

# Guns come back to Fort Casey

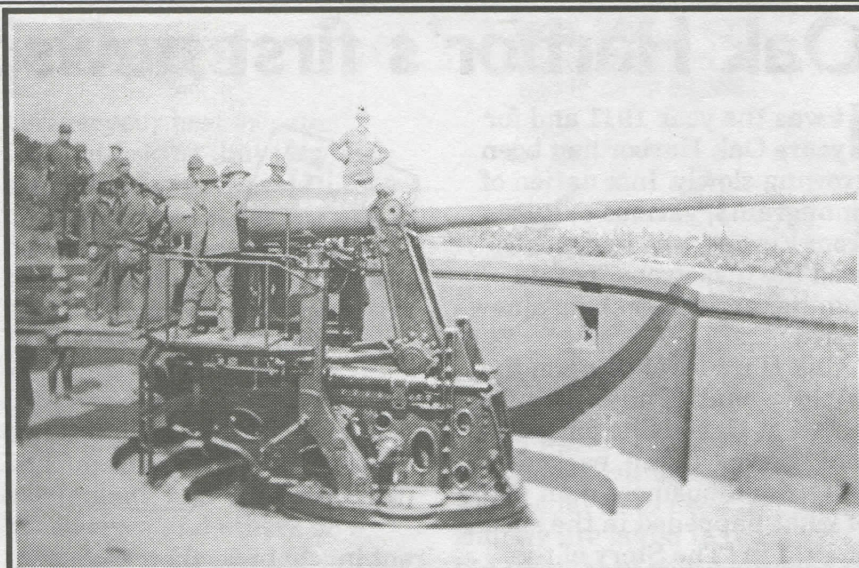
Visitors to Whidbey Island should visit the Historical State Park of Fort Casey, one of three coastal forts along with Fort Flagler and Fort Worden, which guarded the entrance to Admiralty Inlet. They were the key point in a fortification system designed to prevent an enemy from reaching the Bremerton Navy Yard and the large cities of Seattle, Tacoma, Everett and Olympia.

Visitors will see the thick concrete parapets on which large guns with disappearing carriages were mounted. At Fort Casey there were seven 10-inch disappearing carriage guns, plus six disappearing carriage rifles, two 5-inch rapid fire guns on balanced pillar mounts, four 3-inch rapid fire guns on pedestal mounts and sixteen 12-inch mortars.

Today the Fort is bare of guns with the exception of two 3-inch rapid fire guns which were procured from Fort Wint in the Philippines and are now on display at Battery Trevor to the southeast of the central parking lot.

Fort Casey, built at the turn of the century remained an integral part of the U.S. defense until 1921 when it was placed on caretaker status.

During World War II it was reactivated as a unit in the military command known as Harbor Defenses of Puget Sound. Military activity during this period consisted largely of training and routine garrison and guard duty, and remained




*World War I soldiers practice gunnery at Fort Casey.*

on active status until 1950 when it was abandoned by the Army.

It is not fully known what happened to the armament at the fort, except that the guns could have been used for scrap metal in World War II. It took some doing to trace the 10-inch disappearing carriage guns such as were at Fort Casey from 1900 to the 1930s. But in the Philippines, at Fort Wint, two were discovered rusting in the jungle. The huge guns had to be dismantled, crated and then transported overland to a port where the Navy offered to pick them up and bring them to Fort Casey. It would take the sum of \$35,000 to accomplish this gigantic task, and the Coupeville Lions Club headed the drive.

Members of the community club hoped that the project would be the first step in a restoration program to make the fort a mecca for all Americans interested in seeing relics of the three great eras in our country's defense.

The two rifles weigh 200-tons, or 400,000 pounds. And when finally they were at home and in place on the concrete parapet, the Governor of the state and other notables came for the ceremony of installation.

The Coupeville Lions Club was featured in the National Lions Magazine for its drive to bring back the big guns to Fort Casey, and today Whidbey Islanders as well as visitors enjoy touring the Fort where the "Big Guns" are located. 

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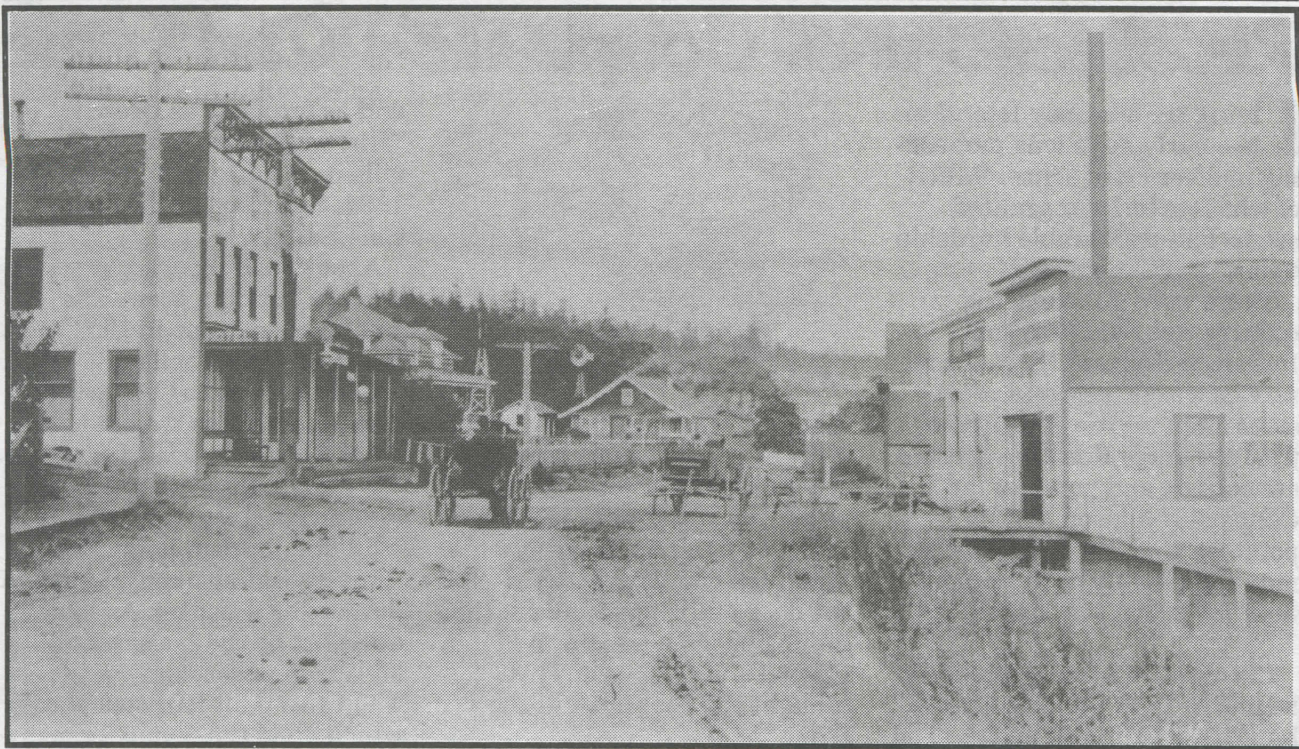


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This photo was taken looking east on Pioneer Way at about Midway. Until these buildings all burned in the early 1920s, this was the heart of town. At left is Byrne's Hotel; at right is the livery where the fire started.

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Early in its life as an incorporated town, Oak Harbor celebrates with a parade. In this photo, looking east from Maylor's Department Store by photographer Johnny Maylor, to whom we are indebted for many early photos, an auto leads the parade at Pioneer Way and Dock St.

## Thank you!! Oak Harbor



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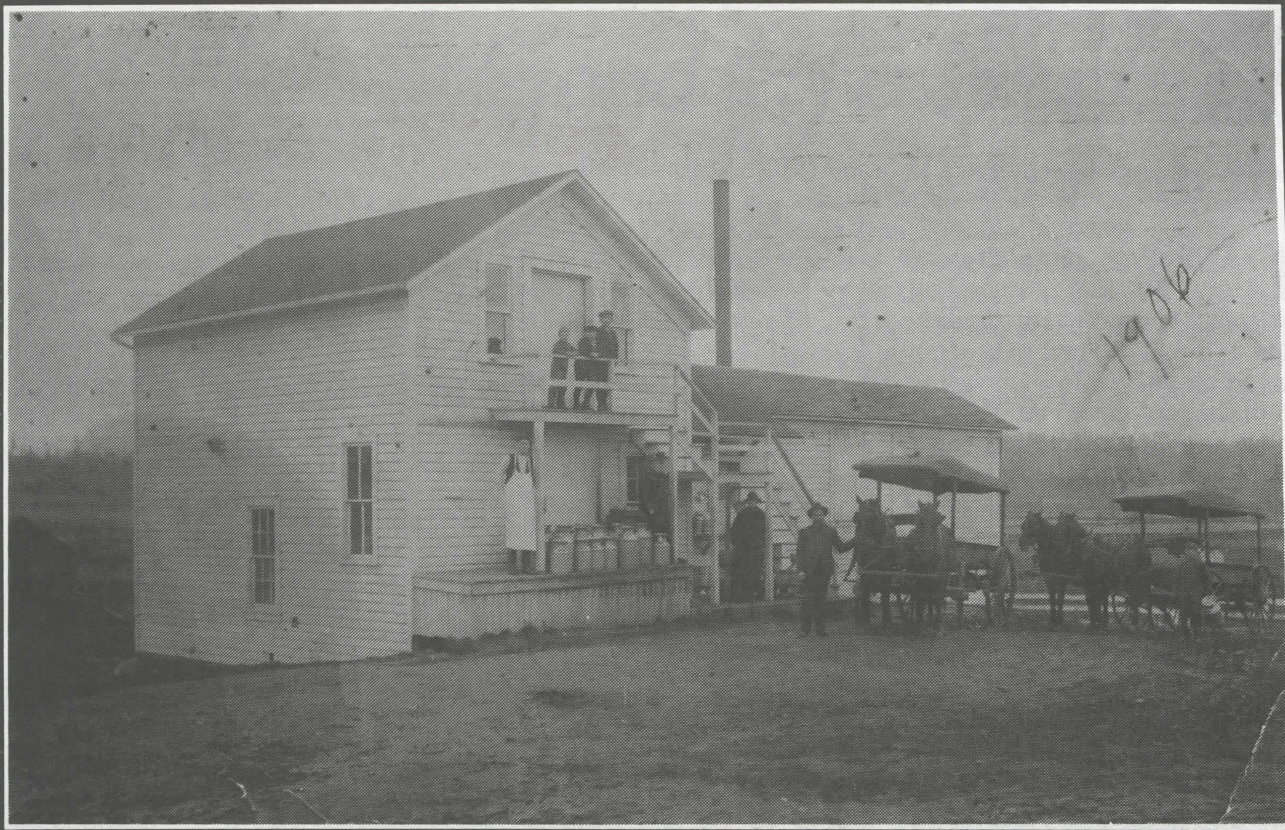
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