

ESSAY

NAME: David Latimore

CLASS: Open Foundation Australian History
7.00 P.M. - 9.00 P.M. Wednesday

TOPIC: THE HISTORY OF FORT SCRATCHLEY

When the first Europeans led by Lieutenant John Shortland arrived in the Newcastle area in 1797 they made their first camp site near Fresh Water Creek at the base of a small hill. This hill which was 35 metres above sea level and composed of sandstone and coal was later to be called Fort Scratchley. It has since played many important roles in the development of Newcastle. Once a signal station and major fort, it now plays an important role as a tourist destination, all of which have had an important bearing on Newcastle as a town and now as an important Australian city.

The Fort Scratchley site had its beginnings in 1804 when a coal fired beacon was established on top of the hill to guide mariners into the growing port of Newcastle. This established the sites first name as Beacon Hill. In 1822 a signal station became operational and Beacon Hill changed its name to Signal Hill. From then on there were various names used for the site at different times. They included Allans Hill (named after the harbour master), Fortification Hill and Flagstaff Hill. But it wasn't until 1887 when the name was used, by which we know it now, Fort Scratchley. Fort Scratchley was chosen to honour Colonel P.H. Scratchley, the man who was the chief architect of the new fort built at the top of Flagstaff Hill to protect the port and the large mining town of Newcastle.

Although classified as a fort in 1887 there had been a number of small muzzle loaded weapons placed on top of the hill as early as 1820. These small guns were mainly used for signal purposes and were removed when the area received its first large defence guns in 1878. Four 80 pdr guns were placed on the site to counter the rumoured Russian invasion. They were also the last guns to be emplaced on the site prior to the forts opening in 1882.

Construction of the fort started in 1881 based on plans that Mr G. Marrell and Colonel P.H. Scratchley had laid down a year earlier. The construction was made of sandstone and concrete and was built by Messrs James Russelle, Fletcher and Kenrick. When finished the design of the fort was kept to a low profile so that it would be difficult to distinguish from the natural hill. It was also built in a semi-circular fashion, 117 feet long and was protected at the rear by an enclosed trench and a 10 foot high wall. The new fort had four gun emplacements. Three were seawards and one facing into the harbour. The guns were all connected by passageways which later became tunnels. The guns used in the new fort complex were muzzle loaded 80 pdr guns, but they were replaced within the first year by new 9 inch muzzle loaded guns. During this time tenders were called for the construction of new barracks and officer's guard house. By 1885 construction was well under way and by 1886 they were opened on behalf of the regiment by Lieutenant L.H. Kyngdon and Warrant Officer Webstar.

During the late nineteenth century rapid advances in military technology were made, especially in the field of the breech loaded cannon which gave a faster rate of fire than muzzle loaded weapons. It was decided in 1889 to modernize Fort Scratchley with four breech loaded disappearing guns which were designed to give its crew maximum protection by being aimed and loaded below the parapet level. The gun would then rise, fire the round and then be forced back down by its recoil. This involved major modifications to the fort which included the construction of a new gun pit and alterations to the existing pits. To help with the alterations "a tramway was laid down for the purpose of facilitating the operation of placing the guns and shields into position"¹. Also constructed during this time was a 170 foot long loophole brick and concrete wall. The alterations were supervised by Major-General Edwards. By the end of 1892 work had been completed giving the fort a powerful armament of one 8 inch and three 6 inch breech loaded disappearing guns. The "Morning Herald and Miners Advocate" reported that "The port of Newcastle is well defended, and its right that it should be, as it is the chief coal station in the Southern Hemisphere"². The protection was to be further bolstered by the addition of three 1.3 inch Nordenfelt quick firing guns in 1898. These weapons stayed in operation until 1910 when the disappearing guns had become outdated. This was due to the increase in the speed of ships. With a disappearing gun only being able to fire one round a minute, they could no longer provide sufficient coast defence against fast moving targets. In 1911 the two disappearing guns were replaced by two 6 inch MK VII breech loaded guns, each capable of firing up to 8 rounds a minute. (These are the guns that are now on display at Fort Scratchley) Again the fort had to be modified to accommodate the new weapons. This meant the removal of a 6 inch and the 8 inch disappearing guns. Both emplacements were filled in. This left the fort with two 6 inch MK VII's and two 6 inch disappearing guns. These served through World War I without going into action. Though they were used many times in exercises and on the occasions when a ship would either leave or enter port without seeking permission of the authorities. This happened on two occasions early in World War I when the steamer "Hunter" failed to stop for a routine check on her way into the harbour. The second was when a German vessel tried to leave without permission in 1914. In these circumstances they were permitted to fire a warning shot across the bow of the boat. This was to make sure the captain of the ship heeded the harbour authorities wishes.

1. Morning Herald and Miners Advocate, 20 June 1889

2. Ibid 22 December 1896

During times when these measures were used, each of the ships stopped or turned back before the second shot was fired.

During the years after World War I, the fort stayed the same. It wasn't until 1938 that the last of the remaining 6 inch disappearing guns were taken out of reserve, dismounted and returned to Sydney. This left the 6 inch MK VII's the only large guns remaining at the fort. Consequently the fort was reclassified for the close defence of Newcastle. Other gun emplacements at Fort Wallace and at Shepherds Hill took the role as the cities long range coastal defence units.

With 1939 came the outbreak of World War II and after Japan entered the war in December 1941, Australia found itself closer to war than ever before. In 1942, Darwin was bombed and shipping off the N.S.W-Queensland coast was being harassed by Japanese submarines. These were the circumstances that led to the raid on Newcastle on 8th June 1942 by a Japanese I-21 submarine. The raid started at 2:17 a.m. when No 3 searchlight on Nobbys Head reported that there appeared to be flashes of gunfire coming from sea. (See appendix attached - Copy of "War Diary or Intelligence Summary" for Scratchley Battery N.F.D.C. from 1231 hrs, 25/5/42 to 0600 hrs, 3/7/42). Searchlights at Parnell Place, Nobbys Head, and below Fort Scratchley, were focused in the area where the gun flashes seemed to be coming from. They could see something at the end of their beam, but there wasn't enough light to illuminate it properly. This was reported to battery commander Captain Wally Watson and he put the battery on alarm. This meant that the two 6 inch guns at Fort Scratchley were loaded with live rounds and were ready to be fired. There were more incoming shells fired from sea. This gave the fort's two guns range and bearings from the submarine's gun flashes and they were ordered to fire. On doing so more shells were fired from sea. The captain corrected his range and bearings and fired his second salvo, which was assumed to land very close to the submarine. After this, the submarine stopped firing and went into deeper waters. On the morning after the raid, army personnel were sent out searching for the Japanese shells. It is estimated that the Japanese fired 24 rounds into Newcastle. Only three of these exploded. One near Newcastle Baths, one at Parnell Place and the other at Scott Street tram turntable. Overall the attack caused little damage to Newcastle. This was the first and only time in Australian history when heavy guns were fired at a hostile war vessel from a coastal fortification. But this was not the only time when Newcastle had to deal with a Japanese submarine threat. The other incident was on the 14th of June, 1942 at 6:35 p.m. came the report that a periscope was coming round the breakwater

and entering the port. The alarm was sounded. The guns on Nobby breakwater went into action firing four times through the night. There was no report of return fire. One can only speculate that it was a Japanese submarine, for there was no actual sighting except for the reported periscope. To this day the mystery remains.

Following the end of the war Fort Scratchley reverted to a peace-time basis and all non-permanent troops were demobilised. A small detachment of troops remained to perform maintenance on equipment. In 1952 National Service commenced and the 13th Medium Coastal continued until mid 1962 when the unit was demobilised marking the end of the two 6 inch MK VII's. They last fired in night practise in March 1962, but remained at the fort until 1965 when they were removed to Obelisk Hill and dedicated as a war memorial. It was reported that:

"Newcastle City Council will remove the two six inch monumental guns from the fort to a public area next to King Edward Park"¹.

Fort Scratchley continued to operate as a light anti aircraft battery and was armed with 40 mm Bofors guns. All other equipment was scrapped or returned to army stores. This unit continued until its light anti aircraft guns were transferred to Adamstown in 1972. For the next 5 years the fort deteriorated with vandals and pigeons taking their toll on the buildings and the underground complex. The fort continued to crumble until 1977 when after long negotiations Newcastle City Council, with a \$120,000 government grant restored it to its present condition which included the return of the forts two 6 inch MK VII guns. All restoration work was finished in 1978 with both the Newcastle Regional Maritime Museum and Military Museums making it their new home. This is the present situation of Fort Scratchley which now serves Newcastle as a tourist attraction.

Fort Scratchley has played many important roles in Newcastle history both in military and historical terms. From the day it was built it has provided not only protection, but employment for the local region. Now in a new era it plays another important role as a tourist attraction and museum. John Tucker best described the transformation. "Scratchley has changed its role from guardian of our city, to guardian of our history"².

1. Newcastle Sun 27th January 1965
2. Ibid 21st March 1979

The well-known Newcastle land mark is not only something
Novocastrians can be proud of but so too all
Australians.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. L Carey Fort Scratchley, Newcastle,
New South Wales, Newcastle 1986
2. Morning Herald and Miners Advocate,
20th June 1889
3. Morning Herald and Miners Advocate,
22nd December 1896
4. Newcastle Sun,
27th January 1965
5. Newcastle Sun,
21st March 1979
6. War Diary or Intelligence Summary
Fort Scratchley N.F.D.C. from 1231 hrs,
25/5/42 to 0600 hrs, 3/7/42

SUMMARY

- Introduction - Fort Scratchley has played many important roles for Newcastle.
- Pre-Fort Scratchley - From Beacon Hill to the construction of the Fort.
- The First Layout of the Fort - Weapons first used at the Fort.
- The First Changes Made-1889 - The installation of new equipment.
- The First World War - The two 6 inch MK VII's become operational. The fort stops two boats without clearances.
- The Second World War - The Japanese attack on Newcastle. The report of a Japanese submarine that came into the port.
- Fort Scratchley 1945-65 - Reverted to peace-time basis.
- Fort Scratchley 1965 to present - Restoration to the Fort. A new role in tourism.
- Conclusion - The Fort still plays an important role for Newcastle.

:Transcript - Interview
with Ted Pricter.

:The History of Fort Scratchley

PREAMBLE

When I was confronted with the task of researching a local history topic, I had the immediate problem of not being a local person of long standing. Thus I had to make a decision on what to study and who to interview.

Fort Scratchley always had a visual impact on my mental picture of Newcastle. I then approached persons at the fort. I was fortunate enough to be given Ted Pricter's phone number.

As it turned out I was very fortunate as Ted has led a very interesting life in many spheres even in areas not covered by this interview. He has flown in the "Southern Cross", piloted by Smithy and was a driver of the famed "Newcastle Flyer" train.

Ted has many opinions and points of view and it was a difficult task for me to keep the interview contained to the history of Fort Scratchley.

Ted is a fountain of information and I extend to him my thanks for the time, and patience he displayed, while this interview was recorded.

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW

The interview with Ted Pricter was conducted at Fort Scratchley on 17th July 1988.

NOTE My lack of technical expertise did not allow me to edit this interview into sequence. Consequently the summary consists of questions asked and discussion headings in order as they happen on the tape.



1. When is your birthday?
2. How old are you?
3. What did you do before the war?
- list occupations including milk boy in 1920 who delivered to the fort.
4. How old were you when you started with the services?
5. What was life at the fort like?
6. Stories about happenings during the militia days.
7. Life in the tunnels.
8. Opinion of present day restoration work.
9. Recreation at the fort.
10. Purpose of 6" guns.
11. Story of nurses watching soldiers at the fort taking showers.
12. Pranks of soldiers at the fort.
13. Weapons used during WWII at the fort.
14. Ted's role at the fort.
15. Newcastle during WWII.
16. People of Newcastle and the submarine attack.
17. What happened on the night of the submarine attack?
18. Why didn't Fort Wallace fire?
19. Who gave the order to fire?
20. "Ullooloo" incident.
21. Submarine suspected of trying to enter harbour WWII.
Tokyo Rose mentioned.
22. Changes that have taken place in Newcastle over the years.
23. False ideas regarding attack on Newcastle by people not present at the event.
- Rumour of shelling of Newcastle by an American destroyer and not Japanese submarine discussed.
24. The forts response to the shelling by the Japanese submarine.

25. Ted's feelings on the forts closure.
26. Ted's feeling on meeting old war buddies.
27. Value of recording history from the people who saw it happen.

HISTORY OF FORT SCRATCHLEY
INTERVIEW WITH TED PRICTER
ON 17TH JULY 1988

Firstly I would like to ask your age. When were you born?

I was born on the 17th December, 1914.

So how old are you now?

I will be 74 at the end of this year.

I would like to ask you what did you do before the war?

I had a temporary job with the railway. And worked for a plumber in Hamilton. During holidays I was a coach cleaner and porter on Newcastle Station.

Well as I told you before I'll be 74 this year. And when I was 7 years of age my grandfather had one of the biggest milk runs in Newcastle. And we used to serve this place for milk and I used to come out in the cart, before I went to school. And this was one of the places I served. I would ring the bell on the gate and the guard would come and open the gate and he would bring the milk in here in the morning. And then a second run that would start at nine o'clock and they would serve here again in the afternoon. So I can go right back to 1920-21.

How old were you when you started with the services at the fort?

1936 - that would make me 24.

What was life at the fort like?

Pretty good, pretty good. Hard but it was good. The officers were easy going provided you didn't try and put anything over them.

Some stories told about the fort.

During the militia days when we had a practise shoot we would put men down on the road with red lanterns to stop the traffic from coming around past the fort, on account of the blast of the guns and, ah, we would send men out looking for the red lamp. And one chap went all the way to the Commanding Officer's cottage up at Shepherd's Hill. Another bloke finished up at Fort Wallace looking for a red lantern that didn't exist. It was only a red shade over a lantern that was taken off earlier.

There was a shed built over there. The parade ground was covered by a big shed from way back there and stretched right across to that fence over there. Over near that water tank. And on a hot summer night when it was too hot to sleep down below, we would come up here and sleep over there. It was only a low shed. Now the night that "Panelbow" came down the coast, she was another one we fired a practise shot at. She would down regularly on Sunday, and it would hug the coast and it would sneak in behind Nobbys and sneak in without a clearance. Well on this night we "sweated" on him, and he was just out far enough. We had the gun already loaded waiting for him. And the shed that was around the observation post had a lot of soil in behind it. When the gun went off, it just plonked down flat on the parade ground. If anybody had been in front of it, it would have killed him. It would of, it would of killed them.

We had a heavy fog out there, and we had one big chap, Big Tom McKenzie, we would call him 79er. Those 9 inch shells from Fort Wallace. He could use two of them as dumb bells and they weighed 380 pounds each, but he could wrap his hand around them and juggle them. He carried four of these shells here (Scratchley) for these guns and think nothing of it. He was on the lookout here and she came out of the fog. Straight out in front of us here, nobody knew what it was. We couldn't identify it, and we were trying to find out in "Jones Fighting" book what it was. Well he shut up. A practise shell was taken out of No 2 gun, and it was loaded ready with two live rounds and the word was just going to be given to fire, and he knew what was going on when he yelled out "Hold it! That's the old 'Port Morsby'". Thats all that saved the 'Port Morsby' from being sunk out in front of us here, one of our own boats. Nobody knew it was there. We had not word it was in the area or anything. So you can be lucky.

Life In The Tunnels.

- (Speaking from within the tunnels.)

If you wanted to leave down here you had to get word over to the observation post and get permission off the officer on watch or the sergeant on duty over there to leave here and go to the toilet or go and have a shower or anything like that. We ate, slept and had our entertainment on these tables and all our eating gear and games. A pack of cards would only last 4 hours here and you would throw them away and get another pack.

What do you think of the restoration of the Fort?

There's not enough of it done. There's not enough money put into it. Not enough. Not enough. It's the greatest tourist resort we have here in Newcastle.

What did you do for recreation at the Fort in your spare time?

We had a lot of cleaning up to do to keep the place clean, maintenance of the equipment.

Did you ever nip down for a swim or anything like that?

Well we did have swimming parades where we could go down but we had to be under supervision.

The purpose of the six inch guns?

We could put a shell in at Raymond Terrace and block the road up there. We could block the road at Charlestown or Adamstown and block the road out at Wallsend from here. They were pre-determined bearings and elevations that were put on the guns.

What was that just in case of invasion or anything like that?

In case of land invasion. But they were mainly here for the protection of the Port of Newcastle. As a close defence battery where as Wallace was a counter bombardment battery for long range firing.

Stories in response to a question about the nurses from Newcastle-Hospital watching the men of the Fort showering.

The fence is not there now. It used to run right down along this road here, Fort Drive, and down along Nobbie Road to the bottom there and we had our Shower Block on that fence. And it was open at the top. It was just like a wooden framework with hessian around it, and anybody with any height could see right in there. And this is what led to the nurses seeing us. Well once we found out that we put a top over it.

The other thing. Major Thompson had a little Austin Car and he used to bring it up here. And we pretty regularly we would lift the back up and put a rock under the diff and just let the wheels clear the ground, and he would wonder why he couldn't get away in his car at times. And we would give him a push. He never woke up to what it was. We were down town one day and four of the big blokes from here, I won't mention any names because it might get back, they got hold of it. One on each corner and put it up on the verandah at the Post Office. They went further down town and they found another one and they put it in the entrance to the Strand Theatre. That was two of the funny things that happened. But we could never live it down. We couldn't live it down over that.

But just over the front of the Fort here there was one chap here, he went A.W.O.L. A chap by the name of Tessia. Well as you know there's a concrete wall down the bottom and where he went over we called that Tessia's Leap, and that name stuck around the place.

What weapons were used during the War?

These two six inch guns, our 303 rifles, Vickers Machine Guns, Lewis Machine Guns, Tommy Guns, Bren Guns and Officers were supplied with their 45 Revolvers and their ceremonial swords.

What job did you have around here during the War?

Well I was a gunner when I came in here at the outbreak of the War and I was in the Observation Post until 1942 as the number one range finder. That was to get the range and the bearing of our target and then transmit them to our guns.

Then in early '42 I came out to the guns as the order site layer on No 2 gun. '42 I passed an examination as a bombardier which is a two stripper and I held that right through until I was discharged in '45.

What was Newcastle like during the War years?

Well the general life in Newcastle went on like ordinary. You would never think there was a war on until the raid. Then it started to tighten things up. People started to wake up to themselves that there was a war on then. To see us going down town we had to wear our bayonets at all times. Our rifles we would leave here when we went out on leave but we would always wear our bayonets for self protection just in case something went wrong. But the general feeling of the people as I say until we had the raid was that life was normal.

Was there any panic amongst the people when the attack happened? Did anyone move out of the city?

No. There were none that moved out of the city. There were a lot that didn't believe. In fact there were a lot that didn't know it happened until they read about it in the paper, and heard it over the air, on the morning after the raid.

I should ask you. The night of the submarine attack. What did happen on that night?

Well we had the duty crew on the guns, and the reserve watch which were the men that had been on the previous day. They were in the huts outside the main wall. They were to supplement the men on the guns if there were any shortages or on the ammunition details or any other duties that were to be done around the place.

There was a little bit of panic. There's no good saying when you have shells whizzing over you there's no panic because there is. I was stuck behind the shells store waiting on orders to come through from the Observation Post to describe to me what target had out at sea because I was in charge of the ammunition detail for No 2 gun and I wanted to know what type of shell out of the three we had down below. In the end I came up and asked Sergeant Kirshaw that was on No 2 gun what it was. We could see it out to sea and he said, "There it is out there. It's a sub."

"Well", I said. "In that case you will want armour piercing shells that were bought up". Now those fuses had to be set up behind the gun. They couldn't be set down below in the shell store in case there was a mishap, and I had six men that had only been in the army a fortnight and I had to teach them how to bring them shells out of the store and up onto the guns which was a bit of a job. Now No 1 gun, the other chap over there was Sergeant Cook and he was in the same boat as me. Now when we have men coming back in from leave, we supplemented our men in the shell store and down in the magazines for the chargers. Now we had a full compliment I would say within twenty minutes. All the re-watch was back in here and all our reserve watch was all taken up and that was all. That's how the thing worked.

What about the shelling from the submarine? Was it hectic or anything like that?

No, he was pretty methodical about the way he done it. The first indication we had was his star shell. Then the live shells followed that, and the first one landed at Pacific Place and exploded. In fact he ringed Newcastle in with his shells the way they landed. But what we summarized: it was after it was all over was that he was trying to find out the exact position of the 9.2 over at Fort Wallace. He was on his way back to Japan and he wanted to expend all his ammunition to find that out. Now those shells. We have one of them here.

The morning after the raid we went out in one of lieutenant's cars. Unfortunately the man is dead now and we bought back 14 of the shells and the serial numbers were traced on them. They were traced back to Singapore. The shells they kept in Singapore. So we got some of our own stuff back.

How come the guns at Fort Wallace didn't operate?

Well it was Fort Scratchley's job to protect the harbour. We were the examination battery for Newcastle. They were in range of our guns. Well under the range of our guns, and we were the ones to open up. If we wanted another counter bombardment from Fort Wallace it was asked for. But we didn't need it because you've got to realize that the shells from a six inch gun weighs up 98 to 101 pounds and the ones at Fort Wallace weigh up to 380 pounds and they were for long rangers. They could put one over the horizon, if there was a ship over the horizon where we couldn't. We were the close defence battery and they were inside our guns range, and it was our option to open up. We were the first to open up.

Who actually gave the order to fire?

Captain Wally Watson gave the order.

Did he have to seek authority off anybody else?

No, it was his perogative in an action where we were being shelled. It was his option to return fire which he did. Now this is the only fort in Australia that successfully engaged and drove off an enemy raider and the two guns that are here now were the two guns used except the barrels. They have been renewed since.

Can you tell me anything about the vessel "Ullooloo" which tried without permission?

She was a fair sized vessel about 10,000 tons. She was going out here one afternoon ahead of convoy time without any clearance. Now there was no ship to enter Newcastle Harbour or leave it unless they had a specially arranged signal with us and the pilot steamer. Now if they didn't have that we were quite in our rights to put a practise round across him and try to stop him. If he didn't stop the next round would be a live shell.

He was going and we just had enough room when we fired to clear Nobbys Lighthouse and the bow of the boat. Now he back pedalled that fast that he nearly ended up on the breakwater here. He didn't get out. He turned around and came back in. Now that shot at that time was worth fourteen pound ten.

The reported sub that entered Newcastle Harbour two weeks after the major attack.

What it was and I have never seen it happen yet was a log floating in against the outgoing tide and it was running fast. Well it that can happen they would be pretty good. What it was we surmised was a submarine coming in with this log tied on him. The depth charges were set off across the harbour and the log immediately started to float back out to sea. The coastal patrol vessels we had in the harbour, they came down and they were dropping depth charges. But we never saw him. But that's what we surmised it was, a midget sub trying to get in to do a bit of damage because we had minesweepers and some of the American Navy in here. But during the panic they fired a Bofors shell. It hit the harbour, skidded off and hit one of the parapets in the power station. We got the blame for that. Now if you have the gun there and you have a power house there. Now and the devil are you going to knock a piece off the parapet around there. You couldn't do it. It was one of the Bofors guns around at Stockton that done that.

Were there any preparation in case the Japanese invaded Newcastle?

There were - we were because Newcastle was wide open. They made them pyramid tank traps and put them along Newcastle beach and Nobbys beach and around Newcastle, and right down as far as Merewether. But the Japs knew we were doing it. Tokyo Rose told us at night. The Thursday night before we got the raid here, exactly what time they would be here and where they would be. And she was right on the dot. She even told us about the nineteen truck loads of ammunition we got in here on the Thursday afternoon before the raid that we had stored down in casement and when we would be shipping them out.

Maybe there were Japanese spies here?

Well I don't know but she knew what was going on.

Was there any other fortification after the attack of the Japanese?

Yes all this blast wall behind these guns were put in. All our leave was stopped until we got them in. I can tell you there was some sweat lost here. Timbering it up. We had to mix the concrete by hand. Whaling the barrows up ramps and tipping it off. And all these walls you can see behind that guns. They were put in after the Jap raid. But in 1939 the observation port was made into a two storey building.

That was previously a single storey?

It was previously a single storey. Down on the bottom storey you can see where those patchers have been put in like where windows were, and then the top storey was put on it.

Has Newcastle changed very much?

It has. It has. I've got a map here of Newcastle. I will give you an idea how Newcastle has changed. There's the whole of Newcastle. Now I live out here at New Lambton, but there's the race course where those flats are now. That used to be the speedway.

That near the racecourse there?

Yes. Behind the racecourse there on Glebe Road and Hamilton South. Wait till I find it. Between Gordon Avenue and Stewart Avenue that is where the first plane to land in Newcastle landed. Down there on the old race course before the present racecourse was built. Where the International Sports Centre is now they landed Spitfires, Lockheed Hudsons, and bombers there for repairs. In fact one skidded off and landed in the big storm water drain there. And down behind where the present ambulance station is. That was all chinese gardens right through until bank corner into National Park Street was all chinese gardens.

Ted talking again about the attack on Newcastle

Half these hillbillies that get on the radio stations and through the different papers in Newcastle don't know what they're talking about. In fact one chap he wrote in. He was pretty hostile because we had a crack back at him. But he knew what happened. Now how would he know. He was home up the other side of Williamtown, nearly up at Buladelah in bed. He wouldn't know. He's only quoting what someone else told him.

Well what do you say to rumours that an American destroyer shelled Newcastle?

There was no American destroyer in the vicinity that could shell Newcastle. If there was, we would know about it, because every afternoon at 4 o'clock we would get a list sent up from Customs House which was Port War Service Station to our observation post here and we had a complete list for 24 hours of boats that were in the vicinity that were either coming into port or leaving the port or going. So there was no American warship there that night.

Ted talking about the Forts reaction to the Japanese gunfire.

It was before sunrise. The pilot steamer which was the old "Birudi" would sit out directly in front of the two guns here at Scratchley until day light. And she would examine any boat that was to come into Newcastle Harbour and give them a clearance light we had here that matched one at Nobby's as well Port War Service Station. If they have that we were quite in our rights to open fire on it to stop it getting into the harbour. Now the submarine when he started shelling was on the other side of the pilot steamer. And he had his signal lamp going signalling to us to want to know what all the gunfire was. We couldn't answer him because it would pinpoint our position. That didn't worry us because it was practically impossible from where the submarine was to land a shell in here. But there was a possibility he could of. Now if he had you would be still looking for this place, because it could of gone down one of the ventilation shafts and the ammunition, gun cotton and jelly weed we had down there and it would of blown this place off the map. You would never found any of it. But luckily he didn't do that. Now when the pilot steamer got out of the road and we could get a clear view of him and the flash of his gun. Thats when we opened fire with these two guns here. The first three shells fell short of him. The next two went across him. He stopped firing, we had nothing to fire at. Because he realised that if we fired again at his flash we would of got him. He didn't want to be sunk out here. He wanted to get home. So he stopped firing. We had nothing to fire at. That's when the action stopped altogether as far as the submarine I-21 and ourselves were concerned.

Do you remember what time that was?

That was about 2:30 in the morning.

What time did it start?

About 2:18 he started firing. The other submarine that was down in Sydney was the I.23. Now the gun he had on board, and don't let anybody tell you it was a small gun. These two guns we have here at Scratchley fire a 6 inch shell and his shell was a 5.5. That's half an inch diameter in the barrel. So you can tell what size gun he had. The barrels of these weigh 20 tons and the shield weighs 8. Now he would have a gun a little bit smaller than what we have got here.

So don't let anybody tell you he had a small gun on board. He was well under range of our guns. If we could of got the searchlight on him he wouldn't have got away. Now there's one of the shells down in the military museum at Scratchley, that was retrieved and he fired at us. If anybody wants to have a look at it, it is there and you can compare it with a six inch shell that is down in the museum.

Was there a blackout called?

There was no use putting a flaming blackout on because the steelworks had only just tapped a furnace. Tapped a furnace you see it would of stood out like a pimple on a pumpkin.

How many crew were here during the War years?

There would be in the best part of 300 to 400 people during the war.

How did you feel when the Fort closed down in the 60's?

Well I felt very badly, because I think it should of gone back to the old militia days where we did our training here once a week, and had a 3 monthly camp and 6 monthly and it would give the young fellow a chance to learn something about firearms and having him in training if we needed him and have a few bob in their pocket. That was my ideas about the place. But the powers that be think differently.

Well my Grandfather served here during the war.

I probably knew him. Probably knew him, because over the years you meet that many men besides that was here, especially with the job I had on the railway. Because when I came out of the army, within 10 days of me coming out I was in the railway. Now I finished up second in charge at Broadmeadow depot the day I finished. And you meet a terrible lot of men, especially when you're doing the bosses job. And its hard to remember people. You can remember faces but you can't remember names. I've had them come up to me and say don't you know me. I was here when you were here, I know you but you don't know me. And you have to ask them their name. And once they tell you, you know who they are. Men that were in my gun crew. I had one chap here six weeks ago. I never saw him from 1943 till six weeks ago. I knew his face but I couldn't remember his name, until he told me. Then I knew him.

How do you feel when you see these people?

Good, you feel good meeting your old mates again and that is where I think they should have more reunions of not only this fort but other regiments and other units that were in the last war. There should be more of them and we should get together more. Not wait until Anzac Day or Armistice Day or something like that to meet up with these blokes, instead of meeting up here on the odd chance.

Do you remember past times when you enter the fort now?

You do. You do.

To relive old memories and things like that?

Well its only the people who lived around here and were here. But you get a lot of visitors up here and its marvellous some of the tales they come up here with. That you can set them straight, straight away that there not right. As I said if you're in a place you know what happened. And I don't care how old you get or someone thinks you're getting a bit senile. It sticks in your memory. It don't matter it still sticks in your memory. Now you can sit them straight on a lot of things.

Now the position of the submarine and the pilot steamer the morning we opened fire here. You can set people right. But once I get a copy - I've got a chap down in the archives after this book for me and once I get that. The book that was written by the Commander of the submarine, the I-21, that shelled Newcastle. I can more or less substantiate myself. But I've got it on tape exactly what is in the book. Part of what is in that book substantiates a lot of things I said. But people tell me I'm getting a bit old and a bit senile. You don't know what you're talking about. But they weren't here. They weren't even born or thought of when the war was on. And thats what gets my back up is giving people false information. Not the true facts on the things that have happened. See like the night the "Marenbar" broke adrift here one Saturday night, she broke adrift being towed to Sydney. She went out in a 80 m.p.h. gale storm. It should of never left Newcastle. It got out in front of Newcastle Baths and the cable broke between the tow boat and it drifted on to the rocks down here. Well when you see that happen and where she finished up on Nobbys beach here. You can tell people what actually happened. But for someone to surmise what happened. Well thats where the trouble starts.

APPENDIX COPY OF WAR DIARY

WAR DIARY or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

Army Form C.2118
(adapted.)

(Erase heading not required).

Unit SCRATCHLEY BATTERY N.F.D.C. Date and Time.—From 1231 hrs. 25/5/42. To 0600 hrs. 3/7/42.

1600 hr

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
Scratchley Battery	29/5/42	1632	Message from Shill " Man all L.M.G's at once"	Fort Log Book
" "	"	1700	" " " " All L.M. Gunners stand down."	" " "
" "	3/6/42	0210	Port closed to outward shipping.	" " "
" "	3/6/42	0900	Port now open	" " "
" "	3/6/42	2344	Port is closed	" " "
" "	6/6/42	0724	Mortlake Bank left port without clearance. O/O/W asked us to contact and order return to port. Vessel failed to respond to signals, at F.C.'s order "BringTo" round was fired. Vessel disappeared into fog bank. Eventually returned to port under orders from X.S. which had proceeded to sea.	" " "
" "	7/6/42	0100	Muffled explosion heard to South, by O.P. Personnel	" " "
" "	7/6/42	0725	Message from Rail - Explosion heard off Nobby's. Not heard by Scratchley personnel.	" " "
" "	8/6/42	0045	Air Raid warning "Red"	" " "
" "	8/6/42	0119	" " " "Yellow"	" " "
" "	"	0121	" " " "white"	" " "



NEWCASTLE - Defence Services - Fort Scratchley

WAR DIARY or INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

Army Form C.2118
(adapted.)

(Erase heading not required).

Unit SCRATCHLEY BATTERY N.F.D.C.

Date and Time.—From 1231 hrs 25/5/42 To 0600hrs. 3/7/42.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices, Diaries, &c.
Scratchley Battery	8/6/42	0217	White flare and sounds of gun-fire to North	Fort Log Book.
" "	"	0218	Alarm sounded - gun-fire appeared to be directed from seaward.	" " "
" "	"	0219	To F/C from B/C. White flares and gun-fire to North. Bty at Alarm.	" " "
" "	"	0220	No target visible in beam	" " "
" "	"	0226	Fire opened up by Battery at enemy vessel, not visible in any beam, but located first time by gun flashes at bearing 067° and approx. 5000 X Four rounds fired from Battery. During this action rounds were observed to fall left of Battery into harbour - others appeared to pass overhead. After the fourth round from the Battery there was no answering fire from the enemy.	" " "
" "	"	0231	No. 2 Gun out of action - damaged L.B.M.	" " "
" "	"	0307	Parties posted as guards over unexploded shell also smashed E.L. wire in street.	" " "
" "	"	1742	Port closed to outward shipping till daylight 9th. June. Port is open to inward shipping - advise Nobby's.	" " "
" "	9/6/42	0108	Until otherwise ordered examination lights on "Birubi" to be extinguished	" " "
" "	"	2240	White very light S.S.E. off Battery approx. 15 miles.	" " "