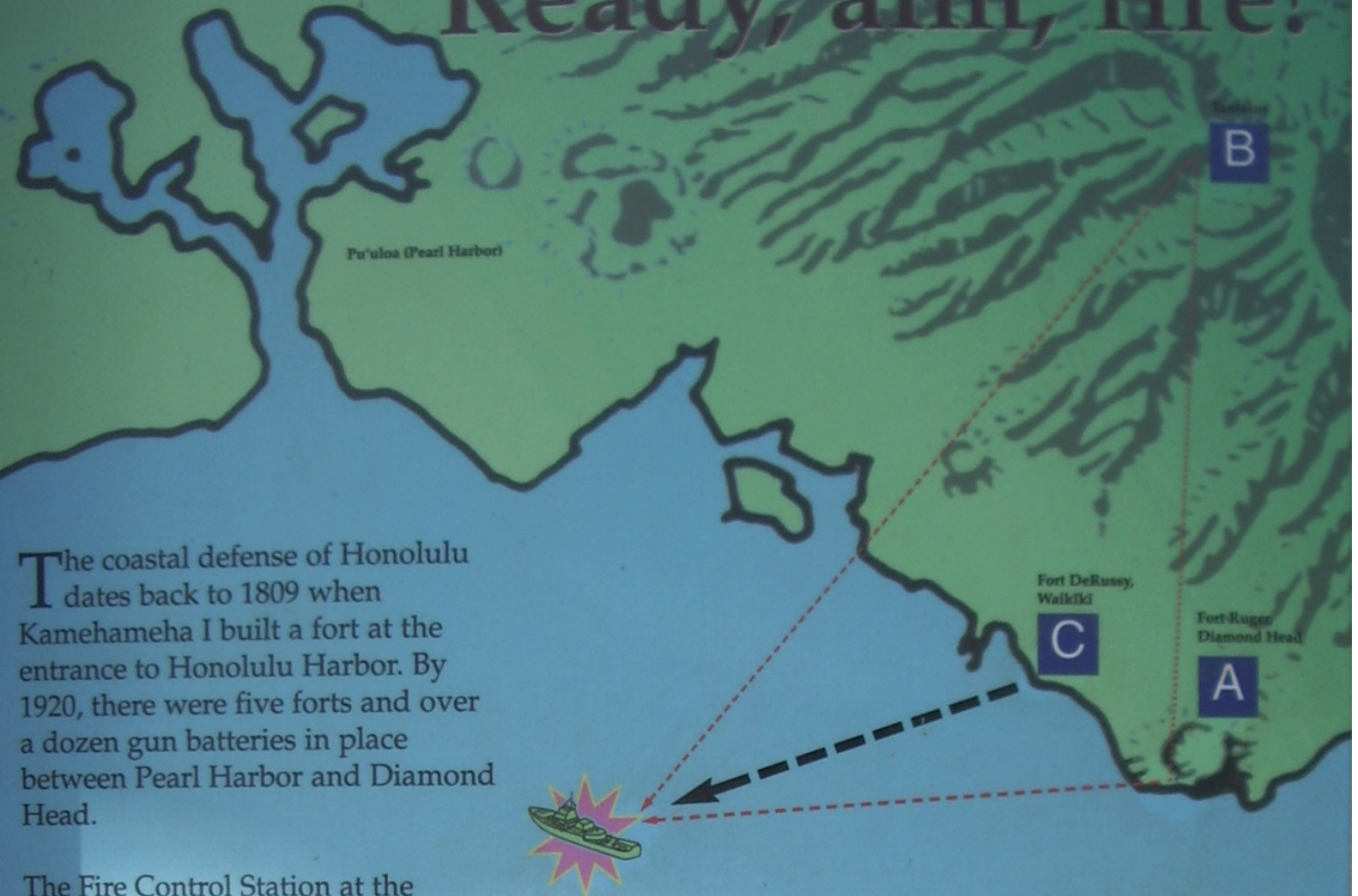


Ready, aim, fire!

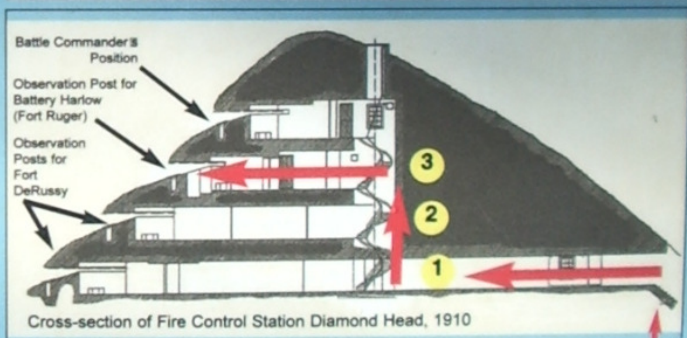


The coastal defense of Honolulu dates back to 1809 when Kamehameha I built a fort at the entrance to Honolulu Harbor. By 1920, there were five forts and over a dozen gun batteries in place between Pearl Harbor and Diamond Head.

The Fire Control Station at the summit of Diamond Head was built between 1908 and 1911 as part of this coastal defense system. The Station served as an observation post for spotting enemy ships approaching O'ahu.

As you exit into sunlight at the Station's third level, imagine that you are an artillery spotter in 1912, scanning the ocean for enemy ships.

Before radar and modern computers...



The hike to the summit takes you through the Fire Control Station. After climbing the 99-steps, you enter a tunnel on Level 1. From this lowest level, you ascend two flights up a spiral staircase and exit the underground chambers on Level 3.

Before radar was invented during World War II, artillery spotters used triangulation to pinpoint enemy targets.

With the known distance between two fixed points at Diamond Head (A) and Tantalus (B), the position of target ships out to sea could be calculated.

This information was relayed by telephone to Fort DeRussy (C) in Waikiki or Fort Ruger at Diamond Head (A), where cannons and mortars were aimed and fired. While these forts were prepared to defend Honolulu, no artillery was ever fired during a war.



Construction of the trail and the Fire Control Station at the summit involved the removal of a portion of the crater rim. The excavated dirt was sent down a chute and deposited on the lower, interior slope of the crater.

Bishop Museum Archives (circa 1909)

