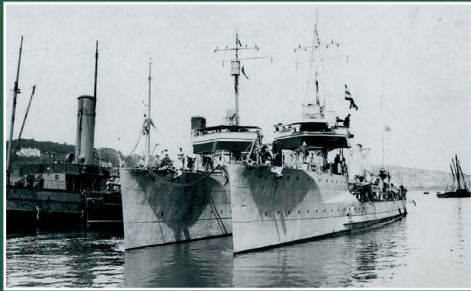# World War 1 (WW1) in Cork Harbour

During WW1, the British Naval headquarters at Queenstown (the name given to Cobh from 1849 to 1923) covered the critical sea area from the Sound of Mull in Scotland to Ushant in France. The Royal Navy and later the United States Navy set up anti-submarine patrols from Cork Harbour to protect this area. This effort became crucial during Germany's unrestricted underwater warfare campaign in 1917-1918. The force based in Cobh consisted of 1200-ton sloops with trawlers, drifters, destroyers, motor launches and submarines, to which were later added minesweepers and disguised armed merchant ships known as 'Q' (for Queenstown) ships. The lower harbour area could be illuminated at night using searchlights located at all of the forts.

Prior to 1941 there were four British military coastal defence forts protecting the harbour: Fort Templebreedy and Fort Camden on the western side; Fort Carlisle on the eastern side and Fort Westmoreland located on Spike Island in the inner harbour. In addition, other facilities existed within and around the harbour and all of these combined to make Cork Harbour an important asset in the ultimate allied victory in the Great War, 1914 – 1918.

Queenstown (Cobh)

Cove Fort

Haulbowline

Spike Island

Fort Westmoreland

Fort Carlisle

Fort Camden

Cork Harbour Defences during WW1

Fort Templebreedy

Getting to Cork Harbour

Belfast

IRELAND

Galway

Dublin

Cork Harbour

County Cork

Cork Harbour Area

←To Cork City
↑To Dublin
→To Waterford Rosslare

Midleton

Little Island

Fota Island

Jack Lynch Tunnel

Douglas

Great Island Cobh

Passage West

Ferry Crossing

Cobh

Spike Island

Aghada

Ringaskiddy

Whitegate

Carrigaline

Crosshaven

Roches Point

Cork Harbour

IRELAND'S ANCIENT EAST®
Wander Through Time

PURE CORK

Cork County Council
Comhairle Contae Chorcaí

WW1 Cork Harbour Trail Attractions visit

https://www.corkcoco.ie/visiting-cork/ww1-cork-harbour-trail

https://purecork.ie/things-to-do/categories/tours/ww1-cork-harbour-trail

WW1 CORK
HARBOUR
TRAIL

BOSTON JOURNAL

HUNDREDS OF LIVES ARE LOST ON THE TORPEDOED LUSITANIA

The Great War 1914 - 1918

WW1 Cork Harbour Trail
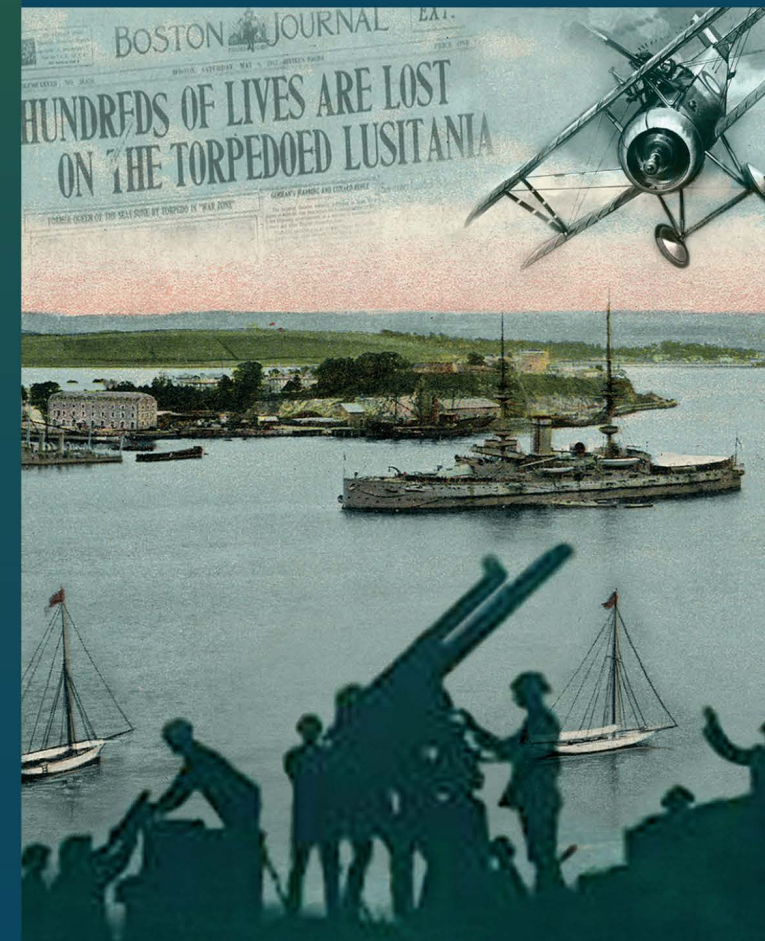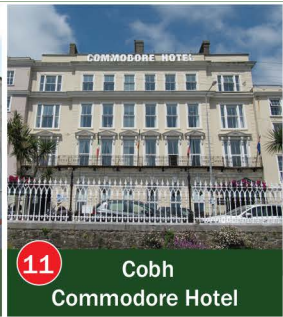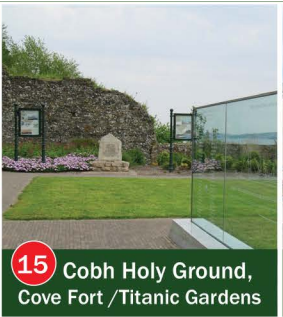

1 Fort Templebreedy Crosshaven

6 Passage West CYMS Hall

11 Cobh Commodore Hotel
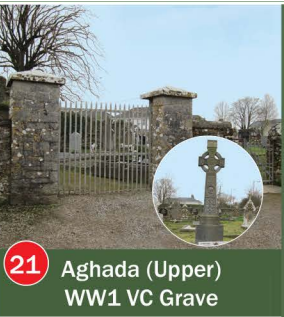

13 Cobh Cunard Building and Pier

15 Cobh Holy Ground, Cove Fort /Titanic Gardens

17 Cobh Cobh Hospital

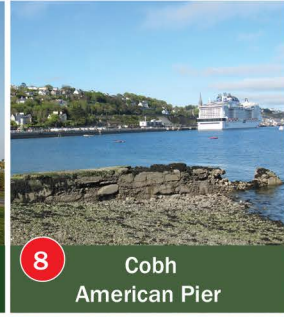19 Spike Island Fort Mitchel

21 Aghada (Upper) WW1 VC Grave

2 Crosshaven Camden/Fort Meagher

7 Cobh Whitepoint House

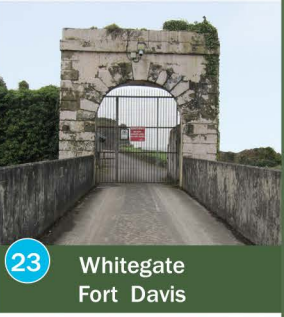22 Corkbeg Whitegate

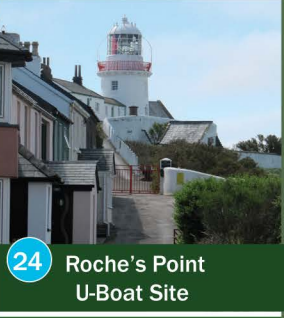3a Haulbowline Island Amenity Park

8 Cobh American Pier

23 Whitegate Fort Davis

4 Haulbowline Island

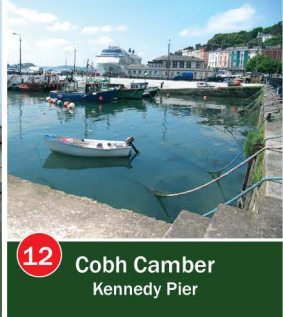9 Cobh - Railway Station/ Queenstown Heritage Centre

24 Roche's Point U-Boat Site
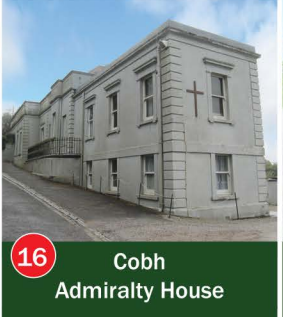

5 Passage West Dockyard

10 Cobh - Sirius Arts Centre/Royal Cork Yacht Club

12 Cobh Camber Kennedy Pier

14 Cobh Bath's Quay

16 Cobh Admiralty House

18 Cobh Old Church Graveyard

20 Aghada (Lower) Sea Plane Base

Map

↑To Dublin

←To Cork City

To Waterford Rosslare →

Glanmire
Glounthaune
Midleton
Carrigtwohill
Ballynacorra
Little Island
Fota Island
Jack Lynch Tunnel
Douglas
Rochestown
Passage West
Glenbrook
Car Ferry Glenbrook/Cobh
Monkstown
Rafeen
Shannon Park Roundabout
Shanbally
Ringaskiddy
Currabinny
Carrigaline
Great Island Cobh
East Ferry
Saleen
Rostellan
Haulbowline
Rocky Island
Spike Island
Aghada (Lower)
Aghada (Upper)
Corkbeg
Whitegate
Fort Davis
Camden Fort Meagher
Roches Point
Fort Templebreedy
Roches Point Light House
Crosshaven
Myrtleville

Cork Harbour

Haulbowline Amenity Park
Rocky Bay
Haulbowline Naval Service Base

KEY

M8 National Roads
N40 Regional Roads
R613 Local Roads
Trail Route
2 Trail Location Accessible
1 Trail Location Inaccessible or Private Property
▲ Car Ferry Glenbrook/Cobh
Irish Rail

WW1 Cork Harbour's trail locations as seen today. (1 - 24) These same locations can be viewed historically overleaf.
https://www.corkcoco.ie/visiting-cork/ww1-cork-harbour-trail

Roads: R639, M8, L3004, N25, R623, N25, N8, R624, R630, R624, L7009, L3629, R630, N40 Eastbound, N40 Westbound, R610, L3651, L3658, N28, R610, R610, N28, N28, L2545, R611, R613, R613, R612, R612, R612

WW1 CORK HARBOUR TRAIL

Locations on the route

Important Notice

The locations listed in this brochure are included because of the role they played during WW1 (World War 1). 100 years later, many of these are currently in private ownership or are otherwise not accessible to the public. Cork County Council asks that any person following this trail respects the privacy of landowners and takes note of any restrictions on accessing sites.

1 Blue circles for locations denotes **restricted sites** on the route. **10 restricted sites - 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 14, 20, 22, 23 and 24.**

German Submarine U-58 - her crew surrendering in November 1917.

United States Naval Air Service - Aghada Established in February 1918.

Facts on WW1 (1914 - 1918)

1914 June 28   Franz Ferdinand of Austria was assassinated.
July 28   WW1 began on 28th July, 1914.

1915 April 22   First use of poison gas by Germany.
May 07   Sinking of the RMS Lusitania.

1916 **Feb 21 to Dec 18 - Battle of Verdun**
One of the longest battles of the War, lasting 300 days with the cost of 800,000 French and German lives.
July 01 to Nov 18 - The Battle of the Somme
One of the bloodiest battles of the war. An estimated 1,000,000 men were killed or wounded.
May 31 - Battle of Jutland
The only major battle of the war fought at sea between Britain and Germany. (lasted 36 hours)

1917 April 06   United States declares war.

1918 Aug 08   One hundred days Allied offensive begins on Germany.
Nov 11   WW1 ends - conflict lasted four years, three months and fourteen days.

1919 June 28   Treaty of Versailles signed. Germany was severely punished with territorial losses and strict limits on its rights to develop militarily.

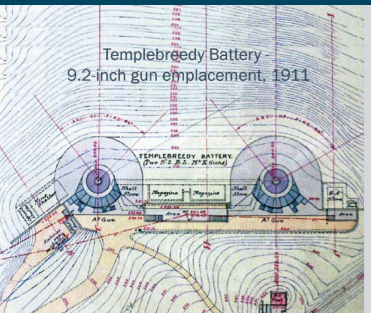# Did you know?

Armistice Day - now Veterans Day

11TH **11**TH **11**TH
MONTH   DAY   HOUR

The war officially ended on the 11th hour of the 11th month of the year 1918.

November 11, 1918 @ 11am.

WW1 Historical Locations 1914 - 1918

Cork Harbour

Blue circles denotes restricted sites on the route

1 — Fort Templebreedy, Crosshaven
Inaccessible

Built in 1904 to equip two long range 9.2" BL guns capable of firing on ships 20,000 yards out to sea. The Navy's Port War Signal Station, which controlled seaborne access to the harbour was located here. This fort is not open to the public.

GPS Coordinates: 51.791267° N, -8.281580° W

2 — Crosshaven - Fort Camden
now Camden Fort Meagher
Cork County Council Tourist Attraction

Home to the Royal Engineers (Fortress) Co. who were responsible for the Searchlights, Communications & Equipment in all the harbour forts. During WW1 it was equipped with five 12 Pdr QF guns to defend the narrow channel at the mouth of the harbour. Visit: www.camdenfortmeagher.ie

GPS Coordinates: 51.8088° N, -8.2789° W

3 — Rocky Island
Now Island Crematorium - Private Property

Rocky Island had two large gunpowder magazines that served all the harbour forts and warships. Gunpowder was manufactured in the Royal Gunpowder Mills in Ballincollig near Cork City. It is now a crematorium.

(Please respect people's privacy)

GPS Coordinates: 51.840598° N, -8.3028216° W

4 — Haulbowline
Inaccessible

This naval base included victualling yards, accommodation, ordnance stores, hospital and a dockyard. The defences included a garrison of up to 2,000 Royal Marines and a signal station to transmit cipher messages to vessels. Almost 3,000 civilians also worked here.

GPS Coordinates: 51.840598° N, -8.3028216° W

5 — Passage West - The Royal Victoria Dockyard
Inaccessible

The Royal Victoria Dockyard was used to carry out repairs to damaged ships. When the USA joined the war in 1917 their destroyers were anchored in Monkstown Bay. Submarine chasers were based in Passage West with the dockyard granaries serving as living quarters, stores and offices.

GPS Coordinates: 51.656782° N, -8.6390917° W

6 — Passage West - CYMS Hall

The CYMS Hall, Chapel Square, was constructed to provide a place of entertainment for soldiers based in the area who were in receipt of training prior to embarkation from Cobh for active duty.

7 — Cobh - Whitepoint House
Private Property

The United States forces established Field Hospital No. 4 at Whitepoint. The prefabricated hospital consisted of wards, operating pavilions, etc. It was shipped completed from the USA. The building is currently in private ownership and is not open to the public.

GPS Coordinates: 51.844091° N, -8.3147066° W

8 — Cobh - American Pier

Known locally as the 'American Pier', this pier was constructed by the US Navy to facilitate the transfer of patients from ships to the Field Hospital No. 4 at Whitepoint House when the United States entered World War 1 on April 6th 1917.

GPS Coordinates: 51.843806° N, -8.312349° W

9 — Cobh - Railway Station
now Queenstown Heritage Centre
Tourist Attraction

The train between Cobh and Cork was established in 1862. By October 1918 almost 9,000 American servicemen were based in Cobh. The US Navy banned sailors below the rank of lieutenant from travelling to Cork in 1917 after crowds attacked the sailors for fraternising with local women. Visit: www.cobhheritage.com

GPS Coordinates: 51.848861° N, -8.2992288° W

10 — Cobh - Royal Cork Yacht Club
now Sirius Arts Centre

During World War 1, the Royal Cork Yacht Club, now the Sirius Arts Centre, was open to British and American officers and was a frequent meeting point for the officers on their return from sea. The bar was especially popular with the younger officers. Visit: www.siriusartscentre.ie

GPS Coordinates: 51.871363° N, -8.3363422° W

11 — Cobh - Queens Hotel
now Commodore Hotel

Survivors of the Lusitania

After the sinking of the RMS Lusitania in 1915, the Cunard Line reserved rooms at the Queens Hotel for survivors. The German born manager Otto Humbert had to hide in the wine cellar after the disaster when a mob threatened to burn down the building.

GPS Coordinates: 51.849753° N, -8.2963313° W

12 — Cobh - Camber - Admiralty Pier
now Kennedy Pier

Admiralty Pier - Camber acted as a landing point for survivors from vessels sunk during WW1. Victims from RMS Lusitania were landed here by lifeboats and recovery vessels. Lifeboats belonging to other torpedoed ships were also towed directly into the Camber.

GPS Coordinates: 51.6203° N, -8.9055° W

13 — Cobh - Cunard Building and Pier

This building had been a railway and mail depot for the Cunard Line, from which passengers could connect from the train to the ferry for Passage. In 1915 this building and pier were used as the main morgue for the victims of RMS Lusitania.

GPS Coordinates: 51.850189° N, -8.2924830° W

14 — Cobh - Bath's Quay
Private Property

Bath's Quay hosted the American's Sailors Club opened in 1917, after the US Navy's ban on ordinary seamen travelling to Cork following repeated altercations between the US forces and 'Sinn Féiners'. The temporary structure housed a billiards room, stage, library and a cinema screen.

GPS Coordinates: 51.865495° N, -8.3318348° W

15 — Cobh - Cove Fort
now Titanic Memorial Garden

The three tiered site sat at the end of town, remembered in song as the Holy Ground. During WW1, the fort housed British soldiers and sailors in temporary huts. A military hospital, one of several in the harbour, also operated during this period.

GPS Coordinates: 51.852194° N, -8.2773363° W

16 — Cobh - Admiralty House
now St. Bendedicts Priory

Admiral Lewis Bayly, Commander in Chief, had his headquarters here. He had underground telegraph cables installed to connect with Haulbowline, replacing semaphore signals from the flagpole in the gardens. The captains of 'Flower Class' sloops planted flowers corresponding to the names of their ships in the gardens.

GPS Coordinates: 51.852817° N, -8.2909110° W

17 — Cobh - Cobh Hospital

In 1917 an American sailor, Charles Blackford, from the USS McDougal, described the Cobh hospital as 'a grim stone building' and conditions as poor, constantly cold and inadequate washing facilities. In 1918 the hospital was replaced and taken over by the Bon Secours nuns, who still run the hospital today.

GPS Coordinates: 51.853689° N, -8.2989264° W

18 — Cobh - Old Church Graveyard

This cemetery contains a number of graves from World War 1, including one Belgian soldier. Forty-six graves are for Royal Navy members ranging from seaman to rear-admiral. The victims of the RMS Luistania are also buried here in three mass graves.

GPS Coordinates: 51.863353° N, -8.2976504° W

19 — Spike Island - Fort Westmoreland
now Fort Mitchel
Cork County Council Tourist Attraction

The Fort is situated on Spike Island and acted as the headquarters of the South Irish Coast Defence (SICD) in the First World War. The fort's primary armaments consisted of two 6-inch Breech Loading (BL) guns, located on Bastion 3, the south central bastion. Visit: www.spikeislandcork.ie

GPS Coordinates: 51.834461° N, -8.2862301° W

20 — Aghada (Lower) - Sea Plane Base
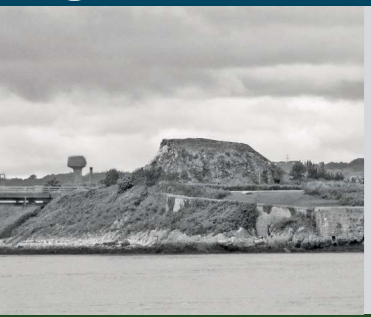*Queenstown US Naval Air Station - Private Property*

The Queenstown US Naval Air Station was the headquarters for all US Navy facilities set up in Ireland during WW1. A total of thirty-eight aircraft were stationed here. In 1919 the base was closed and all aircraft were crated and shipped back to the US. This property is currently a tennis club.

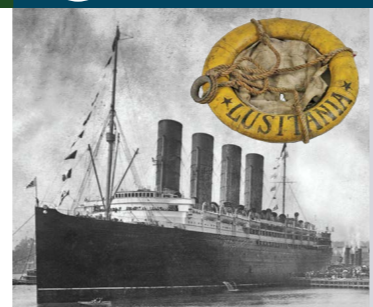GPS Coordinates: 51.843271° N, -8.2155231° W

21 — Aghada (Upper) – WW1 VC Grave
Old Graveyard, Aghada

Corporal William Cosgrove, VC, First Battalion, Royal Munster Fusiliers, from Aghada, won the Victoria Cross in 1915 at Gallipoli for clearing barbed wire obstacles during an attack in which he was severely wounded. He died in July 1936. His former comrades erected a Celtic Cross over his grave in 1938. 50.4288° W

GPS Coordinates: 51.836362° N, -8.210903° W

22 — Corkbeg, Whitegate - Admiralty Telegraph Station
Inaccessible

The wireless station was erected on this site in September 1907. It replaced one at Roches Point. It was a low power station with a range of approximately 200 miles. The Corkbeg station was attacked by republicans on 8th June, 1920.

GPS Coordinates: 51.820747° N, -8.245123° W

23 — Whitegate - Fort Carlisle
now Fort Davis - Inaccessible

Fort Carlisle is the largest of the harbour forts. During WW1 it was equipped with 9.2" BL, 6" BL and 12 Pdr QF guns. The Fire Control Head Quarters was responsible for directing all of the harbour guns until it was transferred to Templebreedy during the war. Not open to the public.

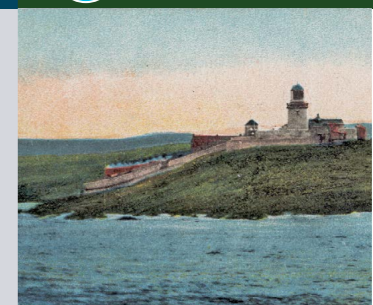GPS Coordinates: 51.815998° N, -8.2617697° W

24 — Roche's Point - U-Boat Site
Inaccessible

The wreck of the German naval submarine UC-42 is located just off Roche's Point, Cork Harbour. It exploded while laying mines at the entrance to the harbour on September 1917, killing the crew of twenty seven. The wreck is a German war grave.

GPS Coordinates: 51.795310° N, -8.2507799° W

Map labels:
↑ To Dublin
← To Cork City
To Rosslare Midleton →
Passage West
Monkstown
Cobh
Ringaskiddy
Haulbowline
Spike Island
Aghada
Whitegate
Crosshaven
Roches Point
Cork Harbour