The Russian Scares

New Zealand's Coastal Defences in the 1880's

Chapter 5 – Auckland Harbour

Manukau Harbour – In 1885, a survey was carried out at Cape Horn (about one and a half miles west of Onehunga Wharf) as a possible site for a coastal battery but this did not eventuate.
Waitemata Harbour

1. **Bastion Point** – Fort Bastion had 2 x 6 inch breech loading disappearing guns. Nothing remains of the Fort and it is now the site of the Joseph Savage Memorial.

![Diagram of Bastion Point and Fort Bastion with 6" BL Guns and Magazine]

Fort Bastion – Classed as incomplete as the Barracks were never built.

2. **Parnell** – Fort Resolution built at the top of the cliff above where the Parnell Baths now are. 2 x 64pdr guns which were transferred to North Head in 1904.

![Diagram of Fort Resolution with 64pdr Guns and Magazine]

Fort Resolution
3. **Narrow Neck** – Fort Takapuna – in later years known as Narrow Neck Camp, then Fort Cautley and HMNZS Tamaki. 2 x Breech Loading 6inch disappearing guns and 2 x Quick Firing 6 pounder Nordenfelt Guns.

![Diagram of Fort Takapuna](image-url)

**Ft Takapuna Barracks** – used as a classroom when HMNZS Tamaki took over part of Fort Cautley
4. **Fort Victoria** – Mount Victoria – 4 x 64 pounder guns installed in 1885. These were removed in 1898 and replaced with 1 x 8inch Breech Loading Disappearing Gun.

![Fort Victoria overlooking Devonport and parts of Auckland with 64pdr in foreground. 1880's](image)

5. **North Head – Fort Cautley** which consisted of three Batteries.

**North Battery** to defend Rangitoto Channel, **Summit Battery** to oversee the harbour entrance and **South Battery** to protect the inner harbour. In 1880, the three batteries each had 1 x 7inch Rifle Muzzle Loading gun and a 64 pounder Mk3 gun.
From 1889, all the guns had been replaced with an 8inch BL Disappearing Gun with the North and South batteries also having a QF 6Pdr Nordenfelt Gun.
**Sub-marin Mining Depot -**

In 1885 a plan to lay mines between Devonport and Bastion Point was initiated and a submarine mining depot was started that year in the small bay at the base of North Head. As a result of a magazine built there later to house the torpedoes and the wharf used by the torpedo boat *Waitemata*, the bay was eventually named Torpedo Bay. By 1891 the depot consisted of a general store, blacksmith's shop, offices, Whitehead torpedo magazine and crews quarters. In 1897 further expansion of the Depot started with installing lines of electrically operated contact mines between Torpedo Bay and Fort Bastion. The minefield became operational in 1904 when three lines were finally laid.

**Spar Torpedo Boat -**

The torpedo boat *Waitemata*, which had been in Wellington since August 1884, arrived in Auckland 19 April 1885. She had been towed from Wellington by the Government Steamer *Hinemoa*.

![Hinemoa](image)

A shed and slipway for *Waitemata* had still not been built by the time she had arrived in Auckland and it is unclear where she was stationed until facilities for her were completed at Admiralty Reserve (Windsor Reserve, Devonport) in 1886. When built, the slipway could only be used in high tide (similar story to the Lyttelton boat) and it was decided that a new facility would be built during the 1897 expansion at the Torpedo Bay Depot. However, this was a non event and when she wasn't at the Admiralty Reserve, *Waitemata* often spent time moored at the wharf at Torpedo Bay Depot.
Torpedo Boat *Waitemata* (mid right) at the Auckland Anniversary Regatta circa 1890's

Torpedo Boat Shed and Slipway as indicated with Devonport Wharf behind and a bathing shed to the left.

All four of the spar torpedo boats were declared obsolete by the late 1890's and *Waitemata* was put up for sale in 1901.
Mine-laying Steamers -

In 1902, the mine-laying steamers **Lady Roberts** and the **Nile** went into service. The **Lady Roberts** was not used much due to serious boiler defects as a result of faulty riveting during manufacture. In 1907 she was sent to Otago to replace the **Ellen Ballance**. She ended up in Western Samoa in 1923 as an inter-island ferry but ran aground during a gale in 1926. She was repaired but became unseaworthy in 1930 and was eventually scrapped with her parts retained for the **Janie Seddon**.

In 1903, the **Nile** was sent to Otago to service the Coastal Batteries.

![Nile Image](image-url)

**Nile**

![Bringing a mine onboard the Nile Image](image-url)

**Bringing a mine onboard the Nile**