
WILLIAMSTOWN RIFLE RANGE LIVEFIRE WARNING MARKER POLES

Location

HOBSONS BAY AND KOROROIT CREEK ROAD WILLIAMSTOWN, HOBSONS BAY CITY

Municipality

HOBSONS BAY CITY

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7822-0435

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Interpretation of Site

Both Taylor and Skiotiz (pers comms) have reported the remains of the rifle range hazard marker piles are evident in water offshore, timber and iron piles on seafloor at ranges of 1, 2 and 3 miles offshore. Taylor has reported that a few iron piles at each range limit each with a platform (probably used to access warning flags). Skiotiz further remembers that 'they used to fly "skeleton flags" to warn mariner to avoid the area during rifle range practice'. Taylor has also seen many bullets in the water here. These features formed part of Merrits Rifle Range and also later rifle ranges in the area, which were integral components of the military landscape of the area. The poles are likely to be the range marker poles used during livefire exercises, and also were used as warning markers to mariners.

Other Names Merrits Rifle Range,

Hermes Number 13925

Property Number

History

The first rifle range was set up at the corner of Garden and Victoria Streets, the present swimming beach and the railway in 1860, and was constantly used for volunteer forces rifle practice from 1860 onwards. Shooting ceased there in 1878, and the land was subdivided into housing lots when the new rifle range opened. The Merrit Rifle Range was used for over a century, until it was sold in 1987 for housing subdivision. Contemporary sailing directions for the area specify that vessels should keep at least 200 yards from the Rifle Range on shore, which is marked in 1897 by danger buoys, which had changed to beacons by 1907.

This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.

For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>