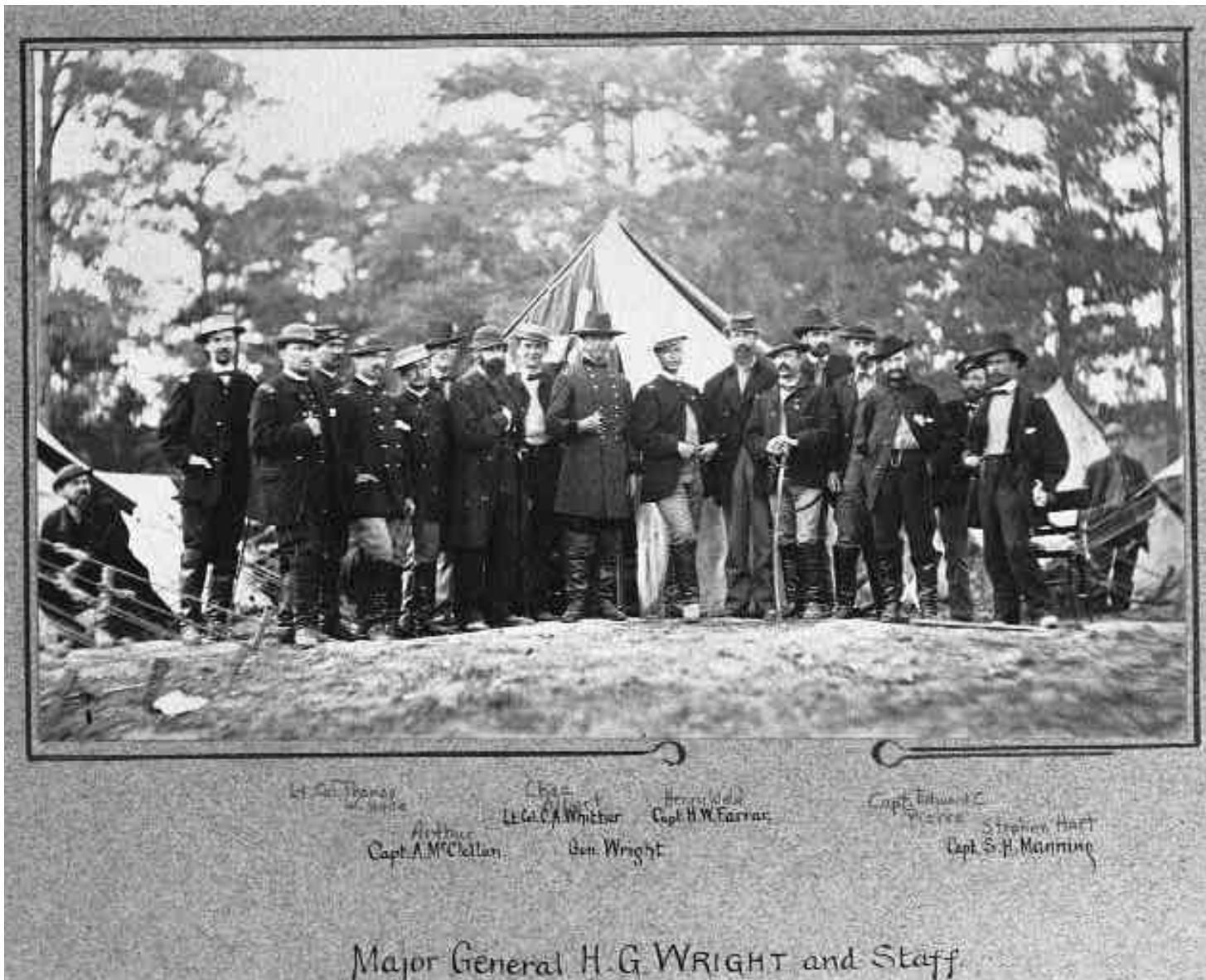


Fort H.G. Wright's flagpole:100 feet tall.Circa 1911.



U.S. Army Military History Institute

On April 4, 1900, the Fort on Fishers Island was named in honor of Major General Horatio G. Wright, US Volunteers, a distinguished commander in the Civil War. After service during the rebellion he rose to the rank of Brigadier General in the US Army Corps of Engineers, and served as Chief of Engineers from 1879 until his retirement in 1884.



National Archives

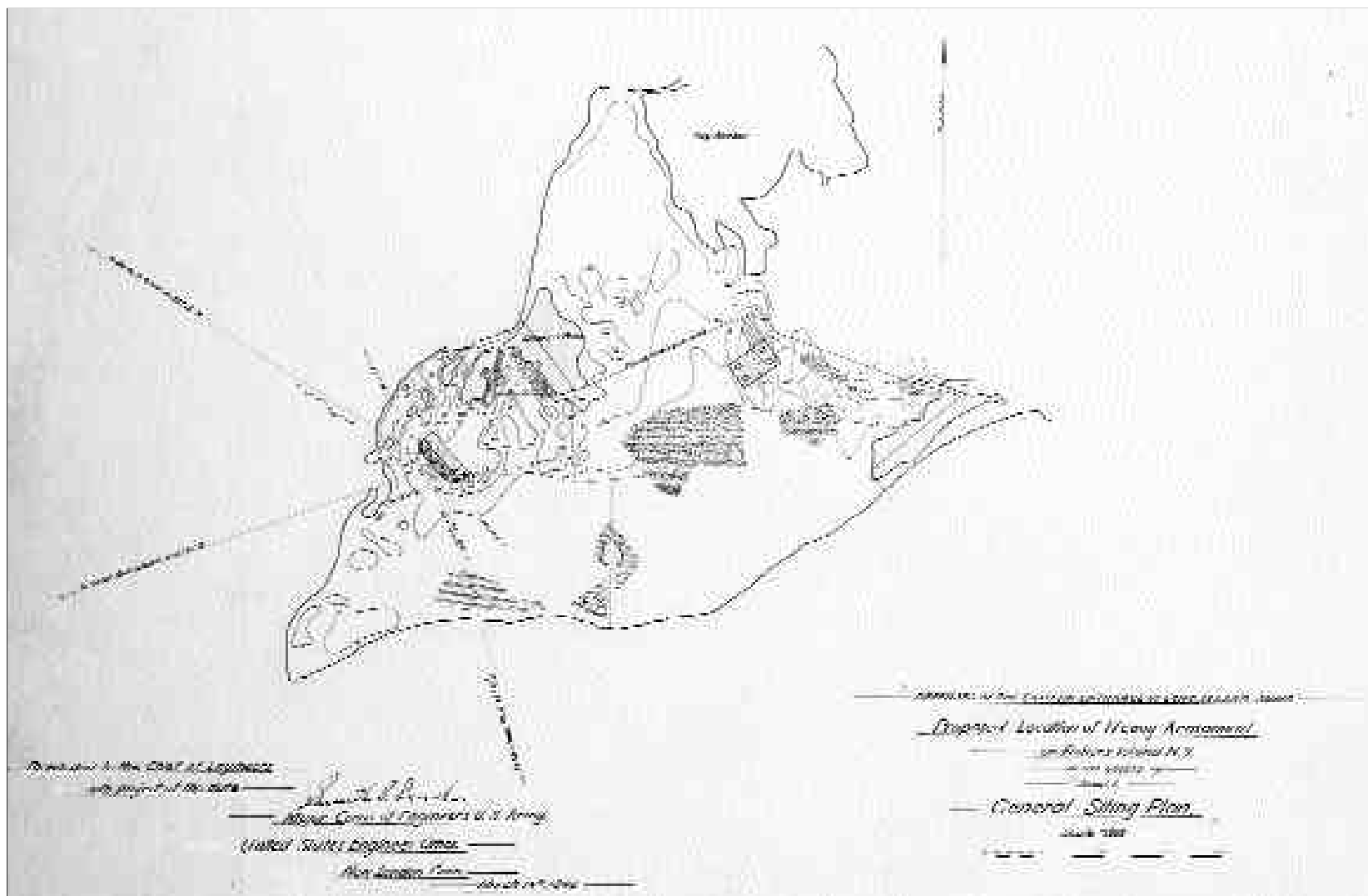
General Horatio Gouverneur Wright. Date unknown.

General Wright was born on March 6, 1820 in Clinton, Connecticut, and died on July 2, 1899 in Washington, DC.



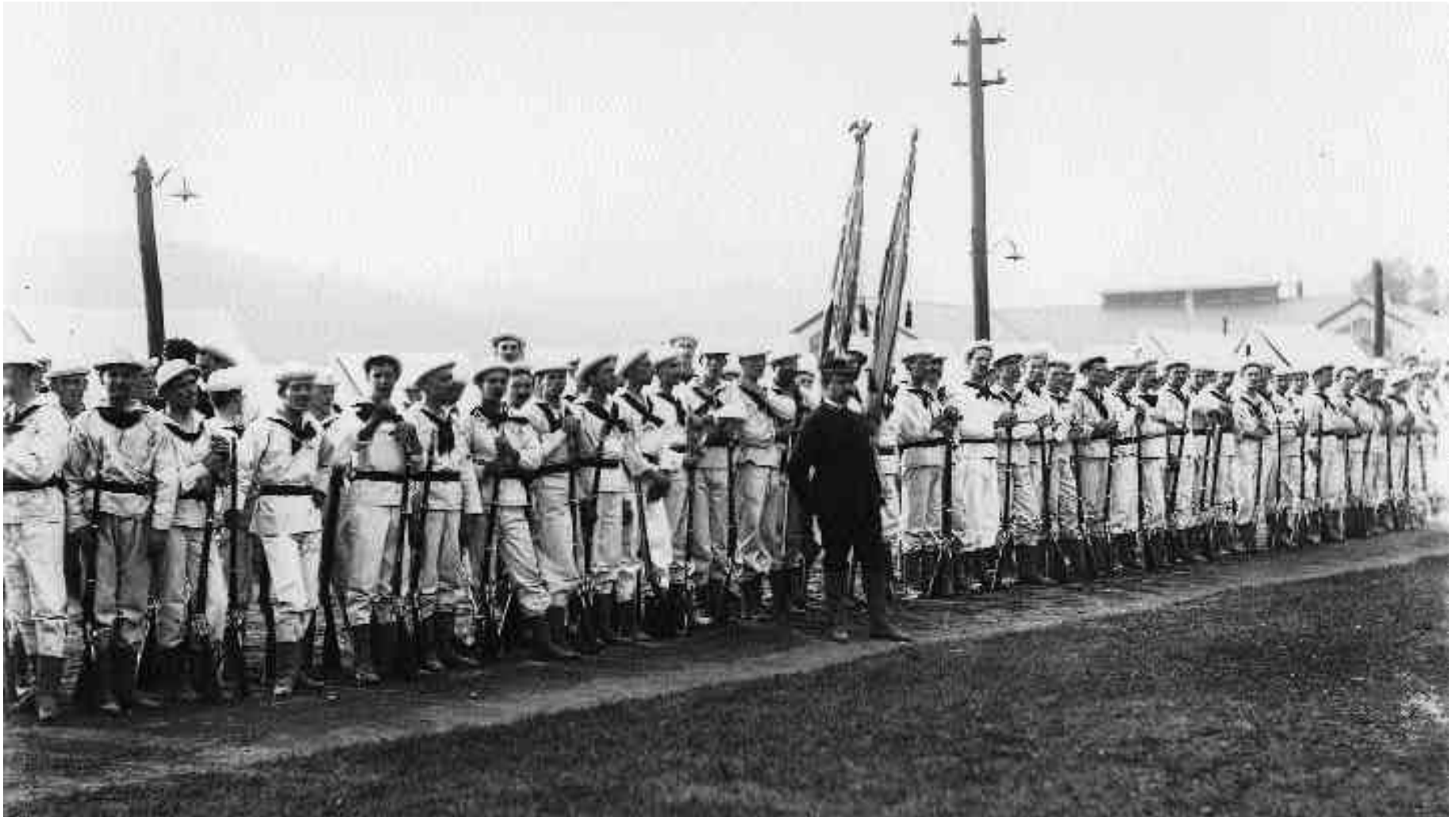
Colonel Smith S. Leach, Corps of Engineers, U.S.A. Date unknown.

First as a captain, then as a major, Smith S. Leach was the supervising engineer in charge of the defenses of Long Island Sound from August 1, 1896 to January 2, 1902. As head of the New London District office of the Corps of Engineers, he was responsible for proposing and designing the fortification sites, securing the land, and supervising the construction of the five forts that guarded the eastern entrance to Long Island Sound at the turn of the century.



National Archives

Major Leach's first site map for heavy armament was submitted on March 19, 1898. The land was acquired six months later in September 1898. Work on the emplacements began in December 1898. Please note the large ponds near the current location of the Ferry District parking lot, west of Silver Eel Pond. They were filled with dirt and gravel in the early 1900s.



Library of Congress

Naval militia at Fishers Island, Captain Joseph Nelson Miller in command. Circa 1890-94.

Naval militia arrived at Fishers Island on at least three occasions before the founding of Fort H.G. Wright: in 1888 for joint maneuvers, in 1894 for coast-signaling exercises, and in 1897 for a tour of duty aboard the ill-fated U.S.S. *Maine*. Although the Library of Congress captioned this photograph as “circa 1890-94,” the lights in the background appear to be electric, making a date after 1899 more likely.



Library of Congress

Admiral Asa Walker and staff, Fishers Island, NY. Circa 1899.

Attracted by its strategic location, relative isolation and varied terrain, the government repeatedly leased land on Fishers Island for military training during the 1880s and 1890s. Small-scale camps for target practice and skirmish firing were the norm, but occasionally large numbers of soldiers and sailors invaded the quiet resort island.



National Archives

Encampment area, Fort H.G. Wright. Army-Navy maneuvers. September 1902.

Over 1,000 soldiers set up camp at the new Fort in the fall of 1902, during large-scale Army-Navy maneuvers. The main camp overlooked South Beach on the South Meadow, just east of where the National Guard camp was later established. In other words, the 1902 camp was south of the movie theater along the water.



National Archives

Emplacement construction for gun batteries along South Beach. Army-Navy maneuvers. September 1902.

The 1902 war games pitted the new island forts against the U.S. Navy's North Atlantic Squadron in a test of the region's coast defenses. Sixteen warships under the command of Admiral Francis Higginson 'attacked' the Long Island Sound forts over a five day period, September 1-5, 1902. The defenders were under the overall command of General Arthur MacArthur, father of General Douglas MacArthur.



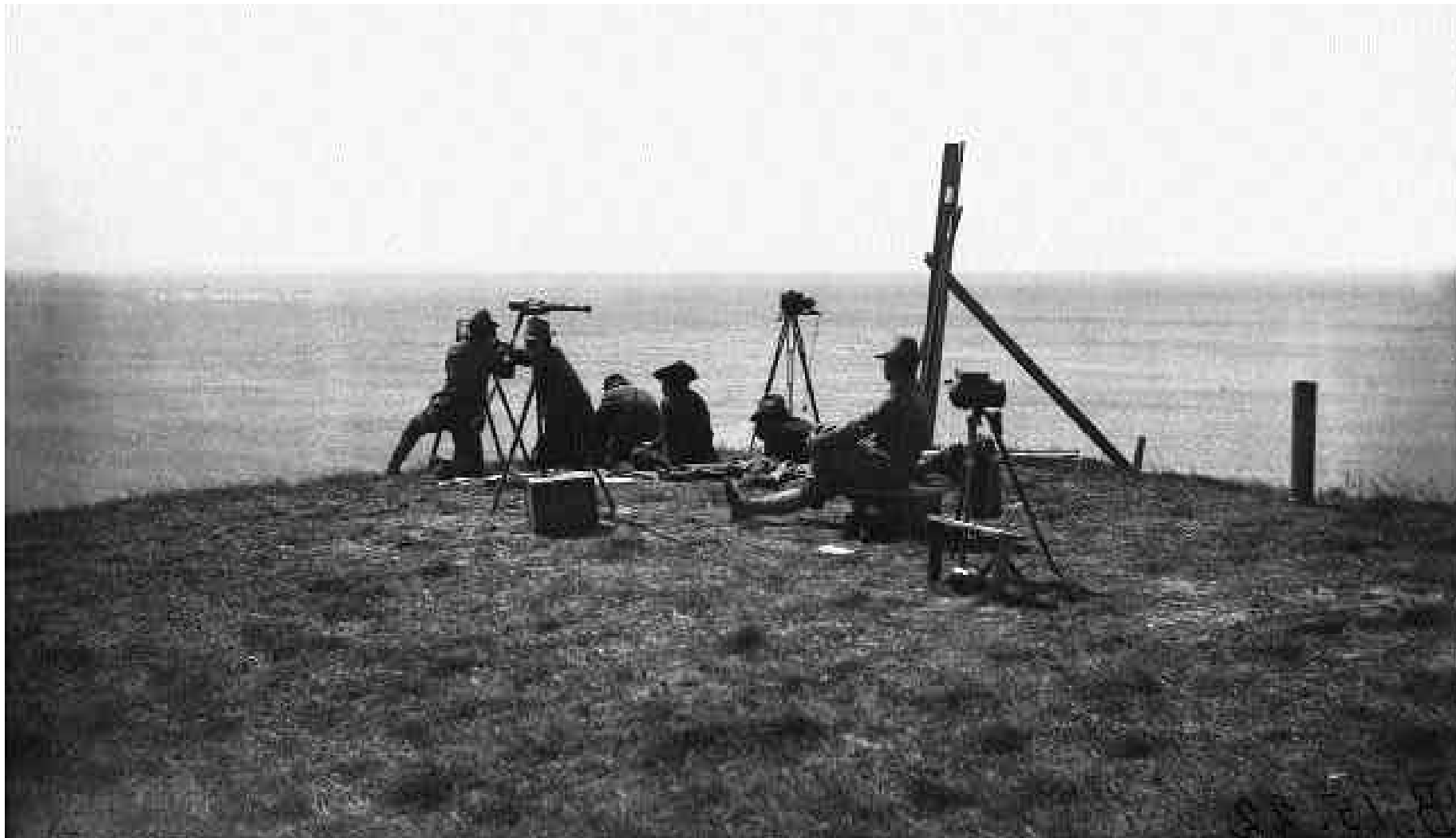
National Archives

Constructing a magazine for a gun battery. Army-Navy maneuvers. September 1902.



National Archives

U.S. 5-inch siege gun, Model 1898. Army-Navy maneuvers. September 1902.



National Archives

Signal station on Mount Prospect, Fishers Island. Army-Navy maneuvers. September 1902.

During the mock war, soldiers of the Signal Corps kept watch for any sign of the 'enemy' fleet. They maintained contact with forts on neighboring islands with an array of signaling equipment, including heliographs and rocket flares. Although Mount Prospect wasn't purchased by the government until 1908-09, Fishers Island's principal owners, Edmund and Walton Ferguson, permitted the government to use this strategic site, both in the 1890s prior to the founding of the Fort, and during the 1902 maneuvers.



National Archives

30-inch searchlight crew. Army-Navy maneuvers. September 1902.



National Archives

Soldiers in front of shelter tents. Army-Navy maneuvers, September 1902.



National Archives

Gatling-gun crew, Fort H.G. Wright. Army-Navy maneuvers. September 1902.

Please note the assortment of uniforms worn by this motley crew.
Some of the men are armed with the U.S. magazine rifle, Model 1896.



National Archives

Gun crew and disappearing 6-inch gun, Battery Dutton, Emplacement No. 1, Fort H.G. Wright. Circa 1906. Completed in 1901, Battery Dutton was one of the new emplacements with disappearing guns that formed the core of Fort H.G. Wright's defenses. At the time of the 1902 maneuvers, the Fort also had two 10-inch disappearing guns at Battery Barlow, two 12-inch disappearing guns at Battery Butterfield, and eight 12-inch mortars at Battery Clinton. Please note that 'inch' refers to the interior diameter of a gun's barrel.