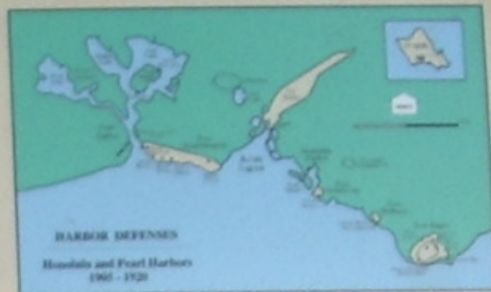


# DEFENDING HONOLULU



View of Honolulu from Puncchbowl, 1875  
 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
 Honolulu, Academy of Arts (1894.1)

Hawai'i has been an important site for coastal defense in the Pacific since the late 1880s. The Army Corps of Engineers began the construction of 4 forts between Honolulu and Pearl Harbors in 1908. The batteries at these forts housed large caliber artillery to defend O'ahu from an ocean attack.



## Fort Ruger

Diamond Head was selected as a fortification because its crater walls are a natural defense and from its summit, ships could be seen from Koko Head to Pearl Harbor. Fort Ruger began in 1908 with the construction of Battery Harlow on the outer slopes of the crater and Fire Control Station Diamond Head at the summit.



Constructing Fort Ruger and Battery Harlow on the outer, inland slopes of Diamond Head, circa 1908.



Mules were the bulldozers of the early 1900s, hauling rocks, pulling wagons, and grading.



Small gauge railroad tracks were used to move rocks and supplies through the tunnels.



Map of Fort Ruger showing the location of the 5 batteries and other artillery placed around Diamond Head Crater between 1908 and 1930.

Three more batteries were built during World War I. Dodge and Hulings were tunnels through the crater wall while Birkhimer was buried in the crater floor. During World War II, one more battery was tunneled through the seaward crater wall and named Battery 407.

All the artillery was dismantled in 1950. None of the guns of Fort Ruger was ever fired during a war.

## Guns and Batteries

The mortars at Battery Harlow were aimed to fire over the crater and far out into the channel south of O'ahu. With a range of 8 miles, the mortars could reach both Honolulu and Pearl Harbors. The target locations were plotted and transmitted from the Fire Control Station at the summit.



U.S. Army Museum of Hawai'i

Mortars at Battery Harlow, circa 1930. Harlow had 2 mortar pits, each with 4 mortars. These 12-inch mortars fired over the crater to offshore targets.

