Dhayah Fort

# Information

Dhayah Fort is an 18th-century fortification in Ras Al Khaimah, United Arab Emirates (UAE). It is the highest hilltop fort in the UAE and was the site of a battle during the Persian Gulf campaign of 1819, when British troops captured the fort after a brief siege.

The fall of Dhayah was to pave the way for the signing of the General Maritime Treaty of 1820, the first of a number of treaties between the British government and the Sheikhs, or rulers, of what would become known as the Trucial Coast.

# History

The fort was the last outpost of Al Qasimi to be captured by British forces in 1819, when a punitive expedition was dispatched from Bombay to quell the seafaring tribe, on supposed charged of piracy against British-flagged merchantmen.

Ras Al Khaimah fell to the British force on 9 December 1819. Following this, three ships were sent to blockade the nearby village of Rams to the North. They landed a force on 18 December, which fought its way inland through date plantations to the hilltop fort of Dhayah on the 19th. There, 398 men and another 400 women and children held out, without sanitation, water or effective cover from the sun, for three days under heavy fire from mortars and 12-pound cannon.

The two 24-pound cannon from HMS Liverpool which had been used to bombard Ras Al Khaimah town from the landward side were once again pressed into use and dragged across the plain from the coast at Rams, a journey of some four miles. Each of the guns weighed over 2 tonnes. After enduring two hours of sustained fire from the big guns, which breached the fort's walls, the last of the Al Qasimi surrendered at 10.30 on the morning of 22 December.

Many of the people in the fort were herders and farmers from the date groves of Dhayah who had fled there on the arrival of the British and of the 798 people who surrendered, only 177 were identified as fighting men. The British flag was briefly flown from the fort before it was demolished. British losses from the action at Dhayah included 1 officer and 3 men killed and 16 wounded.

The British expeditionary force then blew up the town of Ras Al Khaimah and established a garrison there of 800 sepoys and artillery, before visiting Jazirat Al Hamra, which was found to be deserted. They went on to destroy the fortifications and larger vessels of Umm Al Quwain, Ajman, Fasht, Sharjah, Abu Hail, and Dubai. Ten vessels that had taken shelter in Bahrain were also destroyed. The Royal Navy suffered no casualties during the action.

The Sheikh of Rams and Al Dhaya (named on the treaty as the 'Sheikh of Zyah'), Hassan bin Ali, was a co-signatory of the General Maritime Treaty of 1820, which established peace followed the cessation of hostilities. That treaty between the British and the Sheikhs of what was formerly known as the Pirate Coast and what would become known as the Trucial Coast led to the establishment of what is known today as the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

# What to Do

### Tour Guide

If you’re a first-time visitor to the fort you might want to go with a guide for navigation, as the fort is located away from the main road of Al Rams. The area is hot, so carry plenty of water to stay hydrated.

### Trekking

After a long walk, you can also get a view to the city along with the fort itself.

# Timings

Open 24 hours a day