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MEDIA RELEASE

Rottnest Island recognised for its vital role during WWII

Rottnest Island's coastal defence facilities have received national recognition for their part in World War II, being awarded an *Engineering Heritage National Landmark* for their part in Fremantle Fortress.

Fremantle Fortress was constructed in the 1930's to provide a coastal defence system for the Port of Fremantle, in the event of possible seaborne enemy attack during World War II. The defence system included facilities on Rottnest and Garden Islands, Swanbourne, Leighton, North Mole, Fremantle Harbour, South Beach and Point Peron.

A complex infrastructure was installed on Rottnest Island including two 9.2 inch gun batteries at Oliver Hill and two 6 inch guns at Bickley Point. The Rottnest facility is the only intact establishment remaining in Australia and is one of only a few still existing in the world. The Rottnest batteries were ready for action when the war broke out, but fortunately never fired a shot in anger.

Rottnest Island Authority Chairman Laurie O'Meara says it's an honour to receive such prestigious recognition for an important part of Rottnest Island's unique defence heritage, and will provide valuable support in helping engage sponsorship to further conserve and interpret the structures at Oliver Hill and Bickley Battery.

Engineering Heritage Australia's Chairman Owen Peake says that Engineers Australia Heritage Recognition Program is a national program, bringing public recognition to engineering works of historic or heritage significance and to the engineers who created them.

There are two levels of award, an Engineering Heritage National Landmark (EHNL), for the most significant works and an Engineering Heritage Marker (EHM), for works of important but lesser significance.

Fremantle Fortress – Rottnest Island WWII Coastal Defence Facilities, has been judged this year to be worthy of an EHNL, the highest accolade.

Deputy Commander, 13th Brigade Australian Army, Colonel Michael Page, says the design and construction of the infrastructure for and the installation of high precision military equipment by Royal Australian Army personnel and private contractors, before modern earthmoving equipment and mobile cranes were available, was a significant achievement.

The award will be officially presented at a Commemoration Ceremony to be held on Rottnest Island on Wednesday, November 10, 2010.

Other Western Australian projects similarly recognised over previous years are; in 1987, the Coolgardie Water Supply Scheme (now known as the Goldfields Water Supply), the Narrows Bridge, Perth, 1999, the East West Telegraph, Perth to Adelaide 2001, and the Mitchell Freeway Stage 1, 2008.

ENDS

For more information or if you would like to attend the event - Nicole Bailey 0401 903 805



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