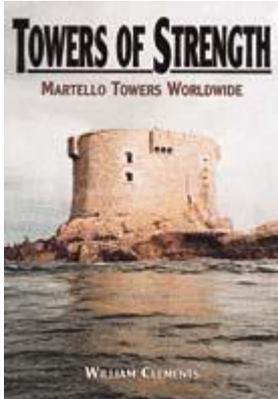


**BOOK REVIEW**  
**TOWERS OF STRENGTH**  
**Martello Towers Worldwide**  
**WH Clements**

**Leo Cooper 1999 and Pen & Sword Military 2021 (sb)**

**ISBN: 978-0-85052-684-4**



Defensive fortifications have been around for millenia and many form a staple of world history with many constructed by notable architects and builders of renown in their time. Names such as Gandulf, who came with Williams army in 1066, James of St George, William Wynford to the relatively modern like Vauban, famous for his 'Star Forts', Sere de Rivieres and Brialmont.

Marshal Maurice de Saxe in his 'reveries' or 'Memoirs of the Art of War' published in 1757 recommended 'defensive towers' to protect fortified places thus the concept of 'masonry gun towers' was not new by the time of the 1803-1805 threat of invasion during the Napoleonic War. Although the term 'Martello' is reasonably familiar to most, the origin of the term has been the source of much discussion, once source attributing it to the Italian 'Torri de Martello' or Hammer Tower which mounted warning bells struck by a hammer! However it is generally agreed that the term is a corruption of 'Mortella' from the tower at Mortella Point, Corsica which was unsuccessfully assaulted by the Royal Navy and its associated landing force in 1794. It was a revelation to discover that some 200 of these 'masonry gun towers' were built by the British government around the world between 1796 and 1857. Of the 76 English towers 26 remain in varying states with four open to the public. This is a very thorough and well structured work covering the design and development of the towers across many sites ranging from the English South and East coast, Spain, Ireland, Channel Islands, Canada and America.

Two useful annexes provide much information on the remaining towers in Great Britain, Ireland and the Channel Islands and the munitions in terms of the Guns, Howitzers and Mortars employed during 1795 to 1825. Additionally a very helpful glossary covers those unfamiliar terms that puzzle us all. This work is a valuable historical record and a 'must have' addition to the bookshelf of any afficanado of military fortifications.

***Martin Willoughby***