

Welcome to the Underground City!

**Please note that the Underground City may only be visited with a guide.
We request that you join a group as suggested by museum staff.**

After a brief greeting and organisation into groups including a headcount, you will be given an introduction to the historical background and set off on a journey to discover the mysteries of the Underground City. For safety reasons, we ask that you do not separate at any time from your group. Your visit will be led by a guide dressed in a historical uniform of the Polish Armed Forces from late 1950s and early 60s. While visiting, please pay attention to the marked points whose stories are presented in this text.

We invite you to a journey back in time!

Your visit begins at the hour indicated at the green former guardhouse building, located in the southwestern part of the complex near the main entrance gate.

► **After groups have been determined, a short greeting, and an introduction to the historical background, we set out.**

Before we go underground though, we must cross a distance of several hundred metres. After this short march, we find ourselves at the inside enclosure of the complex. This is the entrance to the second zone. After reconstruction in the 1960s, the Polish Army divided the complex into five zones, two above ground and three below. Until just a few years ago, crossing any of the gate points in the complex required a special pass. Here in the second zone were located the most important shelters linked by an underground corridor.

► **Following the soldier-guide, we head to the eastern part of the complex.**

At the eastern gate leaving the zone, there is a watchtower and an additional electric fence which was still in operation until the late 1960s. Unfortunately, due to the fact that animals frequently set off the alarm, after a few years this solution was abandoned.

OBJECT H

Beyond this frequently, we see the foundations (H – see map) where during the Second World War the **new FuMO-214 Würzburg-Riese** radar station was set up. This was mounted at the battery in 1941 and was used to direct anti-aircraft artillery fire and search lights. The entire construction is 10 metres high, and the antenna was 7.5 metres in diameter. The construction, which weighed 15 tons, was staffed by six soldiers. The radar station



► **After exiting the shelters, we return via the tunnel to the junction with building B and turn left to the command shelter located to the north (building B).**

OBJECT B

This is the most important building in the entire complex. In the German nomenclature, this shelter was referred to as M-132. Several shelters of this type were built in other parts of Europe on the basis of this design. Currently, the entrance to the shelter is guarded by four sets of armoured doors, the heaviest of which weighs several hundred kilograms. After opening the first sliding gates, we follow a staircase downwards. This is where the entrance to the shelter was formerly located (you can see the frame of the door just before the stairs). Next, we pass through several gas-proof airlocks. In the last lock, on the left hand side, we can see the duty officer's room (no. 1), and to the right the staircase downwards to the lower level (no. 2). The door leads straight into the main command room of shelter M-132 (no. 3). On this level there are rooms for trajectory control, a confidential office, a general's suite with a washbasin, and operations room, and the main staff room. Above the staff room is located a system of armoured domes which during the Second World War housed two long-distance sights which served to identify targets at sea and establish their positions. These worked in tandem with a rangefinder located at the top of the shelter, which measured the distance to a given target.

On the lower level, there is living space for the 26 soldiers serving the operations of the shelter. This includes residential rooms, a washroom, filter and ventilation rooms, and an emergency exit from the shelter.

The building was in its most intensive period of use from around 1965 to the early 1980s; more than once, the shelter hosted visits from high-ranking officials such as the then Minister of National Defence, **Wojciech Jaruzelski** and the commander of the Navy, Admiral **Ludwik Janczyszyn**.

The command reflects the atmosphere of the most intense years of the Cold War. Inside, and exhibition of equipment from that time has been prepared, but the key point is the map which illustrates one of the variants of Cold War strategy. This map was drawn up by an outstanding military strategist, the then head of the Strategic Defence Planning Department at the General Staff of the Polish Army. This man was colonel **Ryszard Kukliński**, who was



could detect objects at a distance of up to 70 kilometres. The reinforced concrete base on which it was mounted can still be seen today.

Two hundred metres further east, at the base of a dune, was located the machine room (F) and the ammunition depot with stores of 600 shells (G). Neither of the buildings are included in the tourist route, but you can find more information about them in the descriptions on the map near the numbers which indicate them.

The most significant modernisation of the complex was conducted in the early 1960s, when the shelters were linked with a kilometre-long underground corridor (the underground portion of the complex includes 1500 metres of corridor). The soldiers of a special company of the Navy poured the concrete for the corridor for three weeks, 24 hours a day, in three shifts. The corridors are 130 cm wide and 220 cm high. The nearly kilometre-long corridor can be accessed by one of eight entrances. But to enter the tunnel, another pass was required. Inside the tunnel can be seen the alarm installations, while a dozen or more centimetres under the flooring there is a technical conduit which houses the installations powering the shelters, communications lines, and other technical infrastructure.

Underground, there in total five shelters: a two-level command shelter and four barracks and fighting shelters with positions for 15 calibre cannons. The shelters are situated along an east-west axis at intervals of 100-150 metres. Constructed of reinforced concrete with walls and ceilings 10 cm thick, they are roughly 35 metres long and 19.6 metres wide. Each of them was functionally divided (during the Second World War) into two sections: a barracks sections (to the south) and a fighting section (to the north).

The exteriors of the shelters were not overgrown with trees during the Second World War, and the guns mounted in them could fire both in the direction of the sea and in any other direction.

OBJECT E

Upon entering the underground area (zone number 3) just next to the guardhouses, we find ourselves at **S04** (firing station n. 4, currently marked as item **E**), which during the era of the Polish People's Army also served as the officers' mess; inside there were kitchens, a mess hall, bathrooms and storerooms.

OBJECT D

Following the underground tunnel, we reach the junction with **S03** (firing station no. 3, currently item **D**), which played the role of Radio Signal Centre (RSC). The shelter was fitted with a variety of types of communications equipment; in order to enter, a special permit needed to be displayed (zone no. 4).

Inside the RSC were radiotelegraph units, equipment rooms, a radio and telegraph station. Part of the **S03** shelter cannot be accessed as the ammunition detonated at the end of the war destroyed the rooms, which were subsequently excluded from use.



thanks to his exploits posthumously promoted to the rank of brigadier general.

The copy of the map presented here was created in the 1970s and shows areas to be attacked with atomic weapons in the Western Theatre. The red dots show the places where atomic bomb strikes from the Warsaw Pact would hit, while the blue dots show the targets of NATO bombs, the majority of which are concentrated along the two major rivers of Poland, the Vistula and the Oder.

The planned scenario for war assumed strikes in two strategic waves. The first was to set out for the West and included the Polish Front (coastal) in a strength of 600 000 troops along with the Czechoslovakian Front. The second wave was to include as many as two million Soviet troops who would march across Poland. For this reason, the assumptions for war also noted the chance of a NATO attack along the lines of the largest rivers in order to destroy bridges, roads, and railways which the second strategic wave would have travelled along. The outbreak of the Third World War and realisation of these mad plans would have led to the destruction of Central Europe. This is why the maps and documents presented here are a symbol of the destruction which would have occurred if this conflict had actually taken place.

► **After having a look at the map and command shelter, we head outside, and next set off towards firing station S01.**

Here was mounted a **15 cm Rheinmetall SK C/28 gun**. Each of the guns and its powerful armour weighed 16 tonnes, and due to their high position on the dune, they were capable of firing rounds weighing roughly 45 kilograms over of distance of as much as 23 kilometres. The cannon was mounted on a foundation around which there was a tunnel surrounding the position. In the tunnel, there were three ammunition lifts and an exit for the personnel quartered in the shelter. During the Second World War, there were no trees covering the approaches to the shelter so that the guns would have a clear line of sight over Pomeranian Bay and the entry to the port of Świnoujście. Towards the end of the war, the last units evacuating the battery detonated the ammunition in the shelters and the locks of the cannons, damaging them to the extent that they were no longer fit for use. After the taking of Świnoujście by the Soviet army on 5 May 1945, the majority of the equipment and armaments were dismantled and carried off. Since 2014, the equipment has been undergoing restoration and recreation; the museum plans to bring the original 15 cm guns to Poland.

OBJECT C

The next item on our route is **S02** (item **C**), which during the heyday of the complex functioned as a chemical weapons defence shelter and essential items storeroom. This was also where the company doctor saw patients.

OBJECT A

The last of the barracks and fighting shelters is **S01** (item **A**). Inside the shelter, the furnishings from the Second World War have been restored.

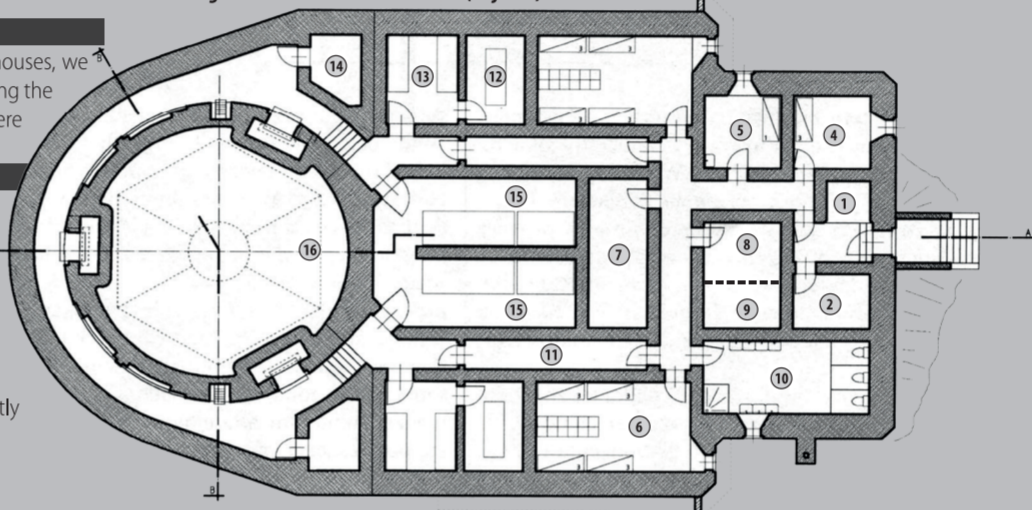
When the Vineta Battery was being built, it was a time of rapid economic expansion. This is why many millions were spent to ensure a high standard in the shelters, as can be seen by the substantial amount of space dedicated to the living needs of each soldier, the placement of windows in the living quarters, the construction of large latrines with a high standard, and the installation of central heating in all the blocks of the battery.

Thus, in the living quarters there are disinfection areas (no. **1**), a boiler room (no. **2**), quarters for three officers (no. **4**), quarters for one officer (no. **5**), two twelve-man barracks for naval personnel (no. **6**), an equipment room (no. **7**), a filtering and ventilation room (no. **8**), a medical area (no. **9**), and a washroom (no. **10**).

The residential space is divided from the fighting space by two firelocks (one on each side, no. **11**), which served to protect both sections in case of fire.

Beyond the firelocks in the fighting areas, there are two storage areas with a capacity of 50 shells each (no. **12**), two storage areas with a capacity of 75 shells each (no. **13**), two detonator storage areas (no. **14**), two storage areas with a capacity of 125 charges each (no. **15**), and two gun positions (no. **16**).

Legend of barrack-combat bunker (Object A).



It would not be possible to visit this amazing legacy of history were it not for the assistance of many individuals and institutions engaged in rescuing the complex from ruin.

Our special thanks go out to the patron of the Vineta Battery "Underground City", Polskie LNG/Gaz-System S.A. which has supported our efforts to save this unique monument of history since the very beginning.

We also express our gratitude to all those who visit, as the price of the ticket is also a donation to the revitalisation efforts of the entire complex

Other facilities off the tourist route:

OBJECT F

The machine room shelter of Vineta Battery is a bunker which is 15.7 metres by 10.9 meters. It is located in the first external zone of the eastern part of the complex. The machine room is not linked by underground corridor with the rest of the buildings, thus it is independent of the rest of the complex. The entire complex of batteries features three sources of power; the municipal power grid, the machine room, and in the event of an emergency each building is supplied by two additional smaller generators. The largest preserved machine in the shelter is a combustion engine powering an alternator manufactured in 1959 at the Czech MEZ Frenstad plant, which generates 60 kW of electrical energy. Only the foundations of a second generator rated at nearly 100 kW remain. In the generator room, there is also a modern electrical switching station which in the event of a loss of external power automatically started up the power generators.

Just beyond the wall, next to the entrance there is a fuel and lubricant depot. In this room, there are three large tanks for fuel used to power the generators. Each of them holds 1500 litres of oil, which could ensure the operation of the machinery without break at high RPM for a week. At the side end of the corridor, across from the fuel depot, there is a battery room. These powerful batteries were used for, among other things, starting up the power generators. Inside the machine room, there is also a latrine, a crew room, a filter and ventilation room, as well as a water pressure boosting station with a 60 metres deep well. This well dating from wartime still operates today and supplies the complex with groundwater. This functionality is only possible thanks to a costly replacement of machinery which was carried out by the army in 2007.

OBJECT G

At a distance of 100 metres from the machine room, there is the ammunition shelter, the easternmost of the shelters. Its powerful structure was hidden at the base of the dune to protect it from shells coming in from sea. This storehouse held 600 charges and rounds, 120 charges and incendiary rounds, 12 000 rounds of long arms ammunition, detonators and igniters. This shelter was the model for other buildings of this type constructed in Europe under the name **Regelbau M 145**.



**A Branch of the Museum of Coastal Defence
the Vineta Battery
in Świnoujście**

Underground City at Wolin Island

Plan legend of barrack-combat bunker (Object A):

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1 Decontamination chamber | 10 Bathroom and toilet |
| 2 Boiler room | 11 Firelock |
| 4 N.C.O. room | 12 Magazine for illumination ammunition (up to 50 rounds) |
| 5 Officer room | 13 Ammunition magazine (up to 75 rounds) |
| 6 Sailors room | 14 Fuse magazine |
| 7 Machinery room | 15 Bagged charges magazine (up to 125 pieces) |
| 8 Air filters and hydrophores | 16 Cannon station (barbette) |
| 9 Medical point | |



**Underground City at Wolin Island
A Branch of the Museum of Coastal Defence**

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History

The history of the Vineta Battery (Underground City) begins in the 1930s. At that time, Świnoujście (in German Swinemünde) was the largest German naval base on the Baltic coast. In connection with preparations for the Second World War, a new conception for the defence of the Kriegsmarine base was developed. One of the elements of the fortification on the port for protection from sea, land, and air attack was, in addition to the reinforcement of older fortifications with modern armaments, the expansion of the fortification of the islands. On Wolin Island, apart from a series of anti-aircraft and land defence batteries, two new coastal defence batteries were constructed; Goeben, fitted with three 28 calibre cannons, and Vineta with four 15 calibre cannons. The former was located deep in the woods near the village of Prztytór, while the latter was planned for construction closer to the sea, on the highest point in the area. Both complexes have remained intact until today and are an exceptionally precious reminder of the military history of the region. The Vineta Battery is one of the largest such historic batteries by surface area in Western Pomerania; nearly 15 hectares have been placed under the care of historic monument preservationists.

The decision to build the Vineta Battery was taken in 1935, yet its actual construction was delayed. The reason was a conflict with the Prussian Forestry Directorate, which did not want to sell for a song this highly attractive terrain for use in the construction of yet another enormous military complex. The dispute mainly revolved around the financial assessment of the value of the land and timber which was growing on it. Ultimately, after several years of negotiations, the Forestry Directorate sold the land just slightly more than a year before the outbreak of World War II.

Construction works were begun in 1938 and completed in 1939. Four fighting shelters with barracks space with constructed (A, C, D, E – see map), fitted with positions for 15 calibre cannons, a two-storey command shelter with huge armoured domes (B), a machine room (F), and ammunition depot (G). Additionally, throughout the area the necessary infrastructure was developed; modern radar (H), guardposts (I), barracks (J), a transformer station (K), and a network of trenches between the shelters.

The construction of these batteries took place during a time of intensive development in the armaments industry in the Third Reich, which is why the army had access to significant sums of money for the planned fortifications. Thanks to this, it was possible to fulfil the dreams of constructors and create buildings which met high standards.

The result of this was the creation of a unique complex which became the model for others; it was later duplicated in other parts of the Reich, adapting a given design to the individual needs of the local terrain, and as the war progressed simplifying the design so that it could be more cheaply built and maintained.

At the turn of 1940 and 1941, the battery, its crew and cannons were transferred to Holland (the so-called Atlantic Wall). The newly built battery was called Vineta, and the former shelter in Świnoujście was used as a training ground for one of the faculties of the Küstenartillerie-Lehrabteilung Coastal Artillery School. When in late March and early April 1945, Polish and Soviet units forced their way onto Wolin Island, the battery and other units responded with heavy fire, stopping the advance of the 19th Army of the Second Belarus Front. When the last units left the city by sea, a decision was taken to detonate the locks of the cannons, including those mounted in the Vineta Battery.

Ultimately, in early May, Soviet forces occupied Świnoujście. For several months, the Vineta Battery was deprived of vital equipment, and then at the turn of 1945/46, the complex was abandoned and handed over to the Polish Army, which at first had no idea what to do with it.

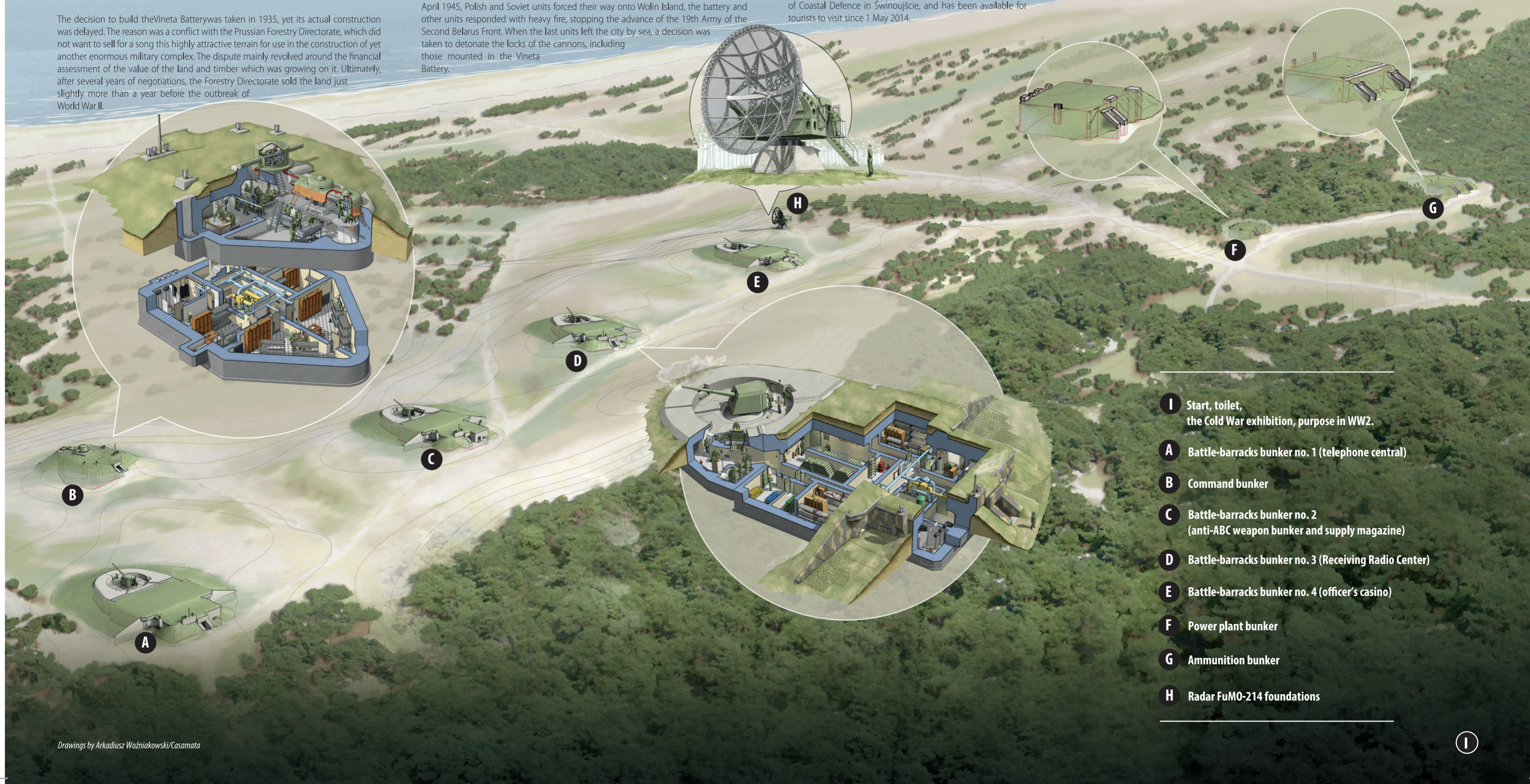
During the increasing tensions of the beginning of the Cold War in the early 1950s, it was decided that the complex may still have some use. Nearby, anti-assault fortifications were constructed which were meant to protect this section of the coast from NATO attacks.

The most significant expansion of the whole complex came in the 1960s. At huge cost, a decision was made to modernise the fortification for the needs of the Polish Front. An underground tunnel was built linking the five shelters, the buildings were reinforced and built up with earth, and subsequently trees were planted on top of them, masking the buildings and the entire aboveground infrastructure.

In this way, a full autonomous Underground City was constructed with the code name "10150", which for nearly 50 years beginning in the 1960s functioned as the command centre of the Polish Front, the Polish Navy, and the 8th Coastal Defence Fleet. From 1965 onwards, the shelters were among the most secretive places in Poland. The complex, a true legacy of the Cold War, since December 2013 has been a branch of the Museum of Coastal Defence in Świnoujście, and has been available for tourists to visit since 1 May 2014.

Underground City at Wolin Island

the Vineta Battery
A Branch of the Museum of Coastal Defence
in Świnoujście



- I Start, toilet, the Cold War exhibition, purpose in WW2.
- A Battle-barracks bunker no. 1 (telephone central)
- B Command bunker
- C Battle-barracks bunker no. 2 (anti-ABC weapon bunker and supply magazine)
- D Battle-barracks bunker no. 3 (Receiving Radio Center)
- E Battle-barracks bunker no. 4 (officer's casino)
- F Power plant bunker
- G Ammunition bunker
- H Radar FuMO-214 foundations