



# North Head Sanctuary Foundation Inc

## Custodians of North Head

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### Next Meeting

Will be on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at 2pm at Bandicoot Heaven - about ESBS. Everyone welcome.

### Education Room - Bandicoot Heaven

#### New volunteers needed

We are open on **Saturdays and Sundays between 10am and 4pm**. Please call in and have a chat.

We need to recruit new volunteers to help provide visitors with information about North Head and its bushland.

Anyone interested should contact Judy Lambert (email: [twsombat505@gmail.com](mailto:twsombat505@gmail.com) or phone 0427 217 580).

### North Head Echidna Survey

Judy Lambert

Many of you will be aware of our year-long citizen science survey of echidnas on North Head, photos for which were collected from 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023.

Thanks to everyone who submitted photos, we have 118 separate photos, several of them of the same animal on different occasions. We estimate that as many as 34 echidnas live in the area from Shelly Beach and Eastern Hill to Fairfax lookouts – up from 18 animals during our 2013-14 survey.

A more detailed report on the project and a new map of echidna sightings will be available in Bandicoot Heaven in the very near future.



Photo Peter Macinnis-22 11 15 parade ground

### Native Plant Nursery

The Nursery grows mainly Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub plants for planting by our volunteers into degraded areas of North Head.

You are welcome to join us. There is always planting, weeding (never ending), and maintenance to be done in one of our many areas.

One plant that we have grown at the Nursery is Christmas Bells (*Blandfordia*) and these have been planted around the pond are going well and are still mostly in flower. They like to be near water.

Please call in any Tuesday or Friday morning between 8am and noon, in really hot weather we may not work, or may leave early due to the heat. Email [northhead@fastmail.com.au](mailto:northhead@fastmail.com.au) if you would like to join us.

### North Fort Observation and Command Posts

Peter Lawrence

#### Background

In the mid-1930s defence concerns over maritime attacks on Sydney Harbour led to the construction of a counter-bombardment battery equipped with two 9.2 inch guns at North Head – known as North Fort. The battery consisted of two protected gun positions interlinked via a tunnel system, an integrated plotting room, a battery observation post and a close defence observation post. The battery was supported with air defence systems and integrated into the whole defence of the Sydney basin.

Over the last three years the two observation posts have been restored by Harbour Trust contractors and volunteers.

#### Battery Observation Post

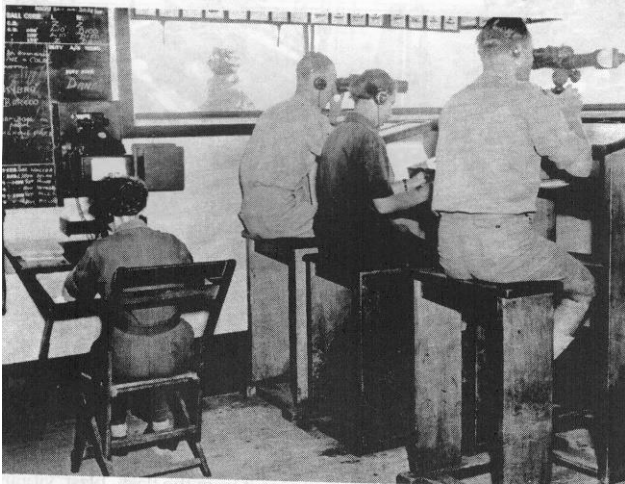


AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

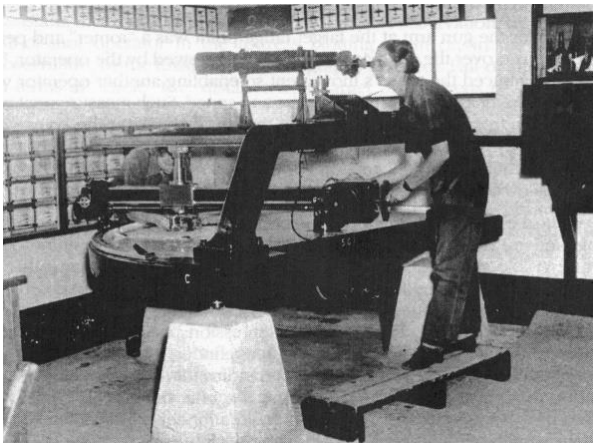
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The battery observation post was housed in a concrete blockhouse with a cantilevered flat roof giving an observation window opening which allowed an unobstructed 200-degree arc for the range-finding and observing instruments to surveil out-to-sea.

The battery observation post was equipped with optical range finders and could produce target bearing and range data (of enemy ships) for the battery plotting room. It also tracked targets to determine their course and speed data. During the engagement of a target by the guns, it was able to observe fall-of-shot and to order spotting corrections to the battery plotting room.



This photograph from the AWM shows the battery observation post in operation. The photograph below is of the optical range finder.



### Close Defence Observation Post

Like the battery observation post, this facility's role was to observe potential targets but it was smaller and closer to the guns. The post gave the searchlight commander any necessary instructions to ensure that at night targets were properly illuminated and fall-of-shot could be observed, passed fire orders to the guns and receive their reports and (early in the war) the Gun Position Officer, in counter-bombardment conditions, was positioned in the close defence battery observation post rather than the plotting rooms (which were 100 metres to the rear).

### Restoration

With restoration complete, Nursery Volunteers from the North Head Sanctuary Foundation have assisted by planting local native vegetation in the garden beds around the base of the two bunkers. The gardens can be seen in the original AWM photographs from 1940s (above). We are not sure why they had gardens – camouflage; safety by keeping the gunners from walking into the window

supports (see safety caps on the protruding bars); or simply to fill in time during quiet periods.



### Third Cemetery

Jenny Wilson

Evening News (Sydney, NSW:1869-1931), Thursday 8 March 1900.

"THE MODE OF BURIAL.

Asked as to the disposal of the bodies of the patients who died of the plague, Mr. Simms stated that all interments were at the new quarantine cemetery, near the North Head. The bodies were all buried at a depth of about eight feet, in a sandy soil, and covered round with lime. Dudley was interred in grave No. 48, Makins in No. 49, Madden in No. 50, and Walker, the last patient who died, in No. 51. Speaking further on the subject of the reports which reach the office of the Board of Health, the secretary said the information of alleged cases of plague reached the authorities sometimes as late as 11 at night. One case proved to be simply an instance of tonsillitis, while on another occasion, remarked Mr. Simms, 'the alleged plague patient only had a sore leg'."

48 Thomas E DUDLEY 43 died 24.2.1900.

49 John MAKINS 36 died 27.2.1900.

50 John Daniel MADDEN 25 died 5.3.1900.

51 Robert WALKER 23 died 6.3.1900.

Evening News (Sydney, NSW:1869 - 1931), 9 April 1900.  
"OBJECTIONS TO QUARANTINE.

Several persons having shown an unwillingness to proceed to quarantine when instructed to do so by officers of the Board of Health, Mr. Clarence A. Simms, the secretary of the department, again points out that the board has no power to directly enforce their removal. It is only necessary in such a case, however, to apply to the Executive Council for a 'warrant, when the police will receive orders from the Governor to use force', if necessary, in taking such persons to quarantine, so that it is not only useless to raise objections; it may lead to much unpleasantness."