

During the Occupation the Islands were fortified out of all proportion and turned into "impregnable fortresses". It was felt that the Allies would try to regain the islands at any price, and "Construction Orders" were issued that resulted in over a fifth of the material set aside for the 'Atlantic Wall', a line of massive defence works stretching from the Baltic to the Spanish frontier, being committed to the Channel Islands. Hundreds of concrete reinforced bunkers, gun emplacements, anti-tank walls and tunnels were constructed during a two-year period between 1941 -1943, for an invasion that never came. On the 8th May 1945, came the announcement of the surrender of Germany, and in the months that followed, the Royal Engineers were charged with disposing of the German ordnance, and making the islands safe again.

This was a huge task involving the removal of hundreds of weapons, over 20,000 tons of ammunition, 68,000 mines and mile upon mile of barbed wire. Some of these armaments were consigned to a watery grave, however some of the larger artillery weapons were retrieved and in 1977 the Channel Islands Occupation Society embarked on an ambitious preservation programme to restore a number of these fortification sites. Why not step back in time and explore some of these fortifications today. The Society has now restored eight fortification sites, and details of its activities may be found by logging onto www.ciosjersey.org.uk

Noirmont M132 Command Bunker

*April 5th, 10th, 13th, 19th, 26th – May 3rd, 9th, 17th, 25th, 31st – June 7th, 14th, 21st, 28th – July 5th, 12th, 19th
August 2nd, 16th, 23rd, 31st – September 6th, 13th, 20th, 27th*

Extending to a depth of 40ft. on two floors, this impressive bunker was surmounted by a range-finder and two periscopes to determine the direction and speed of sea targets. Narrowly escaping the scrap-drive of the early 1950s, it's the last of its type in the Islands to retain the impressive 7 inch-thick armoured cupolas. The bunker has been restored to a very high standard and provides a unique insight into the sheer scale and thoroughness of German military engineering.

11:00 – 16:30 / £2 / Noirmont Point, St Brelade

Noirmont Coastal Artillery Observation Tower

April 13th – May 3rd, 24th – June 14th – July 19th – August 9th – September 6th

This massive structure, with its brooding cliff top presence is, for many, one of the most potent symbols of the Occupation. The design of these towers is unique to the Channel Islands, and the observation slits, set in 2 metres of concrete, provide an impressive setting for the distant sea views towards France. On top of the tower is a mounting for a 2cm Flak Oerlikon anti-aircraft gun.

14:00 – 16:00 / Free / Noirmont Point, St Brelade

Anti-Tank Gun Casemate

April 18th – May 3rd, 16th, 30th – June 28th – July 4th, 25th – August 8th, 30th – September 12th

Located on the sea wall adjacent to the cycle track and 'Old Station Café at Millbrook; this bunker was something of a time capsule when reopened in 1985. It has since been restored to pristine condition, and contains a rare 4.7cm *Pak K36(t)* Czech gun, along with a wealth of original fixtures, and fittings, including a full set of air ventilation equipment. Keep a look out for the soldiers' names above their clothes pegs, gas alarm instructions, and the original wiring and electrical fittings.

14:00 – 16:00 / Free / Millbrook, St. Lawrence

Gun Emplacements and Underground Bunkers

April 19th – May 4th, 17th, 31st – June 14th – July 5th, 26th – August 9th, 31st – September 13th

This is a restored section of the army battery 'Moltke' and displays one of the original 15.5cm K418 (f) French field guns from the battery. Further restored coastal artillery pieces can be seen on display and the bunker complex itself contains passage-linked personnel and ammunition bunkers, and forms an interesting comparison with the design and layout of the naval battery at Noirmont Point.

10:00 – 15:30 / £2 / Les Landes, St Ouen

10.5cm Coastal Defence Gun Casemate

May 9th – July 12th – August 2nd – September 27th

This is the only coastal defence bunker in the St. Ouen's Bay area to retain its original gun, and contains many other contemporary fixtures and fittings. At the 'sharp end' is the 1918 vintage 10.5cm K331 (f) weapon, which is actually French in origin, and had a range of 10-12 km. Although never used in anger, the bunker presents an interesting picture of life for the ordinary soldier, and features several photographic exhibitions and displays.

12:00 – 16:00 / £1.50 / La Corbière, St Brelade

'M19' Fortress Mortar Bunker with Linked Heavy Machine-Gun Bunker

May 9th, 25th – June 14th, 28th – July 12th – August 2nd, 23rd – September 13th, 27th

This bunker has been restored as fully as possible to its original condition, and displays and exhibits provide ample guidance for the workings of this unique weapon. Another interesting and unusual feature is the tunnel which links the bunker to a neighbouring fortification.

11:00 – 16:30 / £2 / La Corbière, St Brelade

Heavy Machine-Gun Turret Bunker

May 23rd – June 6th, 20th July 4th, 18th – August 1st, 15th, 29th – September 12th

One of the few surviving examples, named sechsschartentürme (literally "six-shooting turret") bunkers once proliferated along the Atlantic Wall. It is possible to access the interior of the cupola, equipped with a deactivated MG34 machine-gun, and peer through the optics to see a landscape viewed as a potential invasion point by the German garrison

14:30 – 17:30 / Free / Val de la Mare, St Ouen

The Channel Islands Occupation Society online diary, visit:

www.ciosjersey.org.uk/diary.htm