NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

NAME
HISTORIC
Camp Endicott

AND/OR COMMON
Davisville Construction Battalion Center

LOCATION
Davisville Construction Battalion Center

STREET & NUMBER
"B" Street, 10th Street, a nameless lane off U. S. Route 1 parallel to "B" Street, and 7th Street.

CITY, TOWN
North Kingstown

STATE
Rhode Island

CLASSIFICATION
CATEGORY
X DISTRICT
_X BUILDING(S)
_X STRUCTURE
_X SITE
-X OBJECT

OWNER OF PROPERTY
NAME
(U.S. Navy) Custody of: Commanding Officer

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Town Clerk's Office

STREET & NUMBER
80 Boston Neck Road

CITY, TOWN
North Kingstown

STATE
Rhode Island

REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
TITLE
An Historical Survey of United States Navy Property in Rhode Island.

DATE
August, 1974

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS
Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

CITY, TOWN
Providence

STATE
Rhode Island
Camp Endicott, in the heart of the Davisville Seabee Center, is surrounded by buildings and open spaces formerly used for a jumble of activities typical of a military post -- barracks, freight sidings, warehouses, a "mobile home" park, offices, a golf course, and officers' housing. The proposed district, covering about seven (7) acres, is laid out in a straightforward street pattern with paved thoroughfares running east-west and north-south; the area being nominated is the best-preserved portion of the once vast training camp. Four roads define this neat, rectangular district: "B" Street on the north, 10th Street on the east, a nameless lane parallel to "B" Street on the south, and 7th street on the west.

Within this area stand seventeen 40-by-100-foot quonset huts* manufactured by the Great Lakes Steel Corporation and erected in 1942 by the George A. Fuller Company and Merritt, Chapman & Scott, contractors to the Navy for the development of Davisville and the Quonset Point Naval Air Station, immediately to the south. Built as training facilities for Camp Endicott, they are now vacant or used for storage (see photo # 1).

These prefabricated structures follow standard quonset hut design. Bolted to concrete foundations, their steel arch-rib frames support a skin of curved, corrugated metal sheets nailed in place. Originally this galvanized outer skin was left exposed; now all the buildings bear a coat of Navy grey paint. The ends or bulkheads of each hut contain a large two-leaf sliding metal door flanked by double, industrial six-light windows (see photo # 2). The treatment of a few bulkheads has been altered, usually by substituting a standard 3-by-7-foot doorway and smaller double-hung sash. Running ninety-six feet along the sides of each hut is a continuous range of windows glazed with ten-light wooden sash (see photo # 3). Each frame is hinged at the top and swings open from the bottom. Many of these windows are rather deteriorated and some have been replaced with translucent corrugated fiber-glass panels.

The interiors of several huts have been subdivided, but most remain as built -- single, uninterrupted spaces rising a full 20 feet. The walls are insulated between the arch-ribs with 1" blanket insulation, then furred-out and finished with curved 3/16" (See continuation sheet #1)

*The building numbers are: B-11, T-2, T-3, T-4, T-5, T-6, T-7, T-8, T-9, T-10, T-11, T-12, T-15, T-16, T-17, T-18, T-19.
hardboard paneling (see photo # 4).

The area within the proposed Camp Endicott district contained more structures than stand there now, mostly other quonset huts. Though this building density has been diminished somewhat, what remains of this portion of the camp still gives a suggestion of the original complex, with the buildings placed in ranks along the narrow streets in the simplest arrangement possible.
STAEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Davisville is an outgrowth of the secondary function of Quonset Point Naval Air Station during the Second World War as the base of operations for George A. Fuller & Company and Merritt, Chapman & Scott. These private contractors were employed by the government under terms of the Lend-Lease Act of March, 1941, to design, fabricate, and erect military installations for Great Britain. By February, 1942, the management and space requirements of this activity had outstripped the capacities of Quonset Point, and the Davisville base was established just to the north; it was the first advanced base depot. Here matériel was designed, tested, packaged, and shipped.

The quonset hut was created at Quonset Point (hence the name) by a team of architects and engineers working for the Fuller Company. Fabricated in several sizes (the most common being 20-by-56), it was conceived as a standard building unit -- inexpensive, easy to ship, easy to erect, and versatile in accommodation -- ideal for use at remote new installations where building materials and skilled workers were not available, and shipping was a problem. The 40-by-100 quonset, for example, required but 12½ tons of steel and occupied 350 cubic feet of cargo space; it superseded a vertical-walled structure of the same dimensions which used 20 tons of steel and occupied 650 cubic feet of shipping space. Moreover, a 40-by-100 quonset hut could be erected by a crew of twenty-four unskilled workers in four days. Soon bases were being built for the United States as well as Great Britain in North America, Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Pacific, and the demand for quonset huts was tremendous. The U. S. Navy alone erected over 160,000. Both in terms of design and because of its dispersion throughout the world, the quonset hut must be considered one of the most universal of structures.

The design-team included Otto Brandenberger, Tomaso Secondino, Robert F. McDonnell, and Dominic Urgo. These Fuller employees worked under Navy supervision in extremely hurried and tense conditions to produce plans and specifications. They based their solution on a concept supplied by the Navy which derived from the British Nissen hut developed during the First World War. The semi-cylindrical form of the quonset was taken from the (See continuation sheet # 2)
Nissen hut; its purpose was to create a structure of great strength which could be sandbagged without collapsing to protect it from artillery bombardment. But all particulars of quonset hut design, materials, and mode of fabrication -- the most important aspects of the building -- were new. Significant contributions to the final product were made by subcontractors, particularly in the development of new forming techniques to produce arch-rib frames and curved, corrugated sheet metal roofing. The structures were repeatedly modified and redesigned, but always with the same dual objectives: economy and utility.

The quonset hut epitomizes the dogged, adaptive, problem-solving approach of the American war effort -- a team of technicians given a specific problem for which a solution was demanded within a restricted time-frame. Credit for American success in the war is in part attributable to this nation's ability to produce solutions like the quonset hut. Universal and anonymous, it evokes a critical and still-familiar moment in world history.

As the war escalated in 1941 and 1942 it became imperative for the United States to have military construction units to build overseas bases, bridges, harbors, and other facilities within the war zone. The best-known of these were the Navy's Construction Battalions, the "Seabees". Camp Endicott, one of the first Seabee training stations, was established at Davisville in June, 1942. The 15,000-man camp was erected around the tents of the first trainees, and the seventeen 40-by-100 quonsets still standing there included in this nomination are the best-preserved part of the camp, as well as the best-preserved group of quonset huts in Rhode Island. They are significant, not only as quonset huts, standing where this building-type originated, but also in their arrangement, for they reflect the uncompromising matter-of-factness of a typical war-time military camp.

Long disparaged for their drabness, and neglected as a result of our national myopia to the impact of America's contributions to the Second World War, quonset huts, including those at Camp Endicott, are among our most under-appreciated historic buildings.
MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES


(See continuation sheet 3)

GEографICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY about 7 acres

UTM REFERENCES

| A (1,9) | 2 | 9 | 7 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4,6 | 0,8 | 3,6 | 0 | B (1,9) | 2 | 9 | 7 | 3 | 9 | 0 | 4,6 | 0,8 | 2,6 | 0 |
| C (1,9) | 2 | 9 | 7 | 0 | 9 | 0 | 4,6 | 0,8 | 2,8 | 0 | D (1,9) | 2 | 9 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 4,6 | 0,8 | 3,8 | 0 |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

"B" Street to 10th Street; 10th Street to a nameless lane parallel to "B" Street; the lane to 7th Street; 7th Street to "B" Street.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>CODE</th>
<th>COUNTY</th>
<th>CODE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE
David W. Chase, Chief of Field Services

ORGANIZATION
Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

DATE
September 2, 1976

STREET & NUMBER
150 Benefit Street

TELEPHONE
(401) 277-2678

CITY OR TOWN
Providence

STATE
Rhode Island

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL ___ STATE ___ LOCAL X

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665). I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE
State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Davisville Naval Construction Battalion Center; building records.

Jackson, Henry G; "The Quonset Hut"; Rhode Island History, VI # 1, January, 1947; Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence.

CAMP ENDICOTT HISTORIC DISTRICT
DAVISVILLE CONSTRUCTION BATTALION CENTER
NORTH KINGSTON, R.I.

APRIL, 1976

SCALE 1" = 200'
Camp Endicott
North Kingstown, Rhode Island
Richard Longstreth   October 1975
Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

General view of Camp Endicott, including building T-6, T-7, T-9, T-10, T-12, and T-17.
Camp Endicott
North Kingstown
Richard Longstreth  October 1975
Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

Bulkheads if buildings T-19 and T-18.

#2
Camp Endicott
North Kingstown, Rhode Island
Richard Longstreth October 1975
Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission
Typical window and siding detail, building T-5.
Camp Endicott
North Kingstown, Rhode Island
Richard Longstreth October, 1975
Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

Typical undivided interior of a 40 x 100 foot Quonset Hut (building T-6).
CAMP ENDICOTT  
DAVISVILLE, NORTH KINGSTOWN, R. I.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>297400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>297350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>279090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>297100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>