

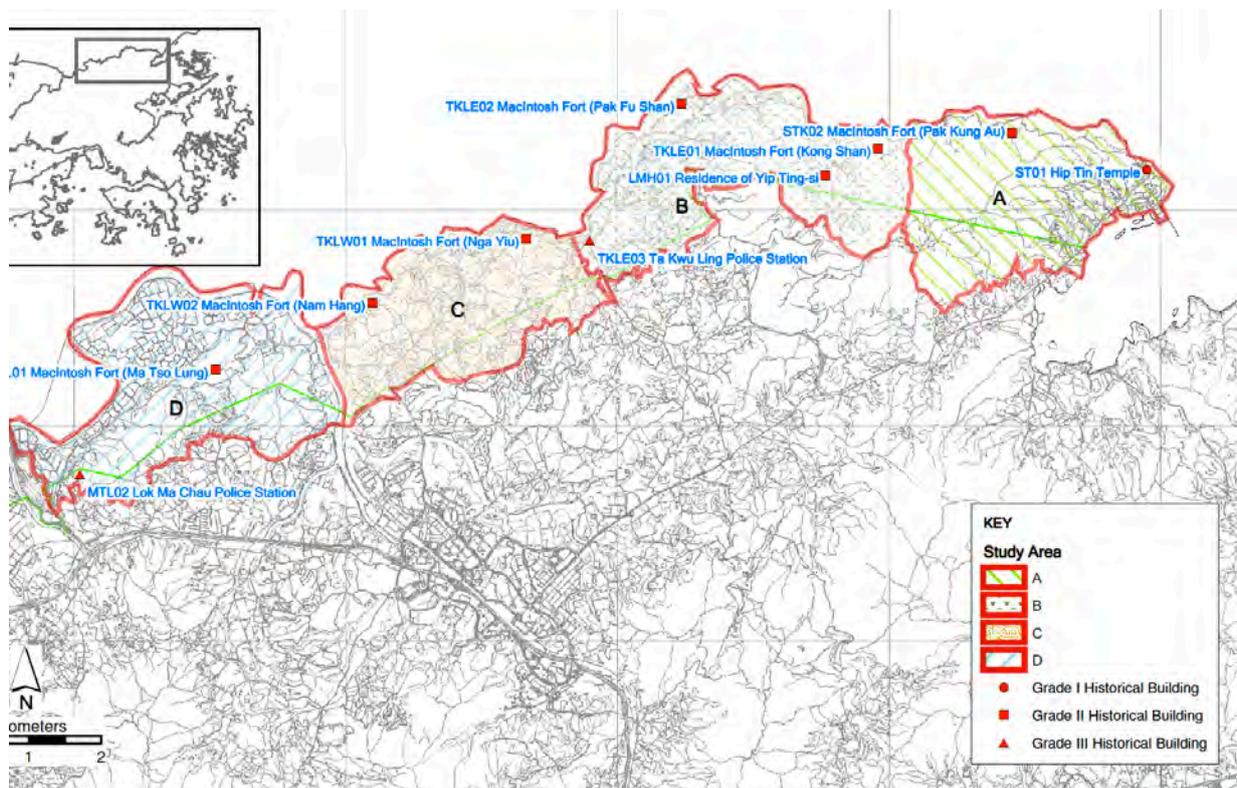
Hong Kong Police Frontier Men & Macintosh Forts



China's 1948/1949 unsettled conditions civil war between the Kuo Min Tang (KMT) and the increasing successes of the communist armies saw a large influx of refugees from the mainland into Hong Kong. Approximately 750,000, mainly from Kwantung Province, Shanghai and other commercial cities entered the colony during 1949 and early 1950's. This reached its height in the Spring of 1950 when the estimated population was 2,360,000.

Amongst the refugees were the defeated remnants of the Kuo Min Tang Nationalist armies and a large number of common criminals. Armed gangs raided villages near the Border. There were frequent gun battles between the police and the gangsters. In May 1949 two serious incidents occurred on the Border when two constables were killed by armed gangs for the constable's revolvers, a sten gun and two rifles at Nga Yiu post. At the time the police posts were only brick structures of two rooms without any form of perimeter fence or facilities.

These incidents lead to a change of design and use of police posts in that dangerous area. As a direct result of the Nga Yiu incident the then Commissioner of Police, Mr. Duncan Macintosh, decided to improve the design of border posts and conditions of officers deployed at the Border outposts. A string of seven strong posts was erected on the hilltops along the Border with a view across the Border at strategic spots. The imposing concrete structures with their distinctive appearance and outline against the skyline were later dubbed the "Macintosh Cathedrals". The posts, of which seven in all were built up to 1953, provided police a strong visible presence along the colony's border. The seven observation posts are located from east to west at Pak Kung Au (伯公坳), Kong Shan (礮山), Pak Fu Shan (白虎山), Ngau Yiu (瓦窑), Nam Hang (南坑), Ma Cho Lung (草壟) and Pak Hok Chau (白鶴洲). They are in a chain, covering most parts of the land frontier.



Macintosh Cathedrals Construction & Equipment

The observation posts are all almost identical in construction with small deviations. Centrally there is a round, two storied tower, jutting from its sides are two long, one storied arms. The plan of the whole is roughly in the shape of a chevron. The upper storey of the tower is the Control Room, equipped with radio and telephone, and manned continuously. At head height around the circumference, windows afford a 360° arc of vision. The Control Room gives access on either side to the flat roof of the arms of the post. This roof has a low, castellated parapet, and forms the Observation Bridge. Here is located a petrol generator and a searchlight. The former supplies electricity to the searchlight by night, and re-charges the R/T batteries by day.

The origin of the design is not known, but it may have its origins in remote hill-top and desert out-posts of the North West frontier of India and the Middle East. Another suggestion is that the design may have its origins in naval architecture due to the resemblance of the bridge of a ship? The design does not fall neatly into any of the usual architectural classifications.

Pak Kung Au is the western most and the second highest among the seven MacIntosh Forts, and one has to walk up nearly 700 steps to reach it. Accommodation is very basic consisting of a bunk room, small kitchen, shower and toilet. An internal cat ladder gives access to the tower and the flat roof. Externally the posts are surrounded by chain link fencing and barbed wire. Some have extra latrines also generator rooms, water tanks and defensive pillboxes.

Frontier OP	Location
Pak Kung Au (伯公坳), Sha Tau Kok , North District	Second highest with 700 steps
Kong Shan (礮山), Sha Tau Kok, North District	The highest with 900 steps at 700 feet above sea level
Pak Fu Shan (白虎山), Sha Tau Kok, North District	Operation base for Ta Kwu Ling Division
Nga Yiu (瓦窑), Sha Tau Kok, North District	Constable killed here and arms stolen
Nam Hang (南坑), Sha Tau Kok, North District	Located near Lo Wu
Ma Tso Lung (馬草壟), Ta Kwu Ling , North District	Constable killed between TKL & Lin Ma Hang Road revolver stolen
Pak Hok Chau (白鶴洲), Mai Po , Yuen Long District	Located near Mai Po Nature reserve

The Closed Area

The boundary stone between Hong Kong and China Sha Tau Kok c.1950



Shumchun (Shenzen River) River Left 1950 & Right 2007



Pak Gung Au OP



Kong Shan OP



Nam Hang OP 2007



Frontier Men



Brian Coak (Aug 2011)