

Esquimalt Harbour

Juan de Fuca Strait

Fort Rodd Hill and Fisgard Lighthouse National Historic Sites are located on the traditional territories of the Lekwungen-speaking peoples, today known as the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations, whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day. We extend our appreciation for the opportunity to live and learn on this territory.

Fort Rodd Hill and Fisgard Lighthouse National Historic Sites

# Site Guide



**Walking times**

- » to the lighthouse: 10–15 mins
- » nature trail: 10–20 mins
- » full loop of site: 40 mins

**Note:** time estimates are for walking only — please allow additional time to explore buildings and exhibits.



## oTENTiKS 1 2 3 4 5

Take advantage of the exclusive chance to stay overnight in Canada's best preserved west coast artillery fort!

Book today at: [reservation.pc.gc.ca](http://reservation.pc.gc.ca)



## GUIDED & AUDIO TOURS

Psst! Wanna hear something amazing? Come learn the secret stories of Fort Rodd Hill and Fisgard Lighthouse NHS through our interpretive guided and audio tours.

## WHY ARE THESE PLACES NATIONAL HISTORIC SITES?

From 1878 until 1956, a series of coast artillery fortifications guarded Victoria and the naval base in Esquimalt harbour. Originally a link in the worldwide chain of defences for the British Empire, the “Victoria-Esquimalt Fortress” grew and changed with time to deal with new technologies and new threats to Canada’s west coast. **FORT RODD HILL NHS** interprets the national historic significance of the Victoria-Esquimalt fortifications.

**FISGARD LIGHTHOUSE NHS**, built in 1860, is nationally significant as the first lighthouse on Canada’s rugged west coast.

### GET INVOLVED!

Volunteer with either Parks Canada or the Victoria-Esquimalt Military Reenactors Association, which helps plan and deliver special events.

### SCHOOL & GROUP PROGRAMS

Contact us for more information at 250-478-5849.

### WANT TO LEARN MORE?


Interpretive Programs • Special Events • Weddings • Volunteer


### CONNECT WITH US AT...

TELEPHONE 250-478-5849

EMAIL [fortrodd@pc.gc.ca](mailto:fortrodd@pc.gc.ca)

WEBSITE [parksCanada.gc.ca/fortroddhill](http://parksCanada.gc.ca/fortroddhill)

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**Fort Rodd Hill and Fisgard Lighthouse  
National Historic Sites**

603 Fort Rodd Hill Road, Victoria, B.C. Canada V9C 2W8




## SUGGESTED WALKING TOUR

This alphabetized list is best used with the map on the other side of this brochure.

 Get a “scent” of history


Although Fisgard Lighthouse tells its own story, remember that Fort Rodd Hill represents all the defensive locations of the Victoria-Esquimalt Fortress, and was only one of a system of forts and related works. Fort Rodd Hill is one of the world’s best preserved — and most complete — examples of its kind, consisting entirely of original structures.

**Entryway** Disabled-access washrooms, site orientation and exhibit; cashier.

- A Upper Battery** Built 1895-97. The single 6-inch disappearing gun here was identical to two in Lower Battery and three others at Macaulay Point, east of Esquimalt harbour. The new forts at Rodd Hill and Macaulay replaced the “temporary” muzzle-loading gun batteries of 1878. As the westerly anchor of the defences of this period, Fort Rodd Hill’s relatively isolated location meant that any land assault would have to be held off until infantry forces arrived from Esquimalt’s Work Point Barracks. Several features of the fort’s construction reflect this self-defence function.
- B Loopholed Gate and Wall** Fort Rodd Hill is unique in the entire V-E Fortress in having rearward-facing concrete walls with rifle-slits.
- C Guardhouse**  More than just a sentry-post, the guard-house also represented military authority and discipline.
- D Water Tank** A 7,500-gallon supply would meet the battery’s needs for several days.
- E Electric Light Directing Station** Commanded all the Defence Electric Lights (searchlights) in the V-E Fortress until 1940.
- F Fortress Fire Commander’s Post** From 1924-40, a wooden building on this site was the Night Commander’s Post for the entire V-E Fortress.
- G Telephone Exchange**
- H Gun and Emplacement** Weighing five tons, this gun barrel is the original one emplaced in this position in 1897. It is shown in the firing position, on a modern display mounting.
- I Underground Magazine Complex** Safe from enemy fire, ammunition for the 6-inch gun was stored here. There was also a small workshop and parts storage area, a crew shelter, and a lamp room. No firearms were allowed in the magazine, and special safety clothing (to prevent sparks) had to be worn in the cartridge store.
- J Second World War Officers’ Quarters**
- K Warrant Officer’s Quarters** The peacetime home to the senior non-commissioned officer at Fort Rodd Hill. Nearby features include:
  - L Fitter’s Shop**
  - M Battery Commander’s Post**
- N Canteen** Off-duty soldiers could enjoy a beer and a snack here. Pickled eggs and pigs’ feet were popular in the 1920s.
- O Lower Battery**  Built at the same time as Upper Battery, and identical in function, this position had two 6-inch guns, and included the main pre-1940 barracks. Notable differences from Upper Battery include:
  - P Casemate Barracks**  Holding up to 54 men in three large rooms, this enclosed barracks also had a parade square, washhouse, kitchen, separate oil, coal and food stores, and a latrine.
  - Q Fortress Plotting Room** Nerve centre of the V-E Fortress’s counter-bombardment guns for a short period during the Second World War, this calculation room worked with the forts at Mary Hill and Albert Head, and had no role in directing the guns at this site. In the 1950s, this room was an anti-aircraft plotting room, reflecting changing threats to Canadian sovereignty during the Cold War.
- R Fisgard Lighthouse** Named a national historic site in 1960, a century after first showing its light, Fisgard is still a working lighthouse — although the last keeper rowed away

in 1929. Fisgard was an early expression of government sovereignty on what would become Canada’s west coast. Generations of mariners — British and Canadian, naval and merchant — have relied on Fisgard as a landmark to find Esquimalt harbour’s narrow entrance. With Race Rocks light, Fisgard marks the safe anchorage of Royal Roads, and also points the way to Victoria harbour for merchant ships.

- S Boathouse** A modern reconstruction.
- T Storehouse and Water Tank** Fresh water was in short supply at Fisgard. To reduce reliance on barrelled water, this general storehouse was built with a flat roof to collect rainwater. Pipes then filled an underground cistern with the water. A modern reconstruction using period bricks on the original foundations.
- U Anti-torpedo measures** This steel anti-torpedo net, supported by wooden stakes, formed an underwater curtain, closing the gap between Fisgard Lighthouse and the beach at Fort Rodd Hill.
- V Searchlight Emplacement No. 7** Built in 1940 and restored to its wartime camouflage scheme as a “fisherman’s hut.” By 1944, there were 17 searchlights throughout the V-E Fortress.
- W Belmont Battery** To prevent small, fast torpedo boats from slipping under the guns of Upper and Lower Batteries, two 12-pounder quick-firing guns were emplaced here in 1900. Identical guns protected Victoria and Esquimalt harbours from (at various times) the Breakwater, Ogden Point, Golf Hill, Black Rock and Duntze Head Batteries.

During the Second World War, the old 12-pounders at Belmont, Duntze Head and Ogden Point were replaced with twin-barrelled 6-pounder guns, with a much higher rate of fire. Belmont fired the last shots of the V-E Fortress in July of 1956.
- X Searchlight Engine Room** 
- Y Historic Nature Trail** This short (15-minute) trail follows an historic sentry path, and takes you through lush shoreline woods.
- Z Garry Oak Learning Meadow** Take a leisurely stroll through restored wildflower meadows and woodland. Come learn about one of BC’s rarest ecosystems.