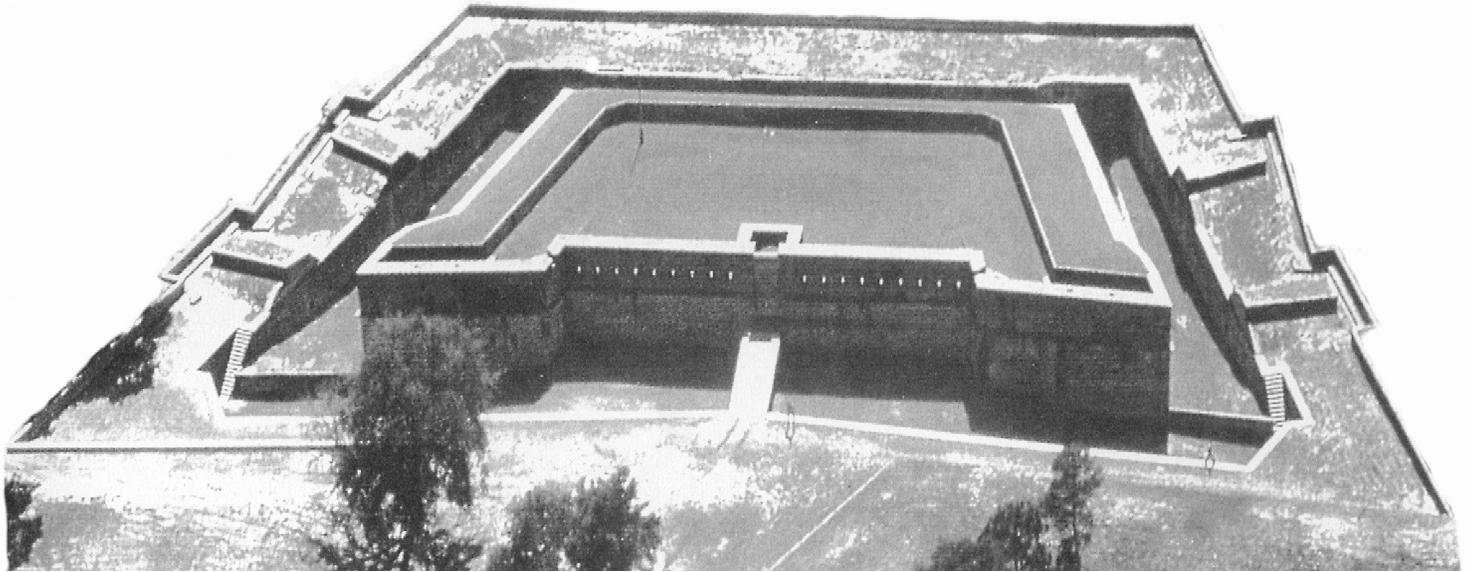


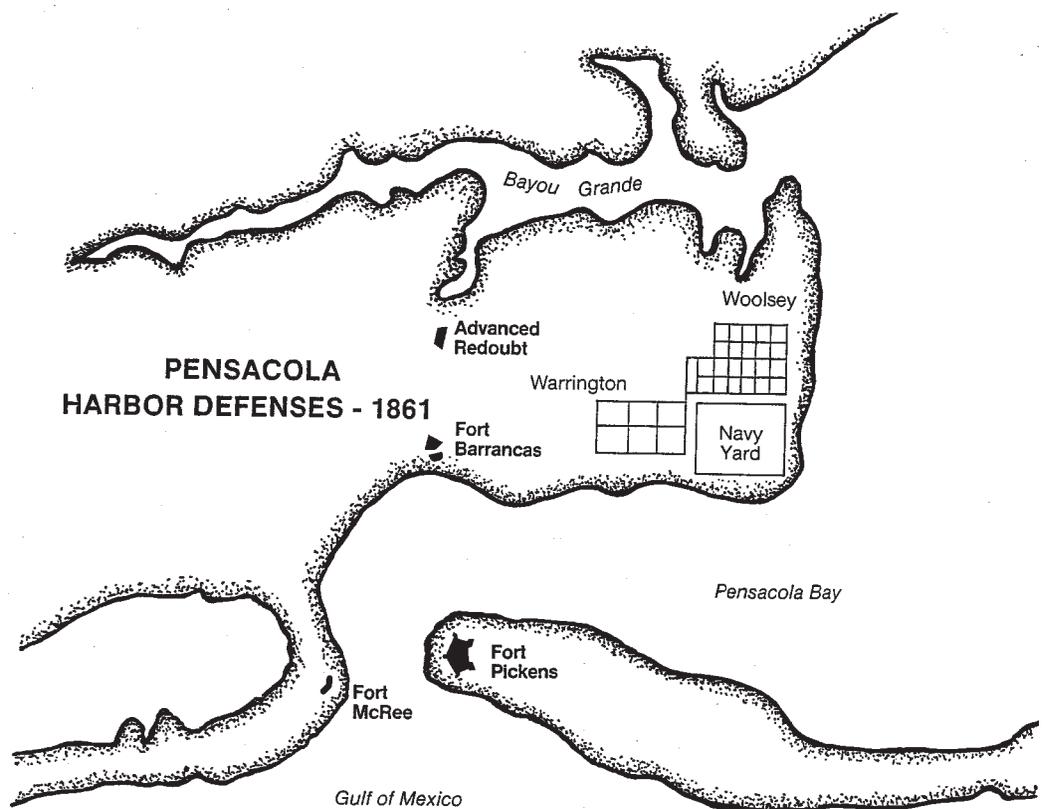


Advanced Redoubt of Fort Barrancas



Why Redoubt?

The Advanced Redoubt of Fort Barrancas was built between 1845 and 1870 as part of a defensive network for the Pensacola Navy Yard. Forts Pickens, McRee, and Barrancas protected the entrance to the harbor; the Advanced Redoubt was constructed to defend the northern side of the peninsula on which the navy yard was located. On October 8, 1863, Confederate Brigadier General Clanton led an attack against Fort Barrancas defended by U.S. Colored Troops of the 14th Regiment Corps d'Afrique and the 7th Vermont Infantry. General Clanton was heard to say that his men were after the blacks; "that he would not fire on the white pickets, but that every black picket that could be seen would be shot." After a brisk skirmish the estimated 200 Confederates retired into the woods. The next day the Confederates returned and engaged the pickets with musketry at Advanced Redoubt. The Federals blazed back with small arms and a few howitzer rounds. The Confederate troops retreated again with no casualties reported on either side.

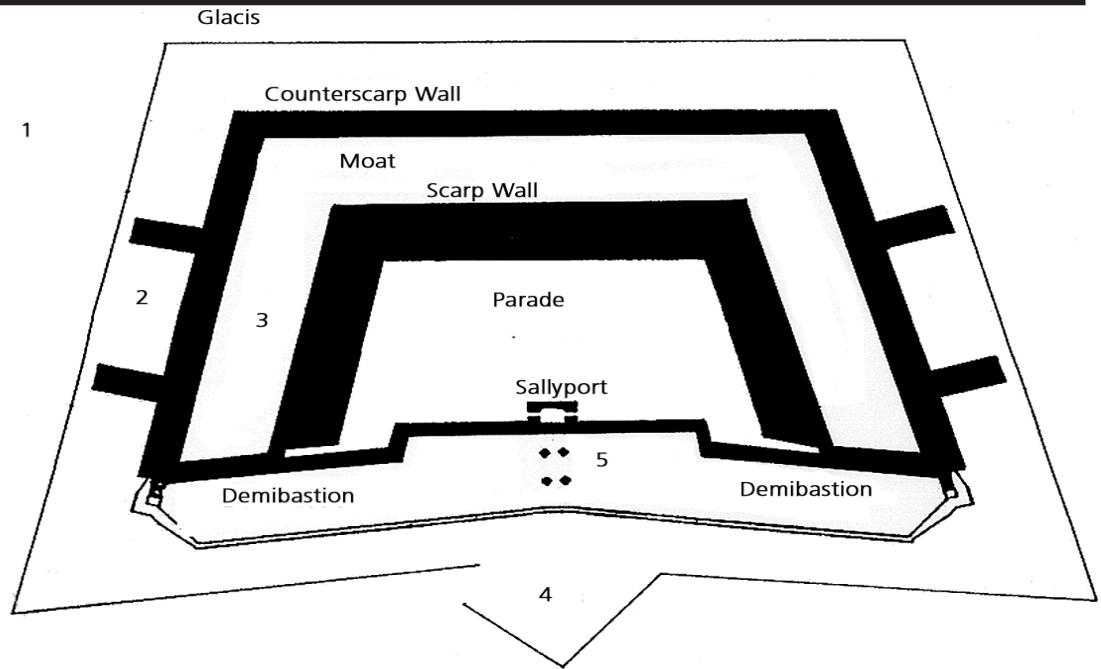


An Infantryman's Nightmare: Attack the Redoubt

The design of the Advanced Redoubt (an enclosed work protecting a strategic point), exhibits the idea of defense in depth. As an attack began to beat back the defenders, the attacking soldiers would meet new obstacles to their progress. The goal was to make an assault as costly as possible and to exhaust the attacking troops before they

could gain access to the fort and the navy yard beyond. The modern visitor approaches the Advanced Redoubt from the east and south, coming first to the side and rear of the fort. However, an enemy would most likely have come from the west, down the peninsula.

Touring the Redoubt



Step Back in Time

To appreciate the power of the fortress take a stroll through history to see how the Advanced Redoubt was designed to oppose enemy forces. As you wander, be careful of uneven walkways, dark areas, slippery places, and snakes.

#1. You are on an open slope called the glacis. As an attacker, you would be exposed to cannon and musket fire from the main wall (scarp) as well as musket fire from the top of the outer wall (counterscarp). The solution is to dig a series of trenches to cover the advance. The trenches must be big enough for cannon as well as infantry to advance.

#2. As a rush of infantry from the trenches overwhelms the west end of the counterscarp, defenders would fall back to these traverses. Defending soldiers are still protected, while the attackers are now exposed. The two traverses allow the defense to fall back gradually while offering stubborn resistance.

#3. At the end of the moat are two windows that have been sealed with red brick. These are embrasures for cannon called flank howitzers. Canister, cannon-sized buckshot, would be fired down the ditch. Notice the loopholes (vertical windows in the wall) on either side. Infantry could fire muskets through these loopholes while completely protected by the wall. Anyone in the moat would be

caught in a deadly crossfire of musketry while facing a hail of canister from the howitzers. The brick-lined ditch is the cunette, for drainage.

#4. If the enemy reaches the back of the fort (the gorge), additional musket fire would come from galleries atop the demibastions on either side. (The pitting visible today resulted from target practice in the 1930s and 1940s.)

#5. Attackers might attempt to enter the fort through the sallyport after first destroying the drawbridge. On either side are embrasures for howitzers, both atop and within the demibastions. Here was the deadliest crossfire of all.

These forts could only be taken by means of a siege. Weeks of trenching would bring cannon up to point-blank range to pound the walls with solid shot. Debris from the collapsing walls would fill the moat and give access to the fort's interior. A siege took a tremendous amount of time, equipment, and casualties, and might be broken at any time if reinforcements arrived at the Redoubt.

Tradition and Technology

The Advanced Redoubt was built at the end of an era, incorporating the lessons of many centuries of engineering. For over 500 years, cannon had hurled round iron balls to batter down walls. Cannon had ended the age of castles, and had led to the designs found in seacoast forts like Pickens, Barrancas, and Redoubt. Among the most advanced of their day, these forts were built to last for centuries.

But the changes in technology that mark the modern age had begun before the Redoubt was completed. By the end of the American Civil War in 1865, rifled cannon and ironclad warships had made this fort, and all others like it, obsolete.

Nevertheless the fort was completed because engineers had not yet solved the problems presented by the new weapons.

This fort is a study in changes. The construction began with slave labor but was finished by free men. In an age of brick and stone, its walls were filled with cement. Although it was designed for the ages, it was outdated before the last brick was set.

The United States continues to struggle with the need for protection. As in the past, the challenge today is to determine the best defense in the face of new technologies and potential threats.