

THERE'S A WAR ON!

World War I and World War II collections and sites on the NSW homefront

Tomaree Lodge Hostel/Hospital / Fort Tomaree

From There's A War On!

Summary

Site Name: Tomaree Lodge Hostel/Hospital / Fort Tomaree

Site Number: 149

Address: 4 Shoal Bay Road, Port Stephens 2315

Category: Accommodation - Requisitioned

Date: c. 1942

War: WW II

Heritage Listings: State

Description

The Tomaree Hostel occupies buildings of the former infantry camp of Fort Tomaree. The infantry camp was on the landward side of the fortifications of the Fort and provided defence for the landward approaches to the Fort.

The hostel is a collection of timber-framed and timber and asbestos cement-clad barracks buildings along the foreshore at the end of Shoal Bay Road. E. Martin states that the buildings were original buildings rebuilt in their current locations. However, examination of the original plans indicates that the remaining timber buildings are located in the same locations as the original buildings of the infantry camp. Some of the buildings away from the waterfront have been demolished and replaced with brick buildings.

Landscape is listed on the SHR but not the buildings.

Related sites in the vicinity: Fort Tomaree - Tomaree batteries RAN Station 307 Fort Tomaree - Nelson Head battery HMAS Assault RAAF Radar Station on Tomaree peak Gan Gan Army Combined Training Centre

History / Provenance

With Japan's invasion of South-East Asia and occupation of the Pacific islands to Australia's north in 1942 it became necessary to establish training camps with the

object of training personnel from all three armed services (navy, army and air force) in joint operations to retake the captured islands.

In June 1942 a Royal Marine officer, Commander, F.N. Cook, and Lieut-Colonel Hope inspected sites on the east coast to establish a School of Combined Operations. Port Stephens was selected because of its defensible port, safe anchorage away from Japanese submarines and sparse population. (Source: Bordiss, B., 1991:1-2)

The military installations commenced in September 1942 were: Fort Tomaree on Tomaree and Nelson Heads, HMAS Assault I at Fly Point and along the shores of Nelson Bay and the RAAF radar station on the peak of Tomaree. These installations joined the 1941 Gan Gan Army Combined Training Centre located inland from Salamander Bay.

In October 1943 the Amphibious Training Centre was closed and only boat crews continued to be trained at HMAS Assault. By August 1944 the base at Port Stephens had been put into care and maintenance. (Source: Armstrong, J., 1996:78)

In 1943, along with the closure of the (Nelson) Head Battery and the Amphibious Training Centre at HMAS Assault, the lower camp at Tomaree (the infantry camp) was also closed and turned over to the Volunteer Defence Corps for training. (Source Eric Martin & Associates, 2002:39)

In 1947 the infantry camp at Tomaree was transferred from the Commonwealth Department of Defence to the NSW Department of Public Health. In 1950 the whole of Tomaree headland was transferred for hospital purposes. From 1960 until 1985 the former infantry base at Tomaree was used as a holiday and recuperation camp and from 1985 onwards it has been used exclusively for permanent mental patients. (Source: Eric Martin & Associates, 2002:18)