

Fort David A. Russell
(Fort Francis E. Warren)
(Francis E. Warren Air Force Base)
Randall Avenue west of First Street
Cheyenne
Laramie County
Wyoming

HABS No. WY-117

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

(Fort Francis E. Warren)

Fort David A. Russell (Francis E. Warren Air Force Base)

HABS No. WY-117

Site Location: Randall Avenue west of First Street
Cheyenne, Laramie County, Wyoming
USGS quadrangle: Cheyenne North, WY (7½ Minute Series, 1994)

Present Owner: U.S. Department of Defense.

Present Occupant: U.S. Department of Defense, Department of the Air Force.

Present Use: Headquarters for 90th Strategic Missile Wing.

Present Condition: Good.

Significance: Established in 1867 to provide military protection for the Union Pacific Railroad, Fort David A. Russell continued to function and expand as a military post long after the threat of Indian depredations had declined in the late 1870s. The Department of War declared it a permanent post in 1882, later authorizing construction of the first substantial brick buildings. These were followed in subsequent years by a growing array of substantial brick and frame structures designed to house the officers, enlisted men, and their livestock, ordnance and equipment. In 1902, and again in 1905, the garrison at Fort D.A. Russell was expanded, necessitating construction of expanded facilities. This intensive construction program continued until 1913, with the peak construction occurring between 1908 and 1910. At its conclusion, some 150 new structures of varying sizes, functions and materials had been built at Fort D.A. Russell. Entailing many of the post's most prominent buildings and parade grounds, it virtually transformed the fort's architectural and landscape character.

Changes to Fort F.E. Warren since then have largely occurred away from the historic complex. In 1947 administration of the post was transferred from the army to the air force; ten years after that F.E. Warren Air Force Base was designated the headquarters for the country's first intercontinental ballistic missile network. The base's historic significance was recognized in 1969 when it was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This importance was further acknowledged in 1975 when F.E. Warren Air Force Base was designated a National Historic Landmark. Today, the modern missile base functions within the confines of the historic army post, with varying alteration to the historic fabric of the buildings. Despite the changes that have accrued over time, the post as a whole retains a high degree of physical and historic integrity. Its original and subsequent organizational plans are clearly discernable, and the individual structures appear, through continuing maintenance, much as they did when they were constructed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The post's longstanding role in the Indian wars, the Spanish-American War, two World Wars, the Cold War, and today's post-Cold-War period places Fort F.E. Warren among the country's most historically significant military facilities.

Even before the finalization of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, far-thinking Americans such as Thomas Jefferson were considering the ways and means to link existing settlements on the eastern seaboard with the continent's western coast. The central objective of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, staged a year later, was to locate a navigable waterway across America. Although the "Corps of Discovery" failed to find a water bridge across the Rocky Mountains, subsequent military/scientific expeditions continued to investigate the feasibility of transcontinental travel. As railroad technology improved in the 1830s and 1840s, it became apparent that this would best be accomplished by rail. In 1845 Asa Whitney, a New York businessman and China trader, first proposed to Congress to build a railroad across America. Following the discovery of gold in California four years later, Congress generally agreed with Whitney that a transcontinental rail link was needed. But the route the railroad would take was the subject of partisan bickering among the various Congressional factions. The combatants were only temporarily mollified by a series of surveys undertaken by the army in 1853-54 to determine the most feasible course to the Pacific. The Secretary of War reported back to Congress in 1855 with four viable routes: from Lake Superior to Portland; over the Overland Trail to San Francisco; along the Red River to southern California; and across southern Texas to San Diego through Yuma. Still, Congress remained deadlocked on the transcontinental line's route.

It was not until the secession of the southern states and the outbreak of the Civil War that Congress would finally agree on the Overland Trail route. They were aided in this decision by California's "Big Four"—Leland Stanford, Collis Huntington, Mark Hopkins and Charles Crocker. The four businessmen provided the necessary private financial reserves and administrative ability to build a railroad to San Francisco. They commissioned Theodore D. Judah, a practiced engineer and energetic promoter, to present their plan to Congress; in response the government passed the Pacific Railroad Act on July 1, 1862. The legislation called for two companies to build and maintain the road. The Central Pacific, chartered by the Big Four, would build a line from San Francisco across California and Nevada, eastward through Utah. The Union Pacific, chartered by Congress, would build westward from Council Bluffs, Iowa, across the Rocky Mountains to link with the Central Pacific.

The cost to build the Union Pacific and Central Pacific would be staggering, far beyond the capacity of private industry to bear. To help finance the construc-

tion, the government offered generous land grants that amounted to twenty alternate sections in a forty-mile-wide strip for each mile of track laid. In addition, Congress authorized loans of \$16,000 for each mile built over level terrain, \$32,000 per mile in the foothills and \$48,000 in the mountains. The transcontinental project was made even more appealing by the inclusion of mineral rights grants. By the time the line was completed in 1869 at Promontory, Utah, the two railroads had received nearly \$27 million, or one-half the legitimate cost of construction.

The Civil War retarded the construction of both the Union Pacific and Central Pacific lines. The Union Pacific had laid only forty miles of track west of Omaha by the end of 1865. Construction accelerated soon after the war's conclusion, however, as the two railroads raced to lay as much trackage as possible. The Central Pacific employed tens of thousands of Chinese laborers to push their tracks through the Sierra Nevada and across the brutal Nevada desert. In laying its track, the Union Pacific hired Jack and Dan Casement to oversee the "Casement Army" of war veterans and Irish immigrants.

Although the U.S. Army had reconnoitered a route seven years earlier, the exact line of both railroads was still undetermined. Chief Engineer Grenville Dodge was responsible for the Union Pacific's route, directing the road along the Platte River across Nebraska. Typically, surveyors would plot a hundred-mile right-of-way, which would then be graded with the construction of cuts, fills and trestles. Gangs of track layers followed, with other gangs of gaugers, spikers and bolters close behind. In this manner, some 240 miles of track were laid across the Nebraska plains in 1867.

The Casement brothers faced considerable construction obstacles posed by the High Plains. Most of the materials were transported over vast distances to the region—trees from the mountains for ties and bridges members, stone from the quarries of Wisconsin and rails from the forges of Pennsylvania. The competition with the Central Pacific carried with it tremendous stakes, and the Casements spurred the construction relentlessly, working the gangs long into the evenings and paying triple wages for Sunday work. Such haste had its cost, though, as the crew shaved corners from accepted construction practice. The grade was largely unballasted, the bridges were often structurally suspect, and the ties were generally untreated and frequently of inferior quality. Most of the line across Nebraska would have to be replaced soon after its completion. But with government subsidies tied to completed trackage, this was of secondary importance. The Casements roared across Nebraska and into Wyoming. Nearly one thousand men strong, their crew reached Cheyenne on November 13, 1867.

Building across most of Nebraska, the Union Pacific crews had only to contend with construction-related hardships and difficulties. From the western part of the state onward, however, they faced an additional danger: hostile Indians. The Pacific Railroad Act had called for the establishment of an army post at the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains to provide a military escort for the construction workers. This base would function as one of a series of outposts along the railroad from which troops would patrol the region. General William Tecumseh Sherman then commanded the Division of the Missouri, under which these posts would operate. After touring the territory late in 1866, Sherman outlined his deployment strategy:

My opinion is that Fort Kearney may now be allowed to go to decay, only to be used as far as its present buildings are serviceable for the shelter of men and animals during the winter system. Forts McPherson, Sedgwick and Sanders should be completed but not enlarged, to be used principally for storage of troops in winter. Fort Morgan and Camp Collins should be wholly abandoned, and their stores transferred over to the Railroad about Lodge Pole Creek. At some point of the Railroad, near the Eastern Base of the Black Hills [Rocky Mountains], convenient to the timber region, should be selected a good site for a depot of some magnitude, and buildings begun, which should be on a plan admitting of enlargement to the capacity of barracks for a regiment of Infantry, and storage for, say 2,500 men. From this point for many years all the Posts north along the eastern base of the Rocky Mountains will have to be supplied.

On July 4, 1867, with the railroad construction crew at Julesburg, Colorado, Grenville Dodge met with General C.C. Augur at the point where the railroad would cross Crow Creek to determine the best location for the proposed post and supply depot. Dodge preferred a site close to the rapidly developing Cheyenne settlement; Augur wanted to place the fort near available timber some fourteen miles away. They eventually agreed on the Cheyenne site. As stated by Department of the Platte General Order No. 33:

The new military post to be established on Crow Creek, D.T. [Dakota Territory], at its intersection by the Union Pacific Railroad, is named Fort D.A. Russell, after Brigadier General David A. Russell, U.S. Volunteers, Major 8th U.S. Infantry, who was killed at the battle of Winchester, September 19, 1864.

The Thirteenth Infantry, assigned to the new post, arrived two weeks later and set up camp three miles west of Cheyenne. While Union Pacific surveyors laid out the town in anticipation of the railroad's arrival, army surveyors laid out the post's military reservation. As delineated by Lieutenant R.W. Petriken, this

reservation formed an irregular parallelogram two miles wide and three miles long that encompassed 3,840 acres. This was later expanded somewhat to accommodate the depot, named Camp Carlin (and renamed the Cheyenne Depot in 1871), on the reservation's southeast corner. "The Cheyenne Depot's mission was to provide supplies to all authorized users in the northern High Plains area," historian Gerald Adams stated, "including Fort D.A. Russell and the army forts to the north and west, plus several Indian agencies. An ordnance depot and a commissary of subsistence depot were also established at the Cheyenne Depot, but these facilities were sub-depots and much less extensive than the main quartermaster supply depot."

Soon after the arrival of the first train to Cheyenne, tons of supplies began pouring into the depot. Soldiers and civilian mechanics began building frame storage structures of all kinds to house the livestock and materiel. Sixteen warehouses were aligned in a double row that straddled the railroad spur to the fort. These were accompanied by an array of wagon sheds, storage cellars and shops adjoined on the south by an extensive network of corrals and stables. Built largely by the Thirteenth Infantry with some civilian help, these buildings were utilitarian frame structures, with wood-shingled, gabled roofs and board-and-batten siding. Camp Carlin was manned by a civilian contingent of blacksmiths, saddlers, carpenters, wheelwrights and laborers that would eventually number 500 people. Serving as a supply point for up to twelve military posts in Wyoming, Nebraska and Colorado, it was for a time the second-largest quartermaster depot in the country.

Already saddled with the responsibility of patrolling for Indians, guarding the railroad crews and fledgling towns, building the supply depot and keeping the peace in Cheyenne, the soldiers at Fort Russell were given the additional task of building their own housing. The officers and enlisted men slept in tents or temporary log cabins through the summer and fall of 1867. Frame barracks for the enlisted men were completed in October, quarters for the officers the following February. Located on benchland immediately north of Crow Creek, these were organized around a diamond-shaped parade ground that had been laid out by Colonel J.D. Stevenson, the Post Commander, and Post Surgeon C.H. Alden (see *Figure 1*). They chose the diamond form, according to Alden, "not only for the sake of appearance, but to avoid the inconvenience of the very large enclosed space, which would have resulted from the ordinary rectangular or square space, owing to the number of buildings required." Alden described the fort in its initial stages:

The buildings are entirely of wood; they are arranged around a parade of the diamond form, which is 1,040 feet in its long, by 800 feet in its short axis. The officers' quarters, fourteen in number, seven on each side, are arranged like the two legs of an inverted V, with the commanding officer's quarters at the angle between them. They form the upper or northern sides of the diamond. The men's barracks, twelve in number, six on each side, form the other two limbs of the figure, the guardhouse is a hexagonal tower-like building, having a room for the officer of the guard below, and a lookout for a sentinel above. In front of this tower is a flagstaff, 100 feet high. In the spring of 1870, cottonwood and pine trees were planted around the parade and other parts of the post. The barracks do not directly face the parade, but are arranged *en echelon*, by which means light and air have free access to all sides of the buildings. Behind the western row of officers' quarters is a "grout" or concrete building, intended for an officers' mess house, but now used for court-martials and school.

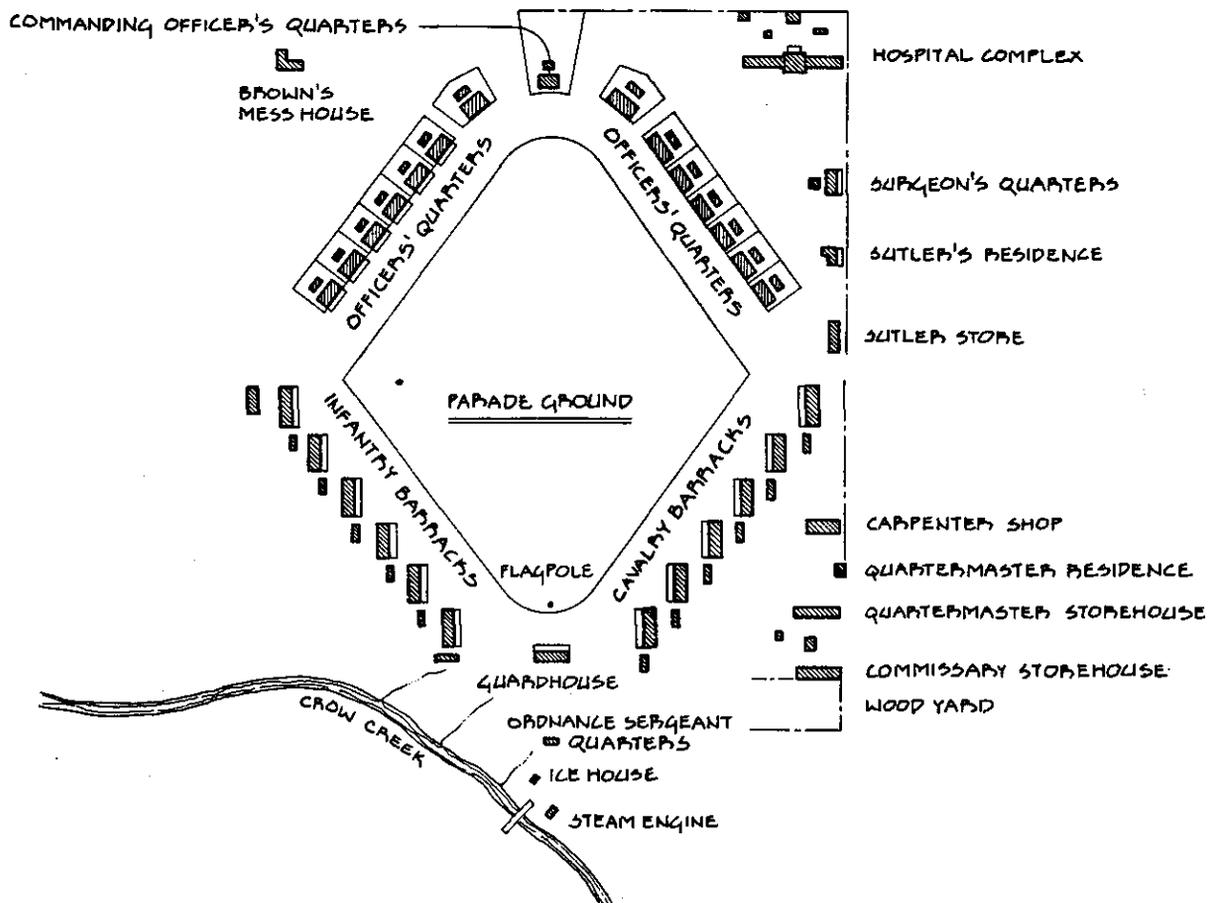


Figure 1. Site Plan at Fort D.A. Russell, 1867, from plan by C.H. Alden

Stevenson and Alden eschewed a stockade fence around the garrison as unnecessary. In laying out the post, they employed the type of formal symmetry that has been characteristic of military posts throughout the country's history. The two spaced the officers' quarters evenly along the northern legs of the diamond (today's Marne Parade at the western edge of the historic district), flanking the commanding officer's house at the north apex. They placed the enlisted men's barracks for the cavalry company on the southeast leg and the infantry barracks on the southwest. Behind each of these buildings was a smaller mess house and kitchen. The guardhouse sat opposite the commanding officer's quarters on the diamond's south apex, situated threateningly between the two rows of barracks. The diamond's east and west corners formed entrances from the quartermaster's depot and the road to Cheyenne Pass respectively. Functional buildings such as the carpenter's shop, the quartermaster's supply house and quarters, the sutler's store and house, the hospital and surgeon's house were situated along a north-south line east of the parade ground. Log cabins for married soldiers and laundresses were scattered west of the parade. In the Crow Creek bottomland, the army built an ice house and a shed for the steam-powered engine that pumped domestic water to an elevated wooden tank. Stables and corrals were situated southeast of the parade ground, downwind from the quarters.

Like the depot structures, the quarters at Fort Russell were simply massed, utilitarian structures, with rough-sawn, board-and-batten siding and wood-shingled, gable roofs. (None of these earliest buildings remains today.) The 30-foot-by-80-foot company barracks were identical, each housing eighty men in a long, open-plan dormitory with two-tier bunks. The duplex officers' quarters were 1½-story houses, each with a full-width front porch, two dormers on the front and back slopes of the side-gabled roof, two interior brick chimneys and a rear kitchen wing. The commanding officer's house was the only two-story building on the post, with a hipped roof, two exterior chimneys, and five bays of double-hung windows and a full-width porch on the front. Initially serving both as the colonel's quarters and the post headquarters, it had modestly Italianate features, providing the post's only acknowledgment of prevailing architectural styles. All the buildings were erected by the soldiers stationed here. Only one—the hospital—employed a published standard plan. Built to accommodate 48 beds, its design was based, with some modification, from a circular distributed by the Surgeon General's Office.

New construction at Fort Russell was largely complete by the end of 1868, freeing the soldiers for soldiering. The Thirteenth Infantry had been joined in September 1867 by Company C of the Second Cavalry, which was later joined by other

cavalry companies. By January 1868 eleven companies were quartered at the post, comprising 23 officers and 905 enlisted men. The Union Pacific crew had by then halted construction for the winter, and the men occupied their time improving the living quarters, which were austere at best. When work on the railroad resumed across Wyoming the following spring, six of the companies were detailed with the Casement crew. In July the Thirteenth Infantry was transferred to Fort Fred Steele, further west along the UP line. These troops were replaced by the Eighteenth Infantry, which were moved from Fort Fetterman, one of the Bozeman Trail posts closed by treaty earlier that year. All but a few of these soldiers spent the summer and fall in the field, either guarding the construction crew or patrolling the completed line between Fort Kearney to the east and the Medicine Bow Mountains to the west.

For the citizens of Cheyenne, Fort Russell was a tremendous boon, providing not only physical security but an irreplaceable economic base as well. The *Cheyenne Leader* reflected the sentiments of the townspeople when it reported on July 4, 1868:

One of the most important adjuncts to the property of Cheyenne is Fort D.A. Russell, a garrison capable of comfortably quartering fourteen companies of men, and Head Quarters... This post, occupying the position it does, employed a great number of men and teams, and annually expends millions of dollars, all of which operated in favor of this city... Fort Russell is pronounced the best arranged and one of the most important military garrisons in the United States.

For the soldiers stationed here, fort life was a mixed blessing: more comfortable and less dangerous than the lengthy campaigns along the railroad but maddening in its tedium and the incessant wind. "The wind constantly sweeping the parade ground bare," reported Captain Burt's wife, "drove the garrison almost to despair with its monotony." Completion of the transcontinental railroad in May 1869 changed the companies' deployment routines somewhat, but the men still patrolled almost continuously during clement weather. Construction of a branch line south to Denver, completed in June 1870, extended the fort's patrol area to northern Colorado. And increasing traffic along the Bozeman Trail to the Black Hills pulled the patrols northward. As the garrison's area of responsibility increased in the early 1870s, its complement of manpower decreased due to army-wide reductions in force. By 1876 the army had been pared down to a mere 25,000 men, stretched thinly across the country.

That year General George Crook undertook an extensive winter march against the Indians, staged in part from Fort Russell. Continuing his far-ranging campaign from the previous summer, he was retaliating in part for Custer's mas-

sacre at the Little Big Horn in June 1876. Crook's brutal campaign essentially crushed large-scale Indian hostilities on the Great Plains. "The Indians will soon lay down their arms and remain in peace with the white man," he predicted. And he was right, as bands of dispirited Indians began streaming onto the reservations the following spring.

The soldiers stationed at Fort D.A. Russell spent the remainder of the 1870s making incremental improvements to the post and chasing the dwindling bands of hostile Indians that remained. Meanwhile, with the Indian wars ebbing, the army continued its gradual dismantlement, reducing the size and number of infantry and cavalry companies and closing posts throughout the West. Forts Sanders and Fetterman were closed in May 1882, and some of their troops were re-assigned to Fort D.A. Russell. With the Cheyenne Depot still in full operation, the War Department decided later that year to maintain Fort Russell as a garrison for eight infantry companies.

The rough-sawn frame quarters built between 1867 and 1878 were by then badly deteriorated. Beginning in January 1885 the army began replacing them with more substantial brick structures. The original diamond-shaped parade ground was retained as the post's centerpiece [See *Figure 2*]. The orientation of the command structure around it changed somewhat with a shift of the new Commanding Officer's Quarters [**Building 2**] to the diamond's west corner.¹ But the functional arrangement of buildings remained unchanged: officers' quarters along the north side of the parade ground, enlisted men's barracks south. Shops, quartermaster warehouses, NCO quarters, the hospital and miscellaneous buildings lined the eastern and southern peripheries, and stables and corrals were located beyond these to the southeast.

To accommodate the increased number of buildings, an extension was added to the parade ground beyond the original east gate. Here the functional hierarchy was continued, with new officers' quarters lining the north side and barracks the south. The new area broke the rigid formality of the diamond-shaped parade ground and tended to give the fort a more linear quality (a feature appreciated by townspeople of Cheyenne who liked to race horses and buggies through the post). More importantly, it pointed the direction of future growth on the post.

¹See HABS Photo No. WY-117-1.

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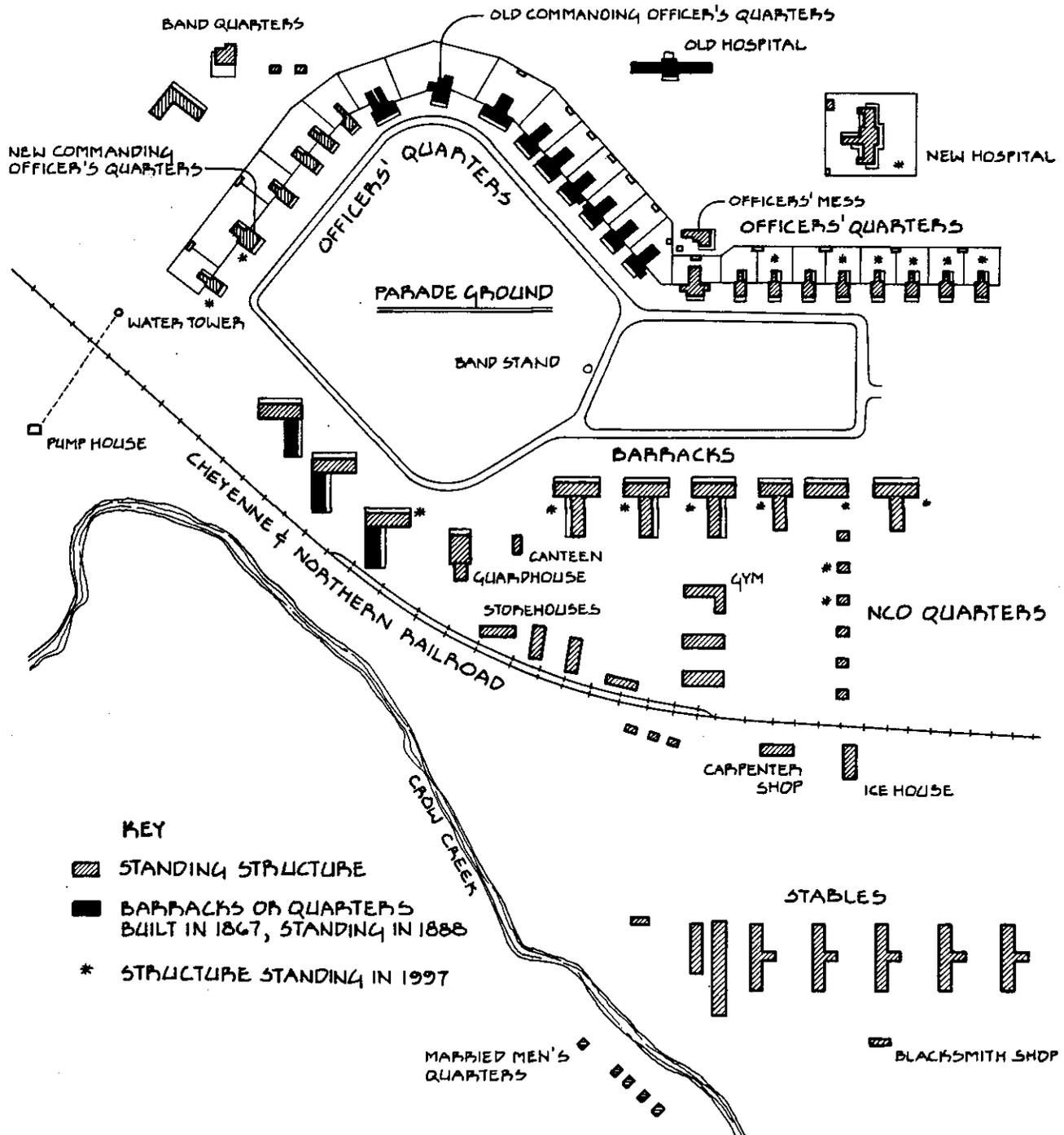


Figure 2. Site Plan of Fort D.A. Russell, 1888, from plan by C.F. Humphrey

In August 1885 the new waterworks were completed, providing indoor plumbing for the first time. Potable water was pumped from a well to a 30,000-gallon, steel water tower and piped to the buildings. The first four brick officers' quarters had by then been completed. These were followed by construction of other new buildings and rehabilitation of existing ones between 1885 and 1889. Some thirty new structures were built (eighteen of which remain today),² including six new quarters for non-commissioned officers (NCOs), eight new barracks, a hospital and eleven officers' quarters along the east-west road.³ The original frame officers' quarters around the parade ground were rehabilitated, as were three of the original frame barracks along the parade's southwest leg.

The new Commanding Officer's House, like the original, was a two-story Italianate cottage, with a hipped roof, interior chimneys and a full-width front porch with ornamental columns and brackets. Rendered in brick instead of wood frame, it featured five bays of segmental-arched, double-hung windows. The other new officers' quarters similarly resembled their predecessors in form and detailing. Also made of brick construction, they were 1½-story buildings with side-gabled roofs, paired dormers and full-width front porches with decorative wood columns, brackets and balustrades. The NCO quarters were scaled-down versions of the officers' quarters: 1-story brick boxes with jerkinhead roofs, interior chimneys, segmental-arched windows and full-width front porches. The officers' quarters were designed by the Surgeon General's office in Washington, D.C.; the barracks and storehouses by the Quartermaster General's Office. Typical of army design and construction, they stressed utility, simplicity and standardization as means to economize on construction. The buildings' design and detailing only vaguely reflected prevailing Victorian styles, depending primarily on roof and porch trim for architectural expression.

Built in 1894, the Post Headquarters (**Building 210**) represented a significant stylistic departure from the other brick structures at the fort.⁴ Its paired gable-end chimneys, flat-arch stone window heads, lunettes, fanlights and dentilled cornices distinguish it as a Colonial Revival structure, with higher stylistic aspirations than the preceding post buildings. The Headquarters proved a harbinger of future architecture at the post, much closer akin to the buildings that

²These are Building Nos. 1, 2, 22, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 31, 207, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 274 and 275. See HABS Drawing No. WY-117 for locations of these and subsequently mentioned buildings.

³See HABS Photo Nos. WY-117-8, 9, 10 and 48.

⁴See HABS Photo Nos. WY-117-34 and 35.

would follow after the turn of the century than the modest officers' quarters that had been built in the 1860s and 1880s.

Completion of the Cheyenne and Northern Railroad north from Cheyenne substantially decreased the necessity for the Cheyenne Depot. With trains available to carry supplies to the northern posts and reservations, wagons were no longer needed. In deteriorating condition after more than twenty years of use, the depot was closed in September 1889. This closure effectively signalled the end of the Indian wars. Most of the northern forts had since been abandoned, and almost all of the Indians were peacefully ensconced on reservations. A further indication that things were changing occurred the following July when the Senate voted to dispose of the military reservations at forts Fetterman, Steele, Bridger, Laramie and Sanders in Wyoming. Under the political protection of Wyoming Senator Francis E. Warren, Fort D.A. Russell appeared insulated from the military cutbacks that were depleting the western forces.

During the 1890s the eight companies of the Seventeenth Infantry at Fort Russell were principally engaged in construction and maintenance of post buildings. The troops were occasionally dispatched to quell incipient Indian uprisings, such as the Ghost Dance movement at Wounded Knee and the Bannock threat in Jackson Hole. They also escorted the defeated "army" of the Wyoming Stock Growers' Association back to Cheyenne after the Johnson County War, and provided law enforcement for labor strikes in Wyoming and Colorado. But the garrison was largely quiet through the 1890s until war was declared with Spain in April 1898. The following month four companies were mustered from the fort to the Philippines to fight in the Battle of Manila. Another group headed to Cuba in June but never made it, after a series of mishaps.

After the Spanish-American War ended in 1899, Congress resumed its dismantling of the western outposts. Despite this, the War Department in March 1899 approved the construction of five new officers' quarters at Fort Russell to replace the 1867 buildings on the northeastern edge of the parade ground.⁵ These duplex structures [Buildings 14 through 20] continued the Quartermaster General Office's penchant for Colonial Revival architecture, although, with their cross-gabled roofs and double-pedimented porches, they were not as clear in their expression as the 1894 Post Headquarters. Four such Double Officers'

⁵See HABS Photo Nos. WY-117-5 and 6.

Quarters and one Bachelor Officer's Quarters were completed in 1900. Intended to house six men, this latter building [**Building 21**] featured the symmetrical facade, heavily dentilled cornice, flat-arched windows and pedimented, two-story central portico that would characterize later post structures.⁶

In July 1901 the last remaining buildings from the fort's initial construction were sold. Buyers purchased eight officers' quarters, the canteen, the original hospital and the ice house, moving most of the structures into town for houses.

At that time the military population of Fort Russell had fallen to two officers and 77 men, prompting fears among the townspeople that the post may be closed. But returning troops from the Philippines soon bolstered the garrison to more than 500 men and 22 officers. Early in 1902 Senator Warren, then on the Senate Military Affairs Committee, succeeded in having Fort Russell designated a permanent post that would house a full regiment of infantry and a battery of artillery. To accommodate the additional troops, 19 new officers' quarters (including a new house for the commanding officer), three NCO quarters and four barracks would be constructed, and eight existing barracks would be remodeled. Two more duplex officers' quarters [**Buildings 10 and 12**] had already been completed that year.⁷ Late in 1902 the army hired Cheyenne contractor-and mayor-M.P. Keefe to construct two major artillery barracks [**Buildings 223 and 224**],⁸ in addition to several other buildings. These, like every building erected on the post since the 1894 Post Headquarters, were designed by the Quartermaster General's Office in Washington, D.C. The barracks were by far the largest structures built on the post to date, enclosing almost 23,000 square feet of above-ground space each. With their red brick walls, white trim and symmetrical facades with full-width, two-story colonnades and front pediments, the artillery barracks typified the modified Colonial Revival style that would dominate post architecture in subsequent years.

The following March the Quartermaster of Construction solicited competitive bids to build ten other buildings: two duplex officers' quarters, one duplex NCO quarters, one barracks, two shop buildings and a stable, gunshed, bake house

⁶See HABS Photo No. WY-117-7.

⁷See HABS Photo No. WY-117-4.

⁸See HABS Photo No. WY-117-37. See also HABS No. WY-148 for more photos and a detailed description of Building 224.

and pump house. All but the stable and gunshed were to be built of brick and stone. The army soon thereafter authorized construction of more buildings, which were let for bid later that year. Construction of officers' houses and enlisted men's barracks continued unabated over the next three years, greatly increasing the size of the post.

Fort Russell's dramatic expansion after the turn of the century was attributable almost entirely to the patronage of Francis Warren, and the fort's improving fortunes were tied directly to those of the Wyoming senator's. In March 1905 Warren was named chairman of the Senate Committee for Public Buildings and Grounds. Later that year he became the chairman of the Senate Military Affairs Committee, a position he would hold for the next 25 years. Coincidentally, Fort Russell was increased to brigade size in 1905, which necessitated the construction of even more facilities to accommodate the increased troops. In January 1907, for instance, the Quartermaster General awarded construction contracts for 31 new buildings; in February 1908 for 48, including a 100-bed hospital [**Building 34**] and a cavalry drill hall [**Building 314**] that was termed "the biggest Army building in the West" when it was completed the following year.⁹ In March 1910 contracts were awarded for ten more structures.

This intensive building program continued until 1913, with the peak construction occurring between 1908 and 1910. Virtually all of the expansion occurred east of the original parade grounds, following the pattern that had been established in the 1880s. The original 1867 parade ground was later renamed the Marne Parade and the 1885 expansion became the Aisne Parade. The road extending from the eastern corner of the original diamond and along the northern edge of the Champagne Parade was named Warren Avenue. As it wound eastward in carefully executed arcs and bends, it defined three subsequently named parade grounds: Vesle, St. Mihiel and Argonne. The officers' quarters were spaced evenly along the north side of Warren Avenue, facing the enlisted men's barracks across the grassed parades. Eventually numbering 74 single and duplex houses, these quarters were landscaped in typical suburban fashion, with cottonwood and spruce trees interspersed with hedgerows in well-tended lawns.

The 29 enlisted men's barracks and administration buildings marched in an evenly spaced line down Randall Avenue, the name given to the street that became the mainline entrance from Cheyenne. The barracks' landscaping was

⁹See HABS Photo No. WY-117-51.

similar to that of the officers' quarters, although the greater density of building mass here limited the number of trees and shrubs that could be planted. The aesthetic landscaping ended behind the barracks, where utilitarian buildings were grouped within large, dirt-surfaced staging yards.

Although greatly expanded, this organization represented a continuation of the functional hierarchy established in 1867 and reinforced in 1885. The officers' quarters formed the northernmost tier of buildings, aligned picturesquely but formally along winding Warren Avenue.¹⁰ The officers and their families were separated visually and spatially from the men, materiel and livestock by a series of open-space parades. Facing the officers across the parade grounds were the enlisted men, housed in large-scale barracks, which, with their similar facades and unvarying setbacks, were characterized by uniformity.¹¹ Behind the men's quarters were the operational support buildings (e.g., fire stations, guardhouses, dispensaries),¹² arranged loosely along side streets. Beyond these to the south were the livestock stables and munitions sheds, which, despite their disparities of size and function, aligned consistently along Second Avenue (now 10th Cavalry Avenue).¹³ The warehouses were located south of these, positioned in functional groups close to the railroad spur.¹⁴ Neither officers nor men, the non-commissioned officers formed the southern boundary of the post in their own discreetly separated compound.¹⁵

The buildings were typically built in rows that extended eastward from the original 1867/1885 core. The Quartermaster General's Office employed fifteen different designs for officers' quarters to create variety along the Warren Avenue streetscape. These varied in frequency of usage from the 39 duplex houses that employed seven designs to five senior officers' houses that were unique. The officers' quarters typically featured two stories over raised basements, red brick exterior walls with painted wood trim and symmetrical facades with prominent verandas or porches. Decorative devices included Tuscan-order

¹⁰See HABS Photo Nos. WY-117-1 through 33.

¹¹See HABS Photo Nos. WY-117-36 through 46.

¹²See HABS Photo No. WY-117-49.

¹³See HABS Photo Nos. WY-117-50 through 55.

¹⁴See HABS Photo Nos. WY-117-47 and 56 through 58.

¹⁵See HABS Photo No. WY-117-59.

columns—often paired or engaged, pedimented cornices with dentils, brackets or modillions, corbeled brick stringcourses, round-arched attic windows, turned porch balusters. The enlisted men's barracks similarly used a variety of designs within the same general parameters. Between 1902 and 1912, two dozen barracks were built using five basic configurations. The most common of these featured U-shaped footprints, and double-pedimented facades that boxed full-width, two-story verandas. Like the officers' quarters, the barracks were consistent in their architectural detailing, typically featuring red brick exterior walls with painted wood trim, symmetrical facades, Tuscan-order columns, pedimented cornices decorative attic windows. Although they varied substantially in enclosed volume, their design stressed uniformity far more than the officers' quarters. The utilitarian buildings—e.g., stables, sheds, warehouses—were typically red-brick boxes with functionally placed window and door openings.

Despite their different functions, virtually all of the buildings at Fort D.A. Russell shared a commonality of scale, materials and design. Virtually all were built from plans furnished by the Office of the Quartermaster General [OQMG] in Washington. The OQMG stressed standardization as an efficient means to design and build large numbers of structures in a relatively short time. Standardization also afforded a visual continuity for the post and allowed, through a subtle system of architectural form and detail, a reinforcement of the military hierarchy. The Colonial Revival idiom fit OQMG's needs perfectly. The prevailing architectural style in America at the turn of the century, it represented a sense of heritage and a reference to the country's colonial origins—an ideal architectural statement for a military steeped in tradition and proud of its Revolutionary War record. Moreover, with its simple massing and unadorned surfaces, Colonial Revival was cheaper to build and maintain than the Victorian styles, with their asymmetrical footprints and sumptuous surface ornamentation.

Typical of the Colonial Revival style, virtually all of the buildings at Fort Russell featured symmetrical facades. The principal buildings used red brick bearing walls, with wood trim and evenly spaced, uniformly proportioned fenestration. Windows, doors, balusters, cornices and trim were all painted white. The style was rendered with different degrees on different building types. The barracks, with their simple massing, strong symmetry and prominent colonnades, tended to hew closest to the Colonial Revival ideal. The officers' quarters reflected the style to varying degrees. These ranged from the Commanding Officer's House¹⁶

¹⁶See HABS Photo No. WY-117-24.

[Building 73]—a classic rendition of Colonial Revival built in 1909—to the picturesque duplex cottages. The utilitarian buildings were largely brick or frame boxes that relied on modest Colonial Revival details to tie them visually with the barracks and quarters. An architectural survey produced in 1984 explained the Quartermaster General's role in the post's design and planning:

The Impact of the OQMG on construction at F.E. Warren AFB is seen in three major ways. First, in numerous instances, more than one building was erected from a single set of plans and specifications. These included all kinds of structures' from stables (over 20 from one plan), to barracks (as many as 6 from a single plan), fire stations (2), stable guardhouses (6), exchanges (2), and even officers' quarters. Second, several different designs might be employed in the construction of a particular building type in order to provide variations on a theme and enrich the texture of overall composition. There remained, however, a strong continuity in terms of plan, exterior detail, and interior finish, because architectural features were repeated from one design to another, but in slightly different configurations. For example, field officers' quarters were built from four designs, but they varied in detail. Double quarters for officers of lesser rank were produced from several designs that differed in plan and massing and in such features as roof and porch shape; however, they incorporated standardized elements for porches, windows, doors, interior woodwork, and fixtures. Enlisted men's barracks were produced from five different designs, and like the officers' duplexes, varied in plan and massing but little in the selection of specific exterior and interior appointments. Finally, even among buildings of widely different functions, some details appeared again and again, such as five-panel doors, multilight transom panels, 6/2 and 4/4 window sash, beaded and vee-notched boarding, Tuscan-order columns and entablatures, chamfered wooden posts, and plain brass hardware.

At its conclusion in 1913, the expansion of Fort D.A. Russell involved some 150 new structures of varying sizes, functions and materials. The post size had increased severalfold. Entailing many of the post's most prominent buildings and parade grounds, the massive post-1902 construction virtually transformed the fort's architectural and landscape character.

With construction in full swing in March 1911, the post's military population plummeted from about 3,000 men to 300, as infantry, cavalry and artillery companies from the fort were dispatched to the Texas border in response to the Mexican revolution. The men returned later that year but returned to Texas in 1913, just as the fort's building program was concluding. Over the next three years, Fort Russell stood almost empty at times. In June 1916, for example, the fort was occupied by only two officers and 38 men—a ratio of over five buildings

per man. Troop numbers varied widely during World War I, as companies of regular and reserve forces passed through on their way to and from other postings. Immediately after war was declared in April 1917, Fort Russell's population increased to more than 5,000 men and 3,200 horses. Later that year only 105 officers and men remained. After the war, the post was designated a demobilization center for a five-state area, and briefly in 1919-20 it contained an airfield for bombing practice and the transcontinental reliability test.

On January 1, 1930, five weeks after Francis Warren's death, the post was renamed Fort F.E. Warren in honor of the senator's longstanding stewardship. The 1920s and 1930s were a period of relative stability for the post. The dramatic fluctuations of population that had occurred in previous years diminished markedly. Similarly, construction of new buildings was limited to a few infill structures and continuations of existing complexes. In 1931 the War Department listed 259 permanent buildings, ten more under construction, and 26 temporary buildings. A year later four Company Officers' Quarters [**Buildings 98, 99, 100 and 131**] were built on the northern side of the Argonne Parade Ground. At the same time the Detachment Barracks [**Building 208**] were built to replace two 1880s barracks buildings that had burned in the 1920s; in 1939 the Medical Detachment Barracks [**Building 152**] were completed to house hospital staff. The most significant expansion of the inter-war period occurred along Carlin Avenue with the construction of several duplex NCO quarters [**Buildings 402, 404, 410, 412, 414, 416, 418, 420, 422, 424**].¹⁷ These, like the barracks and officers' quarters, employed the OQMG's simplified version of Colonial Revival architecture.

World War II precipitated another major construction boom, as the post was designated a Quartermaster Replacement Center. To accommodate up to 20,000 men at a time, 387 temporary frame buildings were built between December 1940 and December 1941. Located south of Crow Creek away from the existing post complex, these 1- and 2-story buildings were flimsily built, with no attempt made for architectural style. Other clusters of temporary buildings sprang up around the post hospital and east of the Argonne Parade Ground, near the east entrance. Most of these emergency structures were demolished or moved from the post after the war ended, leaving the core complex much as it appeared before the war.

¹⁷See HABS Photo No. WY-117-60.

Changes to Fort F.E. Warren since 1945 have largely occurred away from the historic complex. In 1947 administration of the post was transferred from the army to the air force; ten years after that F.E. Warren Air Force Base was designated the headquarters for the country's first intercontinental ballistic missile network. The base's historic significance was recognized in 1969 when it was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This importance was further acknowledged in 1974 when F.E. Warren Air Force Base was designated a National Historic Landmark. Today, the modern missile base functions within the confines of the historic army post, with varying alteration to the historic fabric of the buildings. Despite the changes that have accrued over time, the post as a whole retains a high degree of physical and historic integrity. Its original and subsequent organizational plans are clearly discernable, and the individual structures appear, through continuing maintenance, much as they did when they were constructed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The post's longstanding role in the Indian wars, the Spanish-American War, two World Wars, the Cold War, and today's post-Cold-War period places Fort F.E. Warren among the country's most historically significant military facilities.

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Project Information

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