

THE WAR YEARS ON BRIBIE ISLAND

War changed Bribie from a popular holiday destination to a military installation. Just a few residents remained with some providing essential services to the military and the Civilian Construction Corp.

Fort Bribie and Fort Skirmish were built 1939/41.

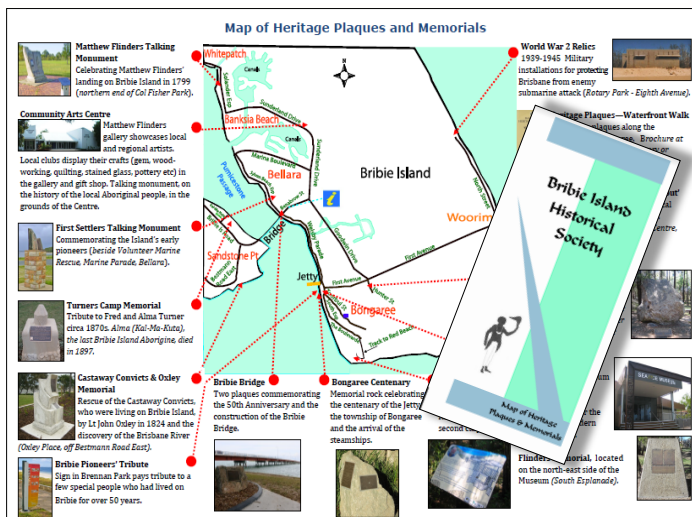
Military were billeted in Camps but also in many private homes, guesthouses and the newly built 'Hotel Bribie' at Woorim.

Signallers with the 'Australian Women's Army Service' worked at the 'Ocean Beach Guesthouse' and were housed in the Hotel Bribie after the liquor Licence was transferred to a cottage in Bongaree.

In 1937 two large guns were placed at Cowan Cowan on the western side of Moreton Island. Prior to that the only defence of the Moreton Bay region was Fort Lytton, at the mouth of the Brisbane River, constructed in the 1880's.

Bribie was an isolated island paradise in those days with less than 100 residents with no power or water supply. Fish were abundant but mosquitoes and sandflies were a major problem. The dung from roaming cattle was collected to burn on open fires as an insect deterrent.

Brochure of other interesting Bribie sites



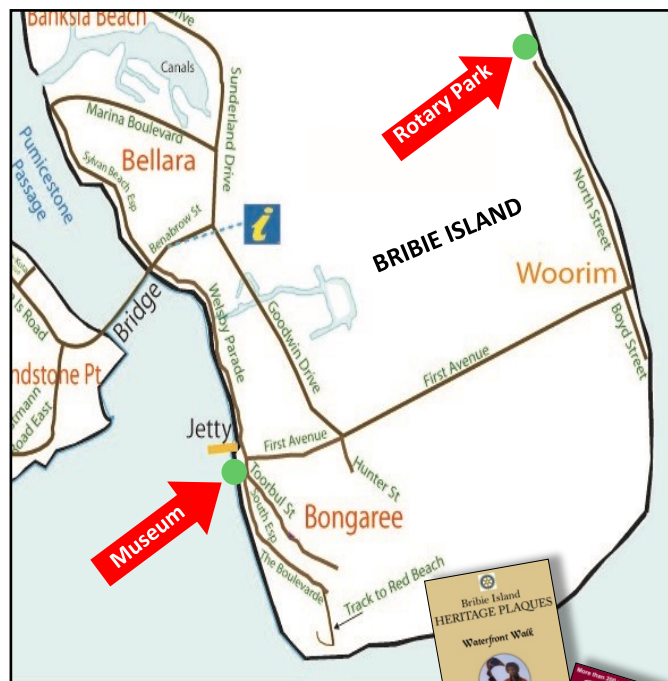
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Off North St opposite 8th Ave

Rotary Park is located on the original site of FORT SKIRMISH where two original military structures are still visible with signs about Moreton Bay War defences in during WW2.



The Bribie Island **Seaside Museum** exhibits various aspects of Bribie's rich history and a display of World War 2 photos and maps. Other free heritage **Walk Brochures** are available at the Museum and the Visitor Information Centre.

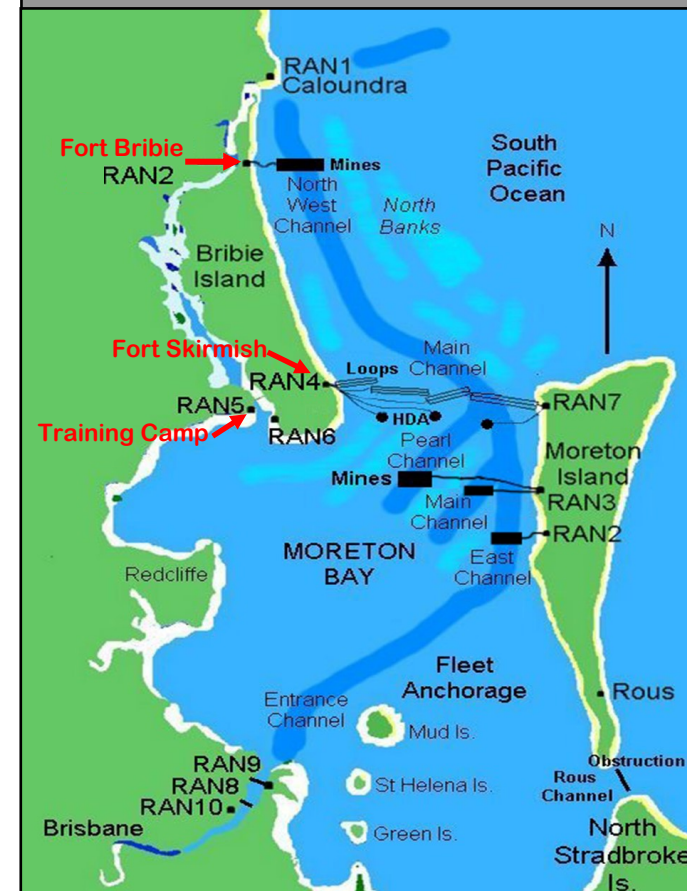


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Visit the history of **WORLD WAR 2** on **BRIBIE ISLAND**



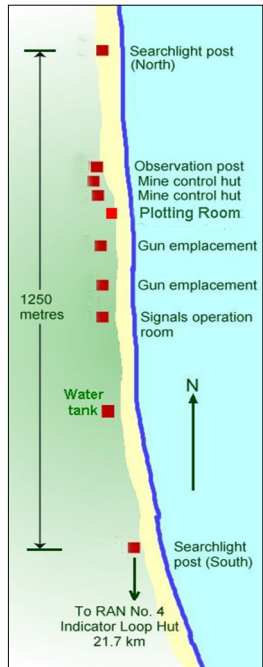
Map shows the numerous military defence locations in Moreton Bay

BRISBANE DEFENCES 1939 – 1945

Fort Bribie - Fort Skirmish - Training Camp
Submarine detection
Guns & Mines - Australian & US Troops

Fort Bribie

Fort Bribie (RAN 2) was built on the north of Bribie Island to protect the NW shipping channel to the Port of Brisbane.



Anti-Submarine indicator loop cables, laid on the sea bed, were linked to remote controlled mines operating in conjunction with two searchlights, two 6 inch guns, a substantial camp and support infrastructure built behind the dunes.

The sand dunes have eroded over the years so now few military structures remain visible.

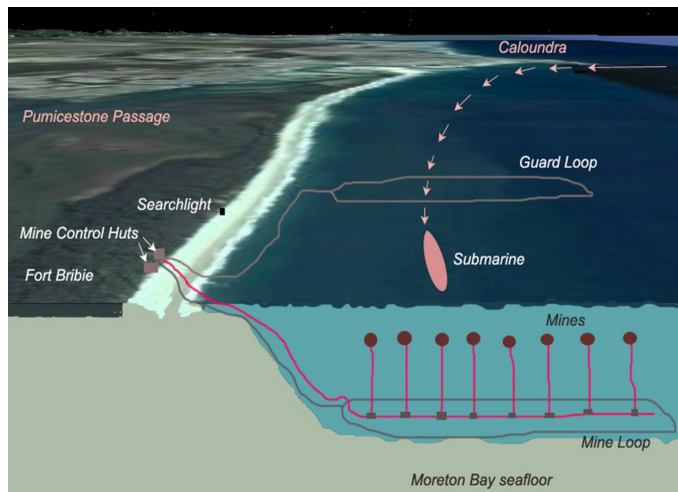
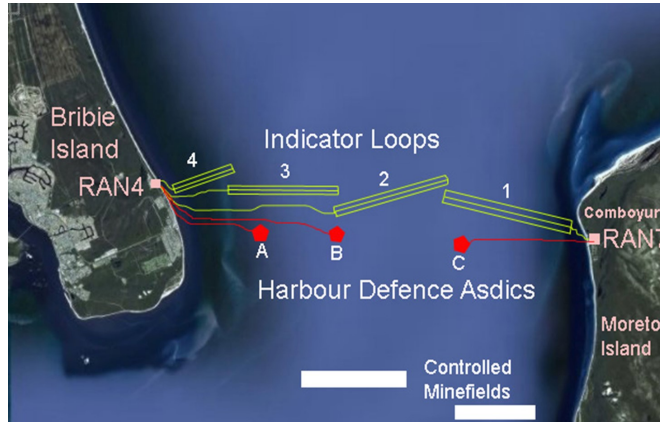


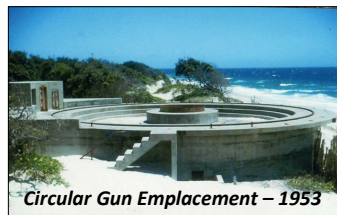
Diagram of Submarine Indicator Loops and under-water mines

Fort Skirmish

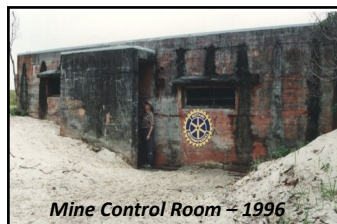


Fort Skirmish (RAN 4) protected the Main and East shipping channels between Bribie and Moreton Islands (RAN 7) with submarine indicator loops linked to electronically controlled mines. The Control Room and Generator building can still be seen in the area of Rotary Park (by the beach) with signs showing large circular Gun Emplacements and several Lookout Towers which have since been demolished.

The Fort was manned by Australian Navy & Army personnel .



A major restoration project was carried out on the Mine Control room in 1996 by Bribie Island Rotary Club when the building was virtually buried in the dunes.



Timber camp buildings were removed after the War but some concrete structures were used as holiday homes for many years, until unsafe or demolished.

Large informative signs were erected in 2017.

Erosion and vandalism are a constant threat to the survival of World War 2 relics.

Defence Effort

The 'Brisbane Line' was a controversial defence proposal formulated during World War 2 to concede northern areas of Australia in the event of an invasion by the Japanese.

Japan bombed Pearl Harbour in 1941; Singapore fell in February 1942; US General Douglas MacArthur appointed Commander-in-Chief of Allied Forces in the SW Pacific in July 1942 and set up his GHQ in Brisbane.

Brisbane hosted more submarines during WW2 than any other city in the world.

A large training camp was established at Toorbul Point (now Sandstone Pt) where thousands of Australian & US troops were progressively trained in beach landing craft.



The tourist steamship *Koopa* was requisitioned for troop training on Bribie beaches prior to service in Papua New Guinea.

The defence installations at Forts Bribie and Skirmish were never used in anger.

However, on the night of 14 May 1943 the Australian hospital ship *Centaur*, with 332 on board, was sunk by a Japanese submarine torpedo off Moreton Island with only 66 survivors.

