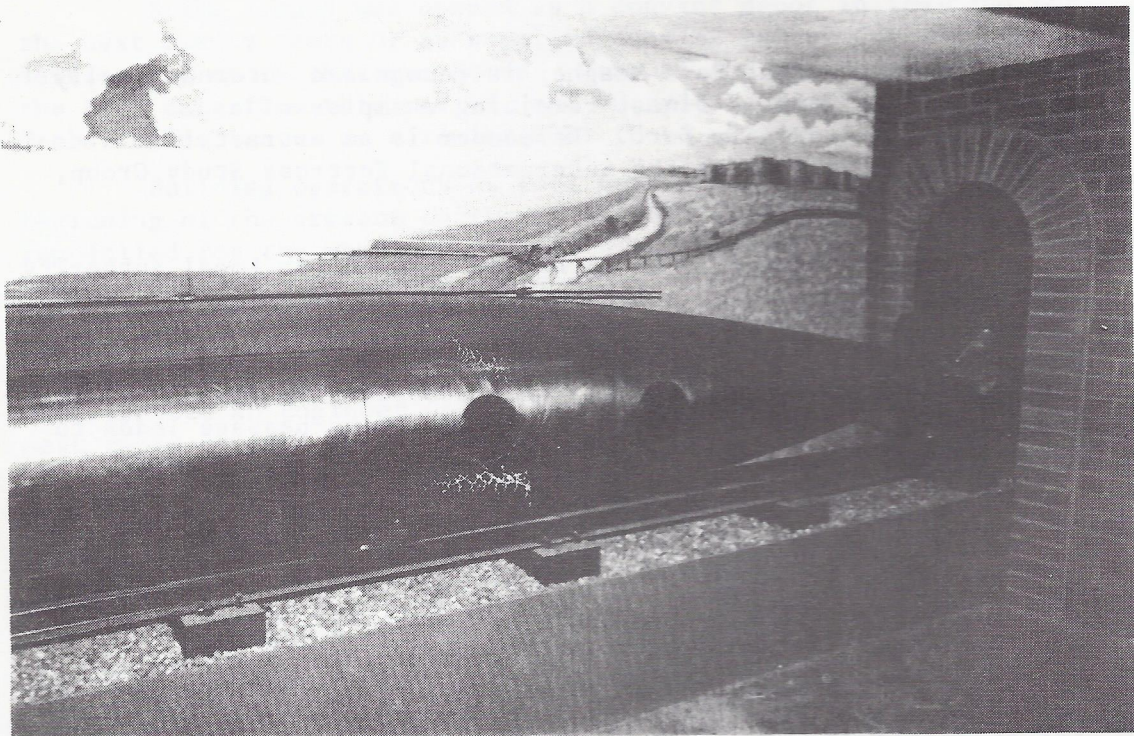


THE BRENNAN TORPEDO

No account of Fort Meagher should fail to mention the remarkable weapon system known as the Brennan Torpedo.

As earlier mentioned, Fort Meagher is oriented largely inward towards the channel and the harbour. It was thus ideally suited for the siting of a torpedo system. About the 1880s the British Government were anxious to develop a system whereby a weapon could be guided to its target. Louis Philip Brennan, an Irish inventor from Mayo, patented a means whereby a vessel could be propelled through water by an engine on the shore, not only being held constantly under control, but capable of being steered towards its target, also from the shore. The system comprised a giant winch with a cable leading into the torpedo which lay on guide rails running into the water. (The winch housing and the remains of the guide rails are still in existence.) Inside the torpedo the long cable was wound around a large bobbin or drum. When the winch was operated, the drum inside the torpedo rotated just like a spool of thread rotates when held between the fingers as the thread is pulled. The rotating drum operated the torpedo's propellers which drove the torpedo away from the winch. Steering vanes on the torpedo were also operated by cables from shore.

Now, a century later, it is right that this unique invention be given the place it so justly deserves in the history of weaponry, as the world's first guided missile.



Model of the Brennan Torpedo