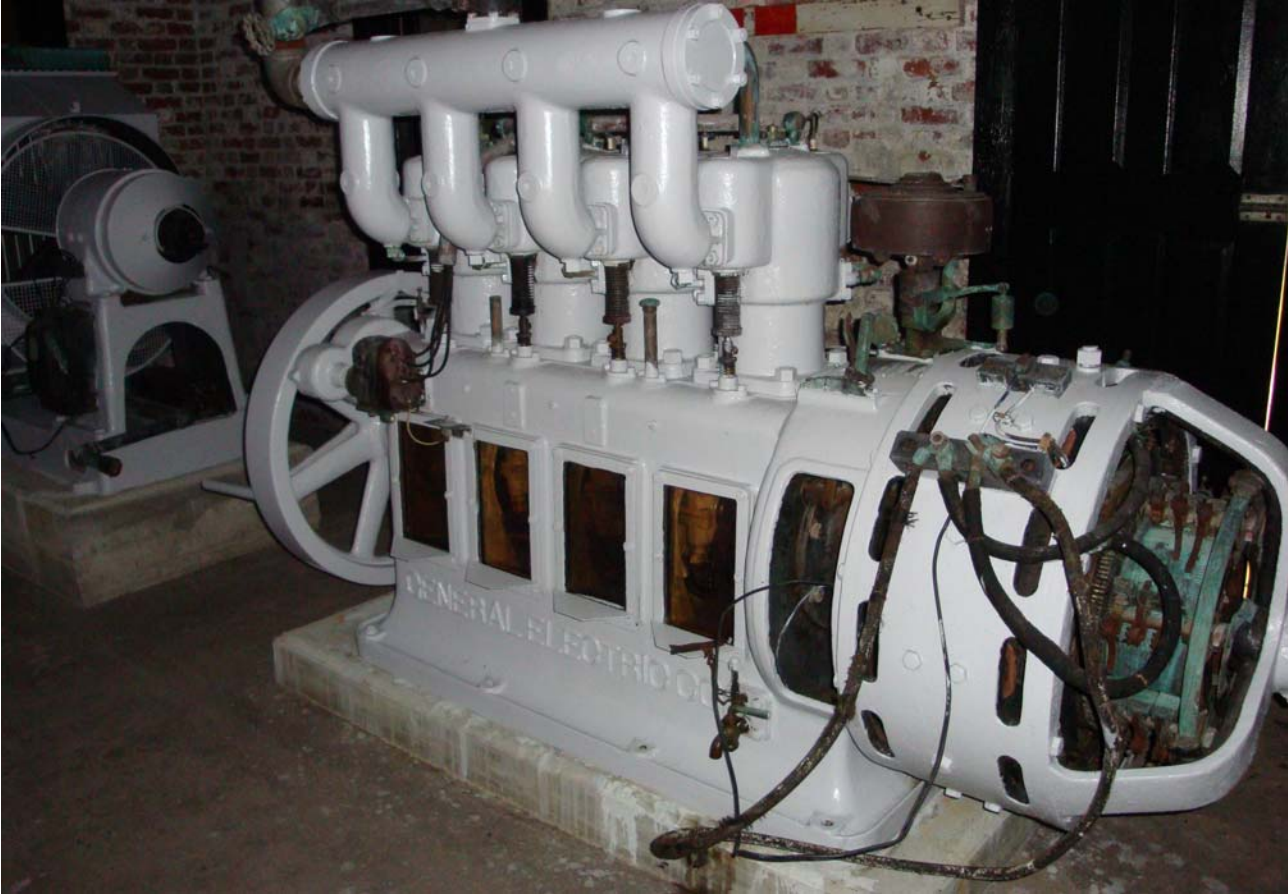
Below, LtCdr Grant and 2LT Lutkenhouse take off on their jeep journey outside of Old Fort Moultrie.



Just to the rear of Battery Jasper (4x10-inch Disappearing Guns) is a power generation station with a restored generator, radiator and power panel.



A close-up of the 25kw generator and its radiator is below. Glass panels allow viewing of the crank shaft.



The ammunition handling equipment of Battery Jasper is almost totally intact. The shell hoist is operational, and the overhead ammunition handling system is fully in place and all track controls work.



On the left is the same ammunition hoist seen above, and the door to the right leads to the 10-inch shell magazine.



Below are four 10-inch armor piercing projectiles mentioned above. These shells weigh about 660 pounds and still retain their ballistic windscreens. These are very rare shells.



Another view of the four 10-inch armor piercing shells.



The entrance to the store room for Gun #1 of Battery Jasper indicates that telephones were once installed in the room.



In the room proper, the wood mounts for the phones are still present, and the size indicates these are likely either EE-71 or EE-31 telephones.



Part of the beauty of Sullivan's Island, where Ft. Moultrie is located is the adaptive re-use of many of the old military buildings. In the photo below, one of the officer's houses on "Officer's Row" is shown. These were sold as surplus in 1948 for \$8,000 each and are now very expensive family homes.



The Edgar Allen Poe Library is located in a 6-inch disappearing gun battery and is a county library. Learn more at <http://www.ccpl.org/content.asp?id=14637&catID=5374&action=detail&parentID>



Inside the library, Anne Lutkenhouse speaks with the Head Librarian of the Edgar Allen Poe Library. This part of the library is in the powder magazine.



Below Tom Minton, Gary Weaver and Kieren Fletcher are visiting the entranceway to the library.



Additional “high dollar” reuse is shown below. This is Ft. Moultrie’s former Bachelor’s Officer’s Quarters.



The real-estate sign below indicates available apartments of 900 to 3,900 square feet. Notice no price is stated on the sign.



This is the protected switchboard room for the fort's installation and appears to be a residential storage area.



The entranceway below is the rear of Gun #1 for Battery 520, a two-gun 12-inch long range gun battery.



This is the front of Gun #1 of Battery 520 showing how the owner who lives in this historic battery has converted the front gun position to an open picture window.



The photo below of Battery Reed in Puerto Rico in 1942 shows how Battery 520 would have looked in wartime. Battery Reed is very similar in construction to Battery 520.



The photo below is of Gun #2 of Battery 520. This homeowner took a very different approach to conversion of the battery to residential living.



And this is a close-up of the back entrance to Gun #1 of Battery 520.



The photo below shows Eric Meiselman helping to raise the American Flag at Fort Sumter on Sunday Morning. AGFA members participating in the flag raising were Anne Lutkenhouse, Gary Weaver, Eric Meiselman, Tom Minton and Kieren Fletcher. This was a huge honor for AGFA members and one that will not be forgotten.



Kieren Fletcher and Tom Minton also assist in raising the flag at Ft Sumter on Sunday morning.



At the end of the event day, we gathered in the main observation deck of the HECP/HDCP at Ft. Moultrie. Notice the original lighting still functions in the station.



As the discussion continues, all agree, this was a most enjoyable event and we look forward to the opportunity to conduct another event at Ft. Moultrie.



For more information, visit the Army Ground Forces Association website at <http://www.armygroundforces.org>