

FORT RODMAN MILITARY RESERVATION, POST EXCHANGE  
(Fort Rodman Military Reservation, Building T-61)  
Along western edge of Fort Rodman, just east of army property  
New Bedford  
Bristol County  
Massachusetts

HABS No. MA-1256-Z

HABS  
MASS  
3-NEBED,  
27Z-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

National Park Service  
Northeast Region  
U.S. Custom House  
200 Chestnut Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

HABS  
MASS  
3-NEBED,  
27Z-

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY

FORT RODMAN MILITARY RESERVATION, POST EXCHANGE  
(Fort Rodman Military Reservation, Building T-61)

HABS No. MA-1256-Z

- Location:** Along western edge of Fort Rodman, just east of army property  
Fort Rodman Military Reservation  
New Bedford, Bristol County, Massachusetts
- USGS Quadrangle: New Bedford, South  
UTM Coordinates: 19.341190.4606200
- Present Owner:** City of New Bedford  
Municipal Building  
133 William Street  
New Bedford, 02740
- Occupant:** Storage
- Significance:** The Post Exchange retains its integrity of location, design, setting, materials, and workmanship. It was built specifically for troops during World War II, a major event in this country's history. It is a very intact example of a World War II "temporary" building constructed according to a standardized plan and may be one of the few surviving examples of its type. In addition, because the Post Exchange was part of a coastal installation during the final period of coastal fortification, it contributes to the existing Fort Taber National Register District, which is significant because it is "representative of the development of American coastal fortifications from the Revolutionary period through the mid-twentieth century."

## PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

### A. Physical History:

1. Date of Erection: February 28, 1941
2. Architect: Quartermaster General's office
3. Original and Subsequent Owners: United States Army - City of New Bedford
4. Builder: United States Army
5. Original Plans: Constructed from Standard Plan No. 700-297, filed in the National Archives. Records of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Record Group 77. National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C. P.I. NM-19, E-411 - Standard Fort Plans, Plan No. 700-297.
6. Alterations and Additions: None

### B. Historical Context

The Post Exchange building (T-61) at Fort Rodman was built according to Plan 700-297, one of the "700 series" of temporary buildings erected by the Army at the beginning of World War II. Like most of the buildings of this era at Fort Rodman, it was constructed in the winter or 1940-41; this particular building was completed on February 28, 1941.

The Post Exchange had multiple uses. According to the specifications in the completion report, it contained a store and a lunch room, office, barber shop, tailor shop, store room, scullery, and a heater room. The fact that the building served such a variety of functions probably explains why it had so many exterior doors and why none seem to be the main entrance.

This Post Exchange at Fort Rodman may be one of the few remaining examples of this type; the database prepared by the Army's documentation study of World War II temporary structures indicates that there are only 16 such buildings still standing. This figure, however, includes both the 700 and 800 Series buildings and does not include buildings on non-Army property, so it may be entirely accurate. In Massachusetts, the Camp Edwards survey did not record any buildings of this type. Thus, the Post Exchange at Fort Rodman appears to retain most of its original features and finishes to be a rather rare surviving example of a plan 700-297 building.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement

1. **Architectural Character:** This building, largely intact and original, is a good example of a World War II "temporary" structure built according to a standardized plan.
2. **Condition of Fabric:** Most original features of this building are intact, the overall condition is fair.

### B. Description of Exterior/Interior

This Post Exchange building at Fort Rodman is a good example of a World War II "temporary" structure built according to standardized plan. The present building is almost intact and, from its evidence plus that in the Army's completion photograph, it is possible to arrive at a description of an original building of this type.

The Post Exchange was a one-story, four-by-eleven bay building with a gable roof covered with asphalt shingles, the exterior clad with wood drop siding (a form of tongue-and-groove boards laid horizontally), and the sill set on concrete piers masked by a wooden "skirt". The wide interior space was apparently spanned by horizontal beams, each comprised of three 2-by-12's with the ends extending out to the edge of the eaves. The building also originally had three large metal roof ventilators.

The fenestration of each elevation was different. The east gable end had a single window, an off-center double door and two more single windows; the north side had a single door, three single windows, a large double door, a single door and another single window; the west gable end had a window, a double door, and then the central heating apparatus, which consisted of an exterior brick chimney with a metal stack and a round metal duct to carry hot air into the building; and finally, the south side had two windows, a double door, and then four more windows. This former Post Exchange building at Fort Rodman is almost intact. Some of the original doors have been replaced as has the wood skirt, but the drop siding, original six-over-six wood sash windows, and heating apparatus still remain.

## PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### Specifications

CERL (Construction Engineering Research Lab)  
Database printout. Construction Engineering Research Laboratory, Corps of Engineers,  
P.O. Box 4005, Champaign, IL 61824-4005

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National Archives. Records of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Record Group 77. National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

E.393 - Construction Completion Reports 1917-1943. Box 272 - Completion Report of Temporary Housing. (1941)

#### Historical Information

Seasholes, Nancy

Office of Public Archeology - Boston University

Architectural Inventory of the Fort Rodman Military Reservation in New Bedford, MA

Office of Public Archeology Report of Investigations No. 72

HABS (Historic American Building Survey)

1989 World War II Temporary Structures: The U.S. Army. Part I. The Historical Context of World War II Mobilization Construction. Draft Report, March 5, 1989.

#### PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The City of New Bedford entered into a consent decree with the Environmental Protection Agency, Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, and the Conservation Law Foundation in 1986 to construct a secondary wastewater treatment facility as a result of the city's violation of the Clean Water Act. The Project includes a new secondary wastewater treatment plant at Fort Rodman, decommissioning and demolition of the existing primary plant, improvements to historic Fort Taber and development of Taber Park, and rehabilitation of the existing 60-inch outfall. The majority of buildings comprising the Fort Rodman Military Reservation will be demolished; several will be retained or relocated and renovated for community purposes. Following completion of the plant, the existing primary plant will be demolished and the Fort Rodman site will be restored, including significant mitigation in the form of Taber Park. Taber Park will be a community recreational park, around the site's existing national register-listed fort and batteries. The park will provide an appropriate setting for the historical resources of Fort Taber and the batteries, as well as recreation opportunities such as picnic areas, multipurpose playfields, and trails and paths. The Memorandum of Agreement for the Project was developed between the City of New Bedford, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, the National Park Service, the Department of the Army, and the Massachusetts Historical Commission. EPA, as enforcer of the Clean Water Act, is the primary agency for ensuring NHPA compliance. The US Army Corps of Engineers is also involved as a holder of property restrictions on the site. The National Park Service is involved due to property restrictions.

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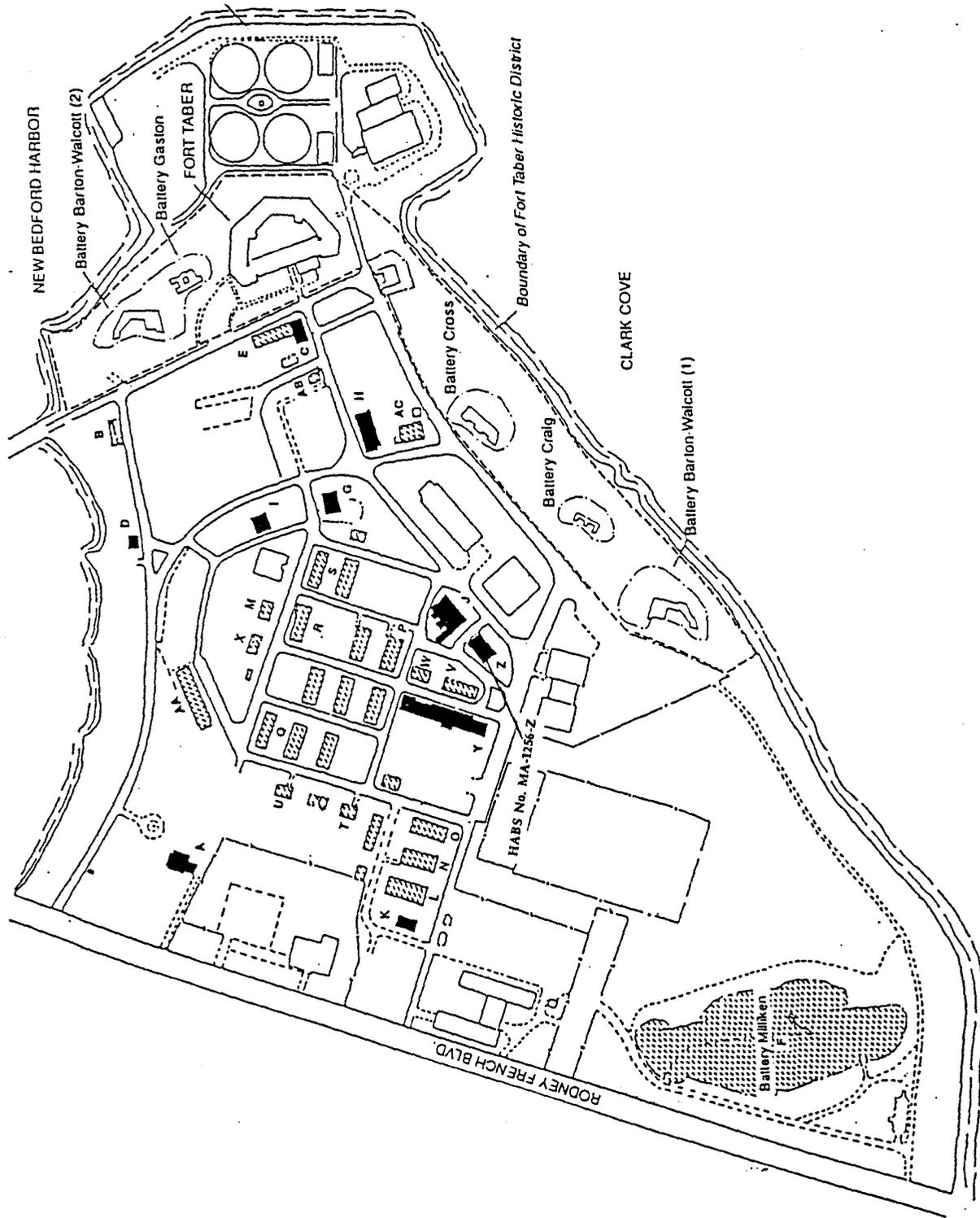
Prepared by: Elizabeth Beardsley, based on studies and documentation performed by Donald G. Jones and Nancy C. Seasholes, Office of Public Archaeology, Boston University (historical and archaeological research and analysis) and Martin Stupich (photography).

Title: Engineer

Affiliation: Camp Dresser & McKee Inc.

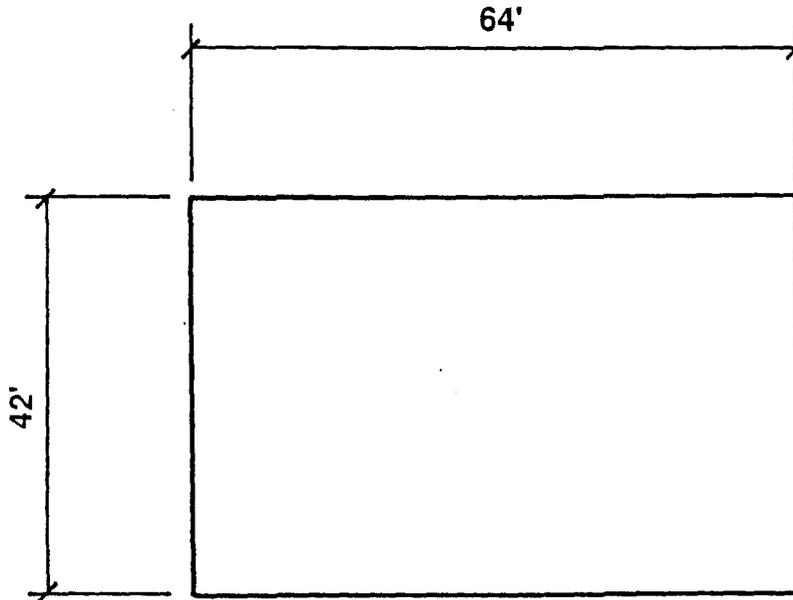
Date: 1992

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SCALE: 1"=20'