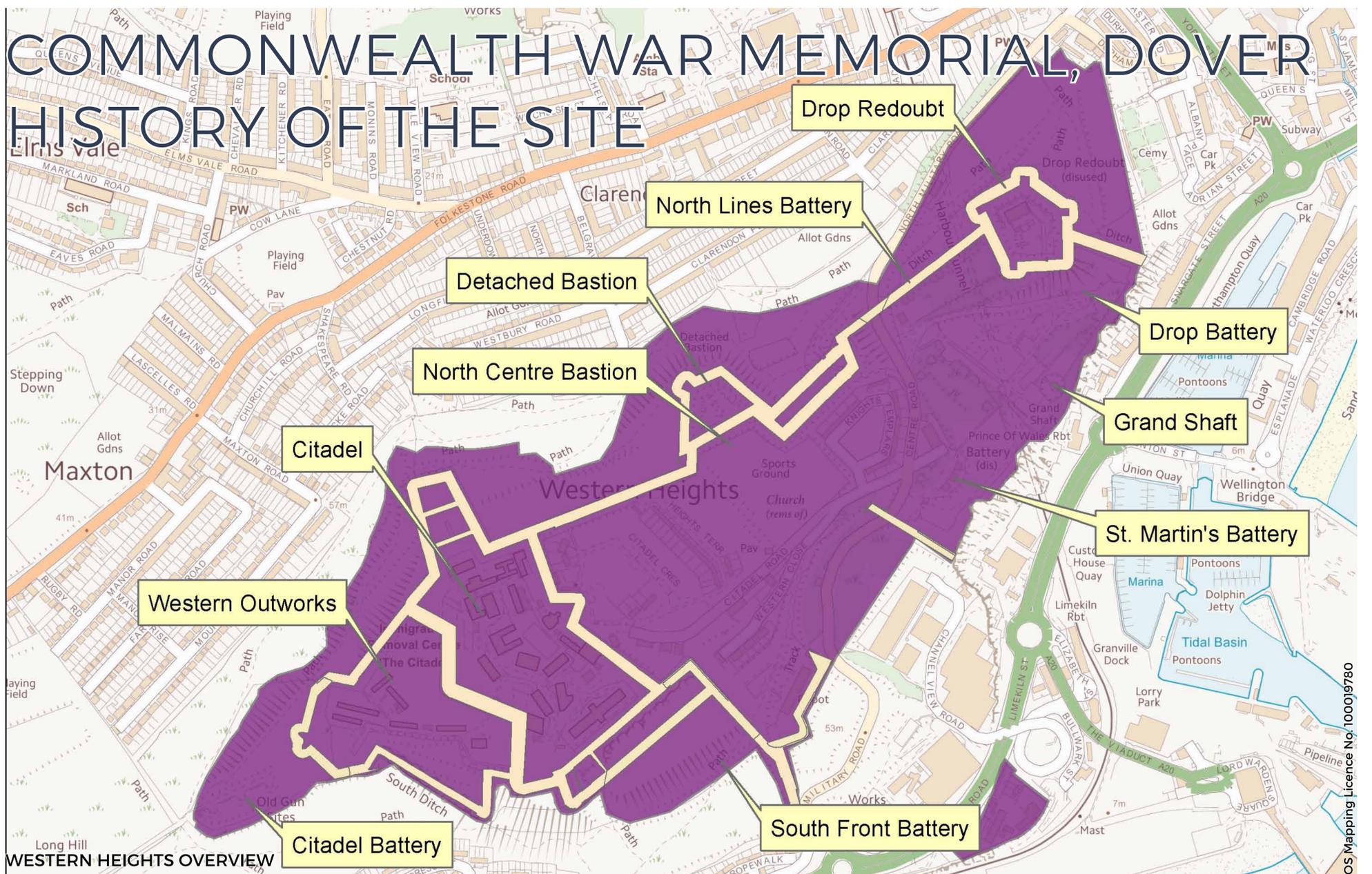


# COMMONWEALTH WAR MEMORIAL, DOVER

## HISTORY OF THE SITE



HISTORIC AERIAL PHOTORAPH OF GRAND SHAFT BARRACKS



HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPH OF GRAND SHAFT BARRACKS

### HISTORY OF THE SITE

Military activity has been an important part of the history of the site. The Grand Shaft Barracks was an integral part of the Western Heights, that constituted the largest, most complete English fortifications of the Napoleonic era. This defensive landscape includes important heritage assets such as the Drop Redoubt, the Citadel and the Grand Shaft but in-between these monumental structures are myriad military structures within the landscape.

The armed forces have long moved out, but this history is easily visible in the many defensive elements that can be experienced first-hand on visiting the area. Substantial academic literature and records exists that has helped to inform and shape the plans for the Memorial. Drawings, photographs, and text allow us to understand how the site might have been in its former use. Armed forces were accommodated in large Georgian barracks dating back to 1804 that were sited on terraces cut into the chalk of the white cliffs. There was a parade area around the entrance to the Grand Shaft. The Grand Shaft Barracks were demolished and the site cleared between 1965 and 1991.

The Grand Shaft Barracks housed approximately 700 men. The barracks would have been a prominent feature on the cliff and in the town, and the terraces on which they sat preserve evidence of the changes to sanitation, drainage and water supply designed to improve the living conditions of the soldiers that lived in them.

These heritage treasures of the Western Heights are largely hidden and the sculpted landscape of the Grand Shaft Barracks has proved to be a challenge as it has implications for design and layout in terms of accessibility and mobility to enable more visitors to enjoy this wonderful place.

Currently the site is maintained but there are a number of non-native species of plants/trees on the site.

The Western Heights Preservation Society, with a team of dedicated volunteers offering their time and energy, have injected vitality into the place and opened many eyes to this incredible place.