



Pendennis Castle was built in the 1540's as a small circular tower, one of a chain of coastal defences erected by Henry VIII. The Spanish Armada invasion scare of 1588 resulted in the tower being surrounded by a large Bastioned trace between 1598 and 1600 designed by Paul Ivy. During the English civil war, the Royalist garrison were besieged for 5 months by Parliamentarian forces and finally surrendered on 17th August 1646 (the last of the Royalist Castles to fall). During the Napoleonic invasion scare the fort was armed with 48 guns and was used as a depot and supply base for the British army during the Peninsular War.

Between 1854 and 1856 all the old SB guns were removed and replaced by seven 56pdr guns on traversing carriages, one in each bastion salient and one in the Ravelin. These were, in turn, replaced by four 64pr RMLs in 1877.

Falmouth was designated a strategic harbour at the beginning of the 1890s, and required modern breech loading guns, one of these, a 6-inch mk VII, was mounted in bastion No. 4 on a hydropneumatic mounting, replacing a 64pr RML. A new minefield across the harbour entrance was to be covered by two QF guns each installed in bastions 2 and 3. A practice battery was formed in 1894 with four 64pr RMLs on traversing carriages, these were subsequently replaced by two 6-inch mk III guns on Vavasseur mountings.

By 1905 Falmouth had been reduced in status to a commercial port and the Royal Navy had taken over responsibility for the minefields. Consequently the 6-inch HP was disarmed together with two of the 12pdr QF guns; the remaining two were retained for practice use until some time between 1910 & 1916.

A new barracks was built between 1900 & 1902, and was followed by four other new buildings. During WW1 a temporary hutted camp was erected on the parade; during WW2 a number of other temporary buildings, now gone, were erected.

In 1920 the Tudor Castle was declared an ancient monument

Details

Type	Bastioned Fort with Coastal Batteries
Position	Pendennis Headland
National Grid Ref	SW 824317
Ditch	Dry
Barrack Accom.	143
Total Guns	48 (see below)
Cost	£5,614-14-2 Enciente: £2,000

History

Commenced	1540 Enciente:1598
Completed	1550 Enciente:1600
Armament	
1805	SB: 22 x 24pdr, 14 x 18pdr, 4 x 68pdr, 8 x 24pdr Carronades
1852	Mounted: 2 x 24pdr SB, 5 x 24pdr Carronades Dismounted SB: 20 x 24pdr, 4 x 68pdr, 3 x 32pdr Carronades
1856-1877	7 x 56pdr SB
1877-1895	4 x 64pr RML
1896-1911	1 x 6-inch BL mk VII HP (Bastion 4)
1903-1907	2 x 12pdr QF (Bastion 3)
1904-1907	2 x 12pdr QF (Bastion 2)
1894-1902 Practice	4 x 64pr RML
1907 - 1910/16 Practice	2 x 6-inch BL mk III, 2 x 12pr QF
Subsequent service	None
Disposal	1920 (castle only) & 1957
Later use	Youth Hostel, English Heritage Site

Access

Postcode	TR11 4LP
Condition	Good
Access	Open to Visitors
Website	www.english-heritage.org.uk/daysout/properties/pendennis-castle
Sources	National Archive, Fort25, Fortress Falmouth
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and opened to the public (with the exception of the war years). In 1957, the Army departed and the whole of the bastioned enceinte with its interior builds became an ancient monument. Today much of the Castle and its enceinte can be visited; many of the interior buildings have exhibitions about the past history of the Castle.

