

DEFENCE AREA 78

FARTHINGLOE, DOVER

1. **Area details:**

The defence area is 1½ miles W of the centre of Dover.

County: Kent.

Parish: Dover.

NGR: centre of area, TR 295404.

1.1 **Area Description:** [see Map 1].

The defence area lies to the west of Dover, and is set partly on the high open downland of Long Hill extending west from the Western Heights and partly on a parallel ridge of more wooded downland at Coney Hill, the two being separated by a valley through which runs the B2011 Folkestone road. This road passes the farms of Great and Little Farthingloe, which, together with a number of houses, form a small settlement in the valley floor. To the east of the area, a tendril of the Dover suburbs trails along the valley below the ramparts of the Citadel, now preserved by English Heritage as part of the extensive fortifications on the Western Heights.



Fig. 1 - Looking south-east over Little Farthingloe Farm, with Long Hill beyond that joins to the east [left] with Dover's Western Heights.

Beyond Long Hill to the south are the white cliffs and the sea, with the houses of Aycliff extending west from Dover docks. Parallel with the cliff edge runs the A20 road, widened in the 1980s to join with the M20. To the north of Coney Hill, a further



series of steep-sided valleys mark the western edge of the Dover suburbs. Off the B2011 road is Farthingloe Technology Village owned by Eurotunnel Developments Ltd. and occupying former land of Great Farthingloe Farm. At Little Farthingloe Farm, there is a car park with shops, a museum to the Women's Land Army, and a cafe. A nature trail begins here providing access to Martins and Lunnons Woods on the steep slopes of the down. Land on Long Hill, below and west of the Citadel, is managed by the White Cliffs Countryside Project, which is dedicated to providing public access to this area of downland in an imaginative scheme of countryside stewardship that combines landscape preservation with the needs of farming.



Fig. 2 - Looking north across the B2011 Folkestone road, with Little Farthingloe Farm lying below the slopes of Coney Hill. A roadblock and other defence works were set up at the farm in 1940.

The focus of the defence area is Farthingloe in the base of the valley. The northern and southern boundaries are the crests of Coney Hill and Long Hill respectively, while the eastern boundary is the Citadel and the suburb edges. To the west, an arbitrary line running west of Martins Wood and Farthingloe represents the boundary. The principal viewshed encompassing much of the defence area is the valley between the two ridges of downland, although a further viewshed, extending the context of the defence area, looks south of Long Hill towards Round Down and the edge of the sea cliffs.

2. **Assessment.**

2.1 **Defences:** [see Maps 2 and 3]

Defence overview -

Being a fortified naval port and docks, with a considerable military presence, Dover would have been a key target on the right flank of the invading German forces under the Operation Sea Lion plans. Its early seizure in the assault would have been highly desirable in order to have a deep water port in which to bring in reinforcements, vehicles, and supplies. Dover was an officially-designated Garrison with an elaborate



scheme of defence, of which only a section of the south-western perimeter directly concerns this study.¹

From June 1940, Dover Garrison had been the responsibility of 1 (London) Division [later 56 Division], but from November 1940 it formed part of No.5 Sector under 43 Division's Area Defence Scheme for East Kent.² This Sector was defended by 130th Infantry Brigade, replaced in 1941 by 219th Infantry Brigade.³ The Dover Garrison area which extended to the west as far as West Hougham and Alkham, to the north to Temple Ewell (which was a Category 'A' nodal point in its own right), and to the east to the South Foreland, was divided into three sub-areas - North, East, and West. In the West sub-area, the approach through West Hougham was considered particularly vulnerable, and a western defence perimeter was established from Crabble through Elms Vale and Farthingloe to the coast at Round Down.⁴



Fig. 3 - Little and Great Farthingloe Farms on the old Folkestone Road (B2011) in an RAF air photograph taken in 1945. This was a defended locality on the western defence perimeter of Dover Garrison. Several pillboxes and earthworks can be made out north and south of the road.

¹ Dover Defence Scheme, September 1940 - TNA: PRO WO 166/1343. The defence scheme was greatly expanded in the course of the war. Other National Archives documents, not otherwise cited here, with copies of the Dover defence schemes, or containing considerable detail of areas of the garrison defence, are TNA: PRO WO 166/ 981; 1072; 4172; 4208-4209; 4328; 4603; 4646; and 6649.

² TNA: PRO WO 166/508.

³ TNA: PRO WO 166/981 and TNA: PRO WO 166/1072.

⁴ TNA: PRO WO 166/981.



The perimeter line was defended by a series of pillboxes, slit trenches, and section posts, with individual defence positions encircled by a complicated system of barbed wire that also ran from post to post, often following hedgerows, across the landscape. Where roads and tracks entered the perimeter, roadblocks were established; one of these points was at Farthingloe, and the concentration of defences here meant it was probably a designated defended locality. Running north-west from the Dover perimeter was a Corps Line [XII Corps], largely following the railway as far as Canterbury, and then on to the North Kent coast at Whitstable, designed to shut off East Kent from the hinterland and also helping to protect Dover from being encircled by landings on the coast to its north.

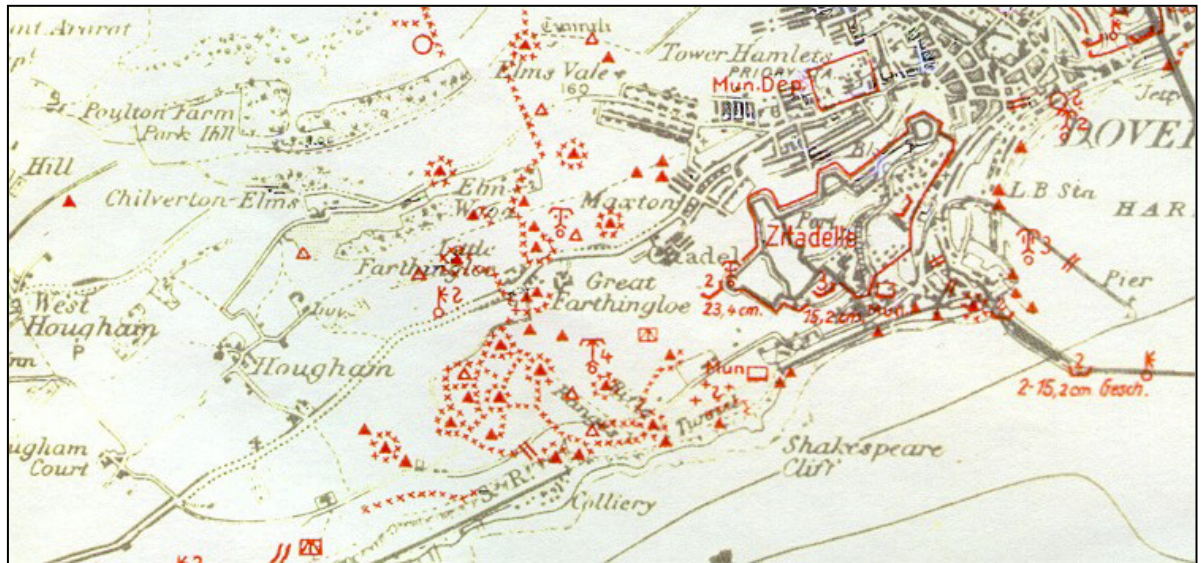


Fig. 4 - Portion of a German map showing the western defences of Dover in November 1940. The triangles represent pillboxes and the small crosses barbed wire. The line of the perimeter running from Elms Vale to Great Farthingloe is clear, with a concentration of defences to the south on the downs above the white cliffs.⁵

In June 1940, troops from the 50th (Holding) Bn. Royal West Kent Regiment were manning the western Dover perimeter, but by September they had been replaced by the 9th Bn. Green Howards, and again by November, the 7th Bn. Hampshire Regiment who drew a map of their positions that survives.⁶ By April 1941, it was a company from the 11th Bn. East Surrey Regiment, whose headquarters were at Pevensey [see Defence Area 66 - Pevensey Castle], that was in position here. This regiment has left a full record of the defences they were manning, detailing the named post, the rations, the weapons, and the amount of available ammunition.⁷ Assistance in the defence would have been given by the Dover Company of the 8th (Cinque Ports) Battalion, Kent Home Guard, the 12th Platoon of which was based at West Hougham.⁸

From 1941, a heavy anti-aircraft battery with four 3.7in. guns was in position on the summit of Long Hill south of Farthingloe. Its accommodation camp, with six barrack huts and other buildings, lay to its east by the side of a concrete military road running along the spine of the hill to the western battery of the Citadel. The latter was a coast

⁵ Südostküste England - Schrägbildreihe I (RAF Museum, Hendon).

⁶ TNA: PRO WO 166/4646, TNA: PRO WO 166/1343, TNA: PRO WO 166/981, and TNA: PRO WO 166/4328 (map).

⁷ TNA: PRO WO 166/4266.

⁸ TNA: PRO WO 166/981.



battery of three 9.2in guns, with adjacent pillboxes and at least one spigot mortar. A further coast battery - the Hougham Battery - stood high on the downland south-west of the Farthingloe anti-aircraft battery beyond the study defence area.



Fig. 5 - RAF air photograph taken in May 1942 showing the Farthingloe anti-aircraft battery with its attendant camp. These sites can be visited today [see Figs. 13 and 14].

The defence works -

A feature of the defence works in the Dover area is a particular variant pillbox type, square in plan, with a distinctive overhanging roof edge. Four examples in good condition, with one semi-destroyed, can be found on Long Hill, with a further two on Coney Hill [one not located by fieldwork] plus the foundations of two more that were apparently never completed.



Fig. 6 - UORN 967: example of the 'Dover' variant' pillbox with its overhanging roof slab. Large open embrasures provide good all-round visibility but would have been highly vulnerable to incoming fire.



Fig. 7 - UORN 14814: taking advantage of the steep slope on which it was built, this 'Dover variant' type pillbox has an additional lower level embrasure. The pillbox type has distinctive brick corner supports for the roof turned at an angle to the rest of the square structure.



Fig. 8 - UORN 14814: the view from inside firing north towards Farthingloe. The lower level embrasure can be seen.

On Coney Hill to the north are several examples of type 24 pillboxes, mostly overgrown in poor condition with their interior anti-ricochet walls and much of the brick shuttering removed. 'Dover variant' type pillbox, UORN 846, could not be located in this area during fieldwork, but may survive under thick vegetation.





Fig. 9 - UORN 962: type 24 pillbox on Coney Hill, denuded of its outer brick shuttering.



Fig. 10 - UORN 964: the entrance to this type 24 pillbox, showing splayed rifle ports on either side. The interior anti-ricochet wall has been removed, probably so that the structure can be used as a sheep shelter.

Approaching Long Hill from the Citadel to the east, the western battery of the Citadel is first reached, which, although strictly lying outside the study area, is important for its three 9.2in gun emplacements and a number of other Second World War structures. From this point, the military road is followed to the anti-aircraft battery site and camp,

these positions marking as well the line of the anti-invasion perimeter defences. All these sites can be viewed as part of the total military landscape here, the anti-invasion defences forming just one aspect. To the south were once further pillboxes, and there is evidence from piles of concrete and brick rubble that some of these at least have been destroyed recently. Two good examples of fire and slit trenches [UORNs 16943 and 16944] can also be seen on the southern slopes of Long Hill.



Fig. 11 - These piles of brick and concrete may be all that survives today of pillboxes, UORNs 959 and 1036.



Fig. 12 (left) - Emplacement for a 9.2in gun at the Western Battery of the Citadel. Although this site is not strictly within the study defence area, it can be visited close by.



Fig. 13 (right) - The ground structure of Farthingloe heavy anti-aircraft battery is substantially complete.



Fig. 14 - The footings of buildings of the anti-aircraft battery camp can still be made out. A semi-destroyed 'Dover variant' pillbox stands close by [UORN 14796].





Fig. 15 - This Second World War military road,, surfaced with concrete slabs, runs between the Citadel and the Farthingloe anti-aircraft battery. Other military roads descend the hillside towards Farthingloe.

2.2 **Landscape:**

Despite extensive development in and around Dover since the war, the downland landscape on the town's south-western fringes remains largely unchanged. The requirements of the Channel Tunnel infrastructure have led to an improved A20 road to the south of the defence area, and a Technology Village has been established on former land of Great Farthingloe Farm. However, the pattern of field and downland is essentially unchanged, with the suburbs of Maxton and Aycliff much as they were in 1940. The military roads south of Farthingloe on the side of Long Hill remain as trackways, and the Second World War landscape occupied by the Army can be readily reconstructed.

Little Farthingloe and Great Farthingloe are still working farms, with pasture land for cattle and sheep on the sides of the downs. The summit of Long Hill, however, is covered by open arable fields. Coney Hill to the north is uncultivated land of grass, scrub, and woods, with trackways from the adjacent suburbs used to dump burnt out motor cars.



The fortifications of the Western Heights are in the care of English Heritage, and the public can wander amongst them at will, although the Citadel itself is still in use as a detention centre. A scheme to make the land of the defence area beyond the Western Heights available for public recreation through the White Cliffs Countryside Project is now well in hand. This will enable visitors to extend their interest in the largely Victorian fortifications of the Western Heights to the more modern military landscape beyond it, and it would be beneficial to these visitors if information on the various Second World War sites could be provided. This is already done for the Western Heights themselves.



Fig. 16 - Information board provided for the Western Heights. It would be good if the information here could be extended to cover the Second World War landscape beyond.

The approach to the downland of Long Hill is by footpaths leading either from the Western Heights or from the suburb of Aycliff. There is no access from Great Farthingloe Farm. However, Coney Hill can be reached via the nature trail from Little Farthingloe Farm, if with somewhat of a scramble through scrub and brambles. Parking is possible at Little Farthingloe, and in the Dover car parks below the Western Heights.

2.3 Statement of Significance:

This is a Second World War military landscape of major interest, with good public access enabling most of the defence structures to be examined at close quarters. It is one also that offers a variety of sites other than the category of anti-invasion defences. It is set in a landscape redolent of the defence of Britain in 1940 - with Dover, the gateway to England, in sight and the line of the white cliffs stretching along the southern horizon.

The anti-invasion defence works provide some important examples in good condition of the 'Dover variant' pillbox, a type known only from the Dover area itself. The type 24 pillboxes, although in deteriorating condition, are also important as they mark the



line of perimeter defences running to the north. The juxtaposition of these defences with coastal and anti-aircraft batteries, a camp site, and connecting concrete roads, in a landscape where it is possible to explore without trespass, makes the area a rewarding experience for all interested in the surviving heritage of the Second World War.

Information could be readily supplied here for public enjoyment and education, and a 'pillbox walk' set out, perhaps displayed on an information board or available in separate literature.

3. **Recommendations:**

1. That the surviving anti-invasion defence works in the Farthingloe, Long Hill, and Coney Hill areas to the west of Dover be considered of national importance. They enable the defence of the area to be interpreted, and provide evidence of the articulation of the defence and the inter-relationship of its functionally different components. Such interpretation is assisted by the documentary evidence provided in this report of defence structures that were built as part of the overall strategy, but which have now been removed.
2. That other Second World War sites within or adjacent to the defence area, viz the western battery of the Citadel, the Farthingloe heavy anti-aircraft battery and its camp, and various connecting military roads be considered of national importance. They add significantly to the overall knowledge of the military occupation of this land in the Second World War.
3. That consideration be given, possibly in an initiative with Dover District Council and the White Cliffs Countryside Project, to providing an information board on the Second World War sites of the area and to drawing up a specific defence site walk.

2. **Supporting material.**

4.1 **Photographs:**

Figs. x, xx - taken (AWF) during field survey, 11.2.2004.

Fig. x - 106G/UK/944 fr.6085 (19.10.1945) - NMR.

Fig. x - HLA/526 fr.6018 (6.5.1942) - NMR.

4.2 **Documentary Sources:**

130th Infantry Brigade HQ War Diary, 1940 - TNA PRO WO 166/981.

1 (London) Division 'G' Branch War Diary, 1940 - TNA: PRO WO 166/710.

'Operation Order No.1', 13.6.1940 (from 50th (Holding) Bn. Royal West Kent Regiment War Diary) - TNA: PRO WO 166/4646.

Stellungskarte Grossbritannien: 1:25,000 (Sheet 1/68/76), 8.8.1940 - BLML Y148.

'Dover Defence Scheme', September 1940 (from Dover Garrison HQ War Diary) - TNA: PRO WO 166/1343.

'List of Nodal Points in Eastern Command', September 1940 (from General Headquarters Papers, Home Forces) - TNA: PRO WO 199/544.

Südostküste England - Schrägbildreihe I: Dover - North Foreland, 20.11.1940 - RAF Museum, Hendon AC 95/130/1.



Befestigungskarte Grossbritannien: 1:50,000 (Sheet 117), 20.11.1940 - BLML 1305(13).

'43 Divisional Area Defence Scheme (East Kent)', 27 November 1940 (from 43 Division 'GS' War Diary) - TNA: PRO WO 166/508.

7th Bn. Hampshire Regiment War Diary, 1941 - TNA: PRO WO 166/4328.

'Dover Defence Scheme', April 1941 (from 219th Infantry Brigade War Diary) - TNA: PRO WO 166/1072.

'Operational Order No.5', April 1941 (from 11th Bn. East Surrey Regiment War Diary) - TNA: PRO WO 166/4266.

East Kent District 'G' Branch HQ War Diary, 1943 - TNA: PRO WO 166/10851.

4.3 **Published Sources:**

Moraig Brown & Paul Pattison, *The Western Heights, Dover, Kent. Report No.8. Citadel Battery* (English Heritage, 2001).

David BurrIDGE, *Defending the Gateway: The Fixed Defences of Dover in the 20th Century* (David BurrIDGE, 2001).

Paul Pattison & Duncan Garrow, *The Western Heights, Dover, Kent. Report No.5. St. Martin's Battery* (English Heritage, 2001).

Paul Pattison, *The Western Heights, Dover, Kent. Report No.7. North, Centre, and Detached Bastions* (English Heritage, 2001).

Andrew Saunders & Victor Smith, *Kent's Defence Heritage: Gazetteer Part One*, KD 109 'Great Farthingloe Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery' (Report for Kent County Council, December 2001).

4.4 **Aerial Photographs:**

HLA/373 frs.604-605 (11.12.1941) - NMR.

HLA/526 frs.6018-6019 (6.5.1942) - NMR.

HLA/549 fr.6052 (1.6.1942) - NMR.

HLA/574 fr.1044 (3.6.1942) - NMR.

106G/UK/610 fr.6336 (5.8.1945) - NMR.

106G/UK/610 frs.6370-6373 (5.8.1945) - NMR.

106G/UK/610 frs.6435 and 6437 (5.8.1945) - NMR.

106G/UK/801 fr.6186 (13.9.1945) - NMR.

106G/UK/848 frs.6005-6006 (27.9.1945) - NMR.

106G/UK/848 fr.6014 (27.9.1945) - NMR.

106G/UK/944 fr.6085 (19.10.1945) - NMR.

106G/UK/1303 fr.1078 (26.3.1946) - NMR.

MAL/68059 fr.127 (20.8.1968) - NMR.

MAL/74028 fr.21 (8.5.1974) - NMR.

4.4 **Ordnance Survey 1: 2500 Plans:**

TR 2839-2939 (1973) - BLML.

TR 2840-2940 (1972) - BLML.

TR 3039 (1957) - BLML.

TR 3040 (1957) - BLML.

4.5 **Defence of Britain Project Database:**

[see 5. 'Annex'].

