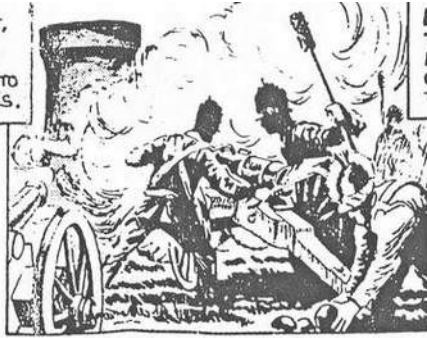
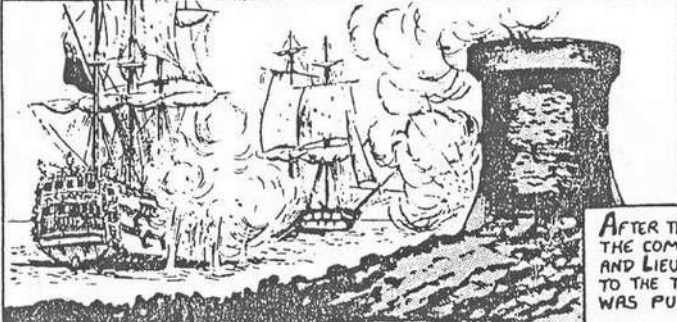


# Martello Towers

## An Illustrated Guide



THE MARTELLO TOWERS, A FAMILIAR SIGHT ALONG THE SOUTH COAST, WERE INSPIRED BY THE TOWER AT MORTELLA POINT, CORSICA. IN 1794 THE BRITISH ATTACKED THE ISLAND, OCCUPIED BY NAPOLEON'S TROOPS. TWO SHIPS BOMBARDED THE TOWER BUT WERE FORCED TO WITHDRAW AFTER SUSTAINING SERIOUS DAMAGE AND 60 CASUALTIES.

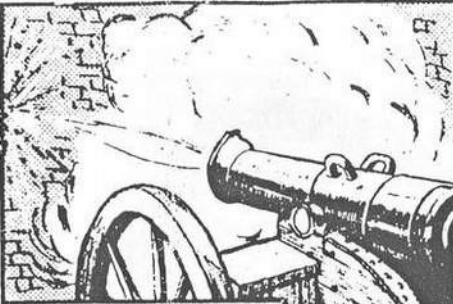
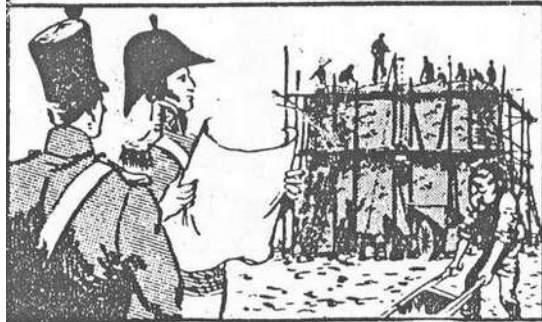


DESPITE CONTINUOUS HEAVY FIRING, THE TOWER HELD OUT FOR TWO MORE DAYS. BOTH NAVAL AND MILITARY OFFICERS WERE IMPRESSED BY TOWER'S STRENGTH.



AFTER THE NAVY'S FAILURE, THE ARMY, UNDER THE COMMAND OF MAJOR-GENERAL DAVID DUNDAS, AND LIEUTENANT-GENERAL JOHN MORE LAID SIEGE TO THE TOWER. A BATTERY OF FOUR GUNS WERE PUSHED TO WITHIN 150 YARDS OF ITS WALLS.

AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 19TH CENTURY, NAPOLEON HAD BECOME SO POWERFUL THAT HE BEGAN THREATENING ENGLAND WITH INVASION. AT A CONFERENCE HELD AT ROCHESTER IT WAS DECIDED TO BUILD 73 MARTELLO TOWERS ALONG THE MOST VULNERABLE STRETCH OF COAST BETWEEN FOLKESTONE AND SEAFORD IN SUSSEX.



TO DISCOVER THE RIGHT STRENGTH OF THE WALLS, CANNON BALLS WERE FIRED AT THEM UNTIL A STRENGTH WAS ACHIEVED WHERE THEY BOUNCED OFF.



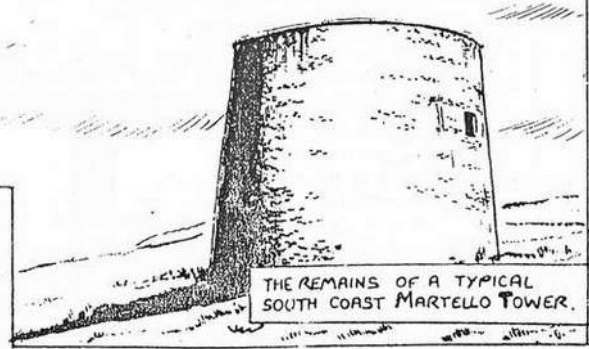
EACH TOWER HAD A GARRISON OF ONE OFFICER AND 24 MEN. ON THE ROOF WAS A 24 POUNDER CANNON WHICH COULD TRAVERSE A FULL CIRCLE. ENOUGH SUPPLIES WERE CONTAINED TO WITHSTAND A SIEGE.

MANY OF THE OFFICERS WHO HAD SERVED IN THE CORSICAN CAMPAIGN LATER HELD IMPORTANT POSTS IN ENGLAND, AND IT WAS THEY WHO SUGGESTED COPIES OF THE MORTELLA TOWER BE BUILT ALONG THE SOUTH COAST.



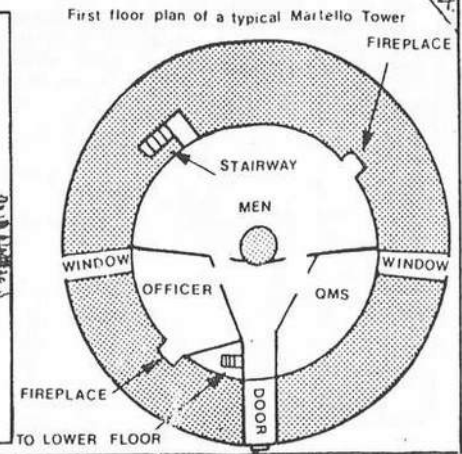
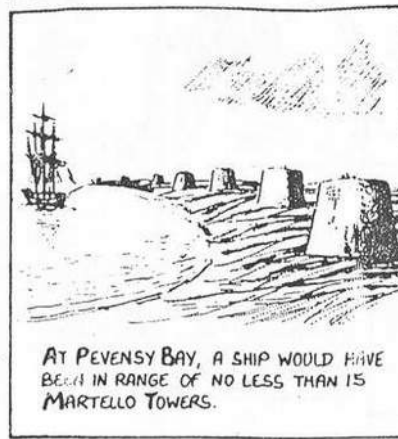
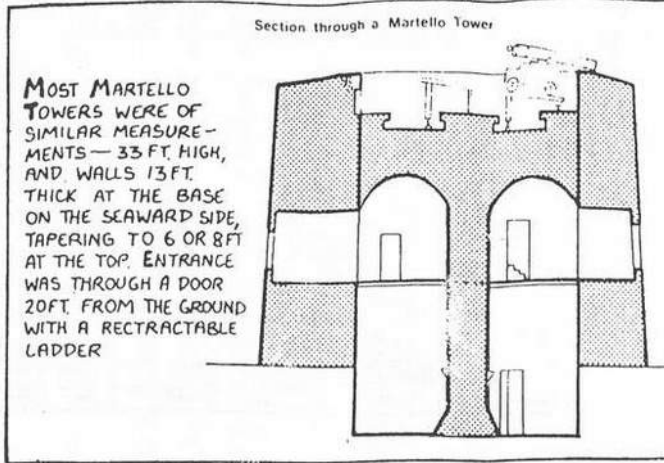
IT HAS BEEN SUGGESTED THAT THE NAME MARTELLO, INSTEAD OF MORTELLA IS OF ITALIAN ORIGIN. THERE WERE SIMILAR TOWERS IN ITALY CALLED TORI DI MARTELLO. MARTELLO IS ITALIAN FOR HAMMER. EACH TOWER CONTAINED AN ALARM BELL WHICH WAS STRUCK WITH A HAMMER.

MARTELLO TOWERS WERE NOT REFERRED TO AS SUCH UNTIL 1803. PREVIOUSLY THEY WERE KNOWN SIMPLY AS 'SEATOWERS', 'CORSICAN TOWERS' OR 'BOMB-PROOF TOWERS'



THE REMAINS OF A TYPICAL SOUTH COAST MARTELLO TOWER.

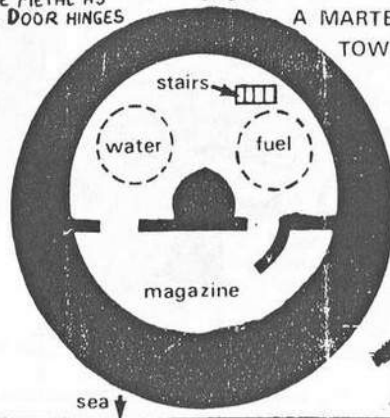
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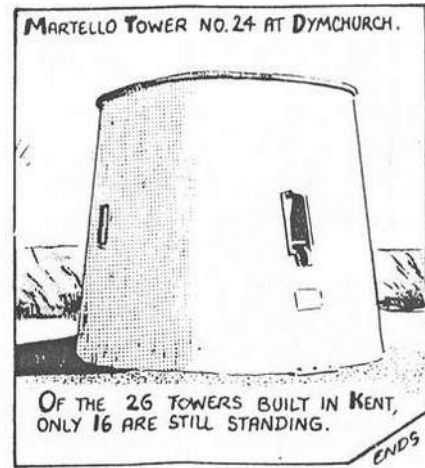
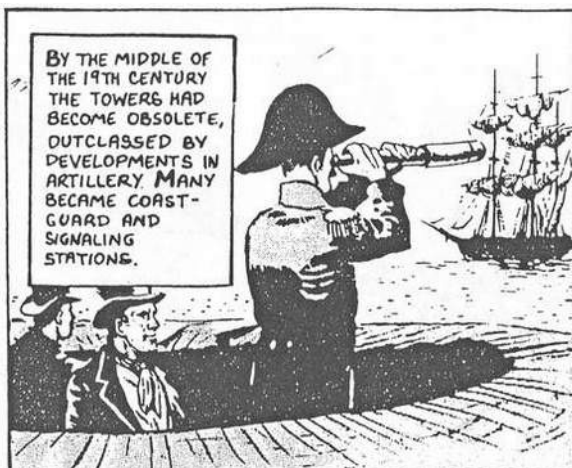
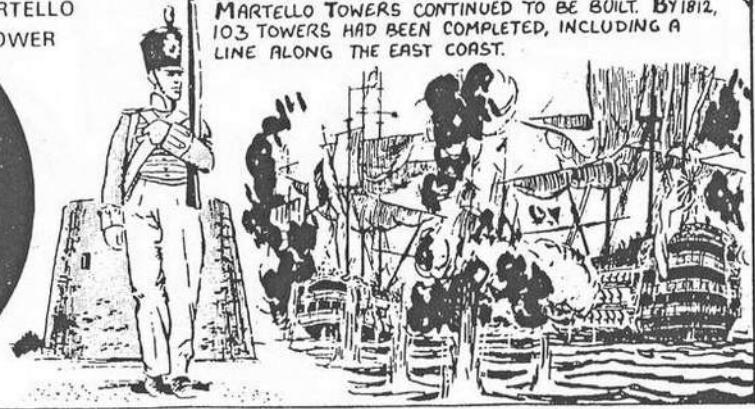
THE GROUND FLOOR CONTAINED THE POWDER MAGAZINE AND THE STORES. TO AVOID SPARKS AS LITTLE METAL AS POSSIBLE WAS USED IN ITS CONSTRUCTION. DOOR HINGES AND LATCH WERE MADE OF COPPER. HALF A TON OF POWDER WAS CONTAINED IN THE MAGAZINE



GROUND FLOOR PLAN OF A MARTELLO TOWER



NELSON'S VICTORY AT TRAFALGAR IN 1805 ENDED FOR EVER NAPOLEON'S DREAM OF INVASION, BUT THE MARTELLO TOWERS CONTINUED TO BE BUILT. BY 1812, 103 TOWERS HAD BEEN COMPLETED, INCLUDING A LINE ALONG THE EAST COAST.



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