

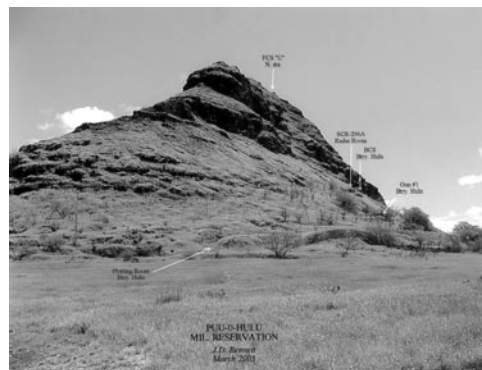
## Puu-o-Hulu Military Reservation, 1923-1945

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The Puu-o-Hulu Military Reservation (POHMR) was located on the Island of Oahu in the Territory of Hawaii, on the leeward or west coast at Puu-o-Hulu-Kai (hereafter: Puu-o-Hulu), an independent mass of basalt that is part of the extinct Waianae Volcano. The reservation was situated in the Lualualei *ahupuaa* (a traditional Hawaiian land division, smaller than a district; typically wedged-shaped, running from mountain to the sea), within the District of Waianae at Maili, between the Lualualei and the Nanakuli Homesteads, some 20 air miles W by N of downtown Honolulu.



Map of Oahu



Puu-o-Hulu-Kai. Author

The military reservation was established on April 27, 1923, when 0.15 acre (Tract A) was set aside for military purposes by Territorial Governor Wallace R. Farrington in Executive Order No. 144, duplicated by President Warren G. Harding's Executive Order No. 3885 of July 27, 1923. The army shortly

Triangulation Station "Puu-o-Hulu Makai," 856 feet above sea level.(1)

Tract B, 0.71 acre, was added to the military reservation by Governor's Executive Order No. 481

On March 25, 1938, a roadway easement totaling 0.35 acre (Tract C) was obtained from the Territory of Hawaii. Tract D, acquired on December 4, 1940, contained approximately 1.25 acres set aside by Governor's Executive Order No. 913. Tract E (0.20 acre) was acquired by an indenture with the Territory of Hawaii on December 31, 1941. The largest parcel (Tract F), consisting of some 65.25 acres, was acquired from the Territory of Hawaii by license on August 12, 1942. A number of rights-of-way (Tracts 1-3 and Tract H) were obtained from the George H. Holt Trust estate, Oahu Railway and Land Company, and the Territory of Hawaii between August 6, 1945, and February 3, 1951. Four additional fire control stations were subsequently built atop the 850-foot Puu-o-Hulu by the end of World War II.(2)

Battery Hulu, an emergency seacoast battery, was built at the POHMR during World War II and armed with two obsolete, well worn 7-inch 45-caliber naval guns. Battery Construction Number 303 (BCN-303), a two-gun modernization program 6-inch shielded barbette carriage battery was under construction by late spring of 1944 to replace Battery Hulu's 7-inch guns.

Bombproof support rooms for BCN-303 were to be within a series of tunnels dug into the west-facing slope of Puu-o-Hulu. At end of the war with Japan on September 2, 1945, all construction at the battery was totally abandoned, including the tunnel complex, which was listed as being in a "deferred status" by the Construction Service on the May 31, 1945.(3)

The majority of the structures at the POHMR were built on the crest, exterior, or within the northwestern slope of Puu-o-Hulu, about 900 yards from the coastline. Puu-o-Hulu overshadows

coastline until the 90-foot elevation; then rises steeply to meet near vertical cliffs almost half way up the slopes. The landscape is principally rock, with countless boulders strewn about. The eastern or reverse slope is also very steep.

The Lualualei *ahupuaa* was in the lee of the Waianae Mountain Range; more arid than the windward slope, it is typically hot and dry. Sparse growths of kiawe (*Prosopis Pallida*) and koa haole trees (*Leucaena Leucocephala*) grow in the area, and the lower slopes are covered, for the most part, by wild grasses some three feet high.

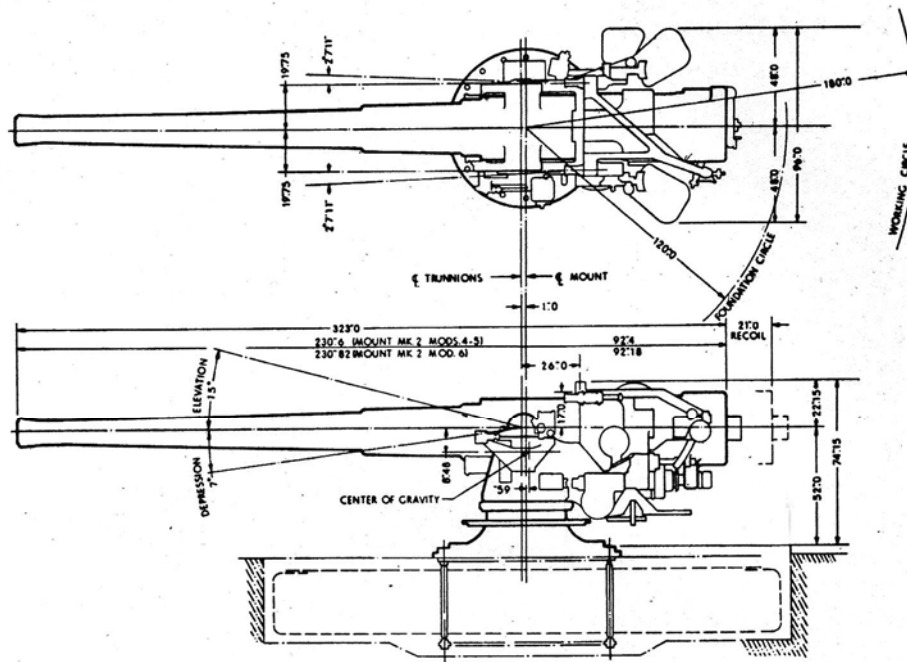
### **Battery Hulu**

On December 31, 1941, Adm. Chester W. Nimitz assumed command of the U.S. Pacific Fleet. Shortly thereafter, the new commander of the Hawaiian Department, Lt. Gen. Delos C. Emmons, conferred with Nimitz, his superior as commander-in-Chief Pacific. The agenda most probably included discussion of the urgent need to expand the defenses to protect Oahu's 149 miles of shoreline, as well as the main ports and airfields on the outlying islands of Kauai, Maui, Molokai, and Hawaii.

Within one week after the December 7, 1941, Pearl Harbor attack, the navy provided the Hawaiian Department 50 light-caliber weapons varying from one-pounders to 3-inch/23s.(4) In addition, the navy offered to loan the Hawaiian Department obsolescent guns of several different calibers from its ordnance stocks, including guns to be salvaged from naval vessels damaged or sunk during the Pearl Harbor attack. The Hawaiian Department received 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, and 14-inch guns from the navy, including 13 obsolete 7-inch naval guns. Six were emplaced on Oahu: four at Battery Harbor on Sand Island, and two at Battery Hulu at Puu-o-Hulu. The Island of Kauai, some 90 miles northwest of Oahu, received two 7-inch batteries: two guns at Battery Ahukini between Ahukini Landing and Nawiliwili

gun tubes were worn out and unusable.

In early 1942, the Hawaiian Department Engineer presented two options for emplacing 7-inch naval guns at Puu-o-Hulu. Option No. 1, a costly tunneling job, required building a 3,000-foot mountain-type access road on a cliff at the 250-foot elevation. Option No. 2 involved the less costly method of building the emplacements and magazines at the 90-foot elevation and incorporating casemates into the design. When Option 1 was found to be structurally unsound, Option 2 was adopted.(5)



7-inch Mk2M4-6 Naval Gun. Alvin Grobmeier collection

Two 7-inch 45-caliber MkII naval guns (Serial Nos. 90 and 92) on MkIIMIV barbette carriages (Serial Nos. 64 and 84) were mounted in concrete emplacements at the POHMR in the spring of 1942. A third gun was to have been emplaced, but its bore was too worn. Reinforced-concrete casemates protected the guns and crews, primarily from falling rock that might be dislodged by an enemy attack. On October 21, 1942, HQ, Hawaiian Seacoast Artillery Command (HSAC), named the emplacements Battery Hulu, using a shortened version of its place name.(6)

Both casemates measured 41 feet wide by 34 feet deep, with thick roofs. Each casemate incorporated projectile and powder storage magazines at the rear, on the left and right respectively.(7) The magazines were equipped with T-shaped rooftop concrete pipe ventilators. Steel entry doors to both magazines included louvered central ventilation panels. A concrete floor-to-ceiling wall shielded the powder and projectile magazine entrances.

Battery Hulu's Gun No. 1 was on a graded, compacted plateau within a concrete emplacement dug below ground; the front faced the ocean in the westerly direction. It was approximately 150 feet to the right of Gun No. 2, at about 90 feet elevation.(8) Both 7-inch pedestal gun mounts were bolted to buried concrete gun blocks, cushioned by two-inch hardwood planking and two-inch steel plate atop

Battery Hulu, Oct. 1942. NARA.



Casemate No. 1, Battery Hulu, showing patio roof added. *Author, 2000*



later. Author, 2000



Emplacement No. 1, Battery Hulu, showing entrances to emplacement and steel mounting plate for pedestal mount. Author, 2000