



# Off the Wall

**Teacher's guide**  
**for students aged 12 to 18**



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# Dear teacher,

This teachers' guide was developed for the project **Off the Wall**, in the context of which Flemish, Dutch and French **youngsters** came together during an **exchange week** to work on topics like **borders, war and peace, the Atlantikwall** and **displacement**. *Off the Wall* was organised within the context of the Creative Europe Project Atlantikwall Europe. Under the direction of theatre maker Pascal Buyse, they translated their ideas and experiences into an artistic performance. Filmmakers Toyah Van der Poten and Yel Ratajczak documented the process.

The point of departure of the project was the social environment of youngsters and the way in which they deal with borders and delimitations. In the **documentary** you can see the youngsters brainstorming about how it feels to **be constantly on the move**. **Refugees** and **displacement** are a topic as well. Never before have so many people seemed to be far away from home, either out of necessity or voluntarily. How does it feel to be constantly on the move? By means of artistic workshops, stories, testimonials and a theatre performance, the youngsters went back into time to World War II and made the link with present times.

[You can watch the documentary here.](#)

## Get to work

This teachers' guide contains more **information about the Atlantikwall** as well as several **activities** you can do with your class before or during a visit to an Atlantikwall site or to Atlantikwall Raversyde (Oostende, BE). These activities not only relate to the theme of World War II but, like Off the Wall, they are **linked to current events**.

The teachers' guide has a **modular structure**: you can choose the activities that are most suitable to your class. For each activity we have indicated whether it is suitable for students aged 12 to 14, 14 to 16 or 16 to 18.

When the activities are linked to the documentary, we refer to the corresponding fragment. This way you can decide whether to watch the full documentary (37 minutes) or only a few well-chosen fragments.

We wish you and your students an inspiring visit to the past and fascinating research into the present and the future.

## Partners:



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# 1. Background information

This chapter will give you more **information** on the topics that are incorporated into the **Off the Wall** project.

On the one hand, we provide some background information about the **history** and the **construction** of the Atlantikwall. When and where was the Atlantikwall built? What was the purpose of the Atlantikwall?

On the other hand, we make a clear **link to present-day issues** relating to **refugees** and **displacement**. It's easier to talk with your students about these issues if you use the right terminology.

## 1.1 The Atlantikwall

The **Atlantic Wall** or **Atlantikwall** is over 5300 kilometres long and stretches from the North Cape in Norway to the Pyrenees. It's **one of the largest coastal defence lines**. This line of defence was **devised** by the Germans **during World War II**. After the Battle of Britain from July to October 1940 and the subsequent Operation Barbarossa on the Eastern Front, they quickly started building a real **coastal defence to defend Europe against overseas invasions**. The concept dated from 1941 and included bunkers as well as other military installations and constructions. It was not a continuous wall of defences but rather a **succession of coastal batteries, manmade barriers and support bunkers**.

### Timeline

The Atlantikwall was **built in several phases**. One could say that **14 December 1941** is the official **start date**. This is the date on which the Oberkommando der Wehrmacht (the supreme command of the German armed forces) issued an order for the construction of the Neue Westwall along the coasts of Norway, Jutland (Denmark), the Netherlands, Belgium and France. It is also the period in which it became clear that the German invasion of Russia was not successful. More soldiers were sent to the Eastern Front, causing a lack of manpower in the West. In order to compensate for this weakness, the decision was taken to build a permanent coastal defence line in the form of a chain with several strongholds.

In **March 1942** Field Marshal Von Rundstedt was given supreme command and the idea of a permanent coastal defence was further developed, at the time when the threat of an invasion started to increase. On **25 August 1942** Hitler gave the **official order to construct** the Atlantikwall. The failed Allied raid in Dieppe (France) the week before played a major role in this decision. The name Atlantikwall initially related to the area between the French-Spanish border and the Northern Netherlands, where the construction of 15,000 bunkers was planned. The construction took place in several phases.

They were unable to complete all the scheduled constructions and therefore focused on the construction of closed artillery positions with the **Schartenbauprogramm** of **October 1943**.

Starting in **November 1943**, a **new approach** was adopted with respect to the Atlantikwall. After an inspection by general field marshal Erwin Rommel, it became clear that the Atlantikwall had many weak points. In addition to the ports, the beaches also had to be protected against an invasion. The Germans installed **beach obstacles** and **anti-tank walls** to sink landing craft, so they could not proceed inland. There were a lot of different beach obstacles:



wooden beams topped with a mine, grenade or saw teeth, so-called Cointet elements or Belgian gates, "Nutcracker" mines that were detonated by a rail being tipped over, Czech hedgehogs, iron and concrete pyramids etc. The "Rommel's asparagus", a wooden post that was driven into the ground, was named after the German general.

A project of this scope requires a **solid organisation**. That is why the **Regelbau principle** was applied. By using **standard types** of **bunkers** with **plans** and **type numbers** for the different components, it was possible to build on a large scale. **Types** of the **Westwall**, a defence line Hitler had already started building on the French-German border in 1933, were used. In addition, **new types** were developed. It was also determined in advance how many man-hours would be needed to build certain elements.

The plans could be adjusted to the specific characteristics of a site. The Atlantikwall was constructed under the direction of the **Festungspioniere** and **Organisation Todt** (OT). The *Festungspioniere* (the engineering corps) were responsible for the tactical aspect, the locations, the equipment and the technical development, while the OT was responsible for the construction. In addition to private construction companies, prisoners of war and forced labourers were used.

The main purpose of the Atlantikwall was to prevent an invasion from overseas, which eventually still took place on 6 June 1944 in Normandy. Nevertheless, the Germans continued the construction of new bunkers until late September 1944. In the Northern Netherlands, Denmark and Norway, the construction of bunkers also continued in 1945.

## Composition of the Atlantikwall

There was a clear idea on how all different elements of the Atlantikwall would work together to defend Nazi-occupied Europe against an attack from overseas. In practice, this idea was adapted to the local situation, the vision of the local commander and the areas that had to be defended.

On general, the Atlantikwall consists of the **following elements**:

- Coastal batteries with cannons to shoot at any approaching ships.
- A first line of defence on the beach, mainly consisting of passive elements of defence, such as sea mines, obstacles and mine fields. The beach could also be fired upon from the coastal batteries, with cannons and machine guns.
- Behind the combat bunkers, the bunkers for the ammunition and the troops were built.
- And even more inland were the command and hospital bunkers.
- Finally, the field batteries covered the beaches from the back.



## 1.2 Refugees and displacement

Since 2013 there has been a **European refugee crisis**, with hundreds of thousands of migrants crossing the Mediterranean Sea. This is caused by the **ongoing conflicts in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan**. The majority of these people look for safety in their own region, but an increasing number continue their journey to Europe. In doing so, they risk their lives. The European Union takes several measures, but new refugees arrive every day. This will continue as long as the situation in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan does not change. For these people, this is their only chance of survival.

People fleeing their country is not a new phenomenon, but something that **has always existed**. In war situations, even more people want to leave their country. Today, people also migrate for other reasons. They are looking for a better life and are economic refugees, or they flee due to the climate change, which makes their country no longer liveable.

The fact that so many people flee their country is something we can't ignore.' To discuss this with your students, it's advisable to use clear **terminology**. The terms "**refugees**", "**migrants**" and "**foreigners**" are often confused:

### refugee

Someone who is **fleeing a dangerous situation in their home country**. This may be violence or prosecution or, in an increasing number of cases, climate conditions.

Refugees try to be internationally recognised and to get help from states, UNHCR (the UN refugee agency) and other organisations. It's not safe for them to return to their country.

Refugees who apply for the refugee status in order to stay in a country officially are called asylum seekers.

### migrate

Moving to another region or country. An **immigrant** is an **incoming migrant**. They are people who leave their country on their own volition, for instance for **economic or family-related reasons**.

A migrant worker moves to find work elsewhere. As a rule, it is safe for migrants to return to their home country.

**Emigration** is the **opposite direction**.

An emigrant is someone who leaves their country and **settles abroad**. It's a matter of perspective: someone who migrates is an emigrant for their home country and an immigrant for their new country.

### foreigner

Someone with a **different nationality than that of the country in which they reside**, without having to have ever resided in another country. This means that not all foreigners are immigrants.

Foreigners who were born in Belgium and have never migrated, are the children of immigrants. They are often called second- or third-generation immigrants.

Conversely, not all immigrants are foreigners.



## 2. Activities before the visit

You can make a selection from the following **activities** to work with your students on topics like borders, being on the move, war and peace **prior to your visit to an Atlantikwall site**. The focus of these activities is on **starting a discussion** about these topics.

### Activity 1 – The Atlantikwall nearby

**Target group**

Ages 12 to 18

**Time**

20 minutes

**Material**

- appendix: blank map
- internet connection to look at the surrounding area using the satellite view of Google Maps

**Purpose**

The students map the Atlantikwall in the surrounding area and think about borders.

After World War II, **large sections** of the 5,000 km long **Atlantikwall were torn down**. Nevertheless, **traces** are still visible in the **landscape**: not only bunkers, but also parts of anti-tank walls or remnants of infrastructure like supply roads, railroads, trenches or sand extraction pits.

**Look** with your students for the nearest **remnants** in your immediate surroundings. Or **visit** an **Atlantikwall site** like Atlantikwall Raversyde (Oostende, BE).

- Who has already passed by remnants that may have been part of the Atlantikwall? Look for traces on a map or via Google Maps.
- Indicate the places where the Atlantikwall used to be on a map of the surrounding area (appendix).
- Compare them with the traces you found.
- The Atlantikwall was a border which the Germans tried to strictly guard out of fear for attacks from overseas. Are there comparable borders anywhere today?
- How are (national) borders guarded today? How do you think this will be done in the future?





## Activity 2 – Imagine you're on a boat ...

### Target group

Ages 12 to 18

### Material

statements

### Fragments from the documentary

- 00:00 - 05:30 (introduction exchange week)
- 21:30 - 24:00 (statement game)

### Time

30 minutes

### Purpose

On the basis of a number of different statements, the students think about borders, migration and refugees. They take a position for each of the statements.

Youngsters make some **statements** during the first five minutes of the **documentary**. One of the first assignments for the participants is to **take a position with respect to the refugee issue**.

- The students move to the centre of the classroom.
- Read a statement (see below).
- The students decide with which statement they agree and move to the corresponding site of the classroom (left or right). They are not allowed to discuss the statements among themselves.
- Once everyone has chosen a side, ask a few students to explain their choice.
- After each statement, the students move back to the centre for the following statement.

statements	
left side of the classroom	right side of the classroom
Borders are good.	Borders are not necessary.
It must be possible to break through borders if necessary.	Borders cannot be torn down.
There should be no border control within Europe.	Border control within Europe is necessary.
Everyone should stay in their own country.	Everyone is free to move to another country.
Refugees should always go back to their country if possible.	Refugees can stay here, even if it would be possible for them to return to their country.
If a war broke out here, I would flee to a country where it's safe.	If war broke out here, I would try to stay here.
Poor or rich, white or black, foreigner or not, everyone is equal.	A poor person, someone with a different skin colour or a foreigner is worth less than a rich person or a native.
If the boat I'm on with other people sinks, I would first save myself.	If the boat I'm on with other people sinks, I would first help the others.



- For the statements listed below, designate **one side of the classroom** as the **“disagree” side** and the **other side** as the **“agree” side**.
- Read a statement.
- The students decide whether or not they agree with the statement and move to the “agree” or “disagree” side. They are not allowed to discuss the statements among themselves.
- Once everyone has chosen a side, ask a few students to explain their choice.
- After each statement, the students move back to the centre for the following statement.

#### statements

- Someone who does not live in Belgium is a foreigner.
- Foreigners are people who are not from here.
- A foreigner is someone with a different skin colour.
- A Frenchman who lives in Belgium is a foreigner.
- There are too many foreigners in Belgium.
- I wouldn't want to live in a country where there is war.
- I would use my boat to save drowning people.
- I would use my own money to save refugees.
- Helping refugees is the responsibility of the government.
- I should do more to help refugees.
- I would kill 1 person to save 20 others.
- I would let 20 people die to save myself.

Discuss the following with the students afterwards:

- What have you noticed?
- Was it easy to take a position?
- How were opinions divided?
- Did you change your opinion by listening to others?

#### **Extension for students of the third cycle**

- Watch fragment 21:30 - 24:00 of the documentary with the students (The youngsters discuss a number of the statements and their opinions).
- Ask the students in advance to write down with which statements they agree and with which ones they disagree.
- Discuss and compare the results.

### Activity 3 – Do you feel at home in your house?

**Target group**

Ages 12 to 14

**Material**

paper & pencil

**Fragment from the documentary**

08:00 - 11:30 (visit to Atlantikwall Raversyde (Oostende, BE) + imagining yourself in a war situation)

**Time**

20 minutes

**Purpose**

The students explain in their own words what make a house a home. They try to imagine life as a refugee.

In the fragment, the youngsters visit Atlantikwall Raversyde (Oostende, BE). They try to imagine what it must have been like for the soldiers to live in the bunkers. Life was not easy for civilians, either. Many of them had to leave their homes because of the construction of the Atlantikwall. This is a situation that is certainly comparable to that of people who are fleeing war situations today.

- Ask the students to **draw a house**.
- Then ask them to draw or write down in the house they drew everything **they think is important** to have at home.
- In addition to personal items or items of practical value, they can also draw things that turn a house into a home. **What do you need to feel at home?**
- Now give them the following **hypothesis**. Suppose that war breaks out and **you have to flee**. You can only take what you can carry yourself: **What would you take and why?** Draw or write this outside the drawing of the house. How would you make sure you feel safe in your new place? How can you make this place your home?
- Have the students discuss what they would take and why in groups of 2 or 3. What are the similarities or differences?



## Activity 4 – This is my border

### Target group

Ages 14 to 18

### Time

15 minutes

### Material

paper & pencil or felt-tip pen

### Purpose

The students look for a way to express their interpretation of borders without words.

### Fragment from the documentary

05:50 - 08:00

During the exchange week, the youngsters took part in artistic workshops and listened to stories and testimonials while working on a **theatre performance** that created a link between World War II and recent events. Partly due to the language barrier, this was done **without using a lot of words**.

- Divide the class into groups of 5 or 6.
- Have each group first think about the term “border” and about ways to explain it without words.
  - ▶ What is a border?
  - ▶ Why do borders exist?
  - ▶ What are the ways to demarcate a border?
  - ▶ Is it allowed to break through a border?
- Explain that the purpose of the exercise is for the group to act out a situation where a border is broken through without using words. Each group is subdivided into two camps: one guards the border and the other wants to cross it.
- Have each group think up a brief scene that consists of three steps:
  - ▶ Initial situation: the first camp demarcates the border.
  - ▶ Action: the border is crossed.
  - ▶ End: how do the two camps handle the situation?
- Watch the different groups act out the scenes with your students and discuss for each scene:
  - ▶ Is it clear what the border was?
  - ▶ What are the feelings that were shown?

### Extension for students of the third cycle

Look for a (recent) newspaper article to illustrate the scene you thought up.

## Activity 5 – A day in the life of ...

### Target group

Ages 12 to 18

### Time

50 minutes

### Material

- appendix: pictures of murals in Vloethemveld camp
- paper, ballpoint, drawing materials

### Purpose

The students imagine living the life of a soldier or civilian during World War II and that of a refugee today.

### Fragments from the documentary

- 12:00 - 15:30 (visit to the POW camp Vloethemveld, Zedelgem, Belgium)
- 18:00 - 21:00 (link to refugees, visit of exhibition *Un|settled*)

First watch fragment 12:00 – 15:30 of the documentary. You will see the youngsters visit the POW camp Vloethemveld and get an impression of the daily life of a prisoner of war. Vloethemveld was a POW (prisoner of war) camp of the British army. Between 1945 and 1946, a little over 100,000 German and Baltic (i.a. Latvian) prisoners of war were packed together in four camps.

### For the first cycle

- Discuss the different types of camps during World War II: extermination camps, labour camps and POW camps.
- By the end of WW II, an increasing number of camps for German prisoners of war were set up. There were approximately 250,000 German prisoners of war in Belgium in November 1945.
- Life in a POW camp was not easy, but it can't be compared to life in the notorious extermination camps. There was a strict military regime and there were few facilities. In addition to their daily maintenance chores, the prisoners had a few other tasks to perform, but in fact, there was not all that much to do. This caused the so-called "barbed-wire disease". This disease was first described by the Swiss physician Adolf Lukas Vischer. It's a psychiatric syndrome among prisoners of war that follows a long-term incarceration and involves boredom, confusion, clouding of consciousness and amnesia.
- In order to combat boredom, the prisoners in Vloethemveld engaged in singing, dancing, playing games and creating visual art. Look at the pictures of the murals in the Vloethemveld camp. These drawings represented what the prisoners missed during their stay in the camp.
- Divide the class into groups of two.
- Have them think about what they would miss (from their current lives) if they got "barbed-wire disease".
- Have each duo make a sketch for a mural they would design.

### Extension to a present-day situation

- Find a photo (online) of a refugee camp.
- What do you think life is like in such a camp?
- Are there things you can think of that may make life there more enjoyable?





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## For the second and third cycle

Additional information about daily life on the Atlantikwall:

*The troops took part in military exercises, maintenance took time and the ordinary daily chores had to be done. Usually, the soldiers were free in the afternoons. They practised sports and made excursions. They also went to the cinema and variety shows in the camp itself or in the neighbourhood. Some soldiers kept rabbits, chickens and pigs or grew vegetables. The battery even had its own library.*

- Divide the class into groups of 3.
- Each group writes a (fictitious) page in the diary of: Assign a character to each group.
  - ▶ a soldier on the Atlantikwall;
  - ▶ a refugee on a boat in the Atlantic Ocean;
  - ▶ a secondary school student in Belgium.
- After the texts are written, have the group look for similarities and differences between the diary pages of the different characters.

## Activity 6 – Borders according to a refugee, a migrant and a local resident

### Target group

Ages 14 to 18

### Time

30 minutes

### Material

large sheets of paper & felt-tip pens

### Purpose

The students look at the current refugee problem from three different angles and try to form a substantiated opinion.

- Start with a brainstorming session on the concept of “borders”. Work together to make a mind map. What do the students associate with “borders”?
- Ask the following questions to move the brainstorming session along and start the discussion:
  - ▶ When is it necessary to establish borders?
  - ▶ In which way do you have to dare break through borders?
  - ▶ In which situations do you need to establish borders for yourself?
  - ▶ Are there any threats we need to protect ourselves against?
- Briefly explain the difference between a migrant and a refugee (see terminology on page 3).
- Divide the class into three groups. Each group adopts a different viewpoint: that of a refugee, that of a migrant and that of a local resident.
- Each group again discusses the questions about borders, this time from the viewpoint that was assigned to them. What is their opinion?
- The groups discuss their findings from their respective viewpoints.



### 3. On-site activities

The following **activities** are meant to be done with your students **during a visit to an Atlantikwall site**. Depending on the duration of the visit and the local circumstances, you are free to combine a few activities. The focus of the activities is on **observing the location** and **experiencing the past/present**.

#### Activity 1 – Bunker catalogue

**Target group**

Ages 14 to 18

**Time**

20 minutes

**Material**

- appendix: bunker catalogue
- paper & ballpoint

**Purpose**

On the basis of a number of different bunker types, the students map what they see on the Atlantikwall site.

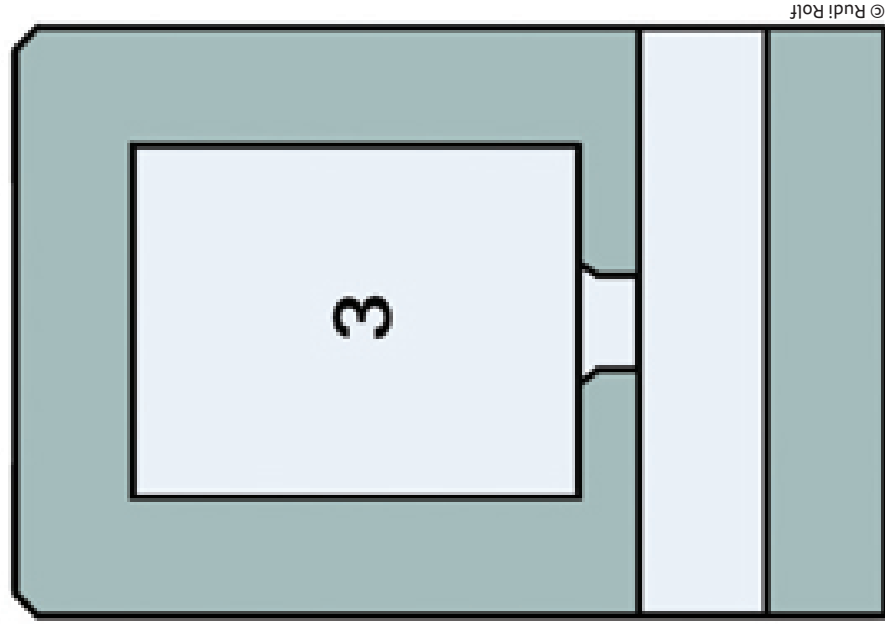
- Briefly discuss the **Regelbau** concept. This is a technique that had been used by the Germans since the 1930s. It implies the use of a **series of standardised bunker designs to construct defences quickly**. Each bunker has a **code** indicating the strength of the construction.
- Divide the class into groups of 4 or 5.
- Give the students the bunker catalogue.
- With this catalogue, the students can try to find out **which bunker types** can be found **at this site**. There are lots of different types. The “bunker catalogue” gives an overview of the different types. The bunkers most frequently found have a type number starting with R6. Bunkers are also quite often adjusted to the specific situation of the location. Not all bunkers were built according to the Regelbau principle.  
Discuss the following:
  - ▶ What can we find here?
  - ▶ Are there things you can identify? Others that you can't?
  - ▶ Imagine that you have to make this place operational again as part of the defence line. How would you do it? What would you add?
  - ▶ Suppose that this Atlantikwall is operational again, what would be the consequences for this place and the people passing by?

## Bunker catalogue

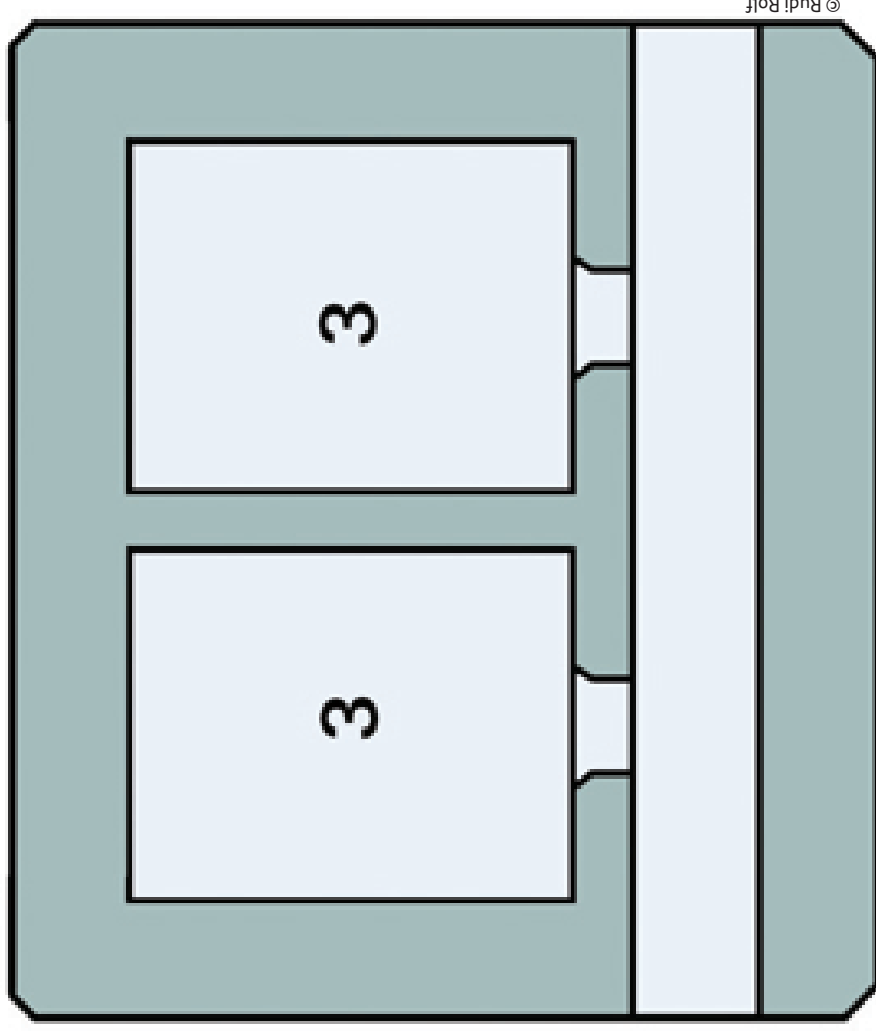
A **bunker** is a **fortified and compact construction made of reinforced concrete** that offers protection against shelling and bombings. A bunker can be built quickly and cheaply and exists in **different types**: observation and command bunkers, ammunitions bunkers, personnel bunkers and storage bunkers.

In this catalogue you will find a lot of the most common **bunker types**.

If you visit Atlantikwall Raversyde in Oostende, look for types 612 (flank defence) 671 (artillery bunker).

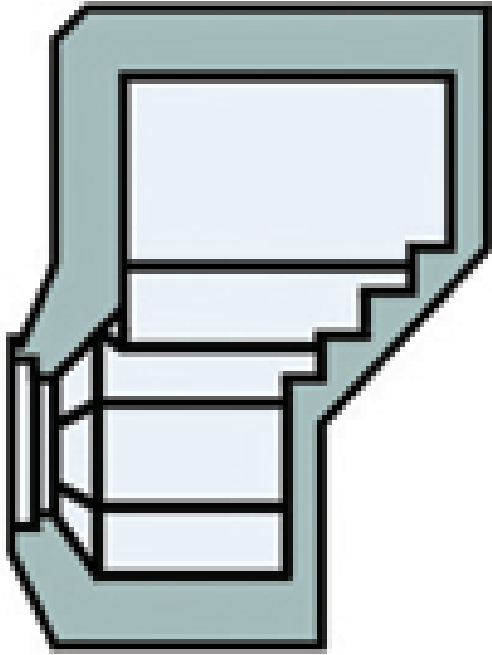


**Type 51a**  
**Personnel bunker**



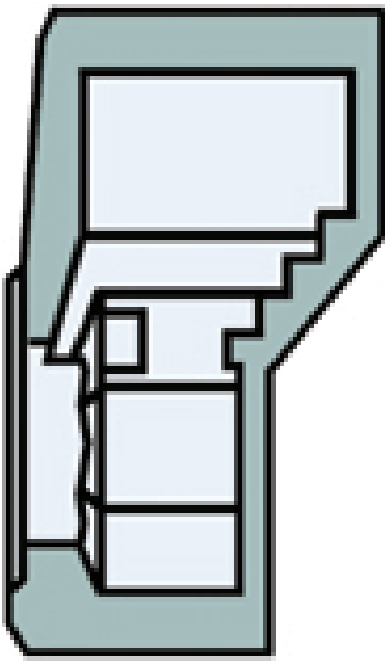
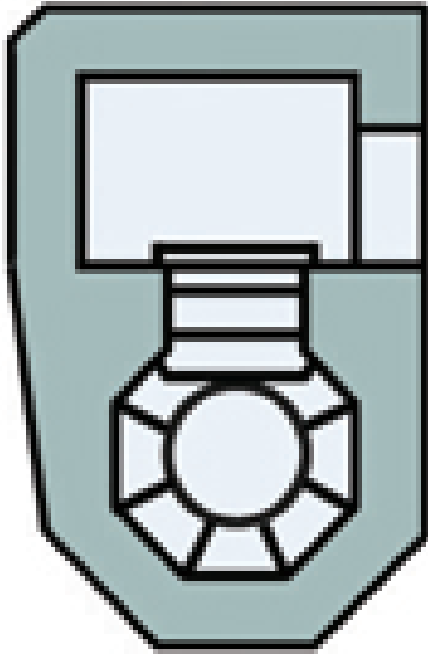
**Type VF52a**  
**Personnel bunker**





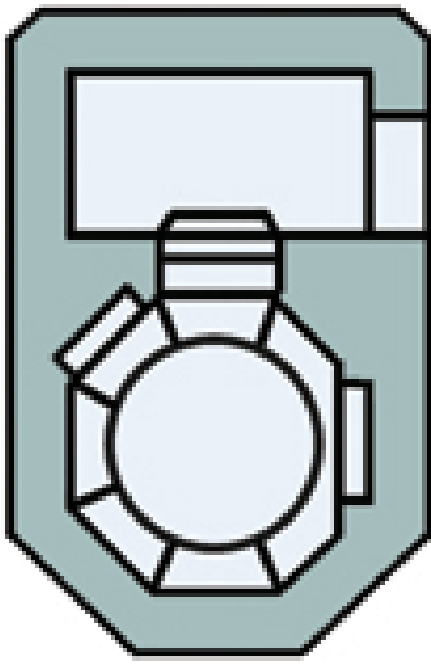
**Type 58c**  
**Tobruk (one-man bunker)**

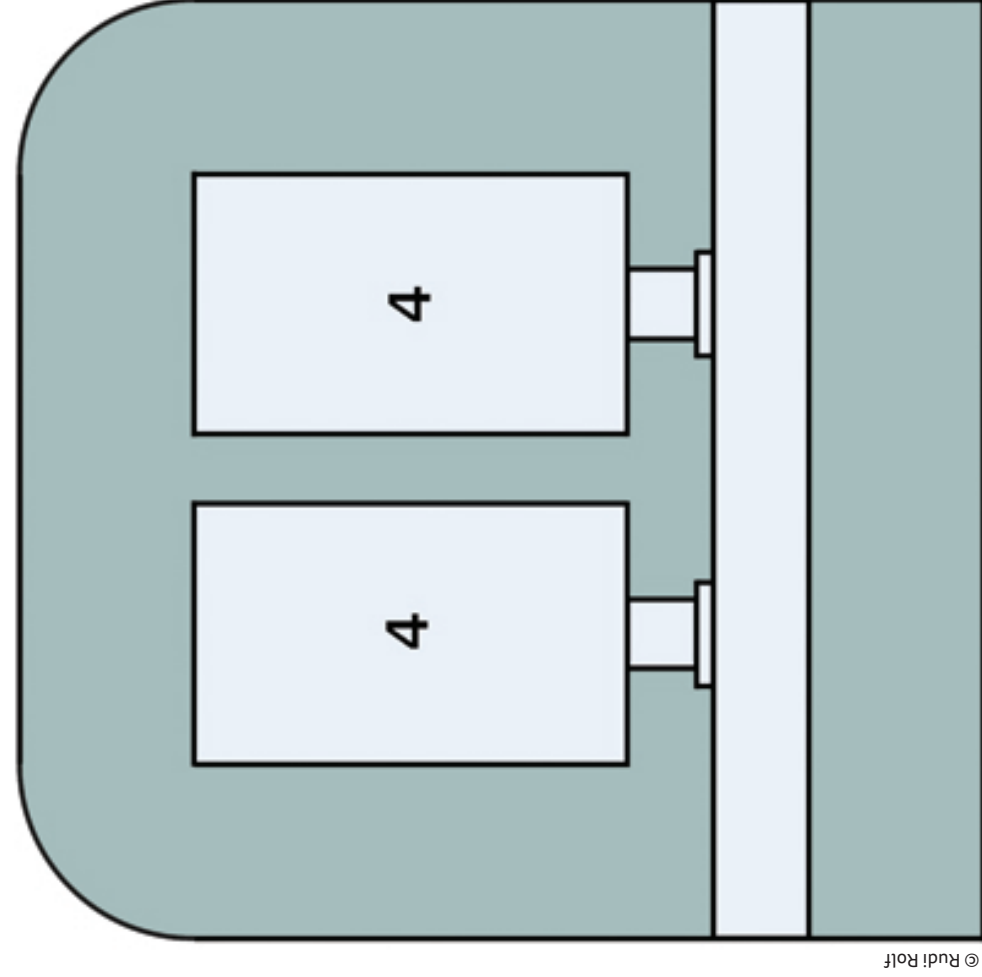
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**Type 67**  
**Tobruk (one-man bunker)**

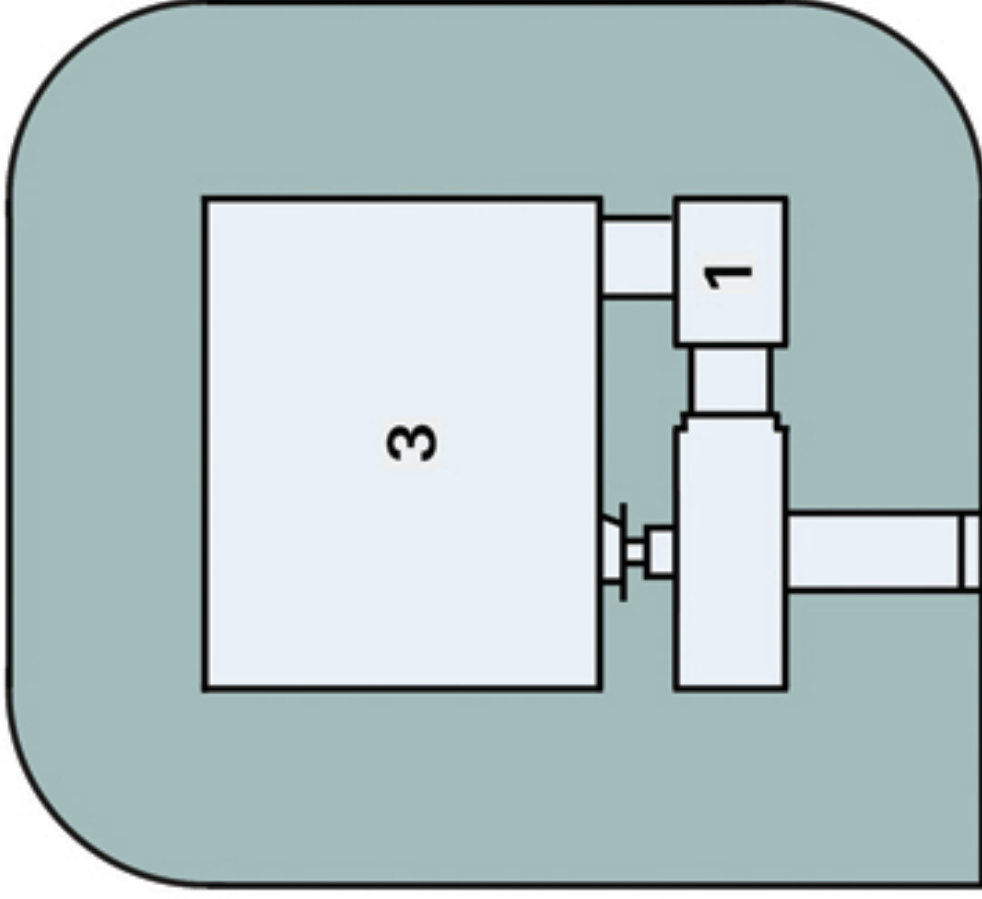
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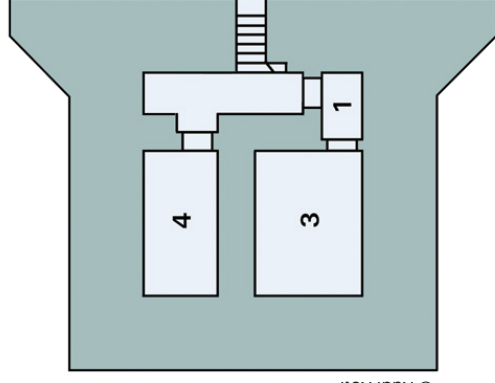
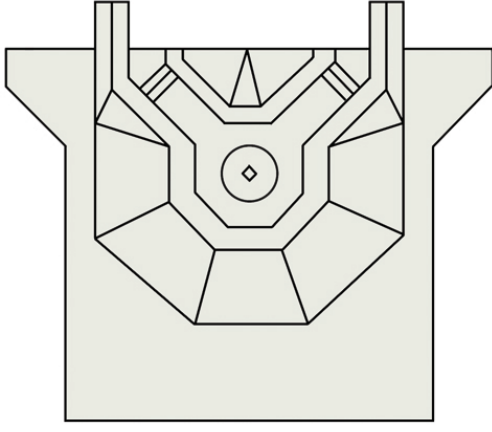
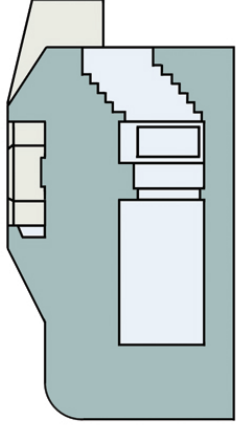
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**Type 134**  
**Ammunitions bunker**



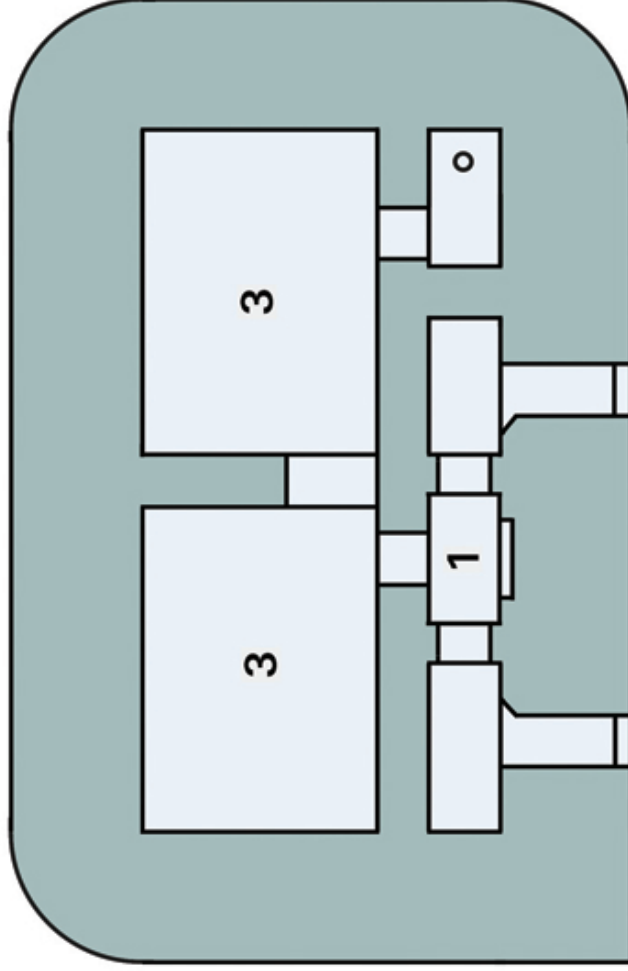
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**Type 501**  
**Personnel bunker**



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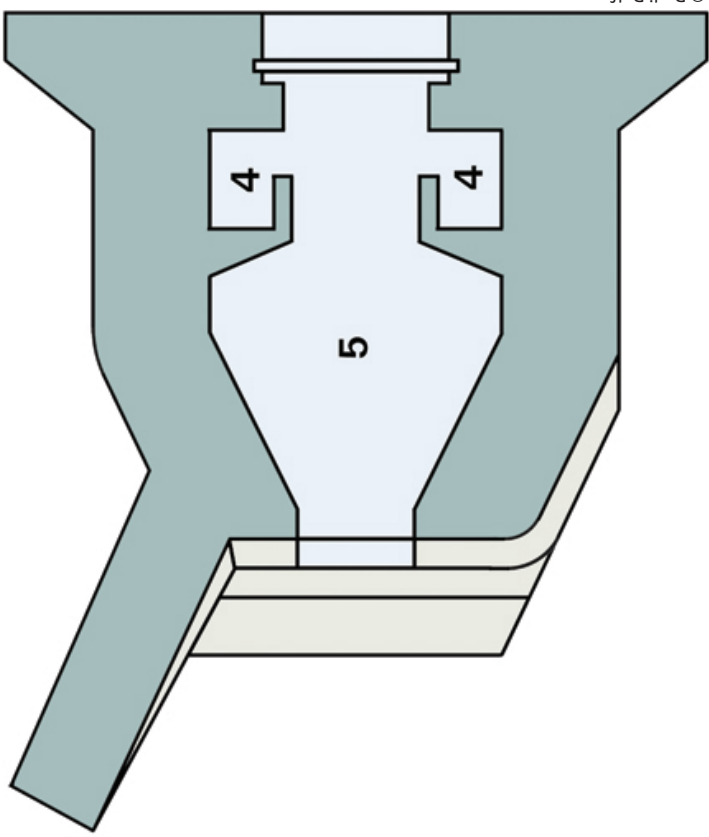
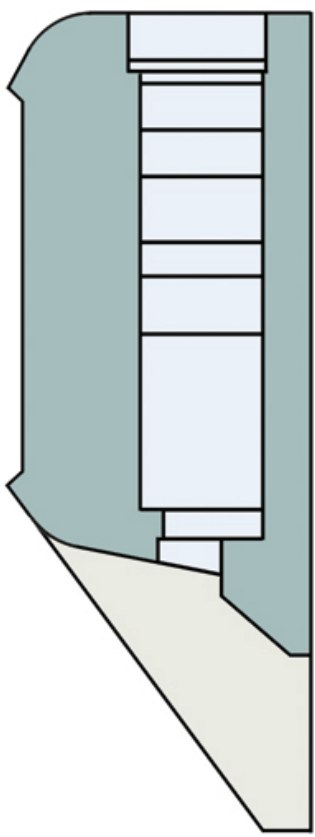
**Type R 600**  
**Bunker with open platform**



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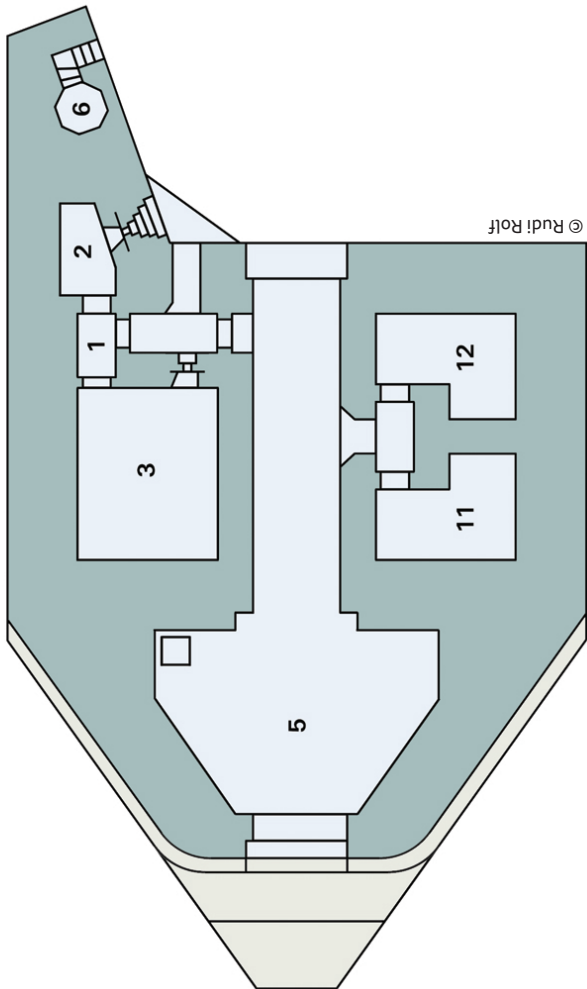
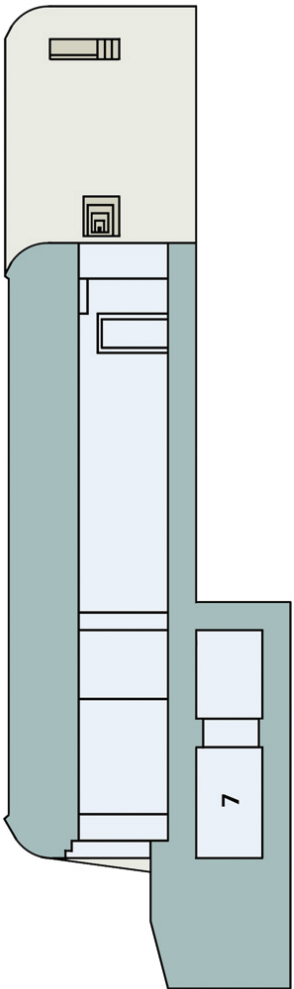
**Type 502**  
**Personnel bunker**





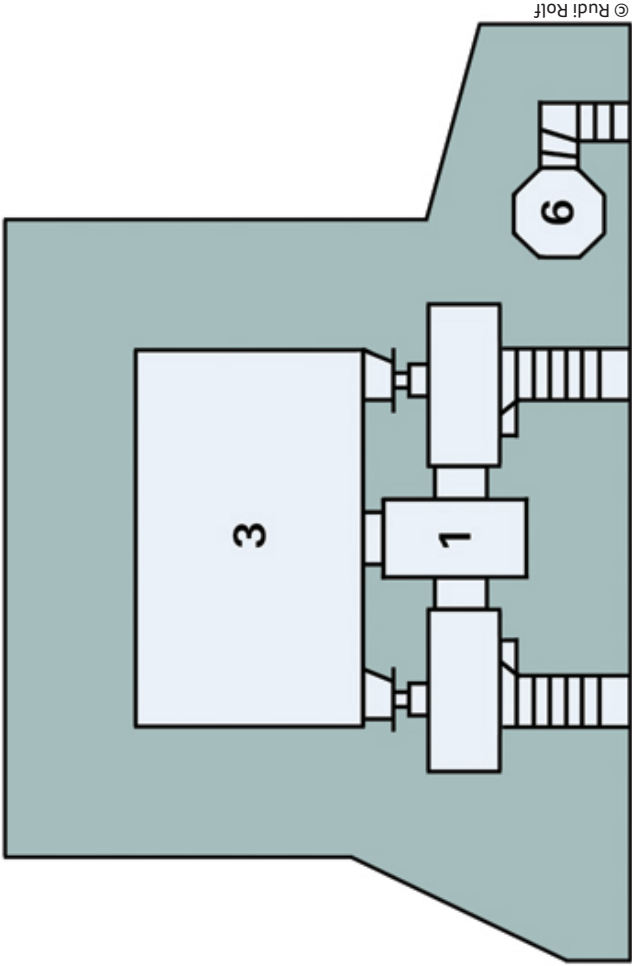
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**Type 612**  
**Artillery bunker**  
**(flank defence)**



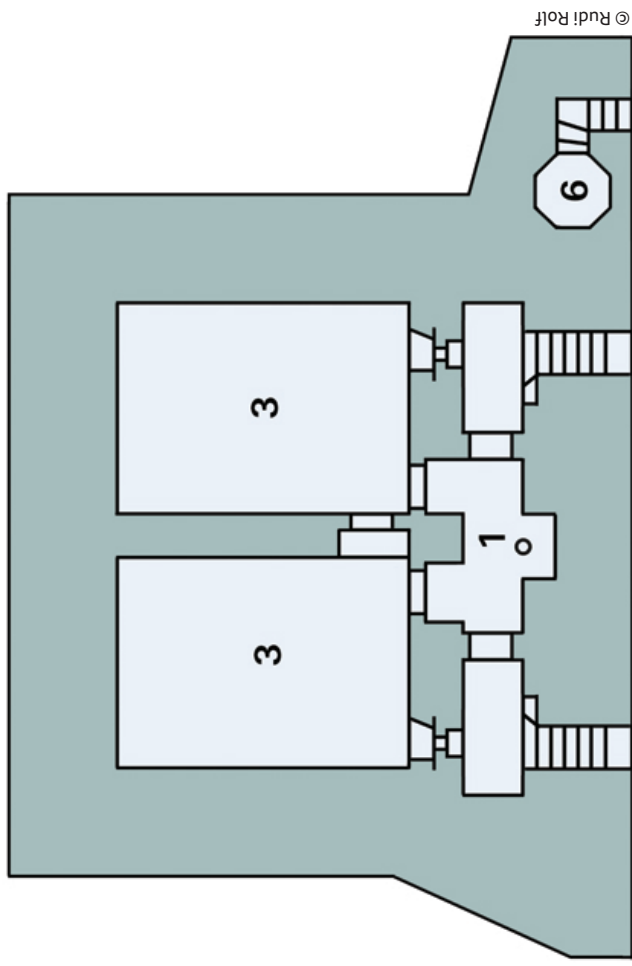
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**Type 611**  
**Artillery bunker**



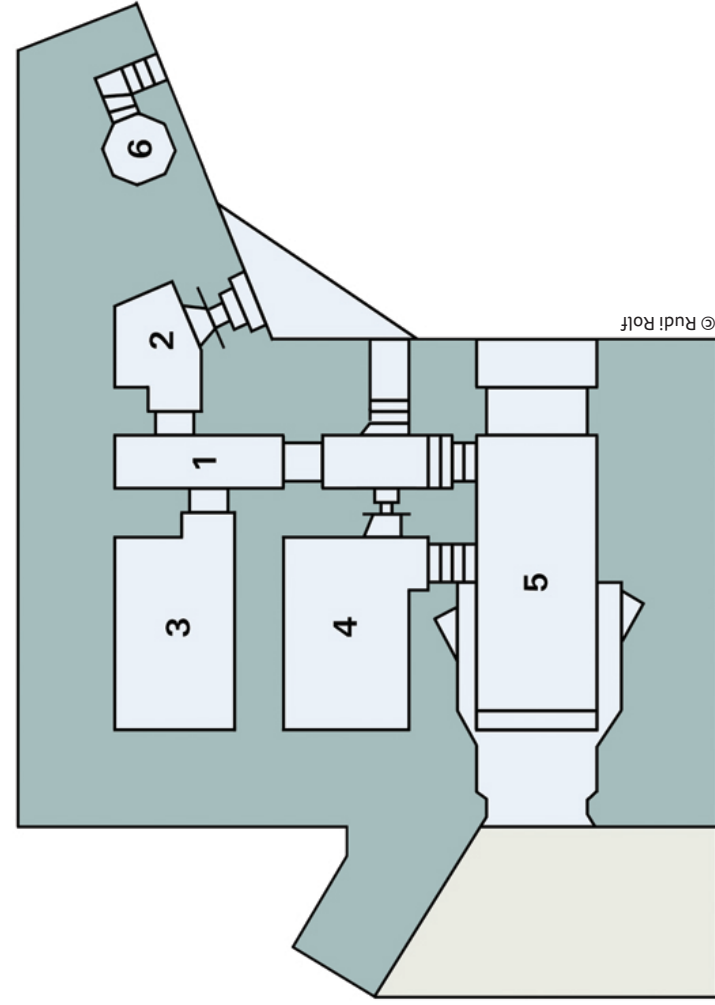
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**Type 621**  
**Personnel bunker**

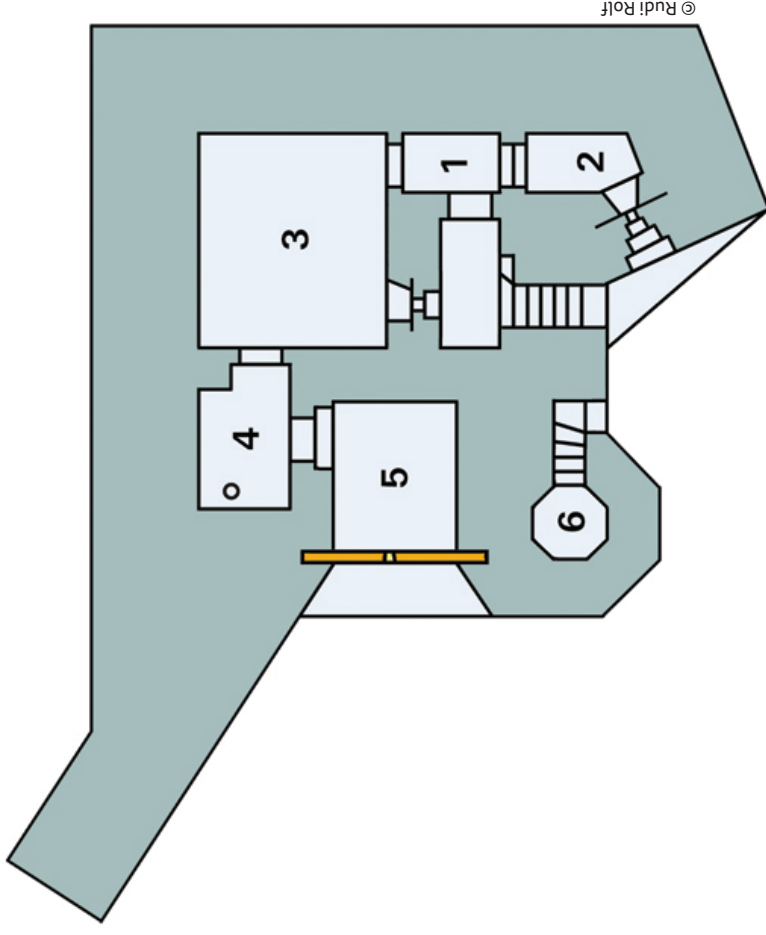


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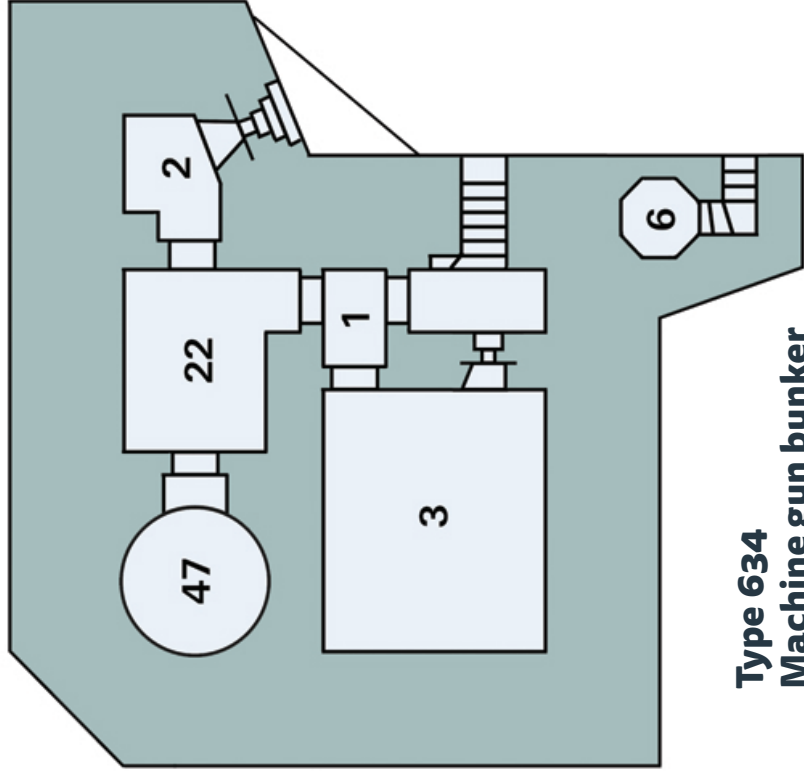
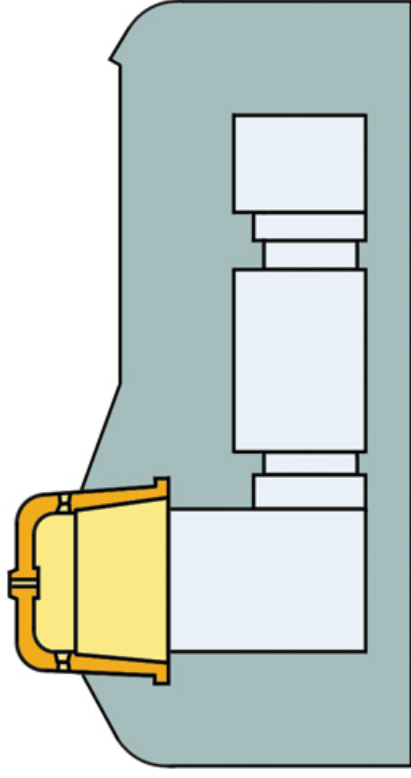
**Type 622**  
**Personnel bunker**



**Type 625**  
**Artillery bunker**

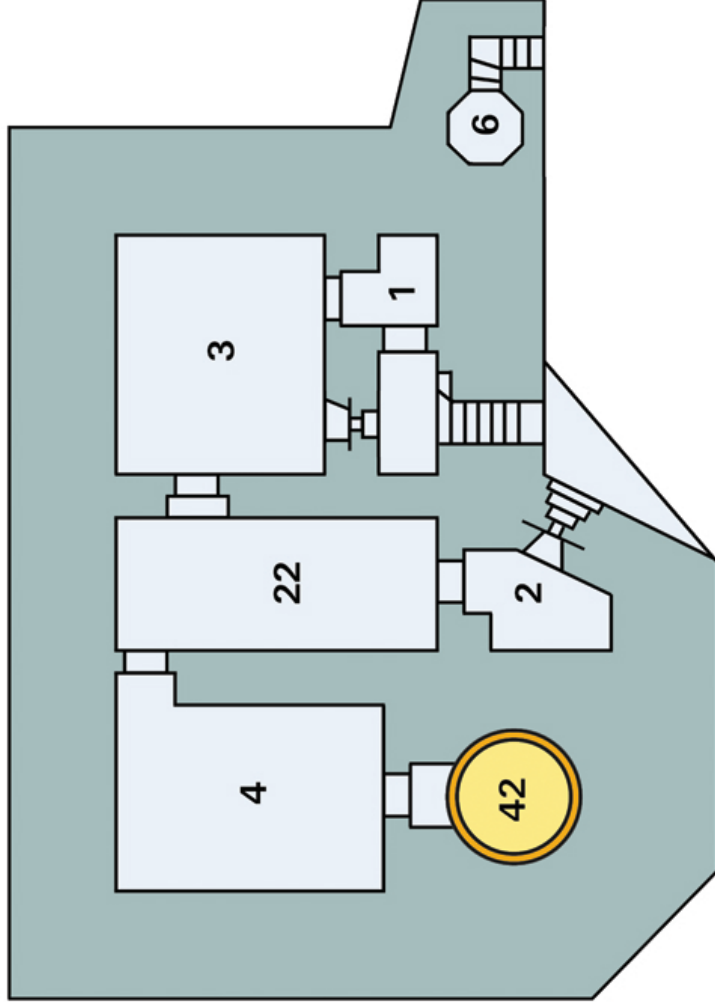


**Type 630**  
**Machine gun bunker**



**Type 634**  
**Machine gun bunker**

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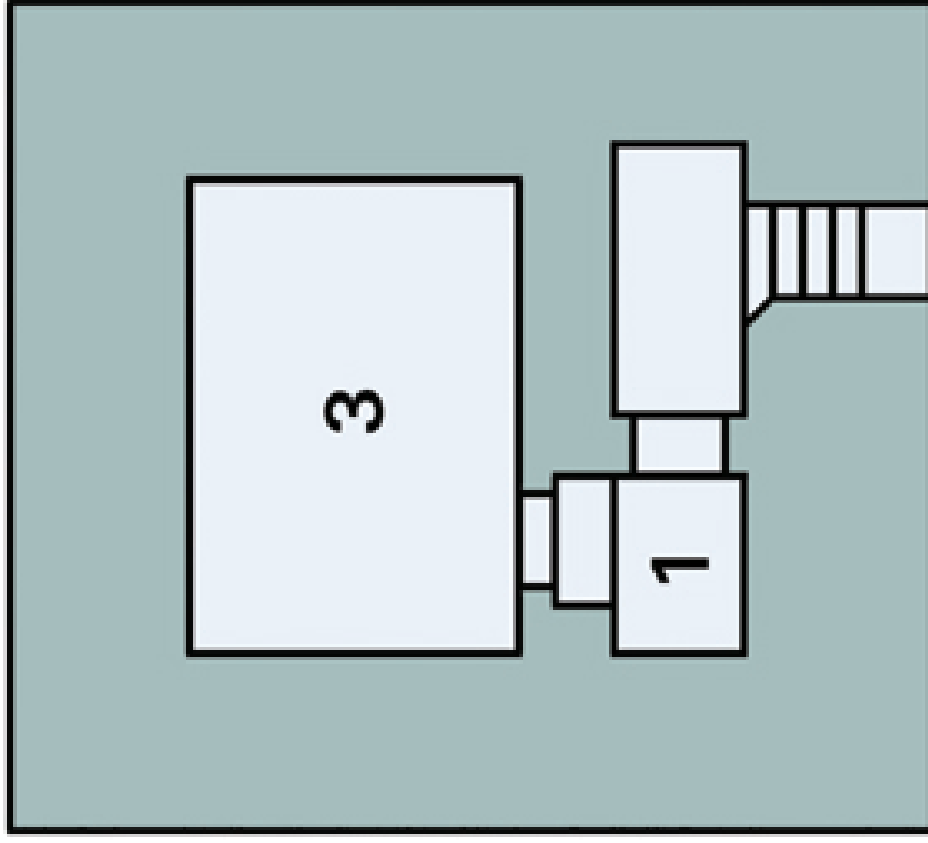


**Type 633**  
**Combat bunker**

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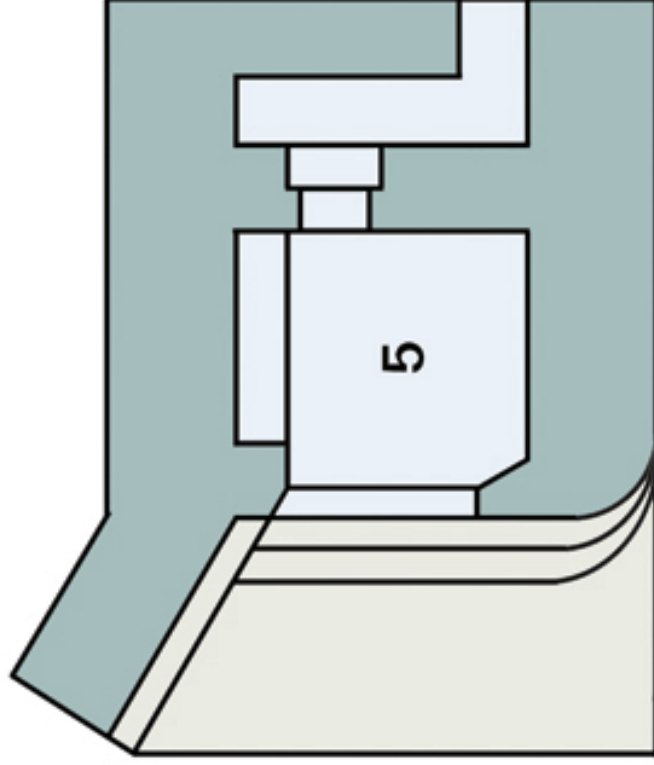


**Type 668**  
**Personnel bunker**

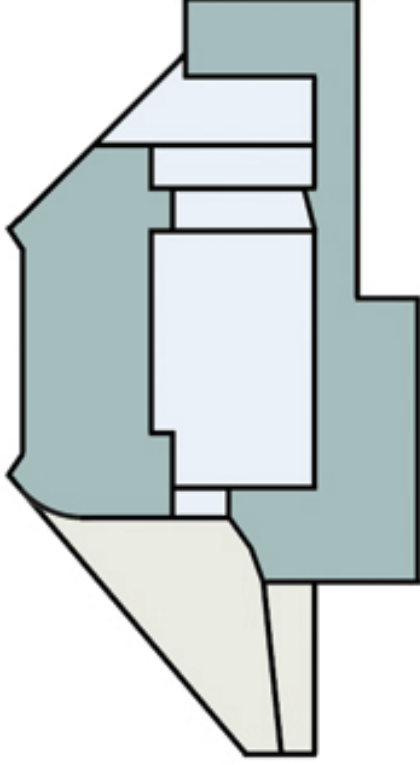


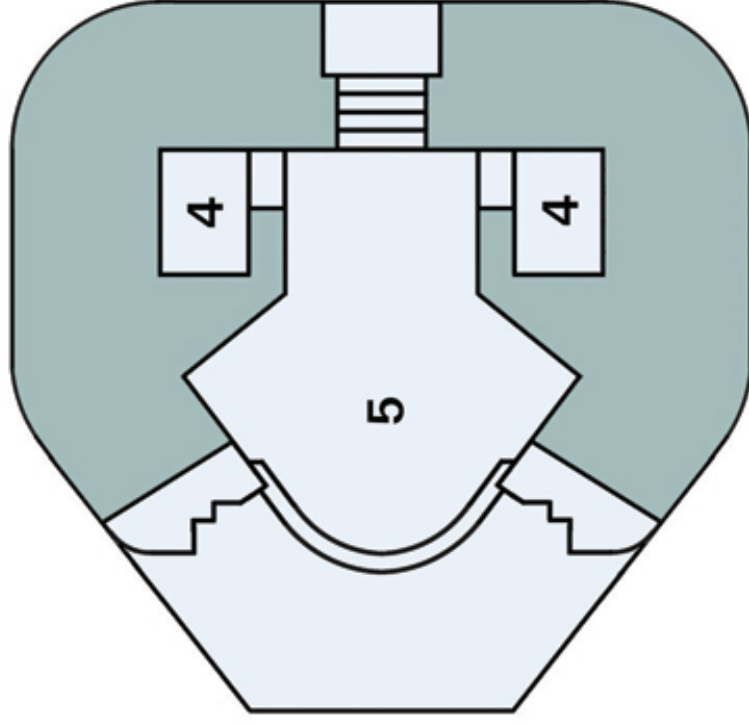
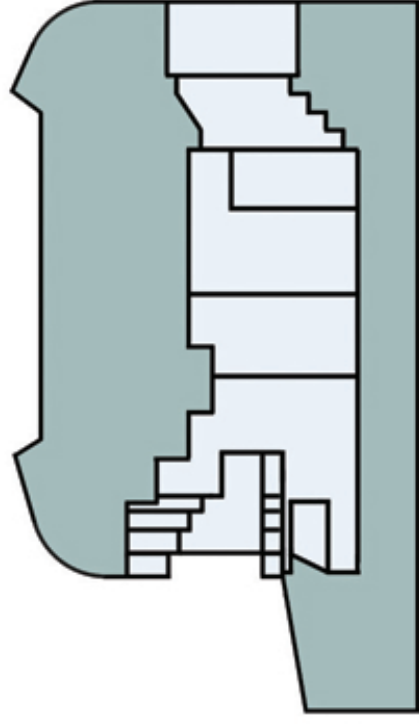
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**Type 667**  
**Artillery bunker**

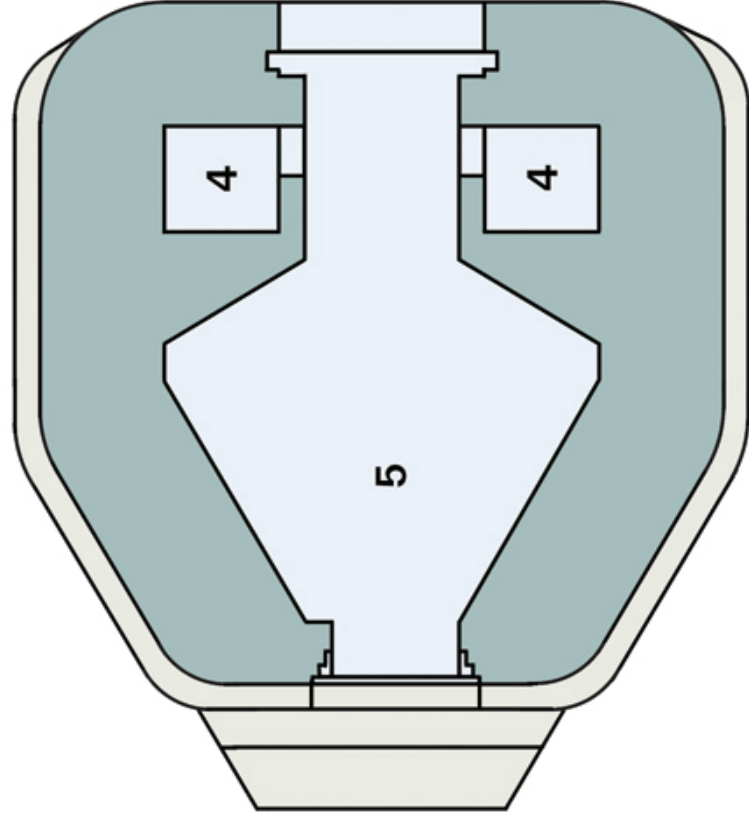
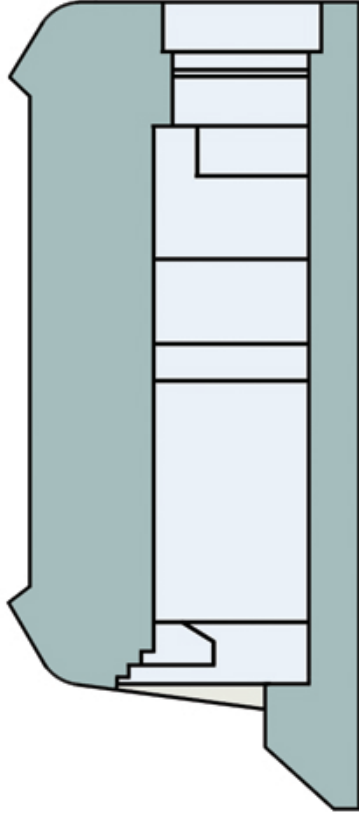


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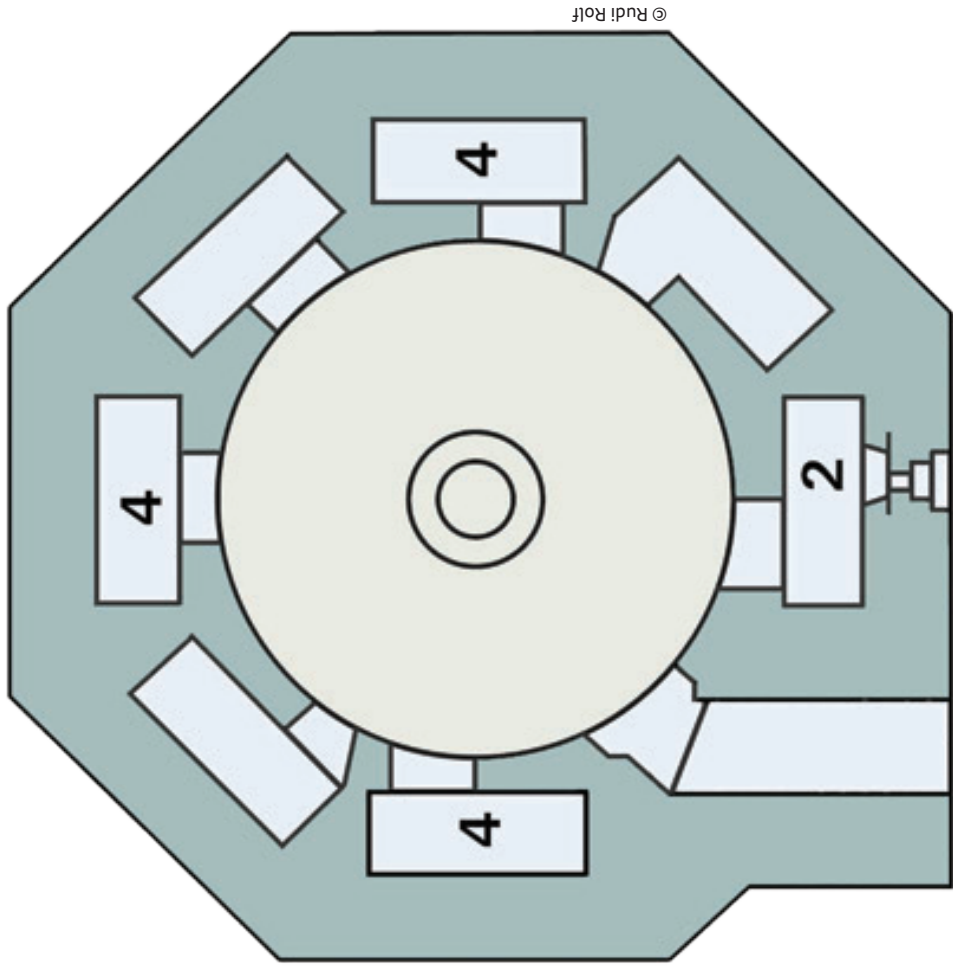




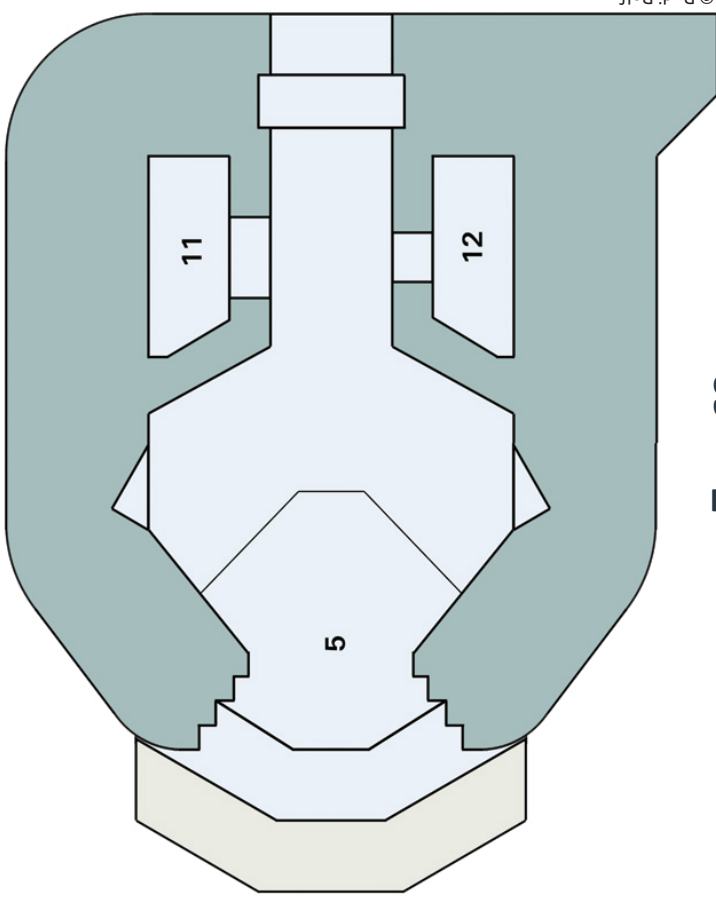
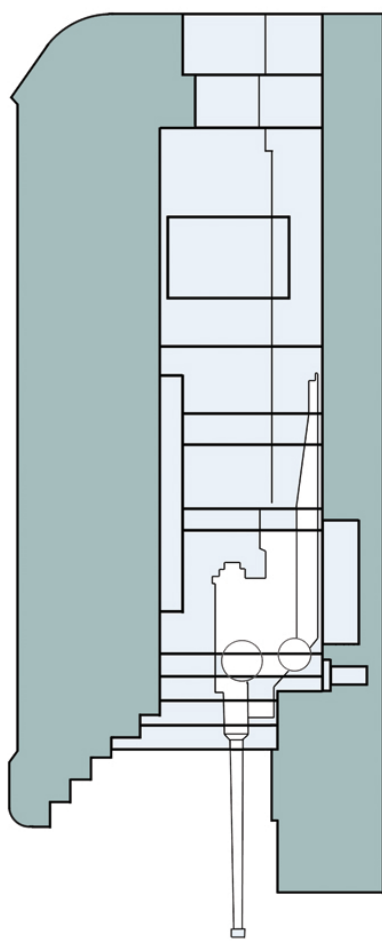
**Type 671**



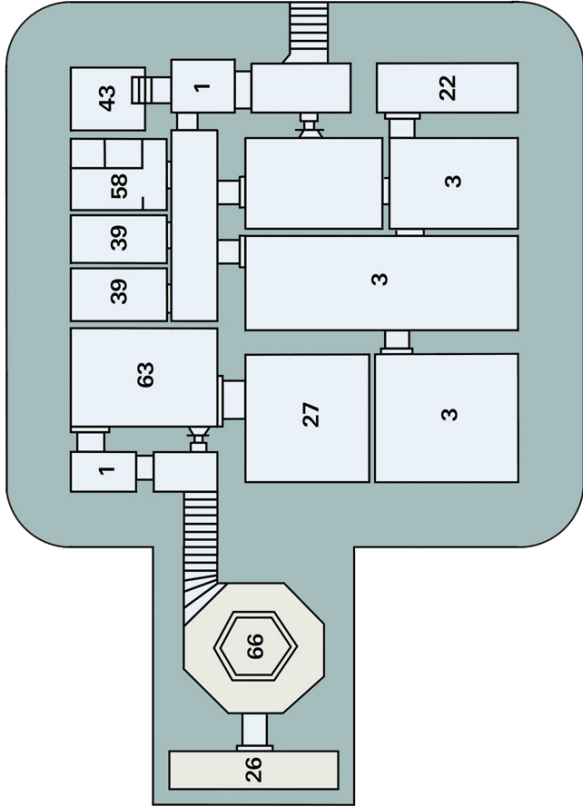
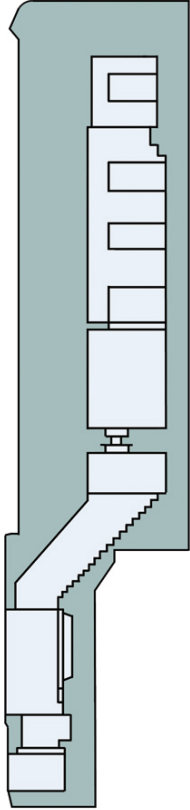
**Type 669**  
**Field artillery position**



**Type Fl 243a  
Flak bunker**

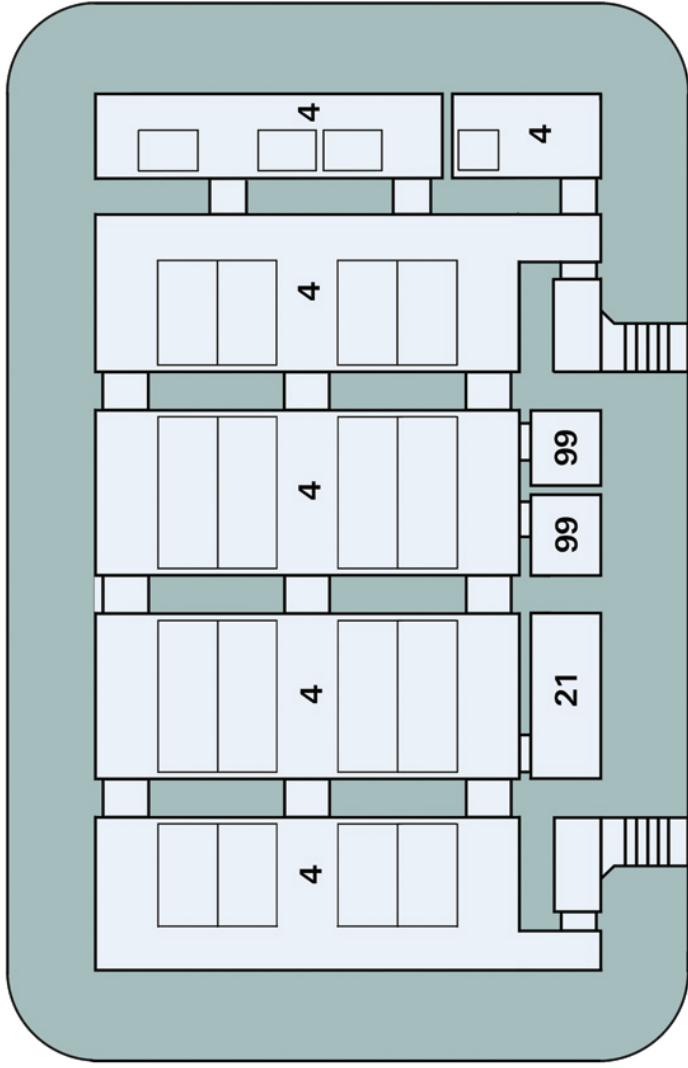


**Type 685  
Artillery bunker**



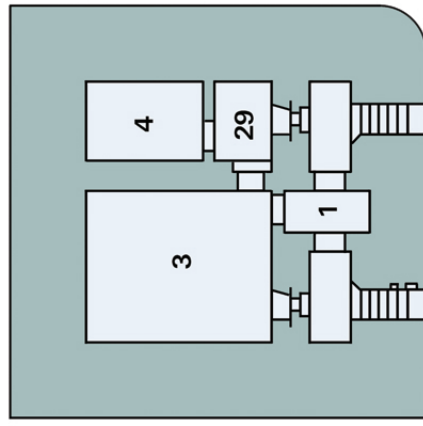
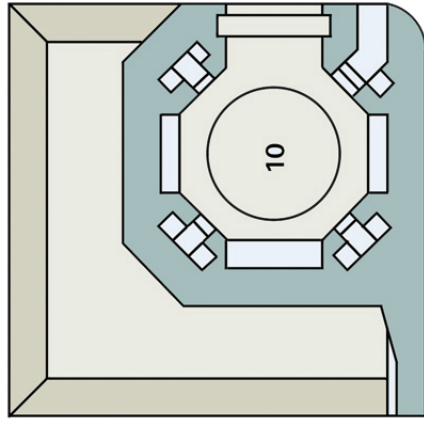
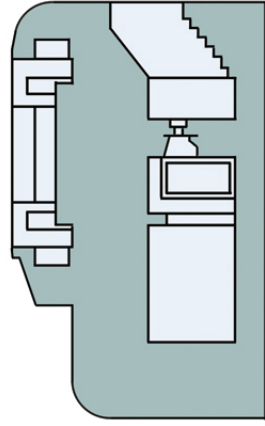
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**Type FI 244**  
**Flak bunker**



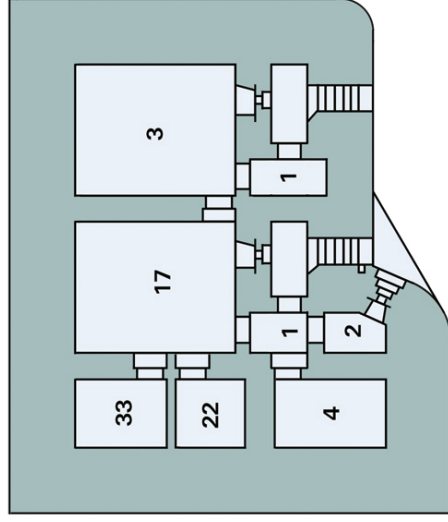
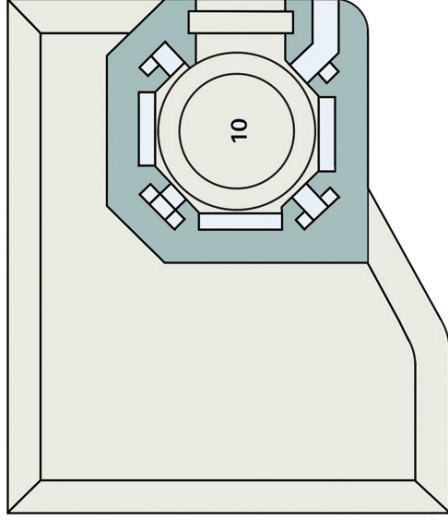
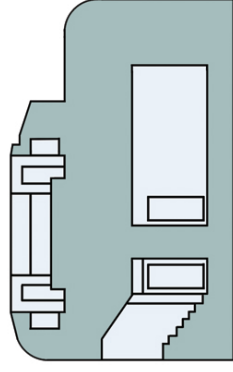
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**Type FI 246**  
**Ammunitions bunker**



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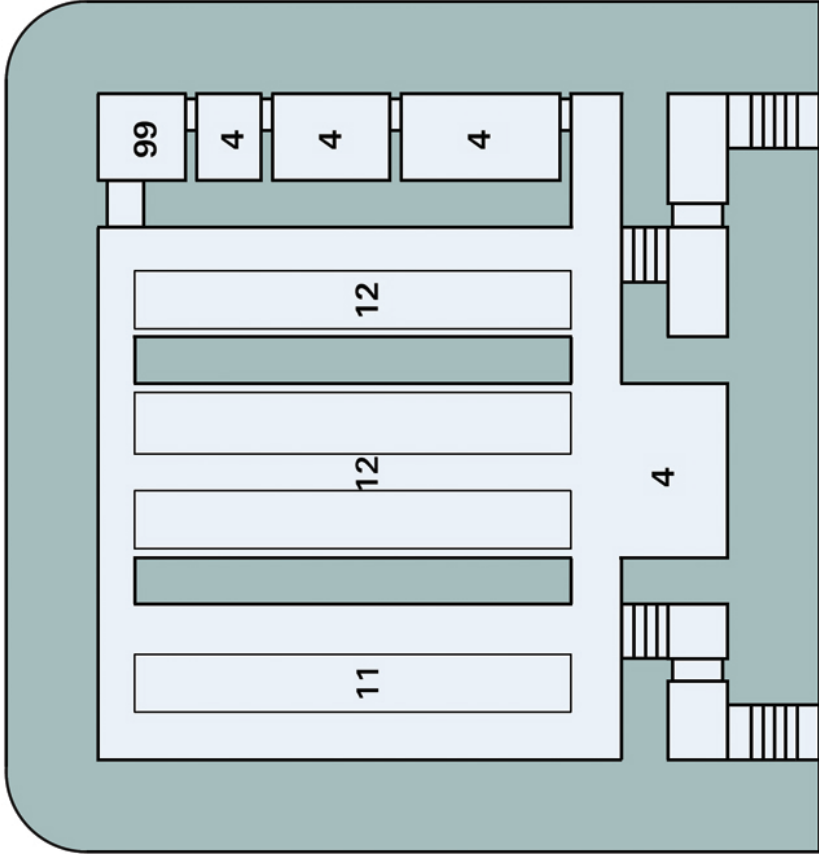
**Type L 409A**  
**Personnel bunker with**  
**anti-aircraft guns**



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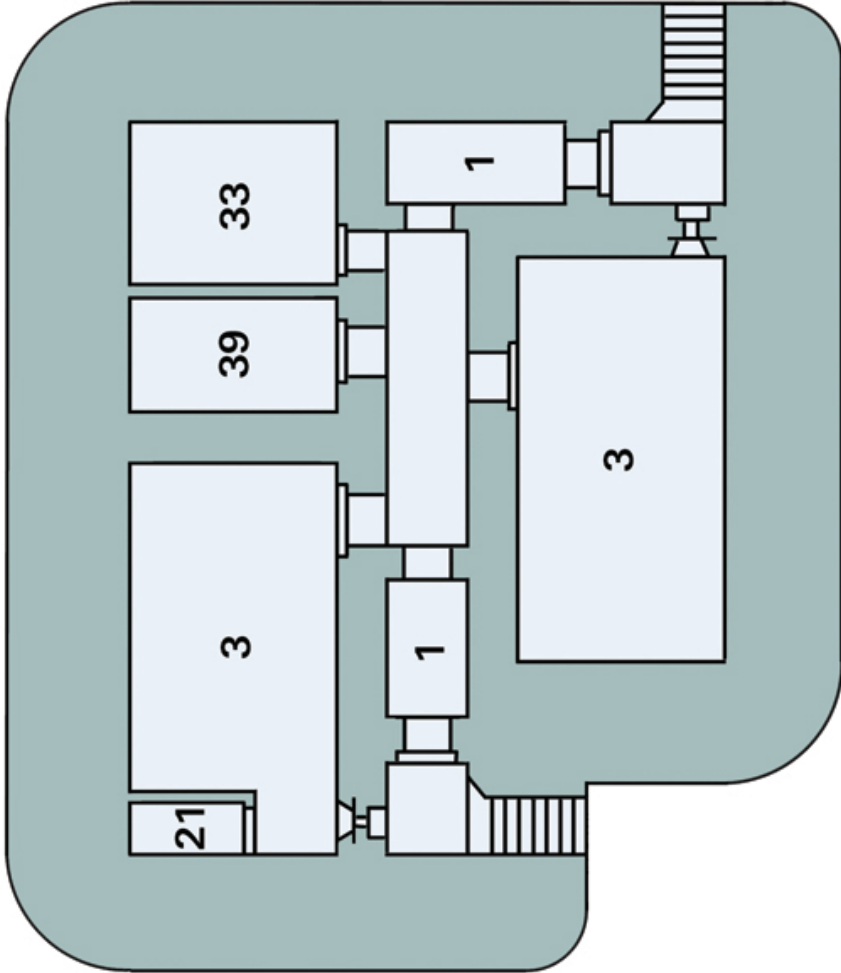
**Type L 410A**  
**Personnel bunker with**  
**anti-aircraft guns**





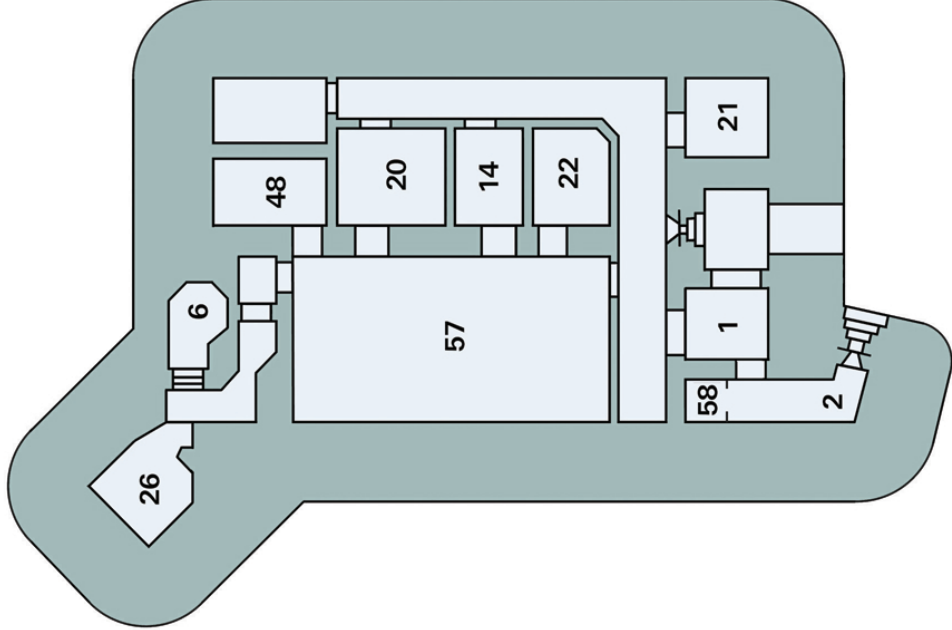
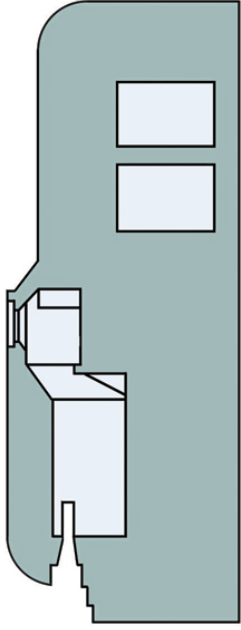
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**Type M 145**  
**Ammunitions bunker**



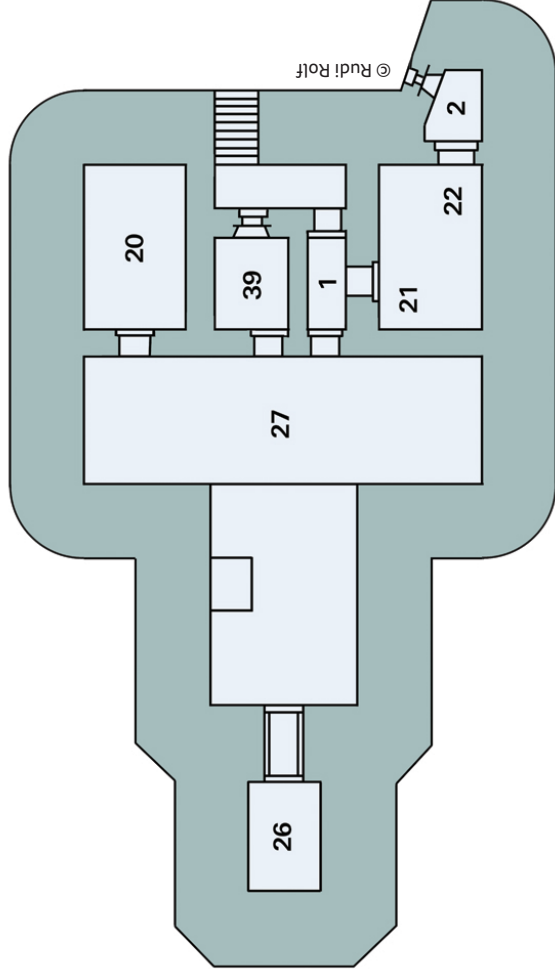
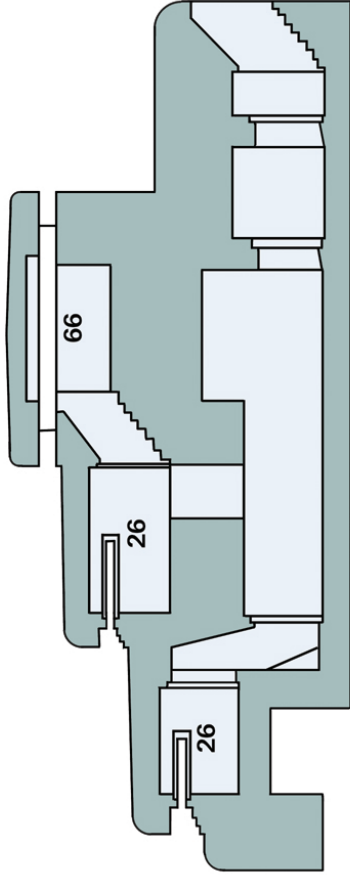
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**Type M 151**  
**Personnel bunker**



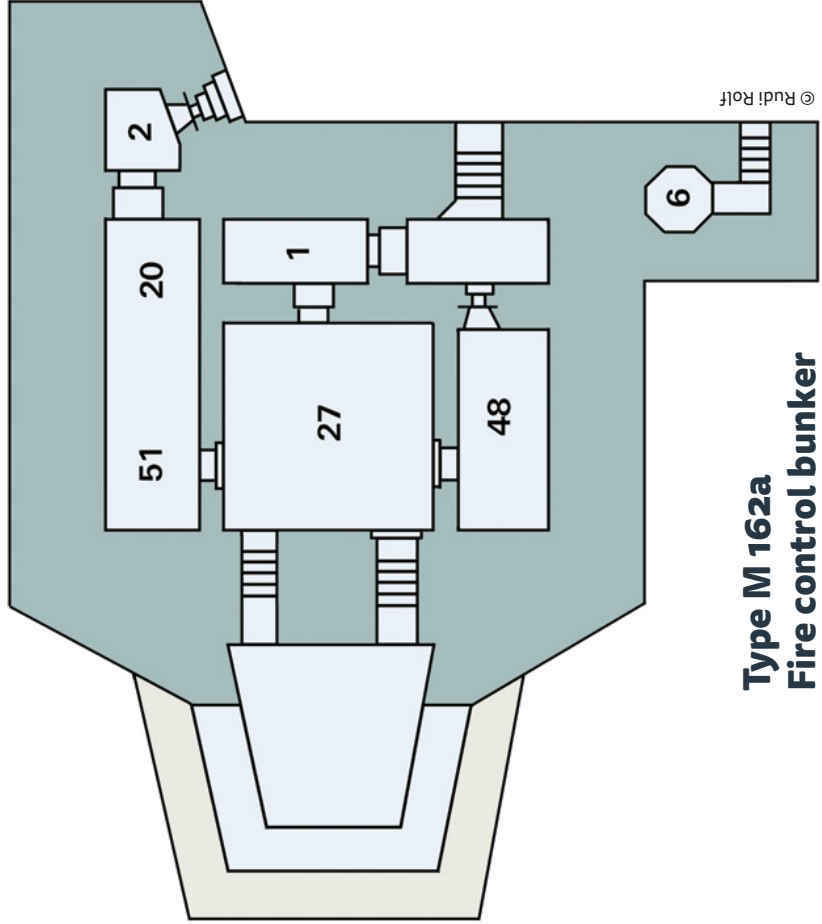
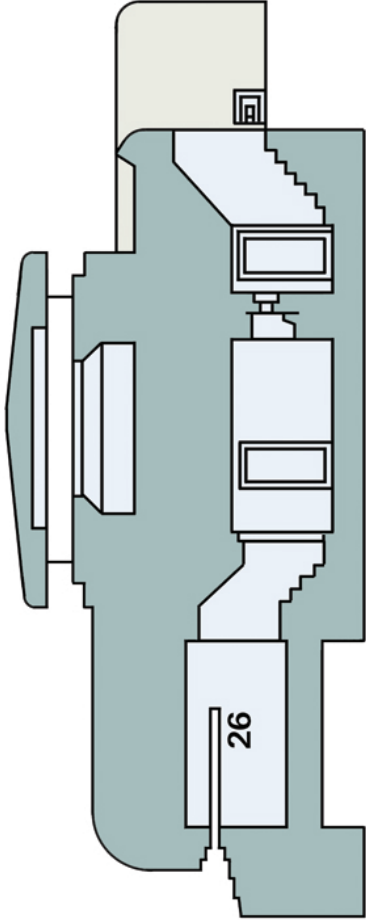
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**Type M 152**  
**Marine artillery command post**



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**Type M 157**  
**Fire control bunker**



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**Type M 162a**  
**Fire control bunker**

## Activity 2 – Design obstacles

### Target group

Ages 12 to 14

### Time

15 minutes

### Material

- appendix: photographs of beach obstacles (optional)
- paper & pencil

### Purpose

The students design (beach)obstacles and discover how ingenious the defences were. The students express their personal opinions.

Because general field marshal Erwin Rommel thought the Atlantikwall had a lot of weak points, the **defence line was fortified by means of beach obstacles**. There were different types of **obstacles that were installed on the beach**. They were all intended to **prevent a landing**. One of the obstacles was even named after Rommel: the so-called **“Rommel’s asparagus”** (wooden or concrete posts).

More examples of the beach obstacles can be found in the appendix. Beach obstacles can still be found at a lot of Atlantikwall sites (e.g. at the Atlantikwall Raversyde site in Oostende, Belgium).

- Discuss with your students what beach obstacles are. Also look at the photographs of the appendix. Can you find traces of beach obstacles at the site you are visiting?
- Divide the class in groups of two.
- Each duo **designs a new “beach obstacle”**. Explain that their beach obstacle must not necessarily stop an invasion by the Allies, but that they are allowed to think outside the box and be creative. For instance: a net that filters conflicts and only lets people with good intentions through.
- Help them with these questions:
  - ▶ Who or what should be stopped by your obstacle?
  - ▶ What could your obstacle look like? Which shape may it have? What is the material you would use to make it? Make a drawing if you can.
  - ▶ How would the obstacle work?
  - ▶ Where on the site would you put the obstacle?

## Beach obstacles

Beach obstacles were **put between the high and low water lines**.



**"Rommel's asparagus"** or **wooden beams** planted at an angle in the sand and topped by a mine or grenade. They were meant to disable landing craft. Other beams were placed under the high-water line and were equipped with mines or saw teeth destined to rip open any approaching landing craft.



**Cointet elements**, also called **"Belgian gates"**, although they were invented by the French colonel De Cointet. The big steel constructions date from before the war and were used as an obstacle to impede the advance of tanks. The Germans put them on the beach to disable landing craft and approaching tanks.





© R. Goegebeur

**"Nutcracker" mine:** usually a large concrete block with room for mines, bombs or explosives, which were set off by the pressure of a falling rail. Simpler versions of the nutcracker mine, consisting only of iron profiles, were also found on the Belgian coast.



R. Goegebeur

The **Czech hedgehogs** are characteristic of World War II and were put on the beaches in large numbers. They were usually weighted down with concrete blocks to prevent them from washing away.





© R. Goegebeur

**Iron and concrete pyramids** were easy to make elsewhere and were assembled on site.



© R. Goegebeur





## Activity 3 – Life as it is

### Target group

Ages 12 to 14

### Time

20 minutes

### Material

appendix: photographs of daily life

### Purpose

The students discuss what daily life on the Atlantikwall or in a refugee camp looks like and compare both situations.

- Divide the class into 6 or 7 groups.
- Give each group a picture from the appendix. Tell them that the pictures are historical photographs from the Atlantikwall as well as photographs from a present-day refugee camp. Make sure the groups don't see each other's photograph. There are more photographs than there are groups. Make a selection or give each group several photographs.
- The students **discuss** in their group what they see on their **photograph**:
  - ▶ What is happening?
  - ▶ Where was the photograph taken?
  - ▶ Who is in the photograph?
- Now have the groups find a way to **bring the photograph to life**. Can they **act out** the scene in the photograph? Can they make the people in the photograph move?
- Each group now acts out the scene in their photograph for the others.
- Can the others guess on the basis of the movements whether the people in the photograph are **soldiers or refugees**? How can they tell?
- Discuss **similarities** and **differences** between both situations.









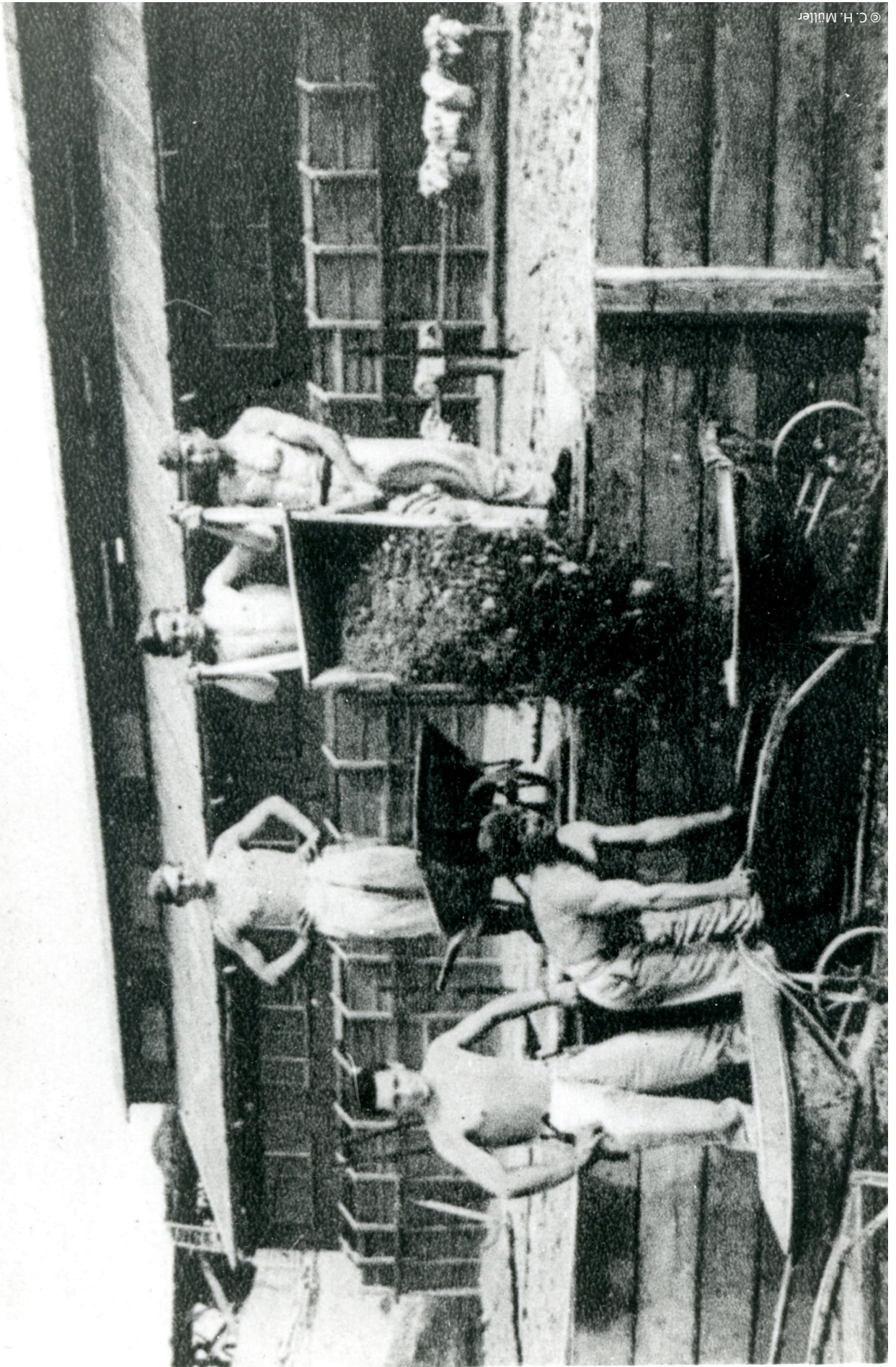




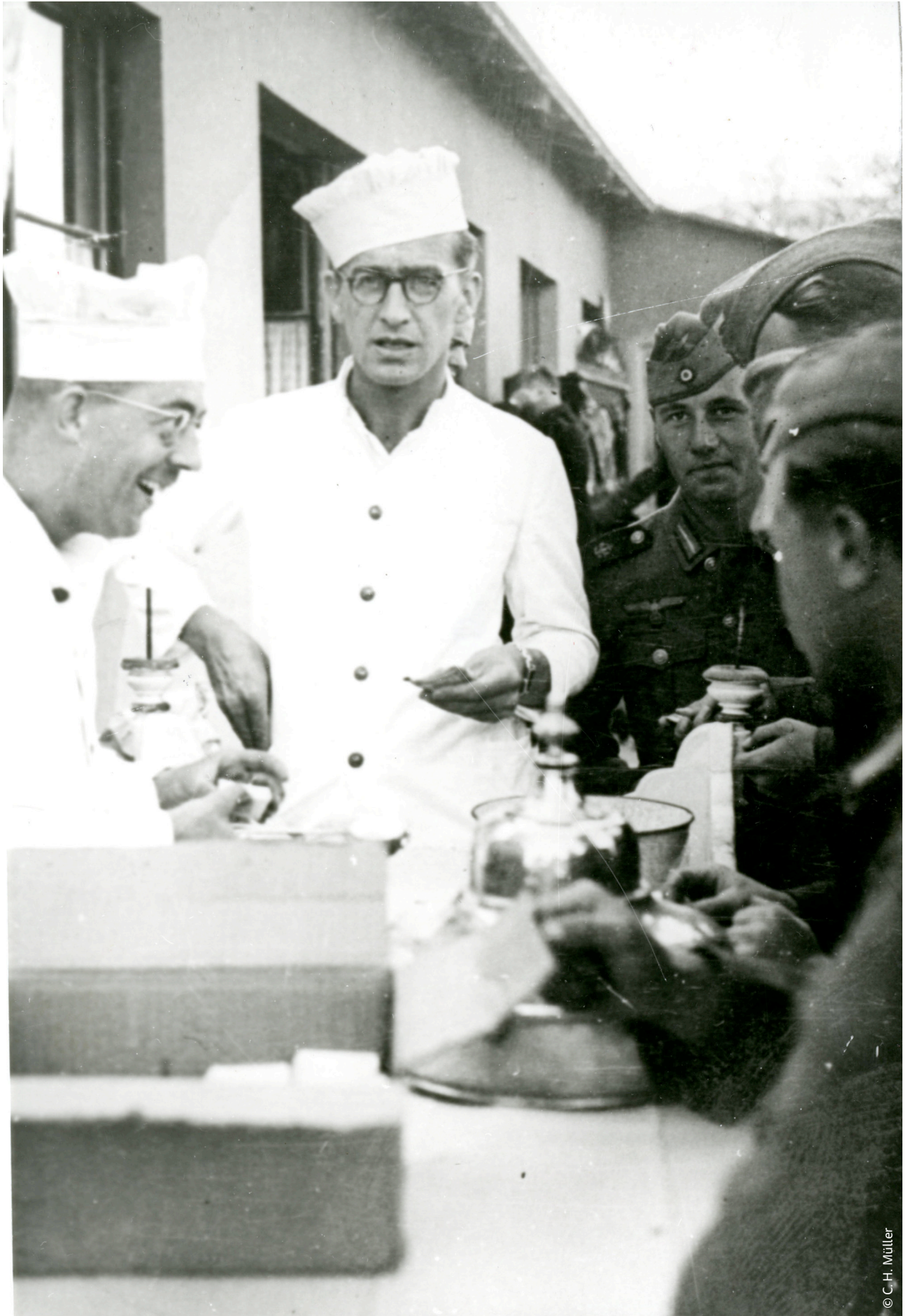
























Nicolas Pinault (VOA)



Nicolas Pinault (VOA)





Nicolas Pinault (VOA)







## Activity 4 – Photo report “fleeing”

### Target group

Ages 14 to 18

### Time

25 minutes

### Material

- appendix: photographs of daily life (see activity 3)
- smartphone with camera
- paper & ballpoint

### Purpose

The pupils find ways to express in images how they think it feels to be a refugee.

### Fragment from the documentary

18:00 tot 21:00 (watch it either in advance or on site on a tablet or smartphone)

Watch the fragment together, if possible. In the fragment, the youngsters describe how they think it feels to be fleeing your country. Or look at the photographs of daily life in a refugee camp in the appendix for activity 3.

- Divide the class into groups of 4.
- Explain that they have to make a **photograph** that shows **what it must be like to be fleeing your country**.
- Tell them to consider the following:
  - ▶ Who is on the photograph?
  - ▶ How does this person or how do these persons feel?
  - ▶ What is their story?
  - ▶ Does their posture and/or their facial expression tell you something?
  - ▶ Is the location important?
- Have them make the photograph as if they were journalists. Have them think of a suitable **headline** and **newspaper article** for the photograph.
- Finally, have the groups look at each other's photograph and newspaper article.



This teacher's guide was created in cooperation with [Mastiek](#) - [Bamm!](#)

#### Partners of the Off the Wall project:



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