

Cadillac Mountain's summit hosted a World War II radar and radio station used for early-warning aircraft detection, and the mountain was closed to the public while this military installation was active.

What was on Cadillac Mountain in WWII?

View of the Porcupine Islands from the summit of Cadillac Mountain.

- In 1941, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers selected Cadillac Mountain as a site for a radar station because of its height and unobstructed views over the Atlantic and Gulf of Maine.
- The facility was operated by the U.S. Army Air Corps (later Army Air Forces) as part of coastal air-defense and early-warning efforts during the war.
- Cadillac's summit location made it an **ideal** place to detect approaching aircraft, and the installation functioned as an early-warning radar station rather than a large troop base.

Physical facilities and site layout

Cadillac Mountain summit

- The first radar station was on exposed ledge at the mountain's middle peak, enclosed by a chain-link fence about 300 feet on a side, encompassing roughly two acres.
- Around 1944 the station was moved to a new, smaller rectangular site (about one acre, 145 by 295 feet), still on the summit area but in a different configuration.
- Existing park buildings were repurposed: the Cadillac Tavern structure was converted into military barracks in 1942 to house personnel stationed at the summit.

Operational status and public access

Cadillac Mountain sunset

- From about 1941 to 1945, Cadillac Mountain was closed to visitors "for the duration of World War II" because of the sensitive nature of the radar site.

- The summit area reopened to the public in October 1945 after the military mission ended and radar operations ceased.
- The installation formed part of a broader network of coastal communications and defense sites in Acadia, which included Navy radio facilities at Otter Cliffs and later Schoodic Point for ship and signal monitoring.

Legacy on today's summit

- The WWII radar station is gone, but its presence helped establish Cadillac as a key communications site; modern antennas on the summit now serve the National Park Service, local police and fire departments, and the U.S. Coast Guard.
- Subtle landscape traces and documentation in the National Park Service's Cultural Landscape Inventory still mark the wartime period as a distinct chapter in the summit's history.

WWII Military Remnants in Acadia National Park

Acadia has a surprising amount of military heritage tucked into its landscape — most of it linked to radio, radar, and coastal watch operations. Here's what still survives on the ground today.

Schoodic Peninsula — the former U.S. Naval Radio Station, Winter Harbor

The largest surviving footprint. Established in 1935 (replacing the Otter Cliffs station) and expanded heavily during WWII, this base operated until 2002, when the Navy transferred it to the National Park Service. It now houses the Schoodic Education and Research Center (SERC), run in partnership with the Schoodic Institute.[nps](#)

Original 1930s–40s structures still standing include:

- **Rockefeller Hall** — the French Norman Revival centerpiece designed by Grosvenor Atterbury, built 1933–34 to house Navy personnel and now the SERC Welcome Center (NPS – Rockefeller Hall; Maine Preservation).[nps+1](#)
- **The adjacent Powerhouse** — also Atterbury-designed and listed on the National Register in 2013.[islandinstitute](#)

- A handful of other original base buildings integrated into the SERC campus; roughly 16 later Navy structures (barracks, dining hall, gym, admin) were razed during the 2010s conversion.[bangordailynews](http://bangordailynews.com)

The famous Cold War "Elephant Cage" (Wullenweber) antenna arrays are gone, but the campus layout, roads, and several utility structures date from the wartime footprint (Island Institute; CLUI).clui+1

Otter Cliffs — the Fabbri Memorial site

The original 1917 Navy radio station was dismantled in 1934 when the operation moved to Schoodic, but its footprint on Ocean Drive is still visible. Archaeological survey found **foundations scattered across the site, most notably those of Barracks B, and steel dock supports visible at the base of the cliff at low tide.** A wayside exhibit, "Hot Line to Europe," marks the spot near today's restrooms and picnic area.nps+1

Seawall Campground — Naval Radio Station remnants

In 1941–42, the CCC built a Naval Radio Station at Seawall. The transmitter buildings were later dismantled, but two tangible remnants remain in daily use (NPS – Military History; National Register nomination – Seawall Campground):nps+1

- The **ranger residence and garage** — originally erected in 1941–42 as Naval Radio Station buildings and converted to park staff housing at the end of WWII.
- The **stone entrance gate** — one of three heavy stone-pier-and-timber gates built by the Navy in 1942 to secure the radio station perimeter; the other two are gone.

Cadillac Mountain — Army Air Corps radar station

Selected in 1941 by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and operated by the Army Air Corps through WWII, closing Cadillac's summit to the public until October 1945. The original radar pad sat on exposed ledge on the middle peak inside a 300-foot-square chain-link enclosure; a smaller second station (145 × 295 ft) was

built around 1944. What survives today are ground disturbances, footings, and fence remnants at those two ledge sites rather than standing buildings.[nps](#)

Baker Island — 1942 watchtower

On Baker Island (reached by ranger boat), a **1942 WWII watchtower** was constructed on the southern site of an earlier Signal Corps installation, near the light station. Foundation remains and landscape features are documented within the National Register-listed light station parcel.[npshistory](#)

Frenchman Bay / Bald Porcupine Island — torpedo test site

In October 1944 the Navy test-fired twelve torpedoes at Bald Porcupine Island. A 1996 Army Corps of Engineers survey found **only remnants** of the ordnance impacts — nothing interpretive on the ground, but the island itself carries the scars.[nps](#)

What's gone

The Cold War antenna fields (including the Corea "Elephant Cages"), the wartime barracks and mess halls at Schoodic, the Seawall transmitter building, and the Otter Cliffs towers were all removed. Most of Acadia's WWII heritage today is best experienced at **Schoodic (Rockefeller Hall + SERC), Seawall Campground gate and ranger house, and the interpretive wayside at Otter Cliffs**, with fainter traces on Cadillac, Baker Island, and Bald Porcupine.