

U.S. NAVAL BASE, PEARL HARBOR, PAINT & OIL STOREHOUSE  
(U.S. Naval Base, Pearl Harbor, Naval Station Ford Island, Facility  
No. 43)  
Pokomoke Street and Lexington Boulevard  
Pearl Harbor  
Honolulu County  
Hawaii

HABS HI-396  
HI-396

HABS  
HI-396

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
PACIFIC GREAT BASIN SUPPORT OFFICE  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1111 Jackson Street  
Oakland, CA 94607

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

### U.S. NAVAL BASE, PEARL HARBOR, PAINT AND OIL STOREHOUSE (U.S. Naval Base, Pearl Harbor, Naval Station Ford Island) (Facility No. 43)

HABS  
HI-396  
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(page 1)

- Location:** Pokomoke Street and Lexington Boulevard  
Ford Island  
Pearl Harbor Naval Base  
City and County of Honolulu, Hawaii
- U.S.G.S. Pearl Harbor Quadrangle, Hawaii, 1999  
7.5 Minute Series (Topographic) (Scale – 1:24,000)  
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates 4.607820.2362480
- Significance:** Facility No. 43 was part of the expansion of the Navy's air base on Ford Island in the mid-1930s. It is also associated with World War II, since Facility No. 43 was greatly enlarged to accommodate the wartime demands in the early 1940s. It was a storehouse for flammable materials needed at the air base. This building embodies the distinctive characteristics of this type and period of construction. Facility No. 43 is a contributing element to the Pearl Harbor National Historic Landmark.
- Description:** Facility No. 43 is located near the center of the southeast side of Ford Island. It is relatively isolated from other buildings due to the flammable nature of the materials stored there. The building is surrounded by pavement, plus there is a ball field (Facility No. S395) across Pokomoke Street, and another open grassy area across the unnamed street on its northeast side. Facility No. 218, a bowling alley building (see HABS No. HI-424), is diagonally across Lexington Avenue from it. A cold storage building (Facility No. 190, see HABS No. HI-316) was built just southeast of it in 1943; but this was demolished about 1999.
- Facility No. 43 is a one-story, rectangular-plan, utilitarian-style structure. It has a low-slope roof behind parapets. The building originally measured approximately 40' x 100' in plan, and was one bay wide by five bays long. A sixth bay was added sometime between 1937 and 1941, and the dimensions were then about 40' x 120'. The storehouse was greatly expanded to the southeast and southwest during World War II, and it now measures about 80' x 200', two bays wide by ten bays long. The structural system of the WWII addition is different from the original building, but it has basically the same grid with most bays measuring approximately 40' x 20'. The building height is about 18' from grade to the top of the parapet.
- There are loading platforms with ramps on both long sides of the building. The elevation of the loading platform on the southwest side is about 1' higher than the one on the northeast side. This means that the floor level

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of the rooms opening onto the southwest platform is approximately a foot higher than the floor level of those rooms opening on the other side. Separate perimeter foundation walls with continuous footings, all of reinforced concrete, support the building and platforms. There is also a foundation wall at or near the center line, to support the walls or columns that allowed the doubled width of the building. The raised slab floors of the building and platforms are reinforced concrete over compacted fill. The exterior walls are painted reinforced concrete, except that the walls of the pre-WWII part of the building, in the northern corner, have a textured stucco finish.

Originally, the northeast side had a loading platform at the three central bays, with steps on either end. Before 1941 the platform had been extended to the southeast because another bay for a refrigerated room had been added, and a ramp at the northwest end had replaced the original steps. The extent of that pre-1941 loading platform is marked by the metal edging where it abuts the WWII extension of the platform and where it meets that ramp down at the northwest end. This ramp extends beyond the northwest end wall, because it starts at the end of the original platform where steps were initially built; the other ramps were designed as part of the WWII addition and do not extend beyond their respective end walls.

On the northeast side of the building, the three original double metal doors are evenly spaced along the original platform section. The door openings measure about 8' wide by 10' tall. Each door leaf has a fixed nine-light sash in the upper section. The original glass appears to be the textured wire type, but many panes have been replaced with clear or frosted glass, or with sheet metal. The two other doors along this side are both thick sheet-metal-covered doors, measuring about 4' x 7', but are not otherwise similar, since they were installed at different dates. One is labeled "replaced refrigerated door" and a historic photo (National Archives II) shows that it is a relocated 1936 interior cooler room door. There are three narrow horizontal openings (measuring approximately 1' x 4') at a height of about 6' on the outer sides of the two refrigerated doors and four such opening between them. Some have metal louvers, but most have been removed and the openings blocked up on the inside. There are three window openings on this side of the building. The one in the original section of the building, near the northern corner, is composed of double steel-sash windows, each sash having 16-lights (for a total of 32 lights) with a row of fixed lights above and below the central 8-light horizontally pivoting sections. The top of this opening is aligned with the tall double doors, and below the window is an opening with metal louvers, measuring about 1' x 7'. The two windows at the other end of this side are noted as "old steel sash / re-used." Each of them consists of 16 lights with four fixed lights above and below the central pivoting section. The tops of these windows align with the shorter doors, and there are no louvered openings under them.

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The southeast end has three "replaced sash" that are the same as the double-sash window in the original part of the building described above. These were recycled when the southwest side of the original building became an inner wall during the WWII expansion. However, they are placed lower on the wall than the original windows and have no louvered openings underneath. Also, three pivoting sections have been replaced by metal louvers. There are three doors on this end, two small and one large. One small door is labeled as "old door re-used" and the new door matches it. These pressed-steel doors have four lights over a lower panel and measure 2'-6" x 7'-0". Between them is a fire door, measuring about 9' wide by 10' tall. This is a sliding door with a sloping overhead track mounted on the inner wall. The detail sheet notes that the fire door type is "2 5/8" tin clad laminated wood door" and shows that the tops of these doors were angled like the overhead track (3/4" to one foot). The track, along with a counterweight, cord, and fusible link, allowed the door to close by gravity during a fire. All the doors at the southeast end open at grade, so the rooms at this end of the building are lower than the rest, which open onto the loading platforms. On this end, near the southern corner, there is a metal ladder to the roof.

The southwest side has four fire doors, just like the one on the southeast end, all of which open onto the loading platform. There are two 16-light windows near the southern corner, which are also re-used sash from the southwest side of the original building. In addition, there are five openings with metal louvers located in the bays without windows or doors. These measure about 1' x 7' and are placed about 1' above the platform level.

In the original half of the northwest end there are two large windows, each consisting of 24 lights with a central 8-light horizontally pivoting section surrounded by fixed lights. Under each window is an opening measuring about 1' x 5' with metal louvers. The WWII half of this northwest wall is blank, but mounted near the western corner there is a metal ladder to the roof.

The low-slope roof drains to ten downspouts, five each on the northeast and southwest sides. These are symmetrically placed on the latter side. Because the original building only had two downspouts, the pattern is not symmetrical on the northeast side. The roof plan shows a roof ventilator placed in the center of most bays. It also shows 4-ply roofing was applied over cane (panel made of sugar cane fibers) insulation on the WWII portion of the building. The type of roof insulation on the original part of the building is not specified on the plans. A low parapet encircles the roof. It originally had slightly higher central sections on the northeast and southwest sides, but because of the additions the higher level was continued around all but the northern corner, where the originally lower parapet was not changed.

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The interior of the original part of Facility No. 43 has distinctive massive integral columns and girders that have a faceted arch shape to span the 40' width. These support five roof beams that run the length of the original part of the building. Four of the five bays in the original building still form one uninterrupted storage space. The fifth bay was originally divided into two cooler rooms (designated for two different temperatures) plus a machine room and toilet room. The partition walls between these rooms are labeled as 8" or 6" or 4" "tile" (hollow masonry units of extruded and fired clay). The refrigerated rooms were lined with 4" of "rock cork" under plastered walls and ceiling and under a 4" concrete finish floor. The ceilings of the original cooler rooms are only 8'-6" above the floor level, below the bottom of the girders. The machine and toilet rooms were combined into a small storage room when the building was enlarged during WWII. An opening between the two original cooler rooms was also added, and each of their doors removed, during or before the WWII enlargement of the building. An additional two-room bay had been built on the southeast end of the original building sometime before 1941. The WWII plans show that the larger room was refrigerated space but the original function of the small room in this bay is not known.

The interior layout of the WWII part of the building included one large refrigerated space that occupied three bays of the new bays on the northeast side of the building. The walls of this room are lined with canec instead of cork, and they are painted black, rather than plastered. The plans also show that 4" of canec was placed under the finish floor of concrete. As noted in a paragraph above, canec insulation was placed on the roof, rather than attached to the ceiling. The fourth additional bay on the northeast side was occupied by toilet and locker rooms plus a room for compressors and other equipment. Four storage rooms, two or three bays in size, took up most of the southwest side of the building, and the bay at the southern corner was labeled as "Acid Storage Room." Most of the partition walls in the WWII part of the building are made of unpainted concrete masonry units (CMU). The wall between the rooms on the northeast and southwest sides of the building is built of reinforced concrete. The reinforced-concrete ceiling has large beams about every 20', typically spanning the width of the bays, with a grid of joists and bridging between these. The structural system for the six bays on the southwest side which abut the pre-WWII part of the building is slightly different. Here there are six columns (two of them incorporated into partition walls), located about 5' away from the original exterior southwest wall. Thus, the beam spans in this part of the building are about 5' shorter.

Interior light fixtures have circular metal shades with green exteriors and white interiors. The majority of exterior lights are pendant fixtures with caged bulbs, located over the doors. The lights over the three original double doors are smaller and project out from the wall. There are also two modern rectangular floodlights at the corners of the northwest end.

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**Historical Context:** See HABS No. HI-382 for an overall history of Ford Island and refer to the report on warehouses (HABS No. HI-388) for an overview history of storehouses in Pearl Harbor.

The Army and the Navy both had aviation bases on Ford Island during the 1920s and 1930s. It soon became clear that both air bases needed room for expansion, especially since the Navy was adding carrier planes and land-based planes to its seaplanes. During the 1930s the Navy frequently sent most of its fleet to Pearl Harbor to conduct war exercises, using carriers with their assigned planes plus other ships. The need to provide supply for these exercises, as well as the Navy's conviction that a war with Japan was looming, led to the construction of new support buildings such as Facility 43. Executive Order No. 7215, dated October 26, 1935, instructed the Army to vacate Luke Field, Ford Island as soon as other facilities were provided. About the same time the Navy accepted bids for the construction of new facilities for its expanded Fleet Air Base. The name of the Naval Air Station (NAS) Pearl Harbor was changed to Fleet Air Base (FAB) Pearl Harbor during the 1930s, and then back to NAS Pearl Harbor by the 1940s. The buildings that were constructed about the same time as Facility No. 43 included Facility No. 54 (Seaplane Hangar, see HABS No. HI-365), Facility No. 55 (Bachelors' Enlisted Quarters, see HABS No. HI-385), and Facility No. 26A (Storehouse Extension, see HABS No. HI-376). Also, a caption on a 1936 photo (National Archives II) indicates that the work on the Fire Station (Facility No. 42, see HABS No. HI-375) and the Boat House (Facility No. 44, see HABS No. HI-397) was done under the same contract number (NOy 2535) as Facility No. 43.

Facility No. 43 was completed by September 1936, and used to store paint and oil during that decade's build up of the Fleet Air Base on Ford Island. It was designed in 1935 by the Public Works Department of the Fourteenth Naval District. Some of the 1935 drawings and a photo of the building's 1936 appearance are included with this report. Young Engineering Company of Honolulu was the contractor for the original part of the building (U.S. Naval Air Station, Ford Island 1954).

Apparently other materials besides paint and oil were stored in this building. A caption on a 1937 historic photo (National Archives II) explains that a refrigerated area was for "storage at low temperatures of airplane 'dope' which is highly volatile and combustible." Two possible definitions of the term "airplane dope" may have been meant in that period. Early airplanes had frames with a skin of canvas; this canvas was "treated with a shellac called 'airplane dope,' which gave the fuselage strength" (Warplane Art 2002). Airplane dope was also used to mean an "antiknock gasoline additive" in the context of military use in World War I (Sullivan et al. 2004).

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The 1935 design for the Paint and Oil Storehouse had seven windows in the one main storage room; this allowed ventilation of the fumes from these materials. The drawings indicate that the original cooler rooms were windowless and no special ventilation was shown. However, a 1937 photo shows two louvered openings low on the southeast end wall for the cooler room in the eastern corner of the building (National Archives II). There was only one roof ventilator for the four rooms built in the original southeast end bay.

A 1937 photo shows that by December of that year a ramp had been built before that date, replacing the southeast stair to the loading platform. The 1941 drawings indicate that the other stair had been replaced by a ramp before that date, so probably both ramps were pre-1937. The 1937 photo also shows that a low-walled enclosure had been built abutting the southwest side of the building (National Archives II). A 1936 site plan (drawing no. V-N2-106) for a road project in the vicinity of the Paint and Oil Storehouse notes that lubricating oil tanks were planned for that side of the building. Not shown on the 1937 photo is the small addition that added one bay to the building's southeast end. That photo and the 1941 drawings clearly indicate that this addition was built sometime between December 1937 and June 1941. Aerial photos of Ford Island suggest that the one-bay addition was built by April 1940. No drawings documenting this addition were found.

In the c. 1940 one-bay expansion, the 1935 design of the original building was not greatly changed. It is not clear how access to the machinery and toilet rooms was provided, since the new bay abutted the original door. It is not known if either of the two rooms in the added bay had windows, but each had its own roof ventilator. The larger of the rooms in the new bay opened onto the northeast platform, which had to be extended for its door to function. At this date the door position for the larger of the original two cooler rooms was apparently changed to also open onto the loading platform.

In June 1941, plans were drawn up to enlarge Facility No. 43 to four times its original size (adding 300% more space), making the building 80'-0" x 200'-0". The completion date for the building was reported as June 1942 (Contractors Pacific Naval Air Bases). When the WWII expansion of the building occurred there were many alterations made to the 1935 design, including changing the location of five windows. The original main storage room retains only the one window located on the northeast side and the two on the northwest end. None of the new storage rooms have windows but each is ventilated by at least one roof ventilator and a louvered opening low on the southwest wall. The details of the 1941 drawings show that portions of these louvers are fixed, but that there are also interior movable louvers that are attached to chains and fusible links which allow them to close in the event of a fire.

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One of the original cooler-room doors which had opened into the four-bay main storage room was moved and reused as the door for the new three-bay refrigerated room in the WWII addition that opened onto the northeast platform. The 1941 drawings note that the exterior door to the new rooms in the eastern corner was also reused. A 7' x 4' opening was created between the two original cooler rooms. The machinery and toilet rooms in the original building were combined into one room, and an opening about 10'-wide was created by removal of the double-sash window and the wall below it; thus, this small room became connected to a two-bay storeroom in the WWII addition that opened onto the southwest loading platform. Because the rooms on the southwest side had a higher floor level, as noted in the description section, the floor level of this small room was also raised, as shown in a section drawing in the 1941 plans. The same appears to have been done for the small room in the c. 1940 addition that opened into the adjacent two-bay storeroom.

The 1941 drawings for the addition to this building were prepared by Contractors Pacific Naval Air Bases (CPNAB). Although the drawings for this building label it as "Storage for Inflammables," the CPNAB report lists the project as an addition to the Paint and Oil Storehouse. Other materials in addition to paint and oil were stored here, as shown by a March 1942 photo, which has gas cylinders on the loading platform and adjacent to the building (National Archives II). That photo also shows oil drums in the foreground, but they could have been stored in Facility No. 43 or in the 1941 Drum Storage Shed that was built across the road to the northeast. Because of the flammable (or inflammable, since that synonymous term was used on the drawings) materials stored in the building, most of the electrical work in the WWII section of the building is specified to be explosion-proof on the electrical plan.

During the attack of December 7, 1941, emergency crews, directed by the Supply Officer of the air station, were sent to Facility No. 43 to help make emergency issues of stores (Harter 1941). The building had an otherwise uneventful history of service during and after World War II. Three other small storehouses for paint and oil (Facility Nos. 309, 310 & 311) were built during the 1940s, near the three older hangars on the northwest side of the island. These three storehouses are not shown on the 1942 Ford Island map and are not included on a 1945 buildings list (U.S. Navy, Bureau of Yards and Docks 1945: 1085); however, they are seen in a 1942 historic photo from the National Archives II (80-G-451154) and each is listed in later Navy inventories with a 1940 construction date. These were simple, steel-framed, gable-roof buildings with roofing and siding of corrugated metal and with doors and openings of expanded metal mesh. Another somewhat larger building called a "Dope Shed" (Facility No. 250) in the 1945 building inventory is listed with a 1943 construction date (U.S. Navy, Bureau of Yards and Docks 1945: 1085); it was later used for storage of paint and other inflammable material. This building was constructed of concrete masonry units and had a flat roof. All these WWII

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storehouses served the purpose of keeping the needed materials close at hand, but in a separate building for safety purposes.

A preliminary plan was drawn up in 1959, with the intent of remodeling Facility No. 43 into a commissary. The existing refrigeration space and the large open spaces in the building made it a suitable choice. However, there is no physical evidence of any of those changes having been made. Facility No. 43 essentially remains accurate to the 1941 plans.

Only a few changes have been made to the building since WWII. One exterior refrigerated door has been blocked up. Conduits have been added on the northeast side. The exterior light fixtures on that side are different than those seen in the historic photographs, and modern floodlights have been added on the northwest end.

**Sources:**

The drawings for the original building and for the later addition and planned alterations are on microfiche cards at the Plan Files of the Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Pacific. The original drawings were found under Y&D numbers 120915, 120961, and 120962. The drawings for the 1942 addition are numbers 2466 through 2477. The 1959 plan is also there, under drawing number 853017.

**Contractors Pacific Naval Air Bases**

n.d. *Technical Report and Project History, Contracts Noy-3550 and Noy-4173, Pacific Naval Air Bases.* Page A-562 in microfiche of report at the library of Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Pacific.

**Harter, C.J.**

1941 Memorandum by Supply Officer to Commander of Naval Air Station, dated December 14, 1941, on Air Raid Attack by Japanese. In binder of reports provided by Jeffrey Dodge, Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Hawaii.

**National Archives II**

1936-42 Historic photos of Paint and Oil Storehouse in RG 71 CA, Box 154, in Still Photo section of National Archives II, College Park, Maryland.

**Sullivan, Joseph, Brian McGuire, Susie Moody, and Michael Giese**

2004 Arthur D. Little, A Register of His Papers in the Library of Congress, Finding Aid in Manuscript Division, at [lcweb2.loc.gov/service/mss/eadxmlmss/eadpdfmss/2004/ms004010.pdf](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/service/mss/eadxmlmss/eadpdfmss/2004/ms004010.pdf), accessed July 13, 2005.

**U.S. Naval Air Station, Ford Island**

1954 Computer entry card (Form 277) for Paint & Oil Storehouse, Building No. 43, in Naval Facilities

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Engineering Command Archives, Port Hueneme,  
California.

U.S. Navy, Bureau of Yards and Docks  
1945 Public Works of the Navy, Data Book, Buildings,  
NAVDOCKS P-164. Copy of Fourteenth Naval District  
section provided by Jeffrey Dodge, Naval Facilities  
Engineering Command, Hawaii.

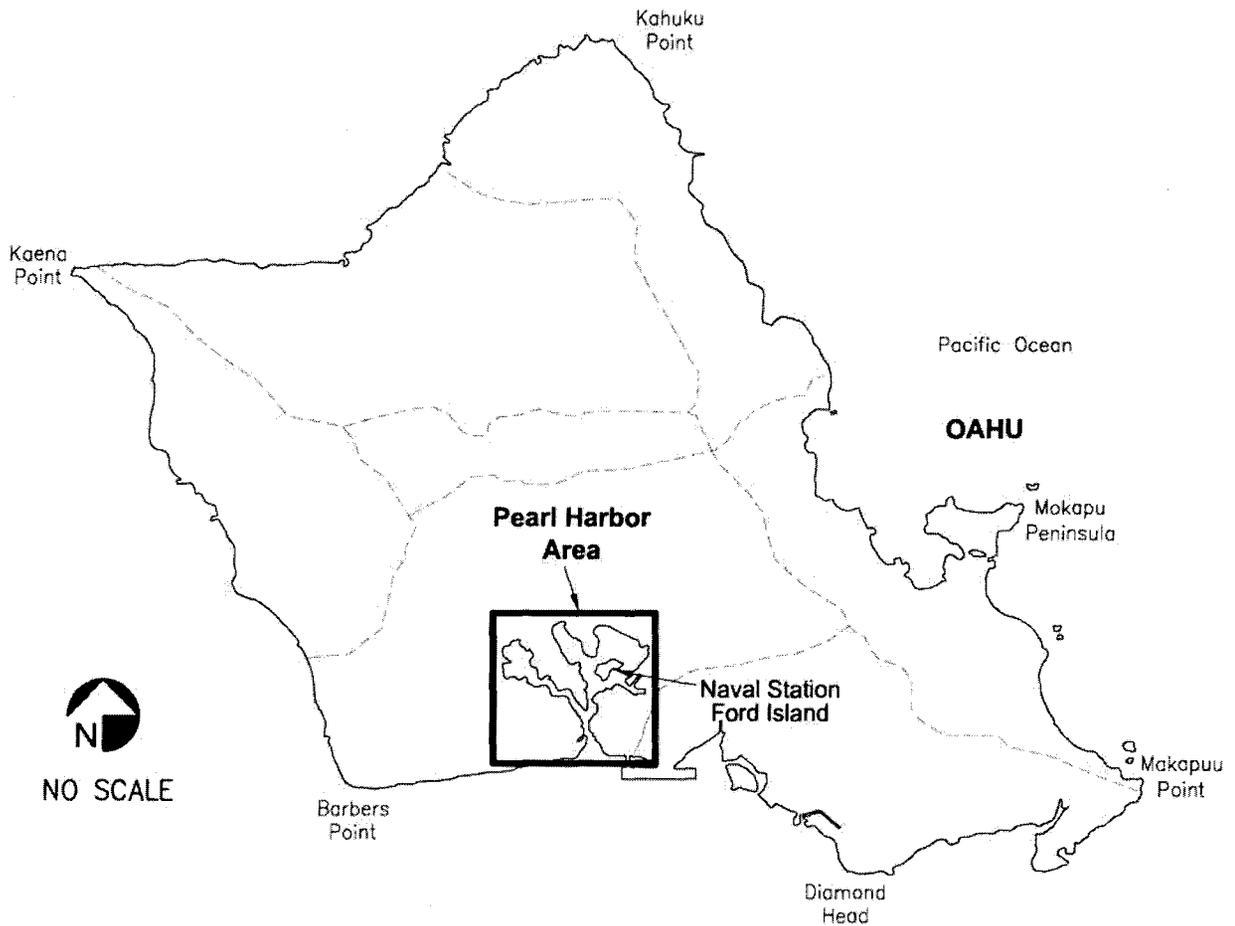
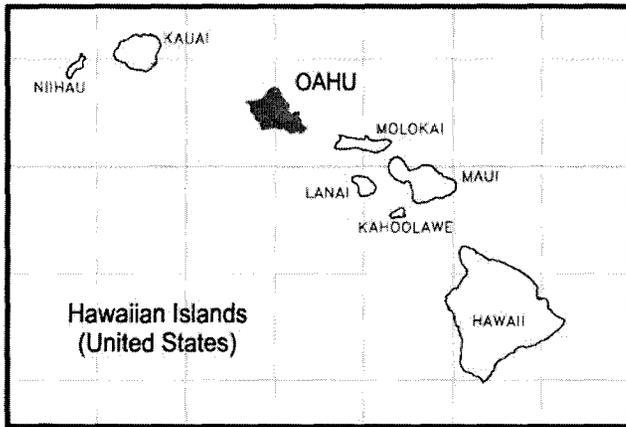
Warplane Art  
2002 Web page discussing World War I art on airplane canvas,  
treated with a shellac called airplane dope, at  
[www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/roadshow/series/highlights/2002/  
/Indianapolis/Indianapolis\\_follow4](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/roadshow/series/highlights/2002/Indianapolis/Indianapolis_follow4), accessed October 31,  
2002.

**Project Information:** Commander Navy Region (COMNAVREG) Hawaii has embarked on a program of documentation of historic properties within its area of responsibility, with the goal of recording historic information about each property and establishing its context of significance. This information will assist COMNAVREG Hawaii in the appropriate management of these properties, be it routine repair and maintenance for continuing use, rehabilitation for continuing use / adaptive reuse, or demolition. At this time, specific action that may affect this facility has not been determined. This report was prepared under a Historic Preservation Services contract (N62742-97-D-3502) awarded to AMEC Earth and Environmental, the prime contractor, by the U.S. Navy, Naval Facilities Engineering Command. The contract was funded through the Cultural Resources Program of COMNAVREG Hawaii. The photographic documentation was undertaken by David Franzen, of Franzen Photography. Location maps were made by Nestor Beltran of NAB Graphics. Between 1999 and 2001, the field work was done and the draft of this report was written by Dot Dye, AMEC Earth & Environmental, Inc. The report was rewritten in 2005 by Mason Architects, Inc.

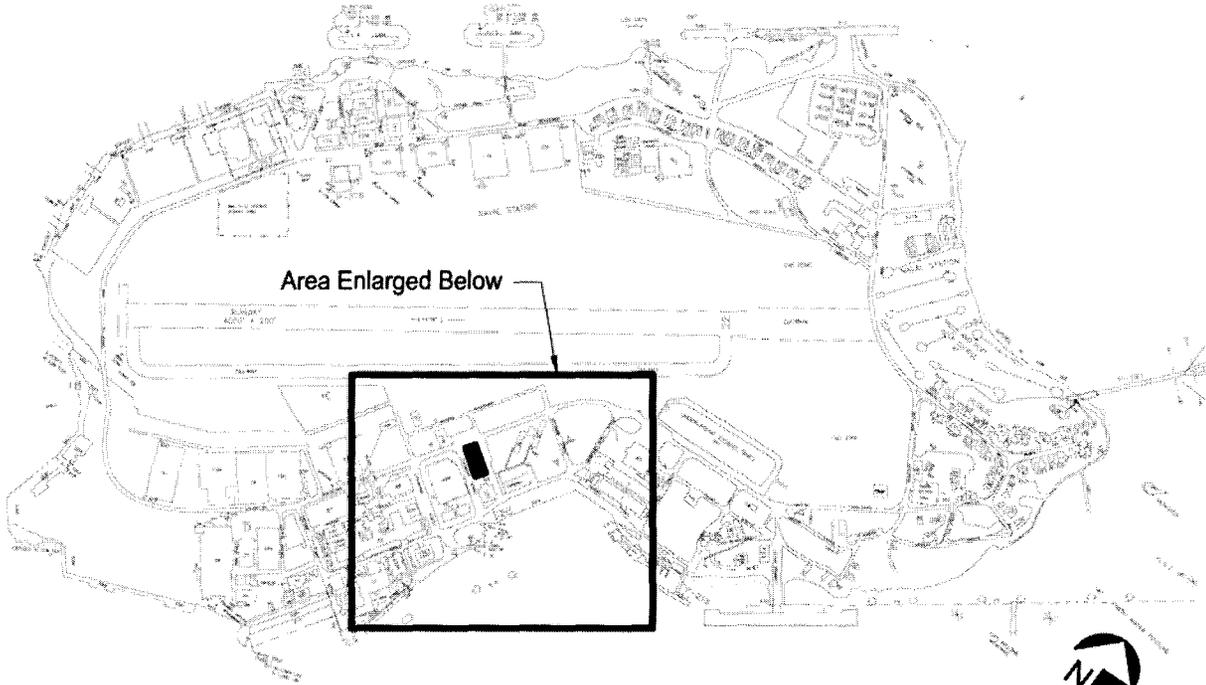
**Prepared by:** Mason Architects, Inc. AMEC Earth & Environmental, Inc.  
119 Merchant St., Suite 501 3375 Koapaka Street, Suite F251  
Honolulu, HI 96813 Honolulu, HI 96819

Date of Final Report: July 2005

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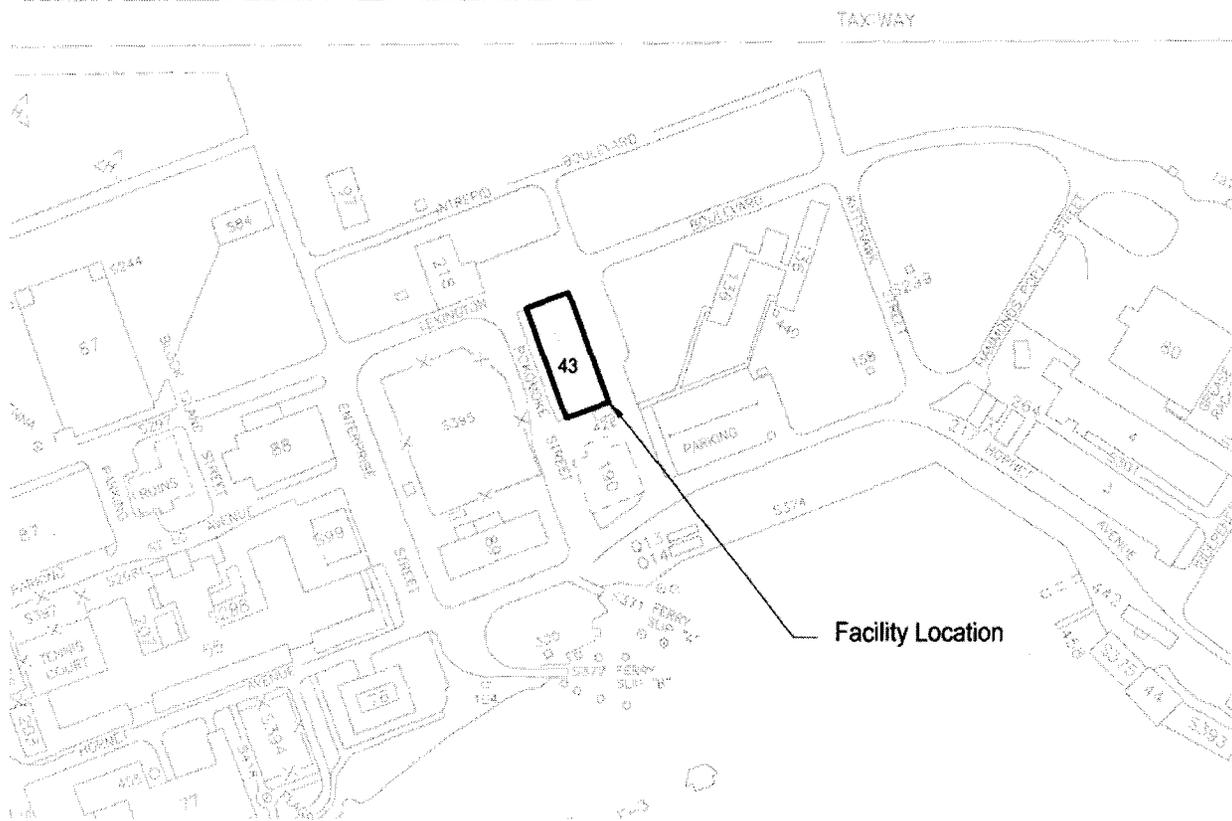


Area Enlarged Below

**Vicinity Map**



**NO SCALE**

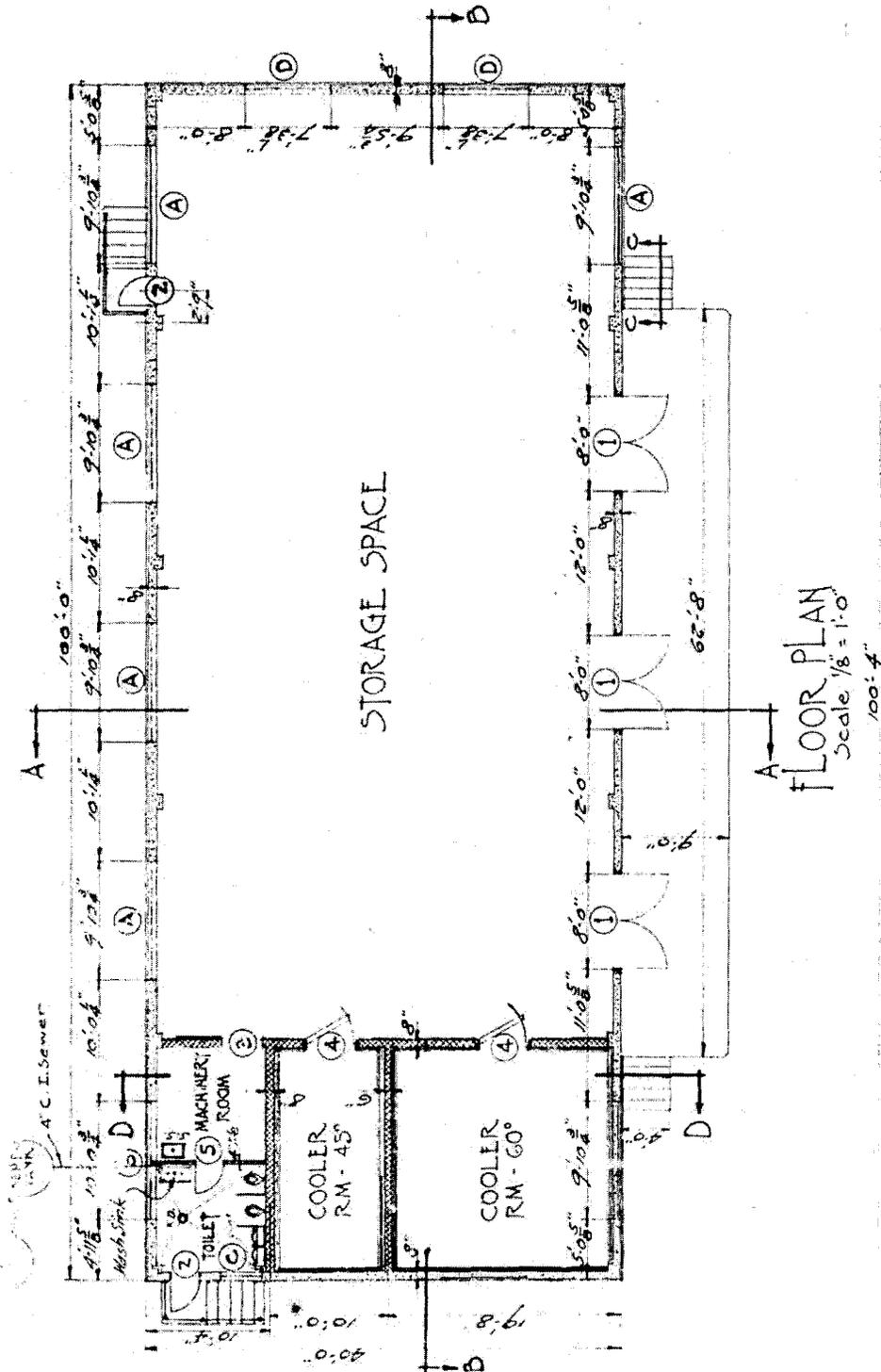


Facility Location

**Site Map**

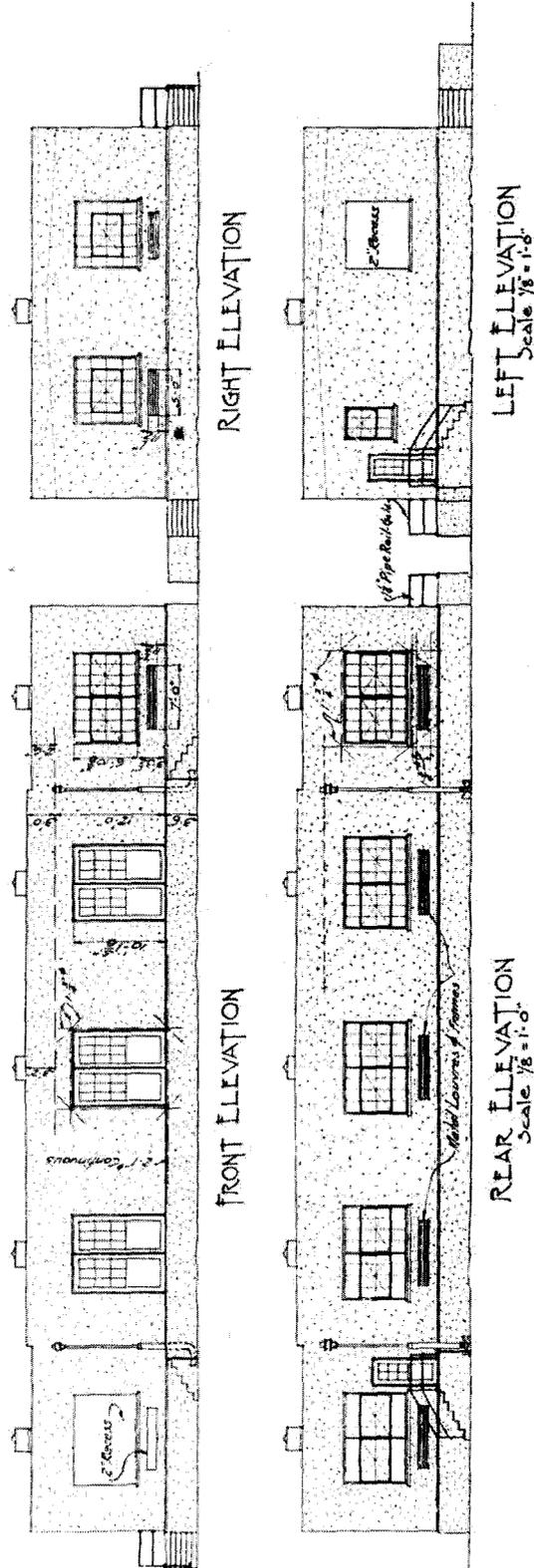
**U.S. NAVAL BASE, PEARL HARBOR, PAINT AND OIL STOREHOUSE**  
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Portion of Drawing No. 120915, dated October 1, 1935 (original floor plan)



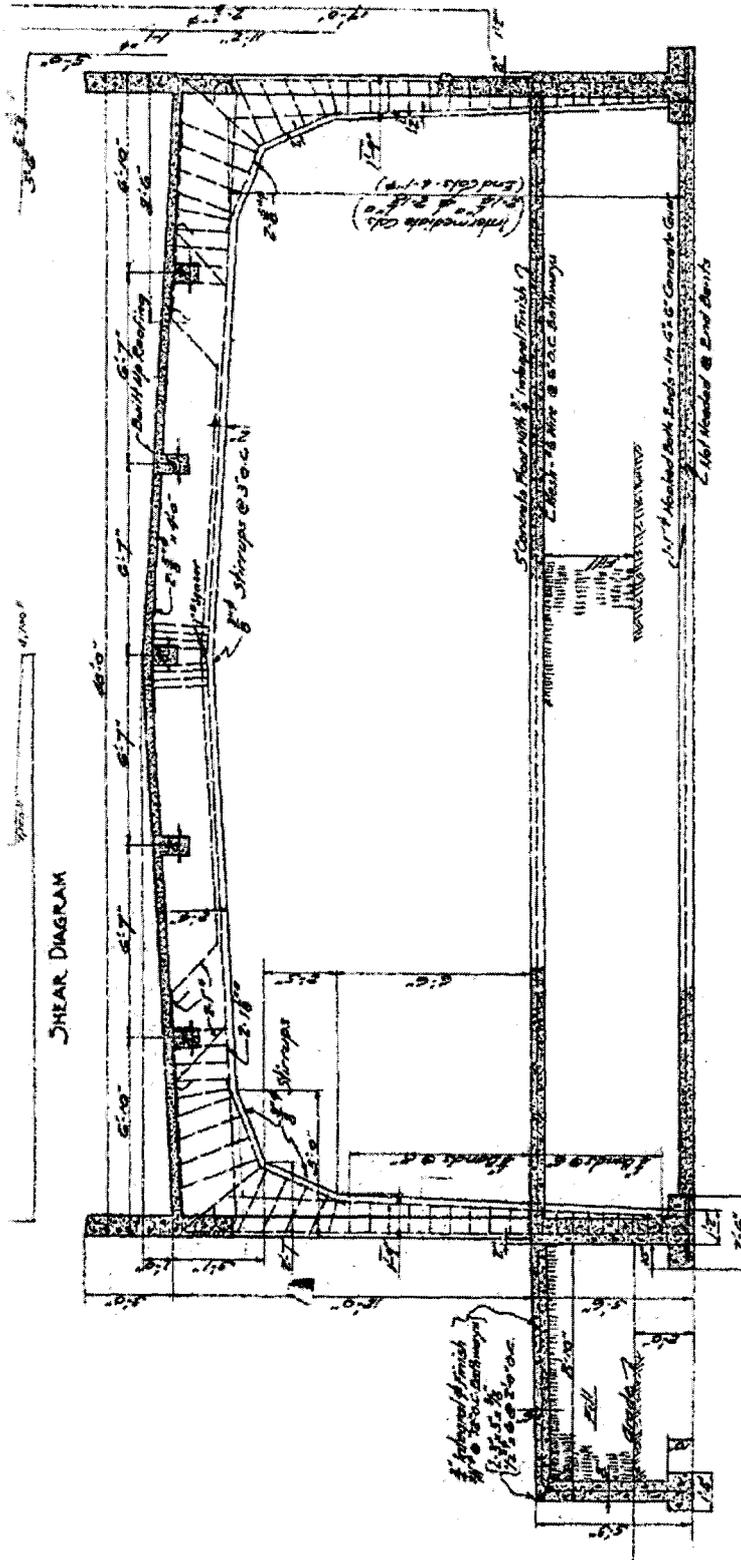
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Portion of Drawing No. 120915, dated October 1, 1935 (all 4 elevations)



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Portion of Drawing No. 120915, dated October 1, 1935 (original cross section)

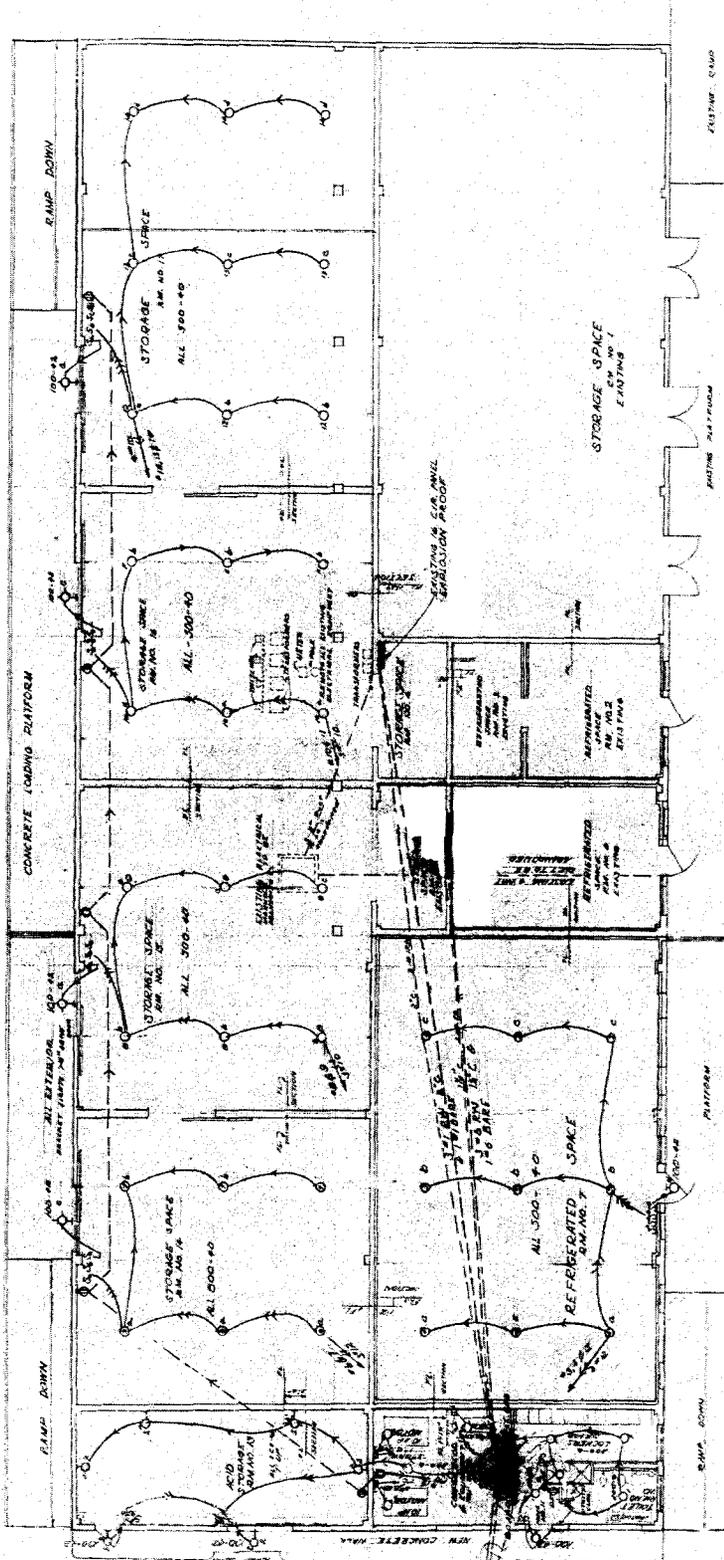


120915
U.S. NAVAL BASE, PEARL HARBOR, NAVAL STATION FORD ISLAND
PAINT AND OIL STOREHOUSE
PLANS, ELEVATIONS AND DETAILS
October 1, 1935
120915

SECTION A-A SHOWING COL'S & GIR'S  
 Scale 3/16" = 1'-0"

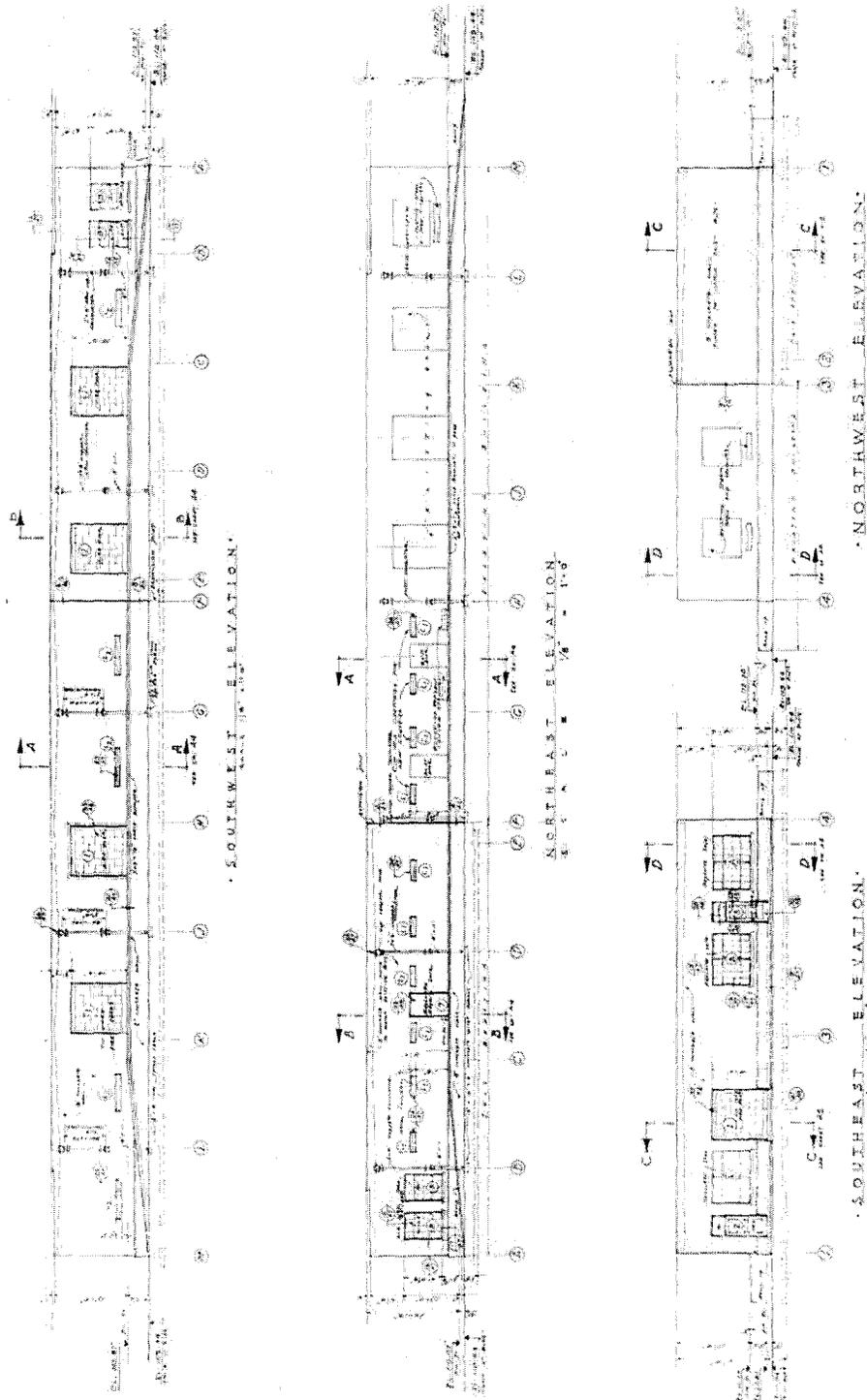
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Drawing No. 2473, dated July 24, 1941 (electr. floor plan with WWII addition)



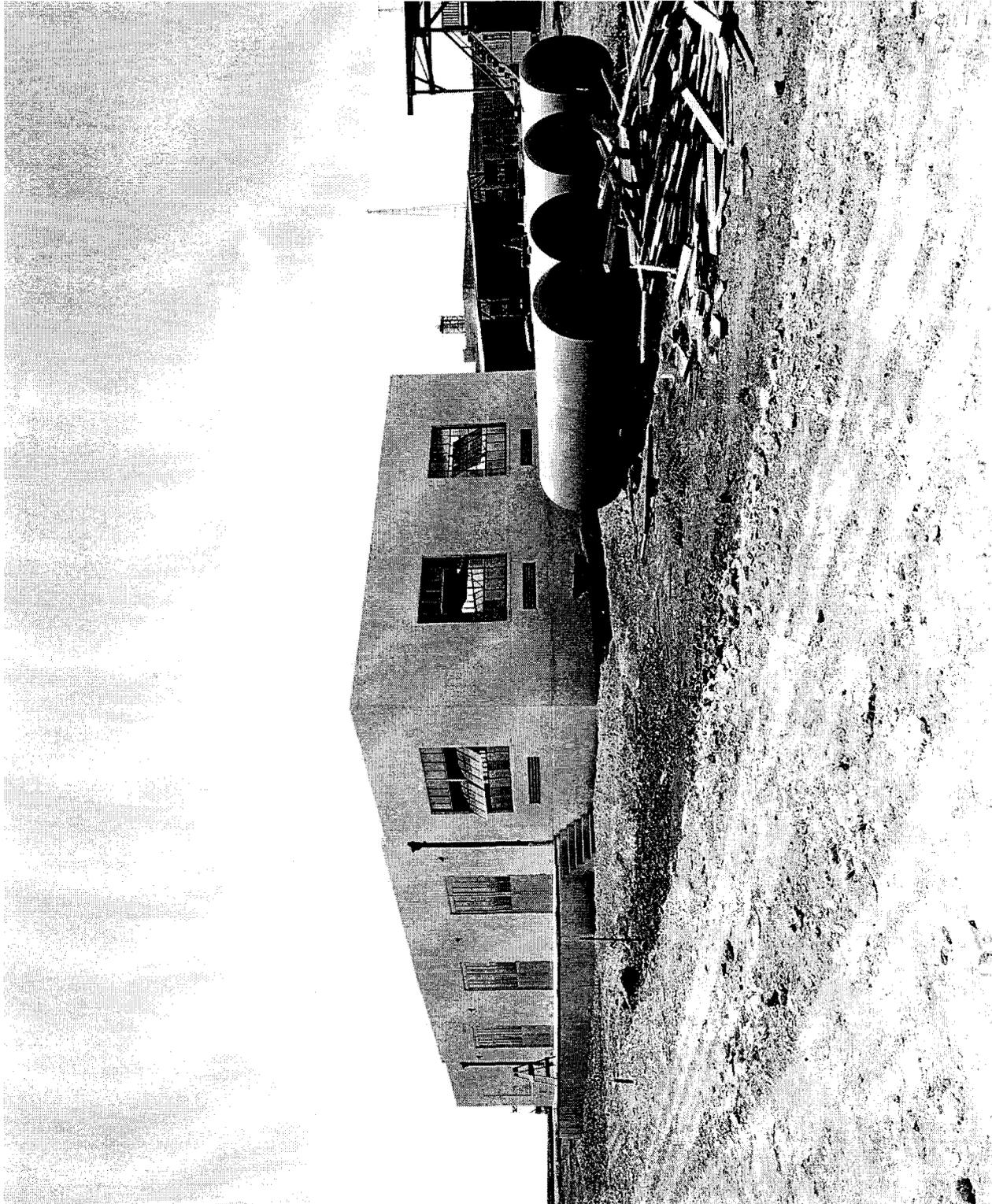
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Drawing No. 2467, dated June 28, 1941 (elevations with WWII addition)



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**1936 Photo (National Archives II, in RG 71 CA)**



**U.S. NAVAL BASE, PEARL HARBOR, PAINT AND OIL STOREHOUSE**  
**(U.S. Naval Base, Pearl Harbor, Naval Station Ford Island)**  
**(Facility No. 43)**  
**HABS No. HI-396 (Page 18)**

1937 Photo (National Archives II, in RG 71 CA)

