

The Long Vinh blockhouse.

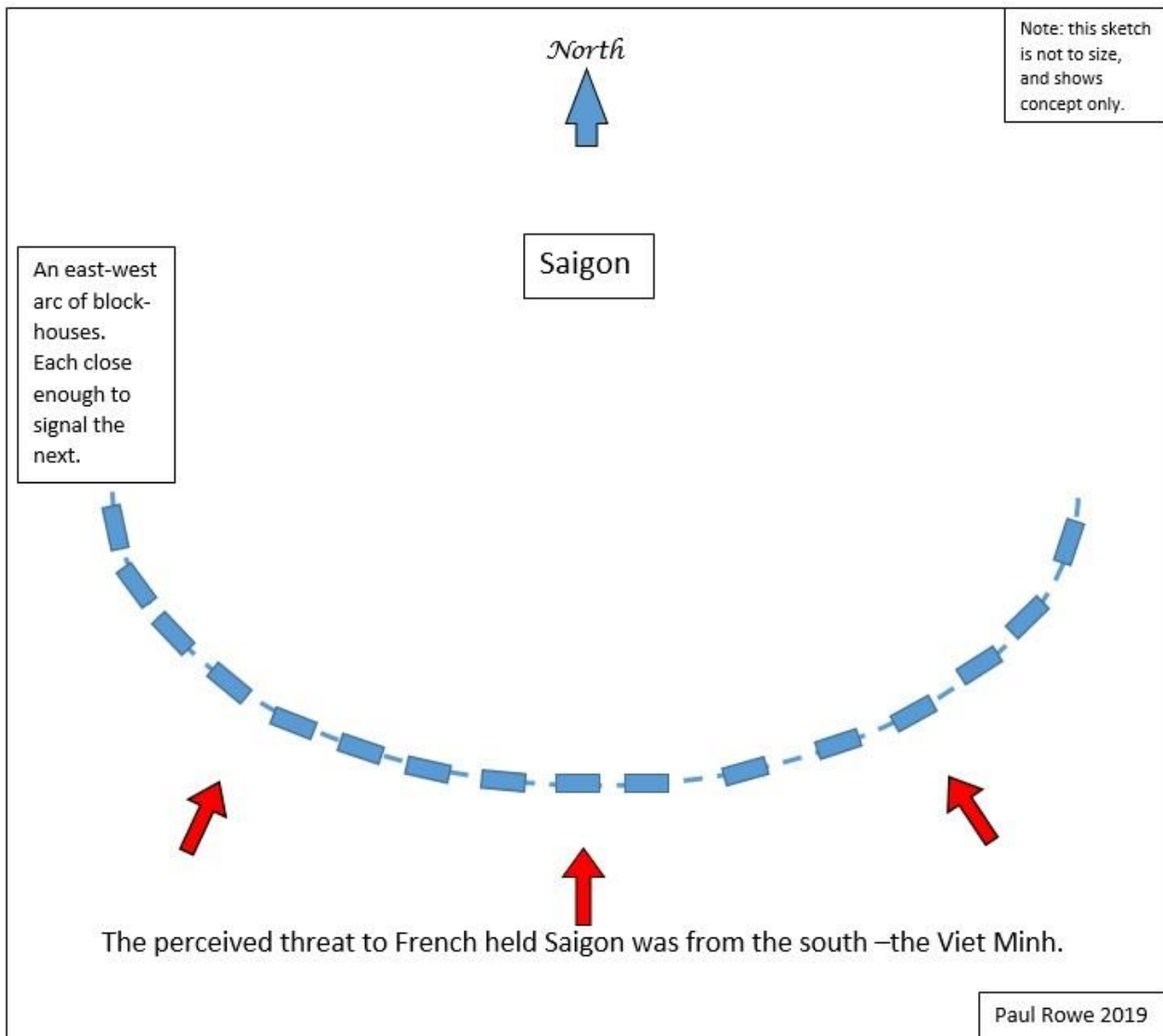
French military 1914ish

Saigon

Showing present day condition. June 30 2019

Paul Rowe 2019

A line of French blockhouses to protect Saigon - the theory.





Part of the exterior of the northern wall. It runs parallel to the small road.
Over time, the road height was raised about four feet.
Therefore the blockhouse was actually four feet higher than it appears.
The rifle slots should be about four feet above ground level.



The other part of the exterior of the northern wall. The rifle slots are just visible above the buildup of rubble and rubbish.



The front entrance mid-way along the northern wall. Imagine that it is not half-buried under rubble.

An, the military historian, who is showing me this blockhouse, was at this site two weeks ago, and the metal gate was still attached. This is the first time he has entered this blockhouse.

This wall and gate shows typical high quality French finish to the stones and mortar.



When entering through the gate there is about 10 metres to this wall straight ahead. The wall holds up a mezzanine floor, which runs around the inside of the blockhouse. Arches along this wall give access to a series of separate rooms with rifle slots (accommodation?).

When I visited there was about one foot of water on the floor. There was no roof to the blockhouse (by design) and it is the wet season. It was difficult to gauge the true floor level because of the amount of rubble on the floor.



The mezzanine floor was where the rifle men would stand to man their rifle slots.
This picture clearly shows that this design of blockhouse had no roof. The lower rooms
must have been like ovens in the tropical heat.



Although this blockhouse is in the suburbs of Ho Chi Minh City, the jungle is making a good attempt at over taking the structure.



More of the arches and the wall that hold up the mezzanine floor all around the blockhouse.

The floor is clearly seen here. Rubbish and rubble, now under water. The water was clean enough. Good sized gold fish call this home.

According to An, the square to the left, just above the water line indicates an underground water tank. I have seen this same thing outside French forts on Vung Tau island.



The mezzanine floor for the riflemen above the entrance gate on the northern wall. It is about one and a bit metres wide. On the northern wall there are no upper-level rifle slots. The soldiers would have either crouched behind the parapet or stood up to shoot.



As I entered through the gate; to the left is one of the pillars supporting the mezzanine floor attached to the northern wall. The pillars are of clay bricks. When the French arrived they found six clay fields, and two more clayfields suitable for furnace-bricks. Therefore high quality clay bricks and tiles are a feature of French military and civilian architecture. Here is a close up example.



The northern wall from the inside, under the mezzanine floor.
It is a little difficult to see, but there are three rifle slots in this room.
It clearly shows how much rubble has built-up on the floor.



Another shot showing the amount of water on the floor.

Can you see the gold fish? They were bigger than usual.



The jungle is taking over.

This is typical with many French forts.

The jungle can easily hide a large French structure. That is why I do most of my jungle explorations in the dry season.



See. This whole corner of the blockhouse is hidden by a few small jungle trees.



The extreme end of the northern wall.

It is difficult to imagine that this structure has survived the tropics so well for more than 100 years.

Obviously the French thought they would be here for a long time.

They were wrong.



This is a good example of French architecture.

The stonework and the mortar work are precise.

This is one way that French architecture can be dated.

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The condition of more French blockhouses in Ho Chi Minh City
will be recorded in the near future, so follow

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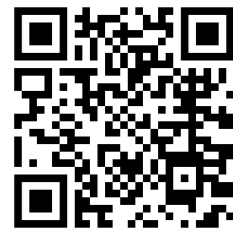


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