

REPORT ON OCTOBER MEETING

Mr Greg Scott: Fort Drummond.

At our October meeting, Greg delivered a very detailed account of the history of this important aspect of Wollongong's defence system during World War II. Beginning with plans of these two gun placements and their interconnecting services, Greg then showed photographs taken during the construction period, illustrating the huge excavations and the enormous amounts of concrete required to accommodate these two heavy long-range guns with 9.2-inch bore (234mm).

These guns were test-fired in March 1943, by which time the Japanese had entered the war and the guns were required in Darwin. Transported one by one to Darwin, they were replaced here by camouflaged dummies until replaced by later models in 1945-46, by which time it was too late for them ever to be used in anger. Today the guns are no longer there, but the sites are marked by two large concrete arches in the vicinity of Win TV at Coniston. The connecting tunnels still exist, now tenanted by mushroom growers.

Greg explained the working of the guns by showing a video of similar weapons being used by the Portuguese army, which reminded us of an early Australian connection with Portugal through Captain Arthur Phillip's service in South America on secondment to the Portuguese navy.

Greg has promised a more detailed account for a future issue of the Bulletin.
