

FORT HOOD, WORLD WAR II TEMPORARY BUILDINGS,  
DISPATCHER HOUSE  
(Camp Hood, Bldg. 1929)  
north of Park Avenue at 49th Street  
Killeen Vicinity  
Coryell County  
Texas

HABS No. TX-3392-A

HABS  
TEX  
50-KILL.V  
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
Rocky Mountain Regional Office  
P.O. Box 25287  
Denver, Colorado 80225

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FORT HOOD, WORLD WAR II TEMPORARY BUILDINGS, DISPATCHER HOUSE  
(Camp Hood, Building 1929)

- Location:** North of Park Avenue at 49th Street, in Block 19 of the area known as South Fort Hood, Killeen vicinity, Coryell County, Texas.
- USGS Quadrangle Fort Hood, Texas; 7.5 minute series 1978; UTM Coordinates: Zone 14. 617540 E 3445970 N
- Present Owner:** United States Army
- Original Use:** Station for personnel in charge of executing orders for vehicles assigned to Block 19 of the motor pool section.
- Present Use:** Currently used as a storage facility.
- Significance:** Building 1929 is a representative example of a Dispatcher House constructed according to the 800 Series of standard construction designs developed by the War Department for the mobilization effort during World War II. Building 1929 was determined to be a relatively unaltered example of this building type.
- This building retains much of its original character based on the plans that are located at Fort Hood and reflects the construction techniques that were utilized on most World War II-era temporary structures.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: Building 1929 was completed on November 30, 1942, and was constructed according to Plan Number 800-305 of the standard War Department drawings for the 800 Series Dispatcher House dated May 20, 1941.<sup>1</sup>
2. Architect: George E. Bergstrom, president of the American Institute of Architects, was the Chief of the Architectural Unit of the Engineering Department, Construction Division, Quartermaster Corps.<sup>2</sup> He was in charge of revising the 700 Series standard construction drawings to create the 800 Series during 1941, under the supervision of Lt. Col. Hugh J. Casey, Chief of the Engineering Department.<sup>3</sup>

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3. Original and subsequent owners: The initial acquisition of land for the site for Fort Hood (then known as Camp Hood) was made by the War Department from 1942 through 1943: The United States Army is the current owner.
4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: Building 1929 is located in what is known as South Fort Hood. In mid-March 1942, contracts for cantonment construction were awarded to Taylor and Byrnes of Fort Worth, Texas, and Tankursley Trapp Associates of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.<sup>4</sup> The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) of Bell and Coryell Counties assisted in the construction of the post. Several other contracts were let for other aspects of the project. Suppliers of the material used are unknown.
5. Original plans and construction: Building 1929 was constructed from Plan Number 800-305, from the 800 Series of standard construction drawings.<sup>5</sup> Other drawings from this series were used to construct Building 1929: 800-151, 800-154, 800-185, 800-186, and 800-199. The drawings are currently filed at the Master Planning Office, Directorate of Engineering and Housing, Fort Hood. The original cost of the building was \$605.00.<sup>6</sup>
6. Alterations and additions: Later alterations include the installation of 6" wide boards to the studs on the interior and the addition of plywood to the ceiling joists. The window at the south elevation has been replaced with an aluminum unit and metal bars have been installed over the windows.

B. Historical Context:

The official announcement that the land which now comprises Fort Hood would be added to the quickly growing list of War Department-owned properties was made in January of 1942. Before the involvement of the United States in World War II, it was known that a tank destroyer training center was needed. Various sites were considered for this installation, including a few located in central and west Texas. Finally, the decision was reached to locate the facility near Killeen, Texas, a farming and ranching community with gently rolling terrain which is located approximately 80 miles north of Austin. By February 1942, 22,000 acres had been acquired by the federal government, with an additional area of land being condemned and purchased to bring the total to approximately 160,000 acres by the end of 1943.<sup>7</sup> In 1950, the installation was designated as a permanent station and was renamed Fort Hood. The current size of the installation is about 217,330 acres, and occupies portions of both Coryell and Bell Counties.<sup>8</sup>

The post is named for General John Bell Hood, the commander of the Texas Brigade which was part of the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia during the Civil War. He and his men fought in several of the major battles during the war, including the defense of Atlanta.<sup>9</sup>

The first two units to arrive by rail and begin training at Camp Hood were the 893d Tank Destroyer Battalion from Fort George Mead, Maryland, and the 753d Medium

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Tank Battalion from Camp Polk, Louisiana, serving under the command of General A. D. Bruce.<sup>10</sup>

Building 1929 was constructed as a part of the huge effort by the War Department to house all United States Army functions expeditiously as the result for the country's entrance into the Second World War. The buildings constructed during this time were based on the 800 Series of standardized War Department plans and details, which were derived from the earlier 700 Series developed during 1940-41.<sup>11</sup> These temporary mobilization structures are significant in the fact that the use of stock plans enabled an assembly-line methodology utilizing pre-cut lumber, thereby facilitating the speed of construction. In the case of Fort Hood, the majority of World War II structures were built from March of 1942 to May of 1943.<sup>12</sup>

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement

1. **Architectural Character:** Building 1929 is a fairly intact example of a World War II-era Dispatcher House (Type D-H-1) constructed according to the 800 Series of standard War Department plans. Built in 1942, the existing structure deviates from the original plans in the use of 6" wide horizontal boards on the interior walls and plywood at the ceiling, an aluminum window at the south elevation, and metal bars over the windows, all of which are later alterations.
2. **Condition of Fabric:** Building 1929 is in fair condition overall. The paint finish at the exterior is extremely deteriorated (there is no information as to when the building was last painted). The 5" wide drop (German) wood siding has weathered to the extent that the grain is raised and several areas near the ground are rotten. All trimwork is deteriorated with the worst areas being the window sills, corner boards, and raking boards at the eaves. A large section of the soffit at the northwest corner of the building has completely rotted away. The roof has suffered some water damage in the past as evidenced by peeling paint at the ceiling. The original wood platform and steps that served as the entrance to the building are no longer in existence.

### B. Description of Exterior

1. **Overall Dimensions:** The Dispatcher House is a simple rectangle in shape, measuring roughly 12' (north and south elevations) by 14' (east and west elevations). It is a single story structure with the height from grade to the roof ridge being approximately 12'.

The single door is centered on the east elevation, with a window being centered on the north, south, and west elevations, respectively.

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There is a shallow attic above the ceiling that was inaccessible at the time of the site inspection and no crawl space.

2. Foundations: The foundation of the building is composed of six 12" x 12" poured concrete piers, which are in turn supported by 1'-8" x 1'-8" concrete footings. There are three pier/footing combinations at the east and west sides, respectively. At the east elevation there are remnants of two pier/footing combinations identical to those described above that were for support of the nonextant platform and stair.
3. Walls: The perimeter walls are composed of 2" x 4" wood studs at 2'-0" on center. Wood sheathing is nailed to the studs and is covered by a black felt vapor barrier and 1"x 5" drop siding. Corner boards are plain 1" x 4" members.
4. Structural systems, framing: Building 1929 utilizes platform frame construction. The walls are typically framed from 2"x 4" studs at 2'-0" on center with diagonal 1" x 6"s let-in between the studs and running from the floor to the top of the plate, which is made up of two 2" x 4"s. Windows are supported a on single 2" x 4" at the sill with a double 2" x 4" plate at the head and jambs. The door is framed with two 2" x 4"s at the jambs and head. The platform is made of 2"x 8" joists spanning east-west at 20" on center, supported by girders composed of three 2" x 8"s which run along the perimeter of the building. Bridging made up of three 2" x 3"s runs north-south down the centerline of the structure.

The roof is supported by 2" x 6" rafters at 2'-0" on center with a 2" x 8" member at the ridge. The rafters extend 1'-3" beyond the face of the wall and are finished with a 2" x 8" fascia board, continuous, on both sides. The ceiling joists are also 2" x 6"s at 2'-0" on center, running east-west. 2" x 4" studs frame the north and south gable ends.

5. Porches, Balconies: There are remnants (as previously noted) of the structure which supported the wood platform and steps that once existed on the east side of the building. The platform was approximately 3'-6" square supported by 2' x 4"s or 2" x 6"s with 1" x 8"s making up the steps.
6. Chimney: There is no chimney. A galvanized metal flue that is attached to the gas-fired heater inside the structure projects through the roof.
7. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and Doors: There is a single wood door with five horizontal panels centered at the east elevation and measuring 2'-4" x 6'-8" overall. The wood trim surrounding the door is 4" wide and plain.
  - b. Windows: Two of the windows are original 8-over-8 double-hung wood sash units, one each centered on the north and west elevations.

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The remaining window at the south elevation is an aluminum replacement. All windows are 3'-4" x 4'-4" overall, with 3" wide plain wood trim at the original wood windows and 6" wide plain wood trim at the aluminum unit.

8. Roof:
  - a. Shape, Covering: The roof of the Dispatcher House is a gable one with a pitch of 5 in 12. The ridge runs north-south and the wood sheathing is covered with asphalt shingle roofing material.
  - b. Cornice, Eaves: Building 1929 has a fairly deep overhang (1'-3"), the faces of which are finished with 2" x 8"s, continuous. The raking boards at each gable end are also made up of 2" x 8"s, and the soffits are composed of 4" wide boards.

C. Description of Interior:

1. First Floor Plan: The floor plan is a simple rectangle measuring approximately 11'-0" x 14'-2".
2. Stairways: There are no stairs inside Building 1929.
3. Flooring: 1" x 4" tongue and groove wood floor boards run north-south, and are in poor condition.
4. Wall and Ceiling Finish: As indicated previously, the walls are finished with horizontal wood boards, most of which are 6" wide. Portions of some of the walls are also faced with 3'-0" tall vertical boards of varying widths which are nailed to the horizontal boards. The ceiling is composed of plywood boards nailed to the ceiling joists above. The walls and ceilings are painted white with some graffiti in evidence.
5. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and Doors: The single door has been described above. The interior door trim is 2½" wide and does not appear to be original.
  - b. Windows: Two of the windows have been totally covered up and the aluminum window is partially covered. The window trim has been altered, with the existing plain boards measuring from 2½" to 4".
6. Decorative Features and Trim: There is a 1½" plain strip of wood that occurs where the walls and ceiling meet and that runs the perimeter of the entire room.
7. Hardware: The door hardware is not original and the status of the window hardware could not be determined due to coverings on the windows.

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8. Mechanical Equipment:
  - a. Heating, Air Conditioning, Ventilation: There is a gas-fired heater of unknown date and manufacture located in the northwest corner of the building.
  - b. Lighting: There is a single porcelain base with an incandescent bulb and pull cord located in the center of the ceiling.

D. Site:

1. General Setting and Orientation: The building faces east, and is located just to the west of the gate that opens into Block 19 of the Motor Pool section of the south portion of Fort Hood. The topography of this area of the post is generally flat.
2. Historical landscape design: Building 1929 is situated at the gateway and fence that divides the motor pool buildings from Park Avenue, which runs east-west past Block 19 and the other motor pool blocks.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Architectural Drawings: War Department Plan Number 800-305 was executed specifically for the construction of Building 1929, a Type D-H-1 structure; this drawing is cited in the Bibliography. The other 800 Series drawings used to build the Dispatcher House are composed of standardized window, door, and miscellaneous details, and are not reproduced for this report: 800-151, 800-154, 800-185, 800-186, and 800-199.

Field observations and measurements revealed that Building 1929 was constructed as shown on the drawings. Alterations to this building have been minimal, and are noted in the appropriate sections of this report. Plan Number 800-305 has been photographically reproduced and is included; it is catalogued as a photographic positive on an aperture card at the Master Planning Office, Directorate of Engineering and Housing, Fort Hood, Building T-4228.

B. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:
  - a. War Department Drawings:

Office of the Quartermaster General. Construction Division. "Mobilization Buildings. Dispatcher House, Type D-H-1, Sentry Box, Type SB-1, Plans, Elevations & Sections," Plan Number 800-305, May 20, 1941.

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b. Other records at Fort Hood:

"Real Property Record. Buildings. Building T-1929," May 16, 1944.  
Located at Real Property Office, Directorate of Engineering and  
Housing, Building T-4213, Fort Hood.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Books and manuscripts:

Faulk, Odie B. and Laura E. Faulk. *Fort Hood: The First Fifty Years*.  
Temple, Texas: The Frank W. Mayborn Foundation, 1990.

Fine, Lenore and Jesse A. Remington. *The Corps of Engineers: Construction  
in the United States*. [volume in the series, *United States Army in World War  
II: The Technical Services*]. Washington D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military  
History, U.S. Army, 1972.

C. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated:

Documentary: Research could be conducted in the Fort Worth, Texas library system  
to locate additional information on the construction firm of Taylor and Byrnes;  
information might be found in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma on Tankursley Trapp  
Associates, another firm involved in the construction of the complex at South Fort  
Hood. Additional information about George E. Bergstrom and Lieutenant Colonel  
Hugh J. Casey and their role in the development of the 800 Series of standard War  
Department drawings is probably located in the National Archives, Washington, D.C.

D. Supplemental Material:

1. Drawings: The drawings executed specifically for the Type D-H-1 building  
have been photographically reproduced and photocopies are included in this  
report.
2. Photographs: Large-format photographs of Building 1929 are included as  
supplemental material.

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PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This report was prepared by the Center for Architectural Conservation, Georgia Institute of Technology, as part of a project to document three representative types of World War II-era temporary mobilization structures at Fort Hood during June 1992. The project was sponsored by the Tri-Services Research Center, United States Army Corps of Engineers, Construction Engineering Research Laboratory (USACERL), Champaign, Illinois. Keith Landreth, Director of the Tri-Services Research Center, provided assistance throughout the project. Assistance at Fort Hood was provided by Dr. Jack Jackson, Environmental Division, Directorate of Engineering and Housing. Large-format photography was done by Martin Stupich.

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NOTES:

1. Office of the Quartermaster General. Construction Division. "Mobilization Buildings. Dispatcher House, Type D-H-1, Sentry Box, Type SB-1, Plans, Elevations & Sections," Plan Number 800-305, May 20, 1941; and "Real Property Record. Buildings. Building T-1929," May 16, 1944. Located at Real Property Office, Directorate of Engineering and Housing, Building T-4213, Fort Hood.
2. Lenore Fine and Jesse A. Remington. *The Corps of Engineers: Construction in the United States*. [volume in the series, *United States Army in World War II: The Technical Services*]. Washington D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, U.S. Army, 1972, p. 347.
3. Ibid., pp. 349-51.
4. Odie B. Faulk and Laura E. Faulk. *Fort Hood: The First Fifty Years*. Temple, Texas: The Frank W. Mayborn Foundation, 1990, pp. 51-52.
5. Office of the Quartermaster General, Plan Number 800-305.
6. "Real Property Record...Building T-1929."
7. Faulk and Faulk, pp. 22-54.
8. This information is based on data supplied by the Directorate of Engineering and Housing, Fort Hood.
9. Faulk and Faulk, pp.39-40.
10. Ibid., p. 59.
11. Fine and Remington, pp. 350-51.
12. Faulk and Faulk, pp. 51-55.