

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING AT
BRIXHAM BATTERY 2009**

**Prepared for
The Brixham Battery Heritage Centre Group**

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1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of archaeological recording undertaken by Exeter Archaeology at the Emergency Coast Artillery Battery at Battery Gardens, Brixham, Torbay (SX 9210 5690; Fig. 1). The work was undertaken under a condition attached to the grant of planning consent for works to the no. 1 gun position, and was commissioned by the Brixham Battery Heritage Centre Group, who maintain the site. The works involve unblocking entrances into the underground rooms at the rear of the gun floor and providing new displays in the crew war shelters.

The Emergency Coast Artillery Battery at Battery Gardens, along with a similar site at Corbyn's Head at Torquay, was constructed in 1940 to provide coastal defence for the anchorage (and potential landing beaches) of Torbay. The battery was also provided with several pieces of anti-aircraft artillery. As a whole the site is a rare survival of a WWII emergency battery, which is recognised in its protection as a Scheduled Monument. A survey of the battery was prepared by English Heritage in 2001, and was published to a wider audience in 2003 (Newman and Salvatore 2003). The underground structures were not accessible at the time of the English Heritage survey.

2. AIMS

The aim of the project was to compile a record of those parts of the site to be affected by the works.

3. METHOD

The recording was undertaken in accordance with a method statement prepared by Exeter Archaeology (Stead 2009). The photographic record was prepared using black and white print film and colour digital format, accompanied by a brief written description to provide a context for the photographic record. A register of the photographic record is presented in appendix 1.

4. RESULTS (Fig. 2)

The No. 1 gun floor and corridor (Pl. 1)

The gun house, over the gun floor, is constructed of brick, whose east and west walls incorporate blocked recesses, possibly former storage lockers for ready ammunition. In the rear of the gun house is a tall, wide opening that gave access into a corridor. This opening was sealed in 1947 using concrete blocks, and has recently been partially unblocked with a new steel door added to provide entry to the corridor. The corridor is constructed of brick and is integral to the gun house. The corridor gives access to a southern tunnel and to the no. 1 gun crew war shelter. The entrances to these rooms were also sealed in 1947 using concrete blocks, and at the time of the survey this blocking had been partially removed.

The south tunnel (Pl. 2)

The south tunnel is constructed of concrete with a smooth finish, but with small sections where impressions from corrugated iron shuttering is visible. The roof of the tunnel is formed from concrete with an arched profile. On its north elevation are clips for removed electric cabling, and fittings for two electric lights. Below these fittings are two recesses, probably for storage (possibly of extra light bulbs). The tunnel is aligned north-west to south-east, but

halfway along its source changes direction to a north to south origination (see inset plan on Fig. 2). At its south end the tunnel has been sealed, again with concrete blocks, and here the tunnel probably turns east and continues for a short distance where an exit is visible beside a path. At the south end of the tunnel are two low recesses set into the west elevation. These may have provided storage for ammunition, but are relatively small, so may have housed the cartridges containing the propellant, rather than the shells themselves.

No. 1 crew war shelter (Pl. 3)

Both war shelters are constructed of brick. The present paint scheme of green and light yellow with a black stripe overlies a partial layer of brown paint, possibly an undercoat. Both rooms have high-level brick vents.

The no. 1 crew war shelter is entered from the corridor, and there is also an opening in its west elevation into the no. 2 crew war shelter. During the survey a door, now blocked, was discovered in the north (external) elevation. The shelter would have been lit by a window, also blocked, in the north elevation. Surviving fittings include scars of electric cabling and the fuse box, a stove base with asbestos sheet lining to the walls and a vent pipe in the ceiling above, a noticeboard or backing of a dartboard, coat hooks and scars of removed shelving.

No. 2 crew war shelter (Pl. 4)

The shelter would have been entered via a brick-lined passage from the no. 1 gun floor, which is now blocked just outside its doorway. There was, and still is, also access between the two war shelters. The shelter is L-shaped, which reflects the position of an exterior coal store. A chute provided access to this bunker from inside the shelter. The shelter would have been lit by a window, now blocked, in the north elevation. Surviving fittings include clips for electric cabling, two stove bases and coat hooks on the south and east elevations.

5. DISCUSSION

A photographic record was made of the newly-accessible underground structures behind the no. 1. gun floor, namely a corridor giving access to two crew war shelters and a tunnel. This tunnel was probably used for the storage of ammunition, although it is very small, and there is limited specific storage space for ammunition (as opposed to using the tunnel floor).

Few fittings survive within these structures and it is clear all portable artefacts and many of the fittings, such as electric cables and stoves, were removed when the site was abandoned at the end of WWII. The presence of a number of openings with post-war blocking provides an opportunity for reuse, particularly for the provision of new ventilation or an exhaust pipe or a generator.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The project was commissioned by the Brixham Battery Heritage Centre Group (BBHCG), and managed by P. Treyhorn (BBHCG) and P. Stead (Exeter Archaeology). The fieldwork was undertaken by Andrew Passmore, and the report illustrations prepared by T. Ives. Thanks are due to H. Bishop, Torbay Council's Senior Historic Environment Officer for advice of the specification of works, and the volunteers of the BBHCG for assistance during the survey.

SOURCES CONSULTED

- Newman, P. and Salvatore, J.P. 2003 'An emergency coastal artillery battery at Battery Gardens, Brixham, Torbay', *Proc. Devon. Archaeol. Soc.* **61**, 209-33.
- Stead, P. *Method Statement for Archaeological Recording at Brixham Coastal Battery, Battery Gardens, Brixham, Devon* (project number 6769).

APPENDIX 1: The photographic register

Photographic indexes were prepared for both the black and white print film and the digital photography. The digital register is prepared below, and the location of photographs is presented on Fig. 2.

EXETER ARCHAEOLOGY		PHOTOGRAPHIC REGISTER: DIGITAL REGISTER	
Site name: Brixham Battery War Shelter		Date: 3 August 2009	Project no: 6769
No.	Description	View to	
1	View of gun floor from outside.	South	
2	View of inside of gun floor showing blocked rear entrance. 1m scale.	Southwest	
3	Corridor behind gun floor, blocked door in south tunnel. 1m scale.	Southeast	
4	Corridor behind gun floor, blocked door into war shelter. 1m scale.	Northwest	
5	South tunnel. 1m scale.	East	
6	South tunnel. 1m scale.	East	
7	South tunnel, electric light fitting.	East	
8	South tunnel, electric light fitting with void below. 1m scale.	Southeast	
9	South tunnel. 1m scale.	Southeast	
10	South tunnel. 1m scale.	Southeast	
11	South tunnel showing blocking. 1m scale.	Southeast	
12	South tunnel, electric light fitting with void below. 1m scale.	East	
13	South tunnel, magazine.	South	
14	South tunnel, magazine.	South	
15	South tunnel, magazine.	South	
16	South tunnel. 1m scale.	Northwest	
17	South tunnel. 1m scale.	Northwest	
18	South tunnel. 1m scale.	Northwest	
19	Entrance into south tunnel showing changes in build.	East	
20	No. 1 crew war shelter, blocked door from corridor. 1m scale.	Southeast	
21	No. 1 crew war shelter, window and stove base. 1m scale.	East	
22	No. 1 crew war shelter, window. 1m scale.	Northeast	
23	No. 1 crew war shelter, blocked external door. 1m scale.	Northeast	
24	No. 1 crew war shelter, north wall and door into no. 2 crew shelter. 1m scale.	Northwest	
25	No. 1 crew war shelter, west elevation. 1m scale.	Southwest	
26	No. 2 crew war shelter, window. 1m scale.	Northeast	
27	No. 2 crew war shelter, stove and coal chute. 1m scale.	Northeast	
28	No. 2 crew war shelter, south elevation. 1m scale.	Southeast	
29	No. 2 crew war shelter, north wall and stove base. 1m scale.	Northwest	
30	No. 2 crew war shelter, door into shelter from tunnel.	East	
31	No. 2 crew war shelter, South elevation. 1m scale.	East	
32	No. 1 crew war shelter, scars of electric cabling.	Southwest	
33	Blocked outside entrance into tunnel.	South	

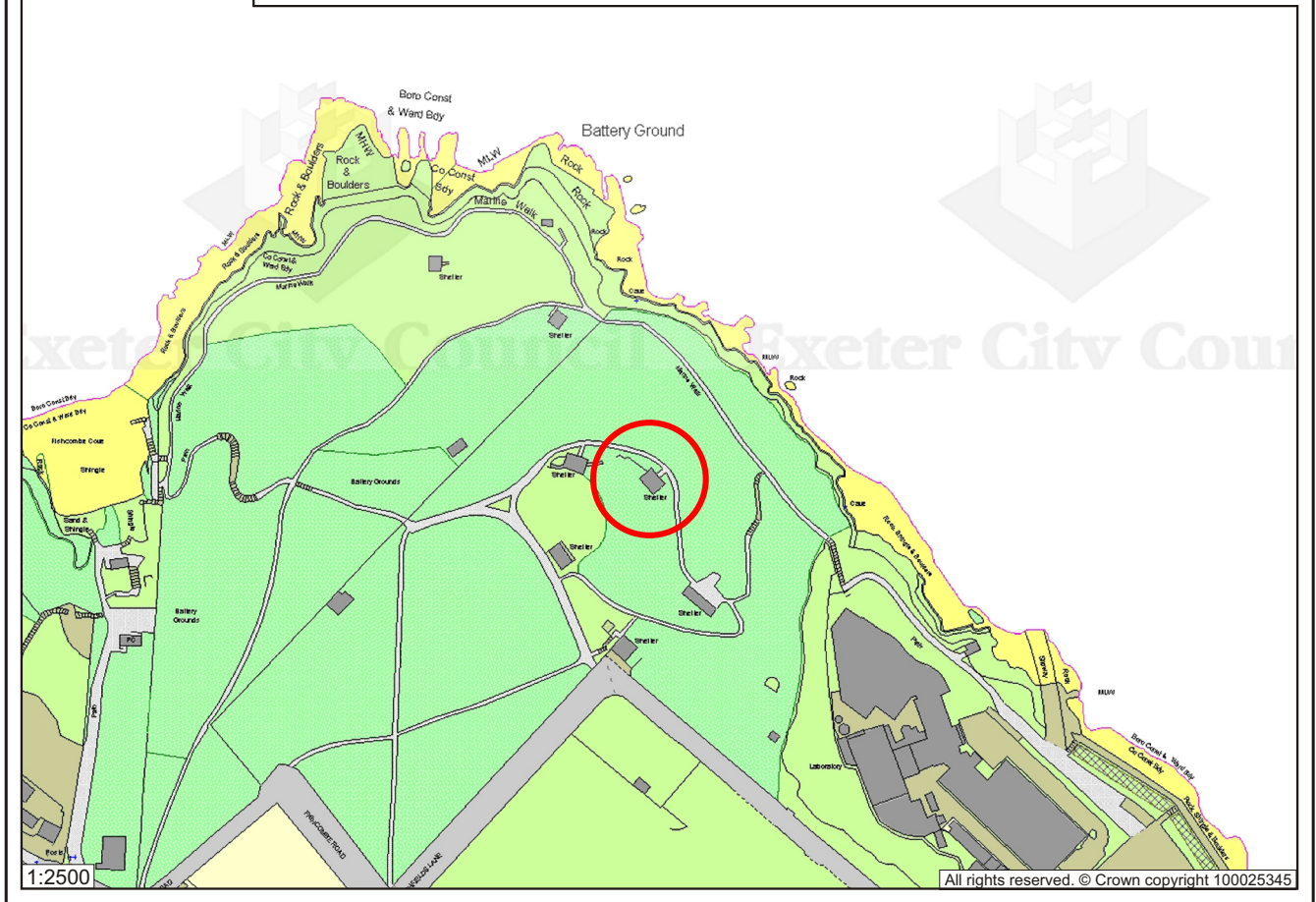
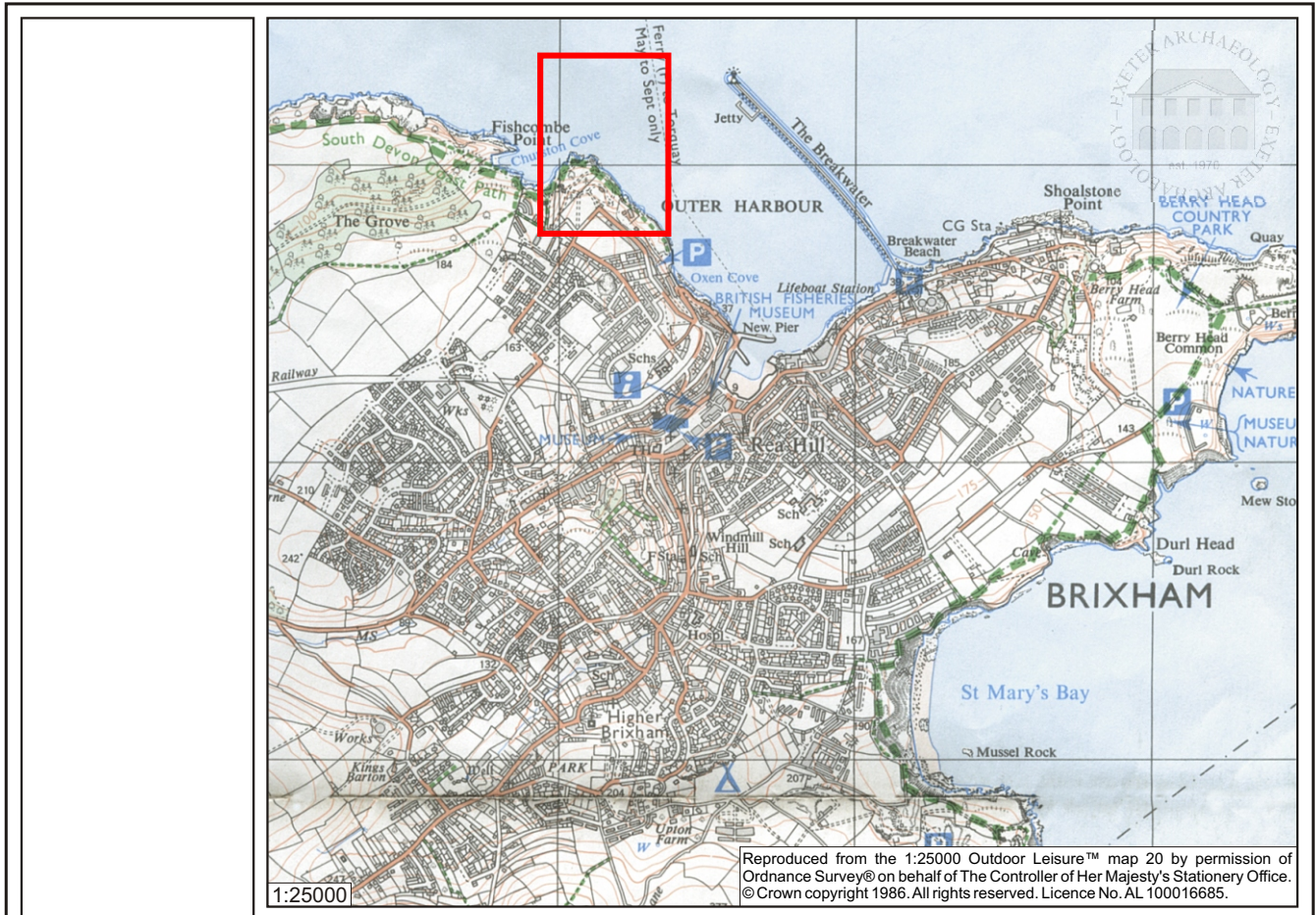


Fig. 1 Location of site.

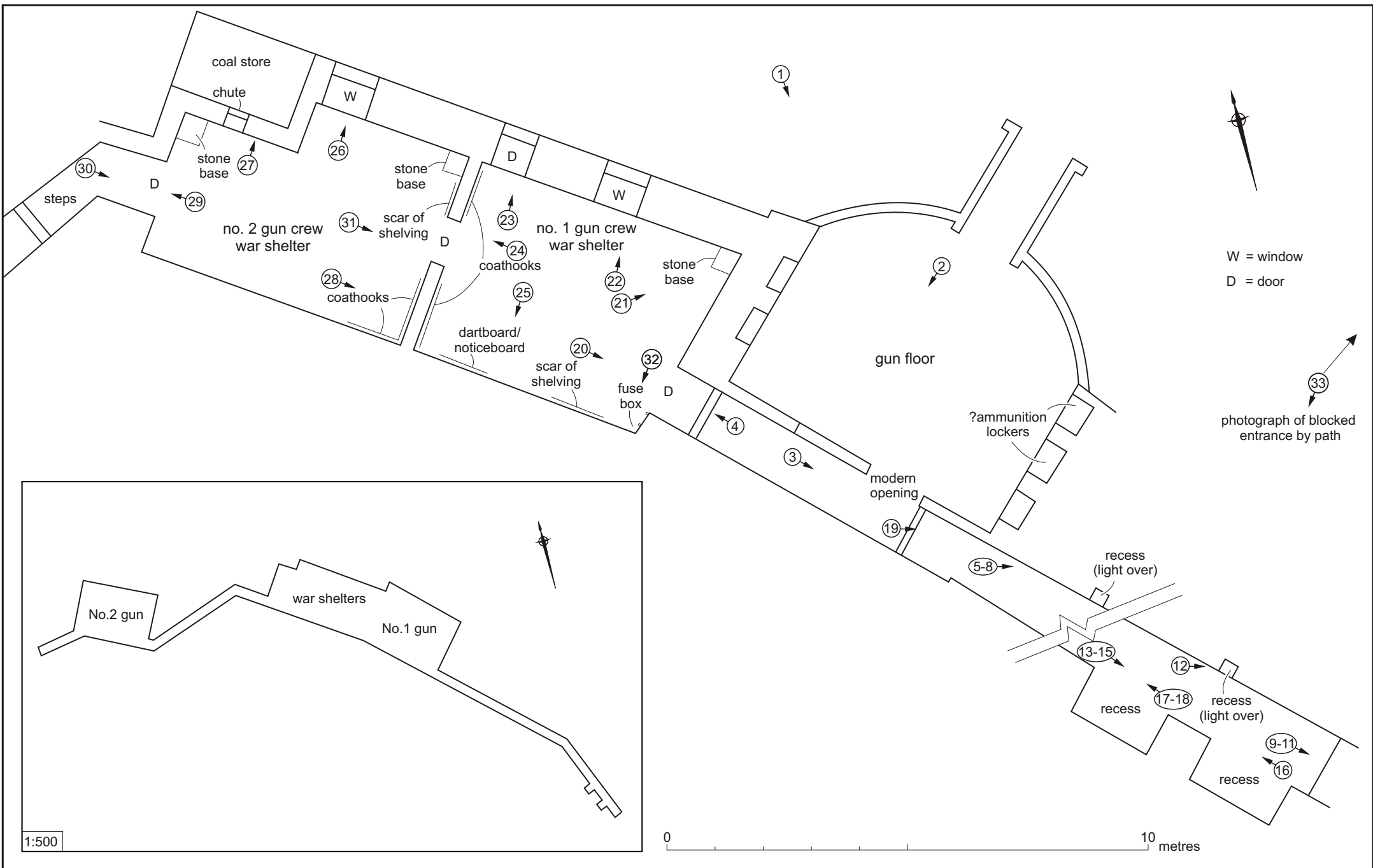


Fig. 2 Sketch plan of the site showing location and direction of photographs (based on a plan provided by the Brixham Battery Heritage Centre Group).



Plate 1 The inside of the gun floor showing blocked rear opening, looking south-west. 1m scale.



Plate 2 Electric light fitting with void below in the south tunnel, looking south-east. 1m scale.



Plate 3 No. 1 gun crew war shelter showing blocked external door, looking north-east. 1m scale.



Plate 3 No. 2 gun crew war shelter showing door opening and stove base, looking south-east. 1m scale.