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case study large objects and weapons

German WW2 SW36 60 cm searchlight

Domein Raversijde, Provincie West-Vlaanderen, Belgium

customer requirement

Domein Raversijde is a unique intact part of the WW2 'Atlantic Wall' at Oostende, Belgium. This 60 cm. searchlight was stood outside in sea-side salt air conditions for the past 20 years, and was to be restored as part of the renovation of the whole site. The object is planned to be exhibited indoors after restoration. This project included organising recovery and transport.

process and methods used

The object had suffered badly from salt sea air as might be expected. Having been sandblasted before, no original paint was left. This process was therefore repeated, after thoroughly washing of any salt deposits. Though aiming to keep as much of the original material as possible, a lot of (sheet) metal had to be replaced due to destructive rust damage. Original fittings were re-used whenever possible. Newly fabricated parts are recognisable as such by welding instead of the original riveting. The whole object was finally coated using a multi-layer industrial paint system, as originally required by the customer.

result and findings

Because of earlier inadequate treatment of the object, deterioration actually got worse. Also, no original colour reference survived. It was therefore decided that the object was to be painted in the standard dark grey, as found on many original WW2 photographs of similar searchlights.

images

1. recovery of the searchlight from the dunes by crane
2. disassembly of the rusted parts
3. reconstruction of the outer rim
4. ready for exhibition after reassembly

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