

The Fort was heavily manned during the Great War, together with all the other Harbour Forts. Under the 1921 Treaty, the Harbour Forts (but not Haulbowline) remained in the possession of the British Government. This state of affairs continued until the 1938 agreement whereby the British handed over to the Irish Government the Forts at Cork Harbour, Berehaven and Lough Swilly.

On 11 July 1938, the British flag was lowered for the last time over Fort Camden, to be replaced by the Tricolour.

Fort Camden - soon afterwards to be named Dun ui Mheachair or Fort Meagher in honour of the patriot Thomas Francis Meagher - was again heavily manned during World War II, principally by the Corps of Engineers. After 1945 there continued Coast Defence Artillery firing practices and frequent other training courses. In recent decades there was less use of the Fort, with a small caretaking staff and Summer Camps for FCA and Slua Muiri.

For today's ceremony, in view of Fort Meagher's long association with the Artillery Corps and the Corps of Engineers, it is appropriate that the Body of Troops be provided by the 1st Field Artillery Regiment, the Fort Orderly Officer and the Fort Guard be provided by the 1st Field Engineer Company, and the guns on display be provided by the 8th Field Artillery Regiment FCA, the last Unit responsible for the Fort. The Defence Forces hand over to Cork County Council, confident that this magnificent and historic Fort will be in good hands.

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IT IS WELL TO KNOW that Fort Meagher is recognised internationally to be one of the world's finest remaining examples of a classical Coast Artillery Fort. Hereunder is an extract from "Casemate", the Journal of the international Fortress Study Group, which visited the Fort recently:

"Fort Meagher is to be handed over to the Local Authority for development. This is one solution to the problem of getting the 11" RMLs out over the drawbridge! Along with a 7" RBL they are embedded in the earth over the trunnions. A zigzag ramp with hauling rings and two very long stepped passageways all lead to the water-level batteries. A slowly rising passage leads to four armoured 11" RML casemates, complete with mantlet bars; in the open are three pre-WWI 12-pounder positions, and through a massive portal two cambers (piers) and a quay with Brennan torpedo position. From the 18" gauge track (as used at Chatham and Woolwich) on the quay, the locomotive used to be lifted by a crane which survives to the higher level. Care was taken over footing: the quay floor was pecked, passage floors were crosshatched, and the stairs were of granite. The most beautiful of these was in the magazines; wedge-shaped and cantilevered out of the walls of the circular shaft without centre support, they spiralled glistening up into the darkness."