

VANCOUVER BARRACKS, CAMP BONNEVILLE
Vancouver
Clark County
Washington

HABS No. WA-227

HABS
WA-227

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
Columbia Cascades Support Office
National Park Service
909 First Avenue
Seattle, Washington 98104

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

VANCOUVER BARRACKS, CAMP BONNEVILLE HABS No. WA-227

Location: Camp Bonneville is part of the Camp Bonneville Military Reservation, a subinstallation of Fort Vancouver which is a subinstallation of Fort Lewis, Washington. The Camp Bonneville Military Reservation (known historically as the Vancouver Barracks Target Range and Camp Bonneville) is located in Clark County, Washington. It embraces approximately 3,900 acres of land on the western slopes of the Cascade Mountains in the valley of LaCamas Creek. It lies some eight miles northeast of Vancouver.

Significance: As part of the Camp Bonneville reservation, Camp Bonneville serves a purpose in military training; however, despite the scant information regarding its establishment and use, it appears to be only tangentially related to developments in the American military between the two world wars.

Description: Camp Bonneville is typical of many training facilities erected by the Army during the period between the two world wars. While the exact number the cantonment's original structures cannot be verified, it appears there were approximately thirty-one, and they were designed to be temporary. They are referred to variously in Army records as T/O and T-10 type buildings, presumably meaning they were built from plans drawn for the Theater of Operations series or from plans for temporary buildings contained in the Handbook for Quartermasters. In this context, these structures reflected the larger efforts of the Quartermaster Corps during this period to standardize plans for Army posts and other military facilities to expedite the training and mobilization of troops.

Although existing documentation is incomplete, the original buildings appear to have consisted of three mess halls, a caretaker's residence, two supply and orderly rooms, an officer's bath house, eight barracks, two fire equipment sheds, a fire house, several latrines and bath houses, a barber shop, a supply room, a recreation hall, a storehouse, a dispensary, an officer's club, and an officer's shower. It seems that there were other structures as well in the camp's immediate vicinity such as several target houses, two ammunition magazines, and a pump house. Today there are about twenty remaining buildings from the original camp, some of which have been converted from their original to new uses. For example, there is only one mess hall, the others having been changed to barracks, and the cold storage warehouse was formerly the barber shop.

The approximate dimensions and floor plans for the extant buildings are as

follows. The mess hall is 20' x 105'. The ten barracks vary in width and length. Two barracks measure 20' x 42'; four measure 22' x 72', and four measure 20' x 98'. The dimensions of the female latrine are 16' x 30', and the male latrine, 20' x 74'. The gas chamber is 16' x 50'. The recreation hall (day room) is 20' x 98' with an attached structure that measures 19' x 42'. The fire truck building (grounds shop) is 12' x 34'. The storehouse is 17' x 50' with an attached structure (projector room) that measures 10' x 11'. The cold storage warehouse is 12' x 16'. The command post is 22' x 73'.

All of the buildings were constructed with wood frames and with wood posts on concrete footings for foundations. They also were built with wood floors and sided and roofed with cedar shakes, except for the grounds shop and latrines. These have concrete floors. In recent years, the roofing material has been changed to roll roofing and asphalt shingle.

Finally, the buildings were arranged in a modified U-shaped pattern, the command post forming the closed end of the "U" and the barracks forming the legs with the mess hall and other facilities in the middle; this was also fairly typical of standardized site plans for army camps, although in this case on a much smaller scale.

Historical Context: In 1909, the Army expanded Vancouver Barracks, perhaps the most significant site associated with the military in the history of the Pacific Northwest. That year the Army leased approximately 3,020 acres of land then lying some fifteen miles northeast of Vancouver for use as a field and rifle range for soldiers stationed at the barracks. During the next decade the government began to improve the area in order to make it a more permanent facility. To this end, it purchased the reservation in 1919, and over the next several years carried out road work, installed electrical, water, and telephone systems, and improved the general condition of the target range.

In 1926, the Army named the rifle range (known as the Proebstel Target Range) Camp Bonneville in honor of Benjamin L.E. Bonneville. Bonneville was a noted Army explorer in the mid-nineteenth-century American West. As Lieutenant Colonel, 4th Infantry, he commanded Vancouver Barracks (then Columbia Barracks) in 1852. As Brigadier General Paul A. Wolf wrote, the "naming of this range" for Bonneville "would be of considerable historical and advertising value to the Army. In my opinion it [would] be a fitting tribute to a gallant officer who was

formerly an officer of the 4th Infantry of this Brigade. (5th Brigade, 3rd Division).”

General Wolf also noted that the range was “very popular” with civilian rifle clubs, and more importantly, it was “an ideal location for training camps of any sort.” Evidently, the conditions were right for further improving the range for training. With the added benefit of federal appropriations for military construction in the late 1920s, the Army established two cantonments on the reservation between 1927 and 1935. The first of these was known as Camp Bonneville, the second as Camp Killpack.

The Army established Camp Bonneville first. Between 1927 and 1933, at least thirty temporary structures, including barracks, mess halls, latrines, warehouses, recreation buildings, and related facilities, were erected. While little is known of the exact details surrounding Camp Bonneville’s planning and construction, we know that it continued to receive heavy use from troops stationed at Vancouver Barracks as well as from other members of the military. Civilian groups, such as the Citizen Military Training Camps and the Reserve Officer Training Corps, used the camp as well. Both military and civilian groups, as many as 750 at a time, stayed in both the Bonneville and Killpack cantonments. The number of people using the facility influenced the need for other temporary facilities. Before the end of World War II, the Army had constructed at least thirty-six concrete tent pads above the Bonneville cantonment.

Thus, it seems likely then that the Army constructed Camp Killpack in 1935 to meet the growing demands for a facility to train and house troops and others for extended periods of time. According to available records, the initial impetus for Camp Killpack was to house a Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) company at the rifle range. The CCC camp was part of the Vancouver Barracks CCC District. The Office of the Quartermaster at Vancouver Barracks, it seems, supervised the project, which was completed using possibly both CCC and troop labor, and using Emergency Conservation Work funds. In general, it seems that the camp was constructed from Headquarters Ninth Area Corps Army camp plans. Construction began on June 25, 1935, and was completed on November 15, 1935. Funds allotted through the Emergency Conservation Work program paid for the project. Finally, the Army named the camp in honor of Captain Harry W. Killpack, who was killed in August 1935 while working with the CCC.

During World War II, the Army continued to use the Camp Bonneville Reservation to train troops from Vancouver Barracks, then part of the Portland Sub-port of Embarkation. At that time, the camp also housed Italian prisoners of war. In 1946, the War Department surplused the property, but in May 1947, the military withdrew the camp from the status because of continued need for its training facilities. In 1950, the Army renovated many of the buildings and systems at the reservation, removing some and improving others, in order to prepare for weekend and summer training by Army Reserve units from southern Washington and northern Oregon. Over the next several years, the Army expanded once more the training possibilities of the post when it leased 840 acres from the state of Washington, bringing the area up to some 3,900 acres. In 1957, the Army returned twenty of these acres to the state. Two years later, the responsibility for Camp Bonneville changed from Vancouver Barracks to Fort Lewis, when the former became a subinstallation of the latter.

Up until the reservation's recent closure in the late 1990s, the Army has used Camp Bonneville for essentially the same mission: as a training area for a variety of military units, and federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies, as well as a recreation area for civilian groups. The two cantonments, Camp Bonneville and Camp Killpack, were constructed to aid in this enduring mission as it evolved over time. Their temporary structures, in the end, served a permanent role.

Sources:

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Project Information: The National Park Service, Columbia Cascades Support Office (NPS-CCSO), prepared this Historic American Buildings Survey recording project for the Department of the Army, Headquarters I and Fort Lewis, Public Works (Army). The project is the product of an interagency agreement between the NPS-CCSO and the Army, in which the NPS-CCSO is providing the Army information required to make a National Register of Historic Places eligibility determination for buildings and related landscape features at Camp Bonneville and Camp Killpack at Camp Bonneville, Washington. These facilities are a training camp associated historically with Vancouver, Barracks, Washington.

The intent of the project is to provide the Army with information so that it can make an accurate assessment of the history, significance, and condition of the resources associated with Camp Bonneville, which will enable the Army to plan better for the closing and disposal of the facility. The project will also meet the U.S. Army's requirements under Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act to identify, evaluate, and

protect cultural resources under federal agency jurisdiction. The project will, in addition, allow for a determination of National Register of Historic Places eligibility for buildings and associated landscape features at this site. David Louter, NPS-CCSO Historian, prepared the outline history. Hank Florence, NPS-CCSO Architectural Historian and project leader, prepared the other elements of the report. The report was completed July 1998.

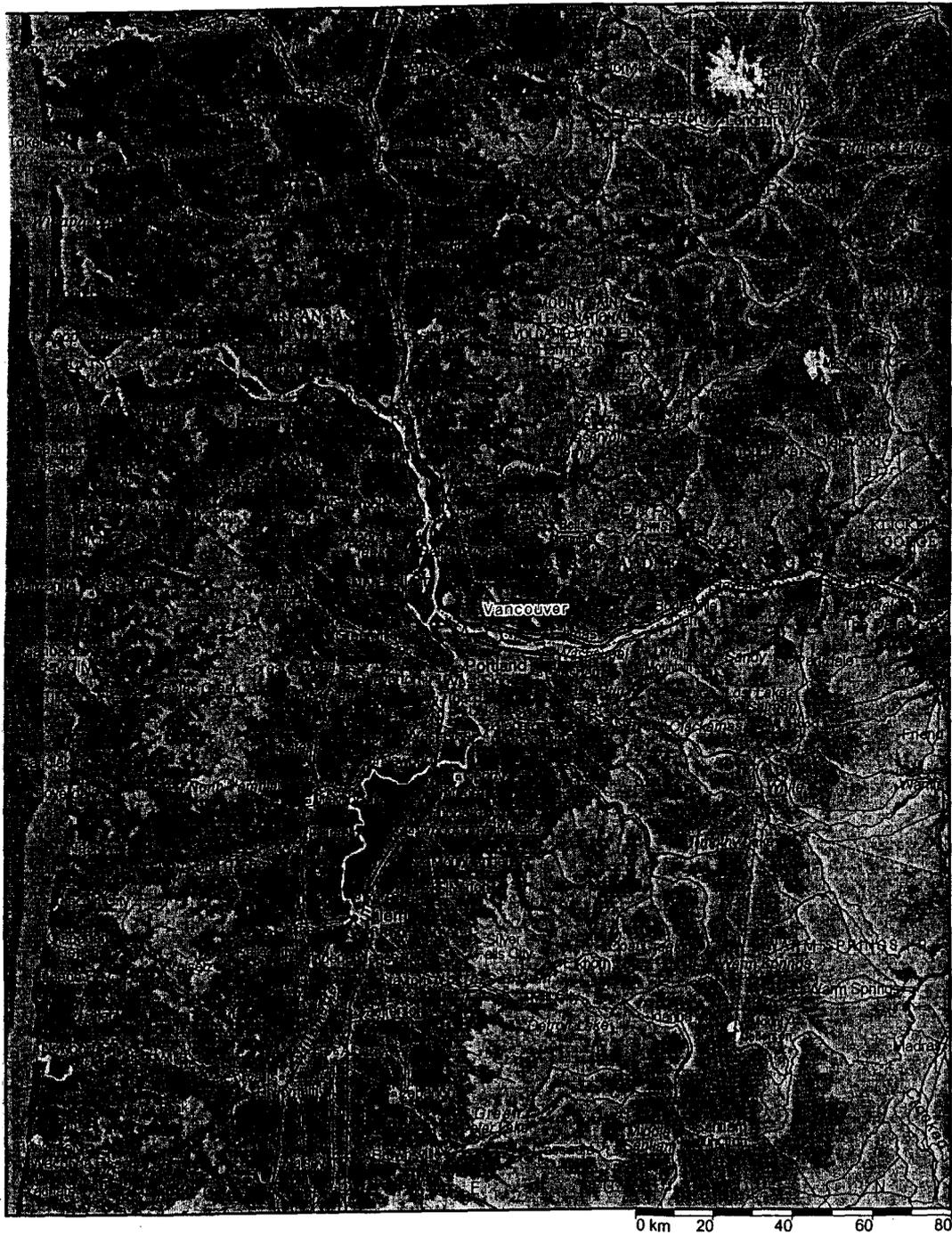


Figure 1. Vicinity Map

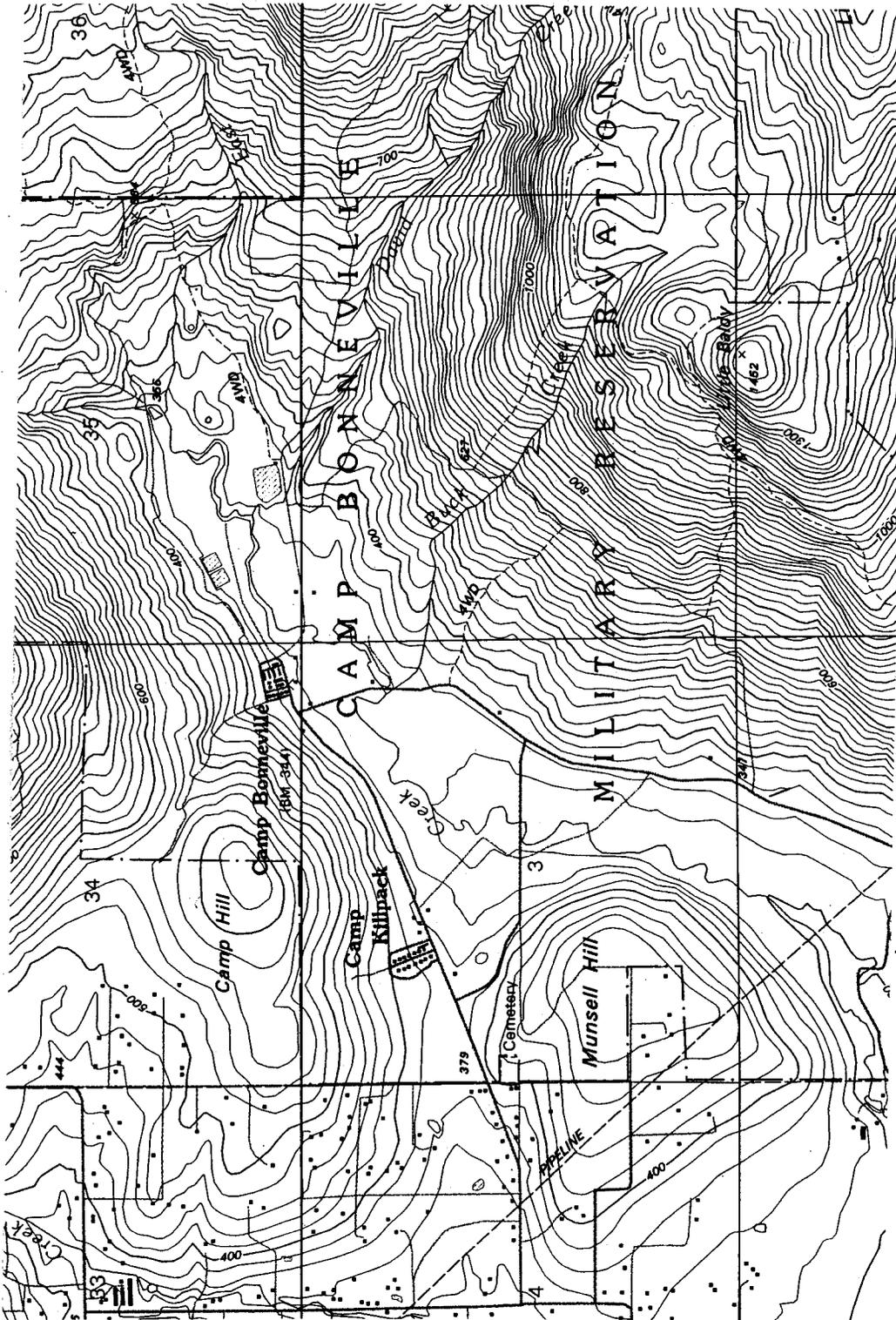


Figure 2. Geological Survey Map Section
LaCamas Creek, WASH
NW/4 Camas 15' Quadrangle
N4547.5-W 12222 .5/7.5

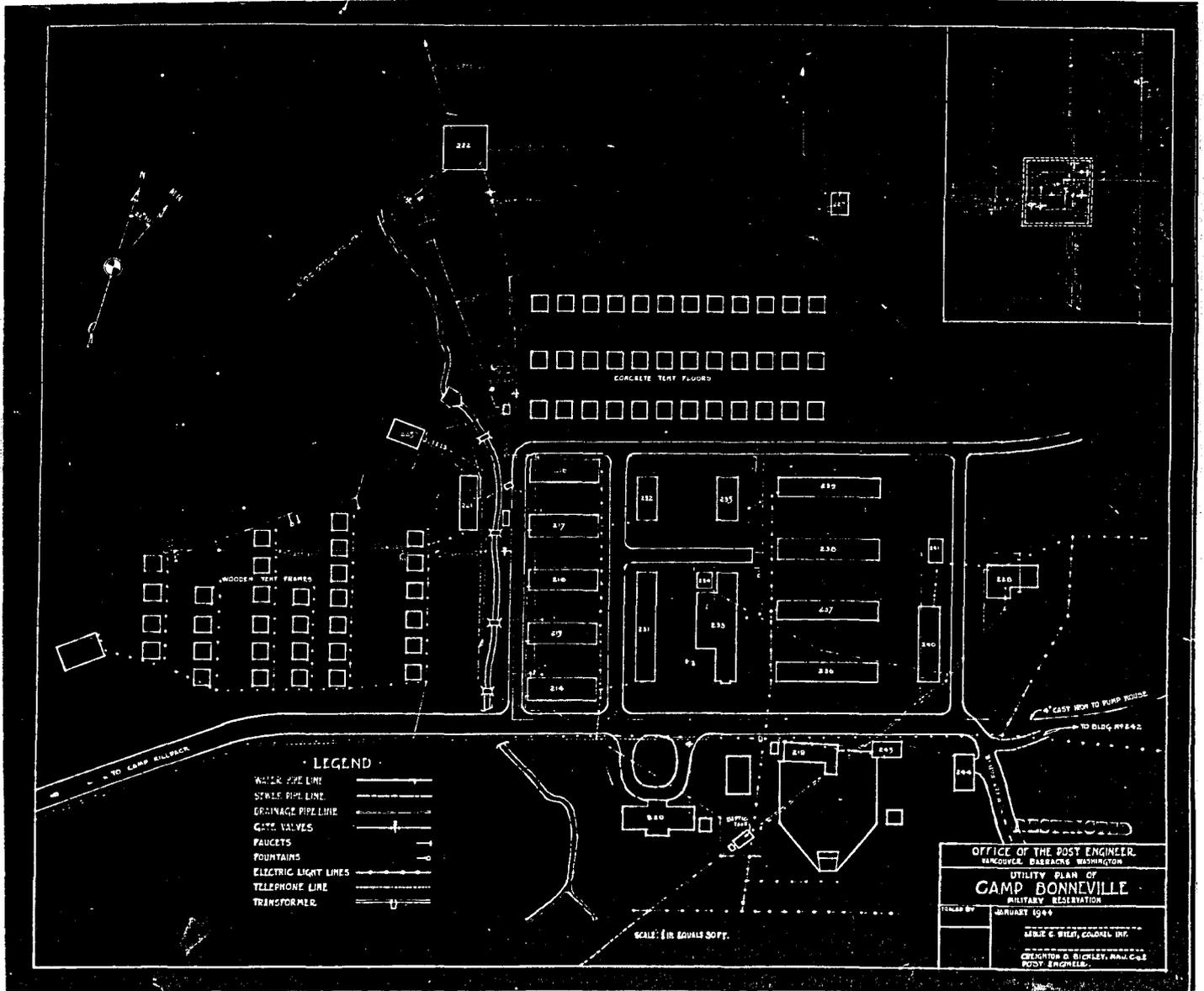
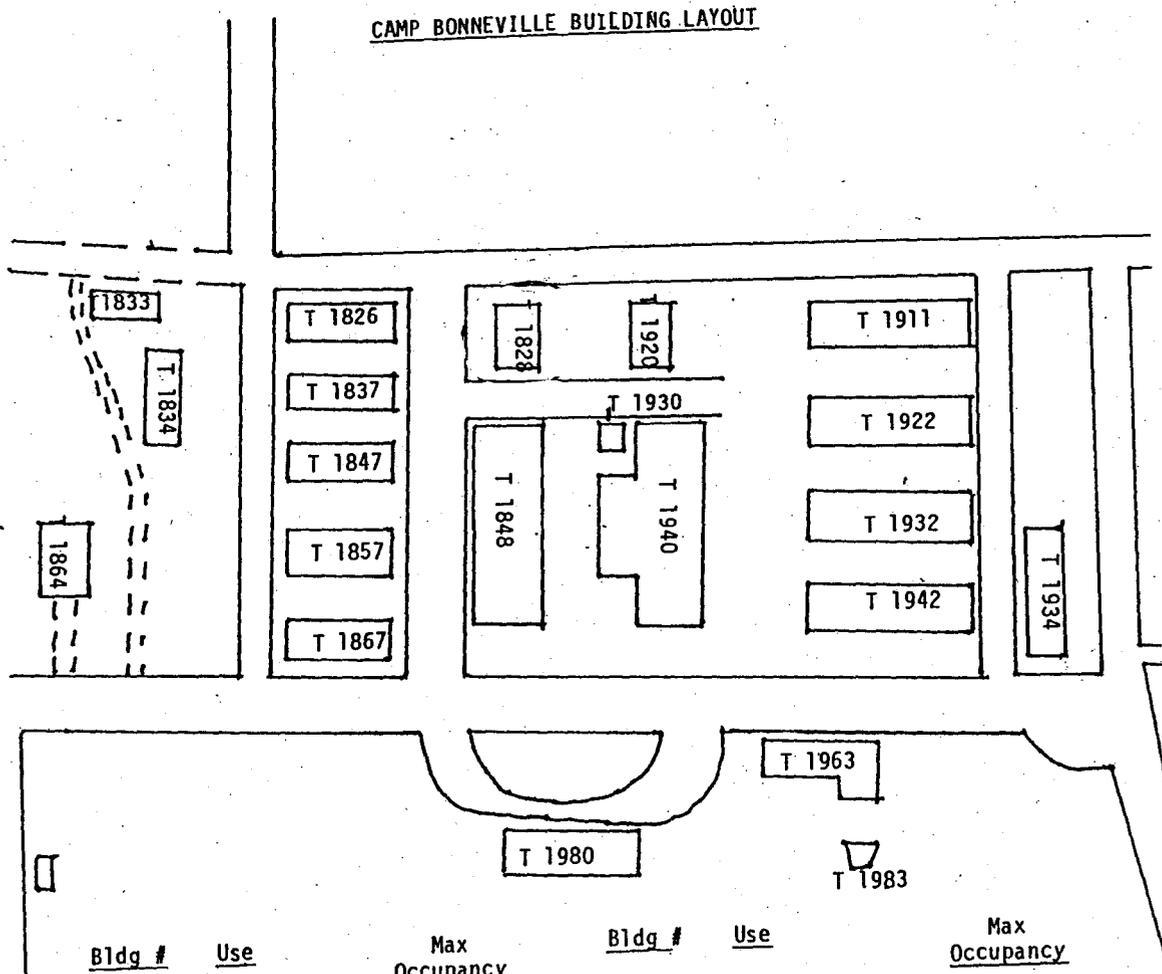


Figure 3. 1944 Utility/Site Map
(likely at height of development)



<u>Bldg #</u>	<u>Use</u>	<u>Max Occupancy</u>	<u>Bldg #</u>	<u>Use</u>	<u>Max Occupancy</u>
1828	Small Brks	15	1911	Barracks	35
1826	Barracks	25	1920	Small Barracks	15
1833	Female Latrine		1922	Barracks	35
1834	Gas Chamber		1930	Storage	
1837	Barracks	25	1932	Barracks	35
1847	Barracks	25	1934	Male Latrine	
1848	Mess Hall		1940	Command Post	
1857	Classroom		1942	Barracks	35
1864	Roads & Grounds Shop		1963	Storage	
1867	Barracks	25	1980	Dayroom	
			1983	Outdoor Theater	

Figure 4. Site Map Showing Building Numbers
(not to scale)

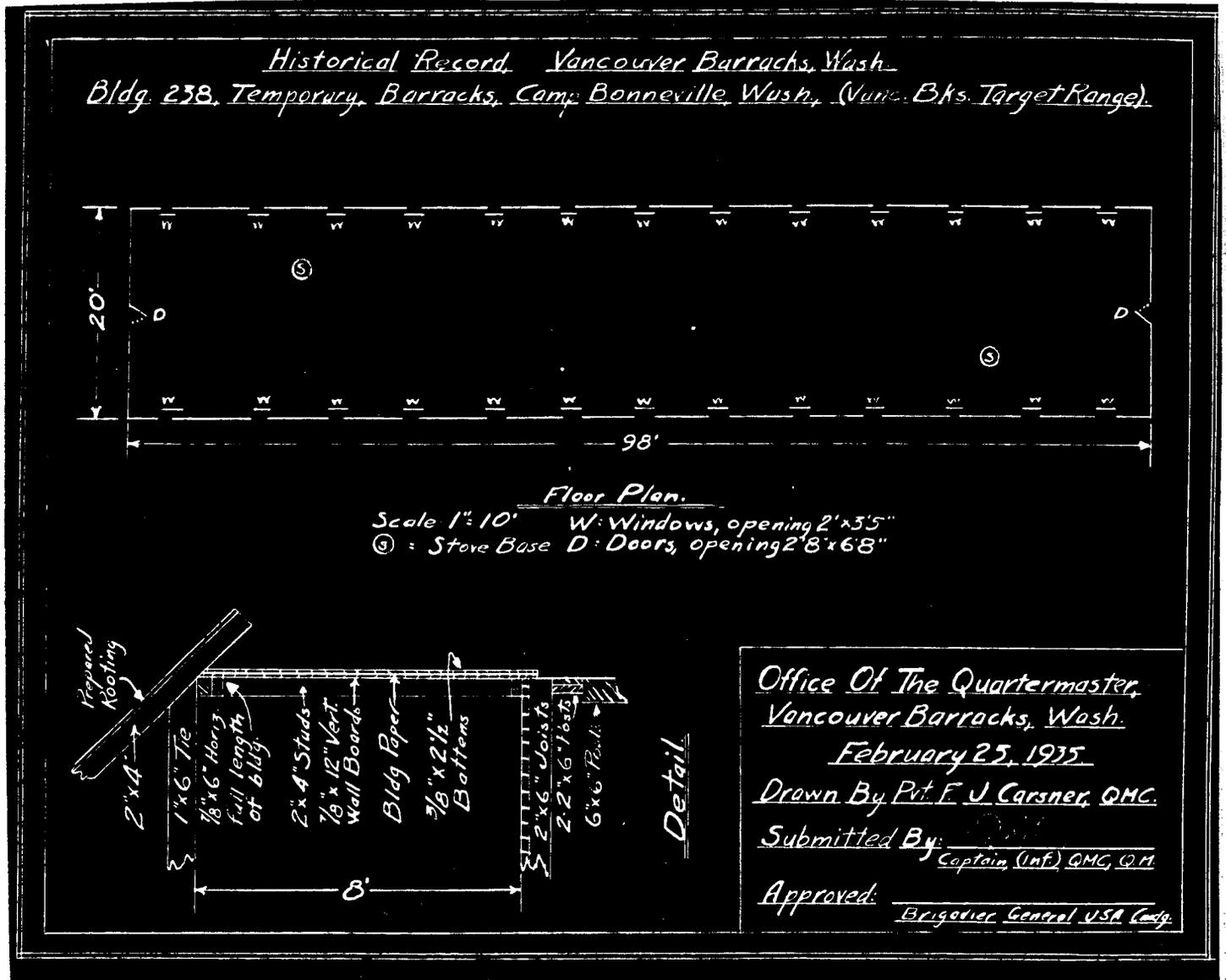


Figure A. Vancouver Barracks, Camp Bonneville
Typical Barracks Floor Plan and Construction Detail
Used in Structures: T-1911, T-1922, T-1932, and T-1942.

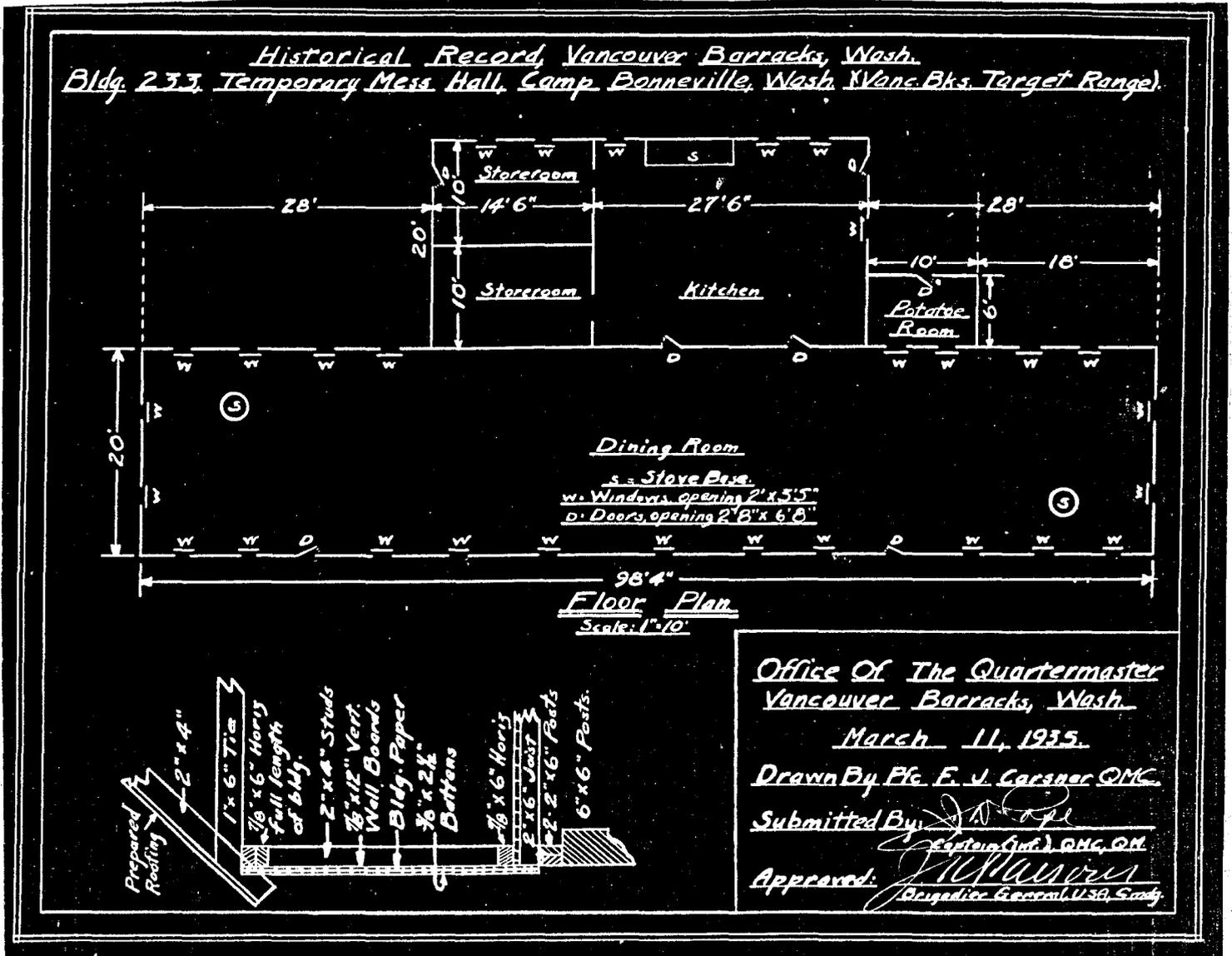


Figure B. Vancouver Barracks, Camp Bonneville
Day Room/Command Post, Building No. T-1940

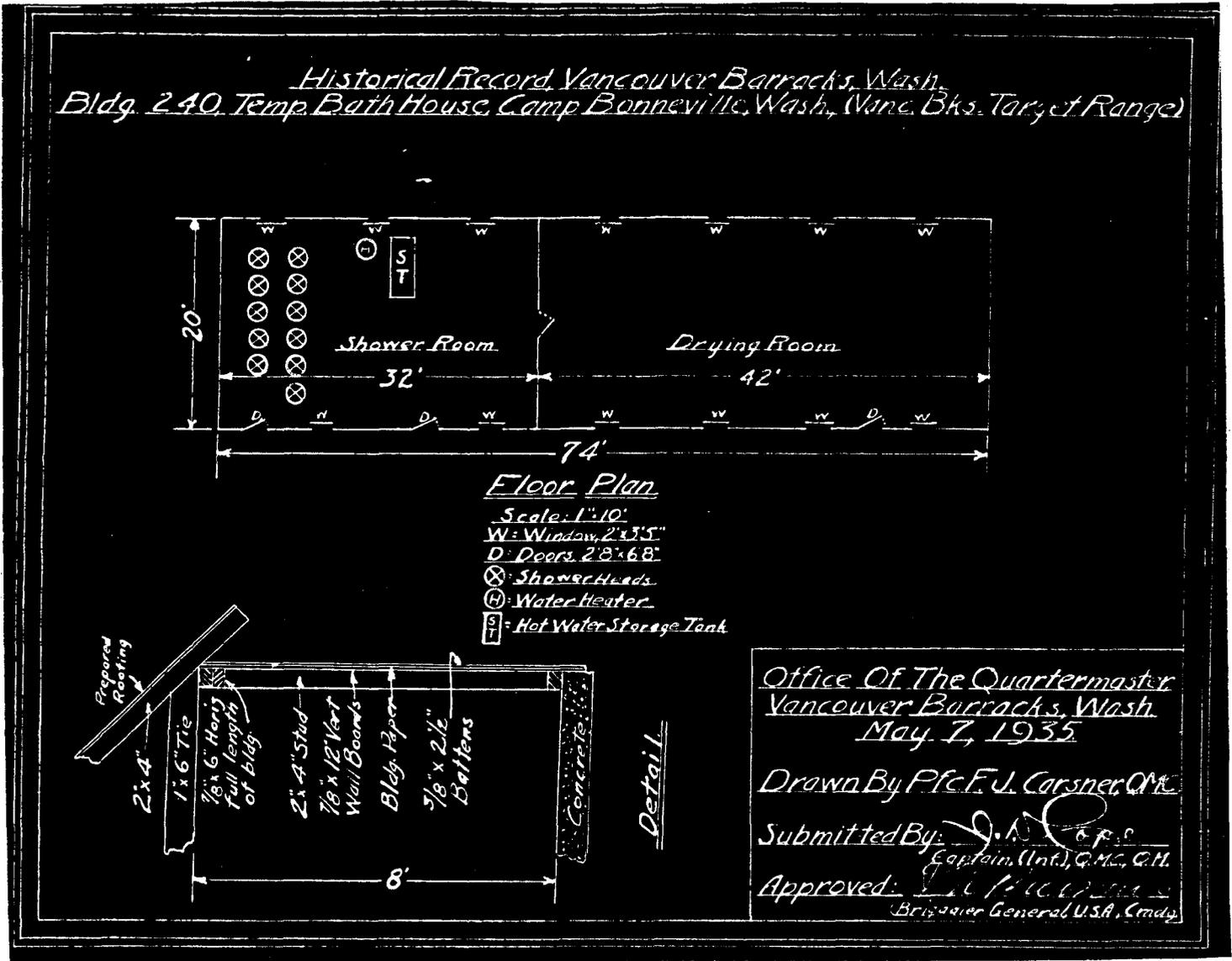


Figure C. Vancouver Barracks, Camp Bonneville
Male Latrine, Building No. T-1934

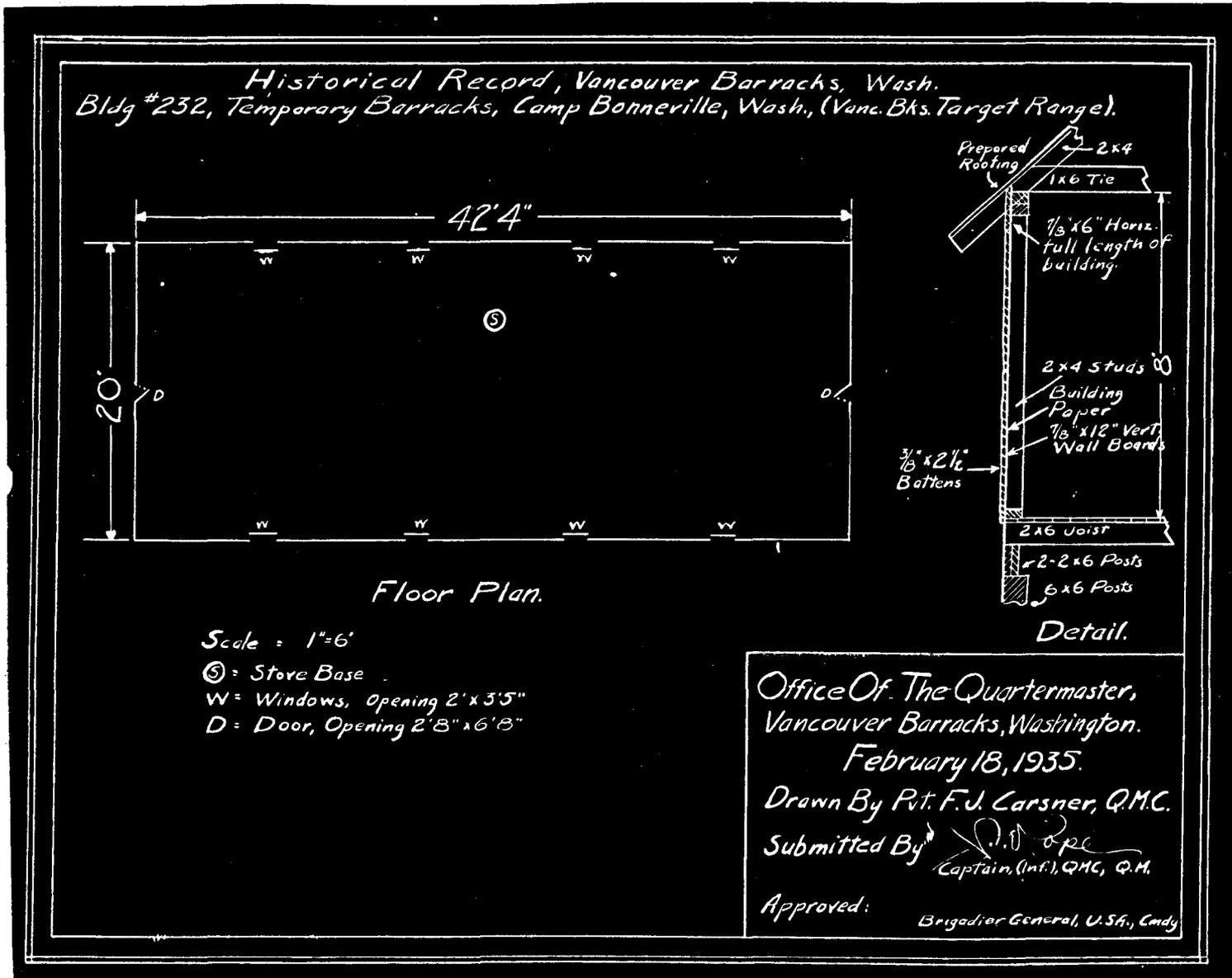


Figure E. Vancouver Barracks, Camp Bonneville
Barracks (Temporary), Building Nos. T-1828 and T-1920

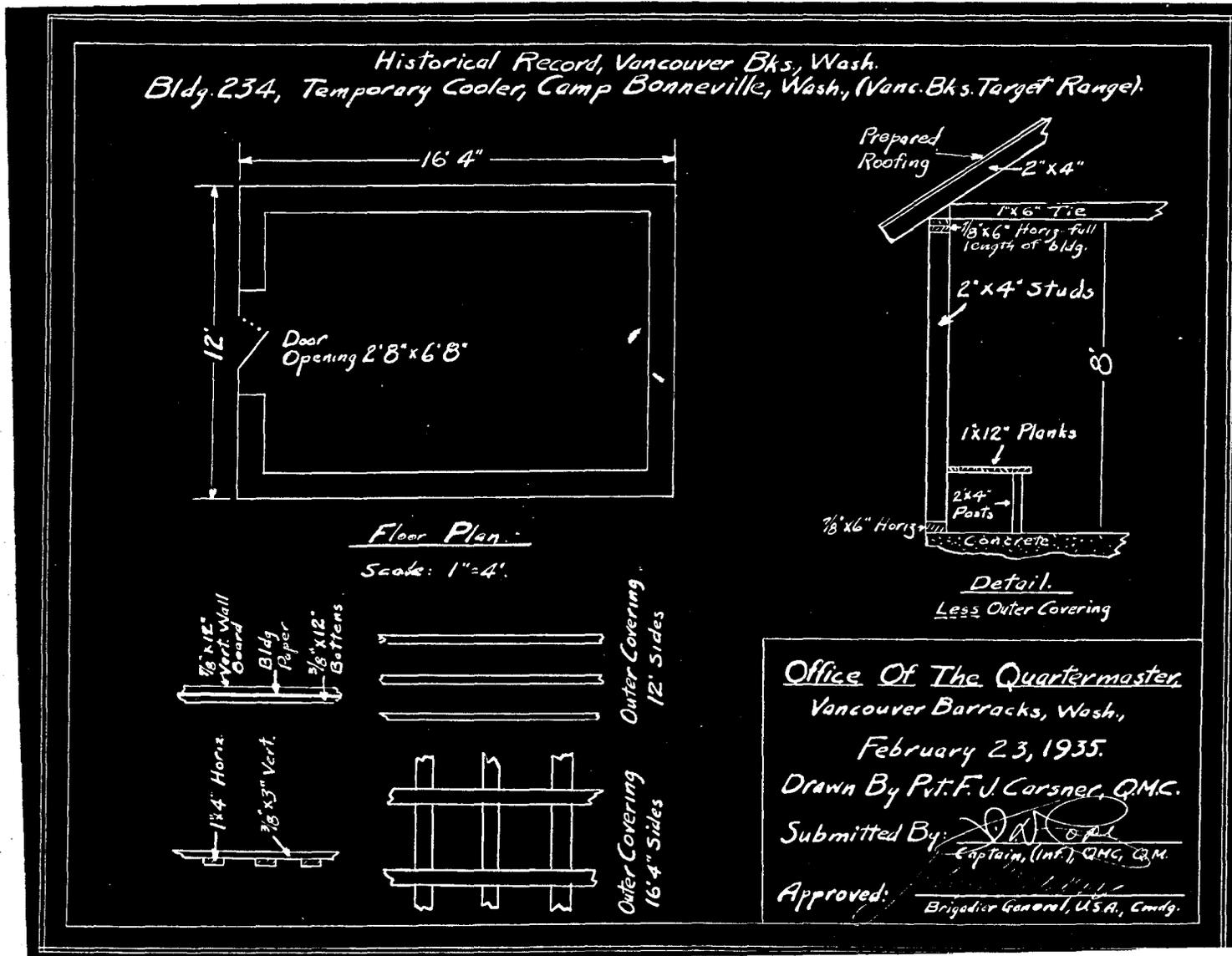


Figure F. Vancouver Barracks, Camp Bonneville
Cold Storage Warehouse (Temporary), Building No. T-1930

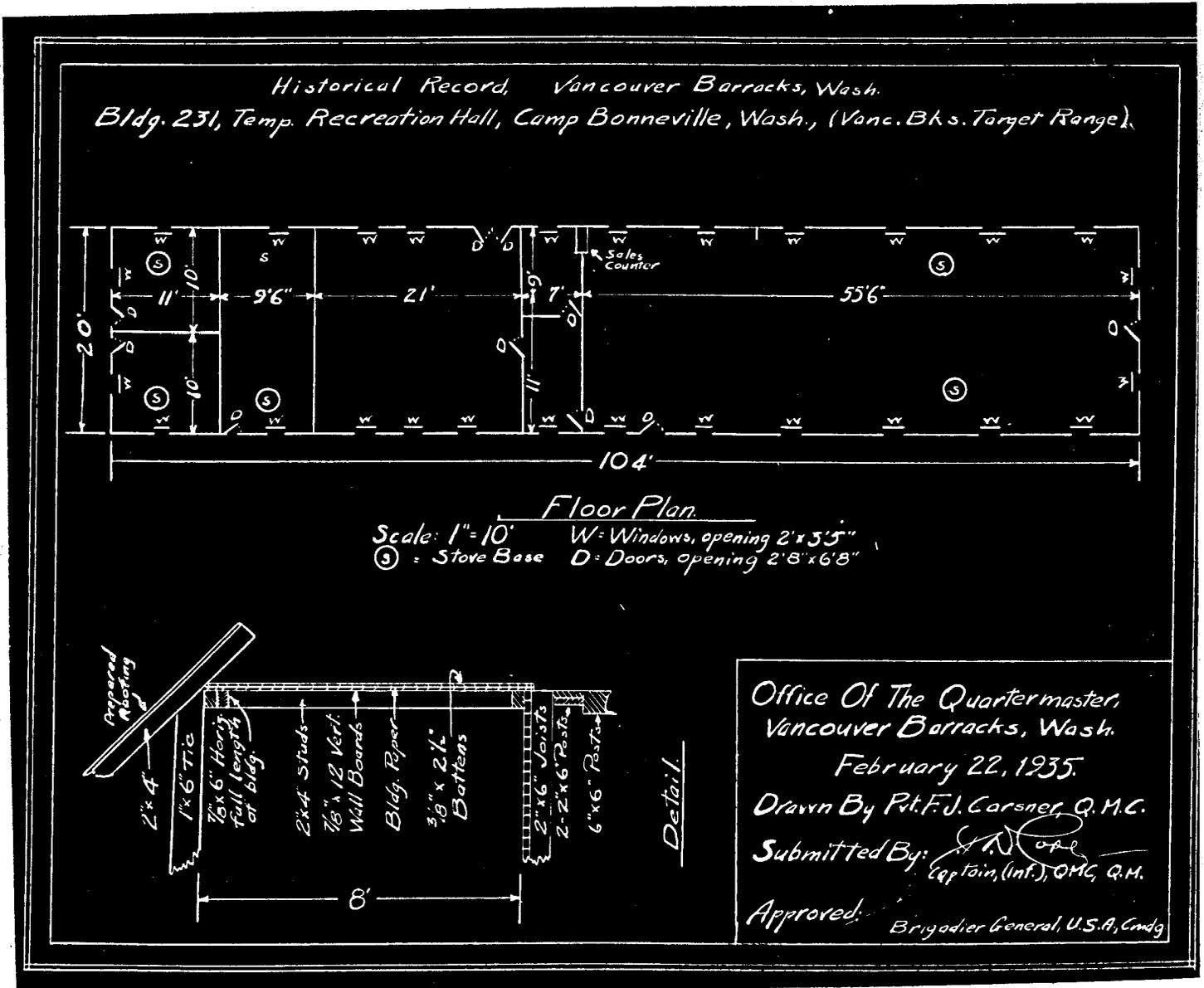


Figure G. Vancouver Barracks, Camp Bonneville
Recreation Hall (Temporary), Building No. T-1848

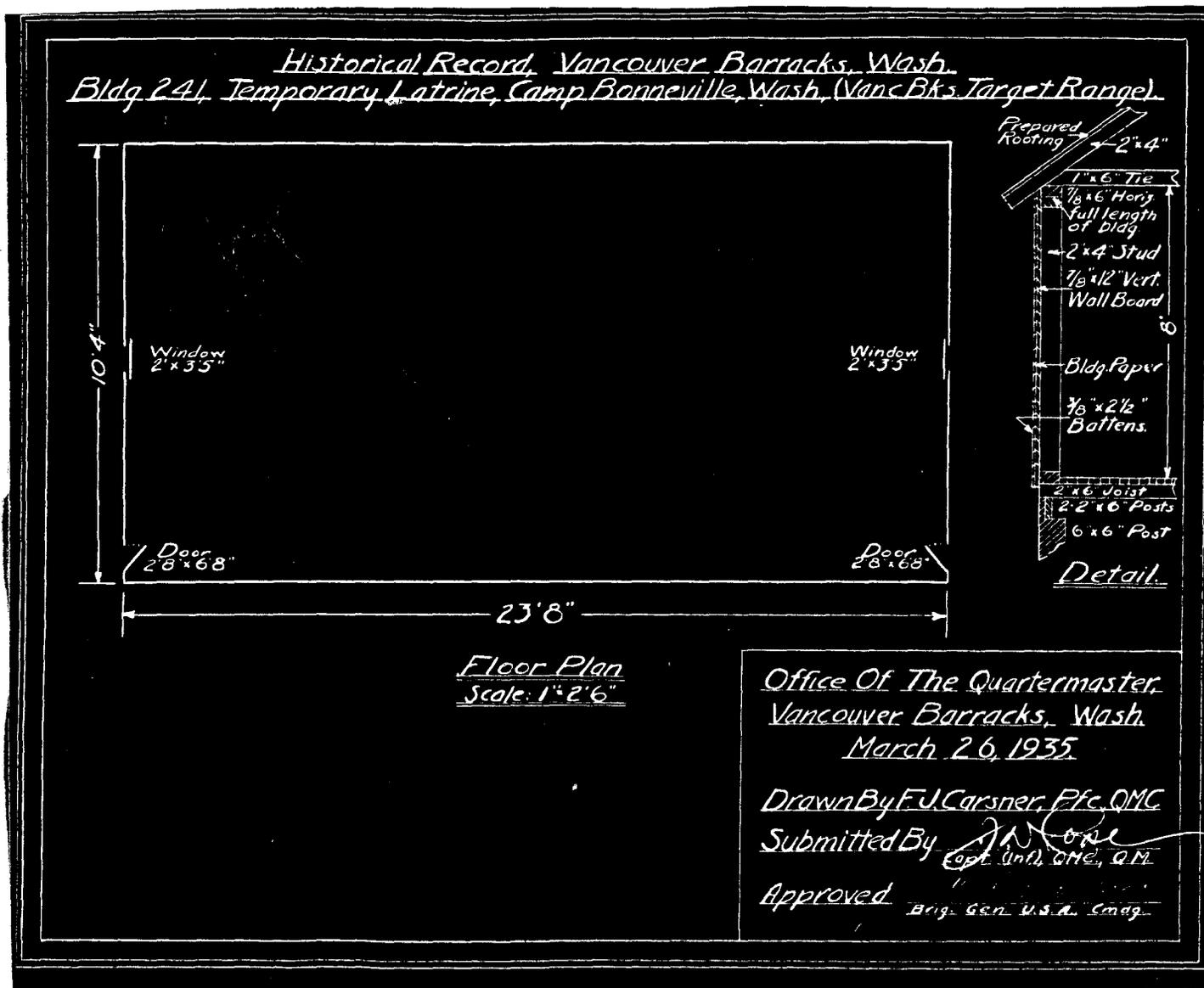


Figure I. Vancouver Barracks, Camp Bonneville
Temporary Latrine (removed), likely Building No. 225
on Historic Base Map, January 1944

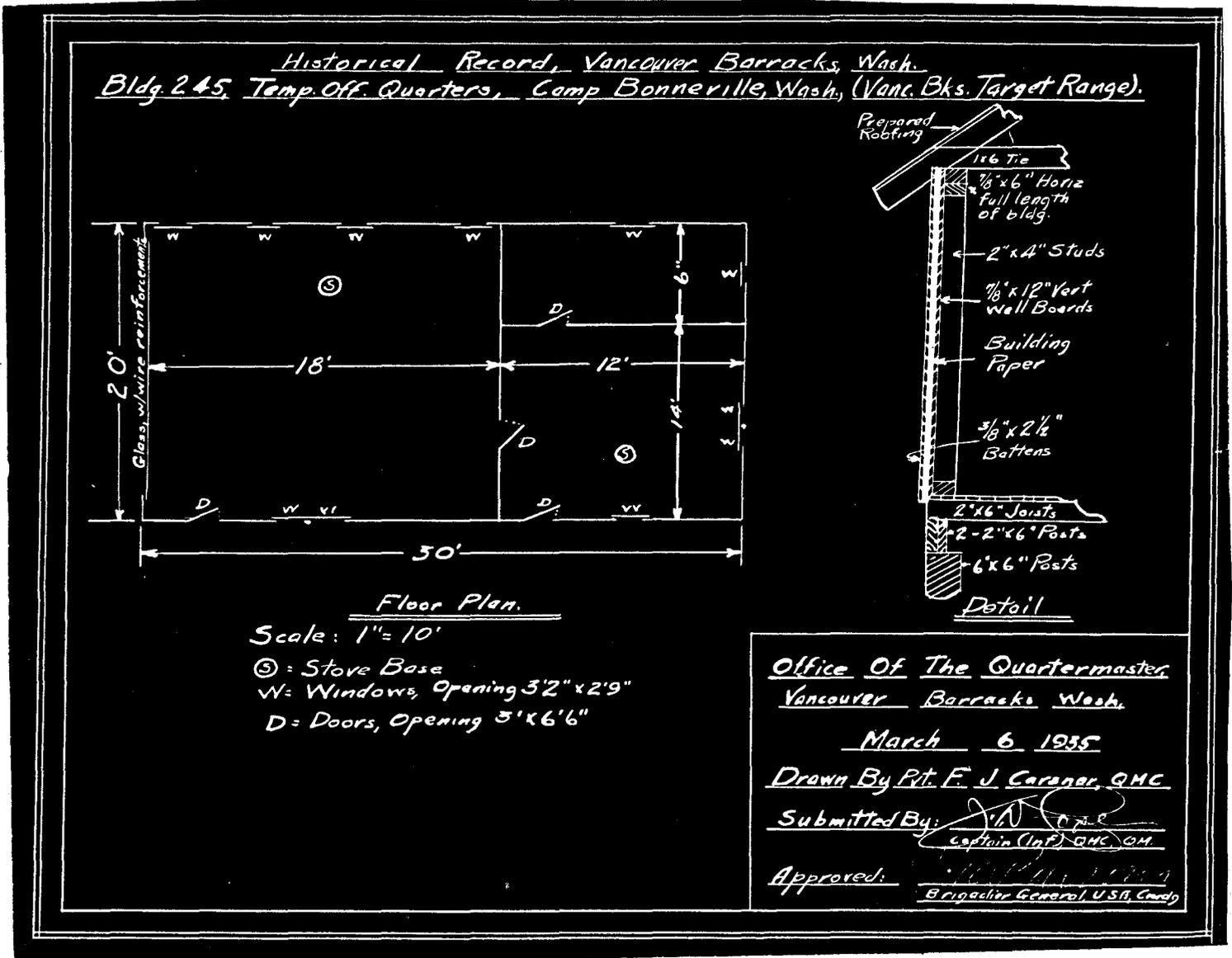


Figure J. Vancouver Barracks, Camp Bonneville
Temporary Officers' Quarters (removed)

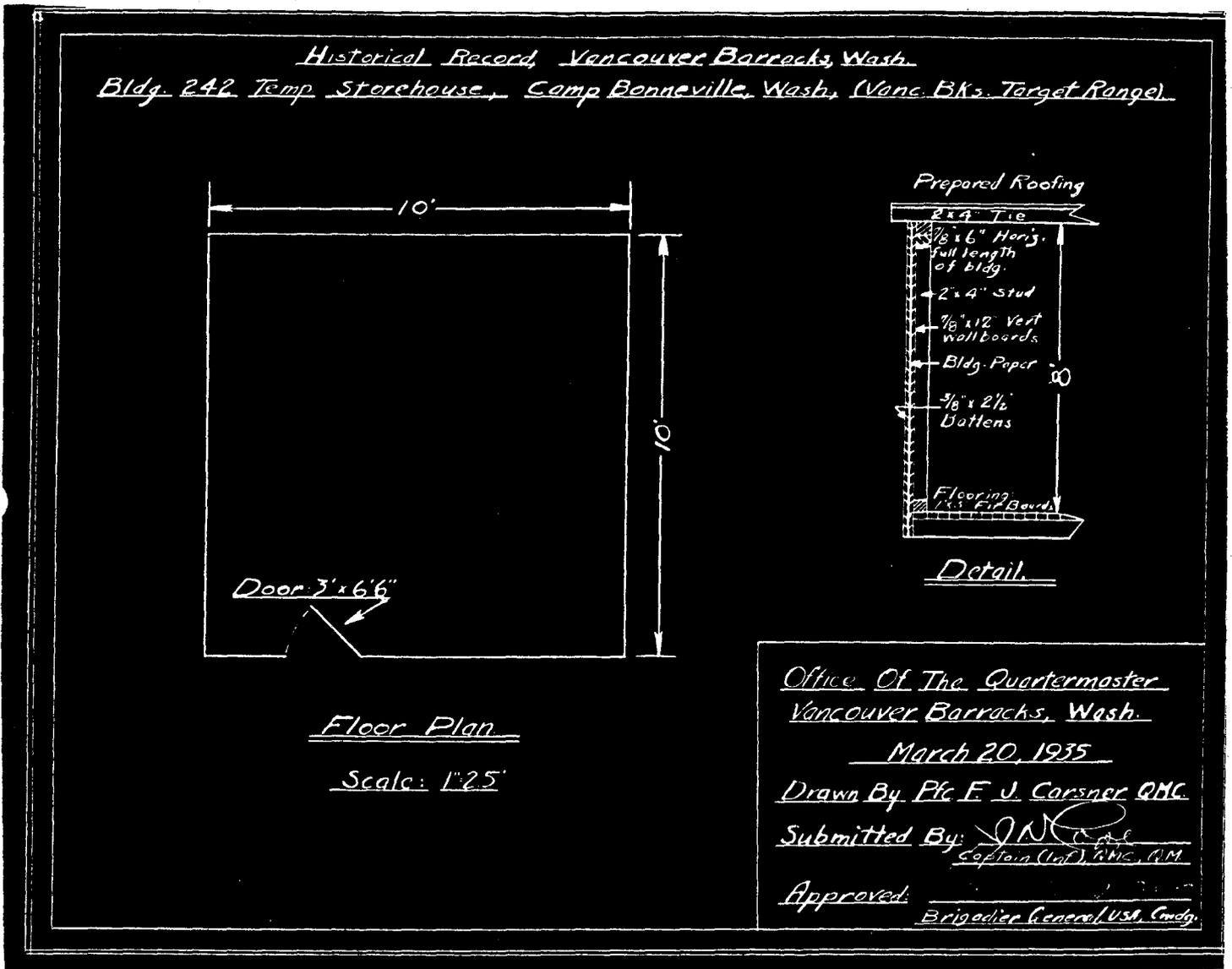


Figure K. Vancouver Barracks, Camp Bonneville
Temporary Storehouse (removed)

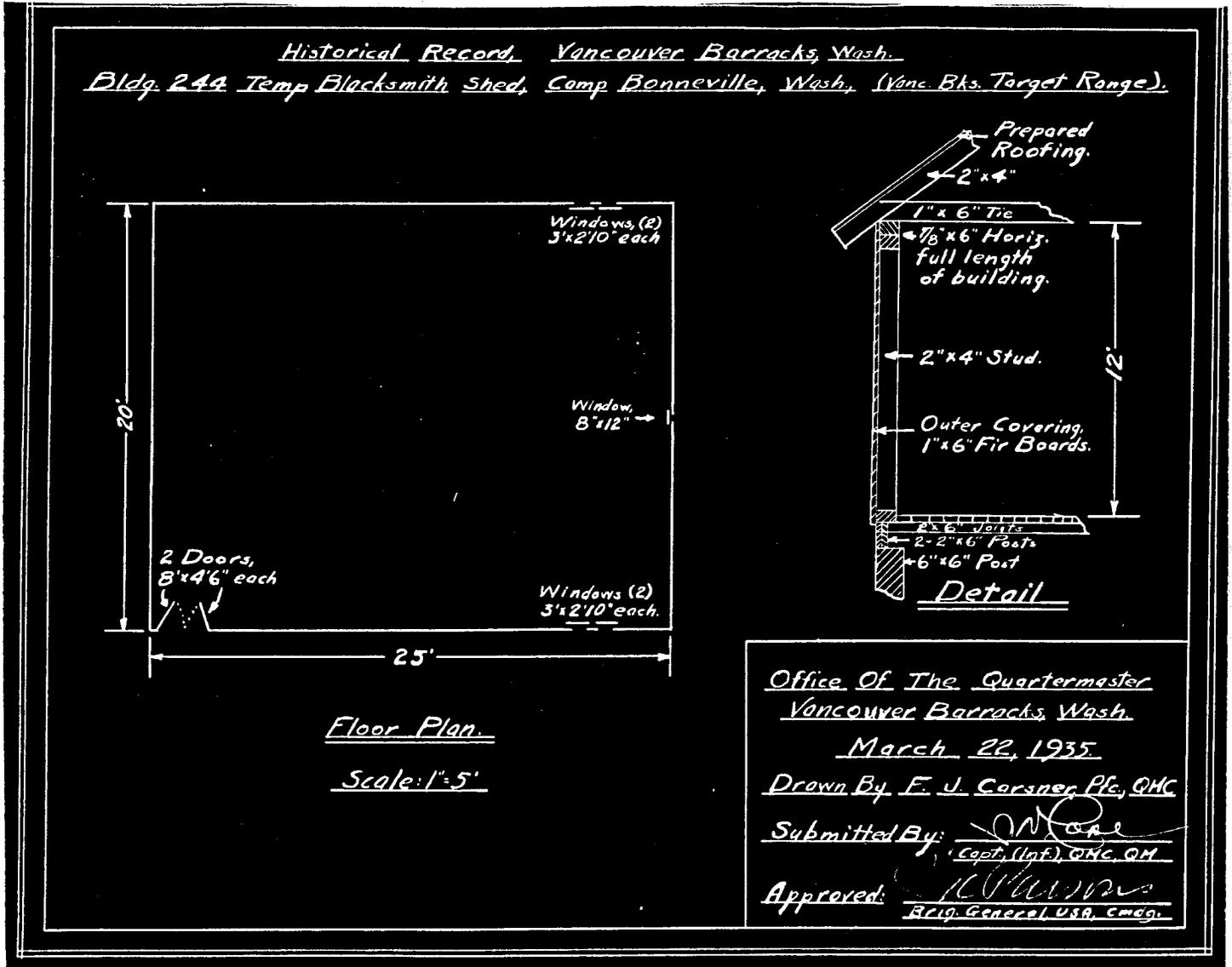


Figure L. Vancouver Barracks, Camp Bonneville
Temporary Blacksmith Shop (removed)

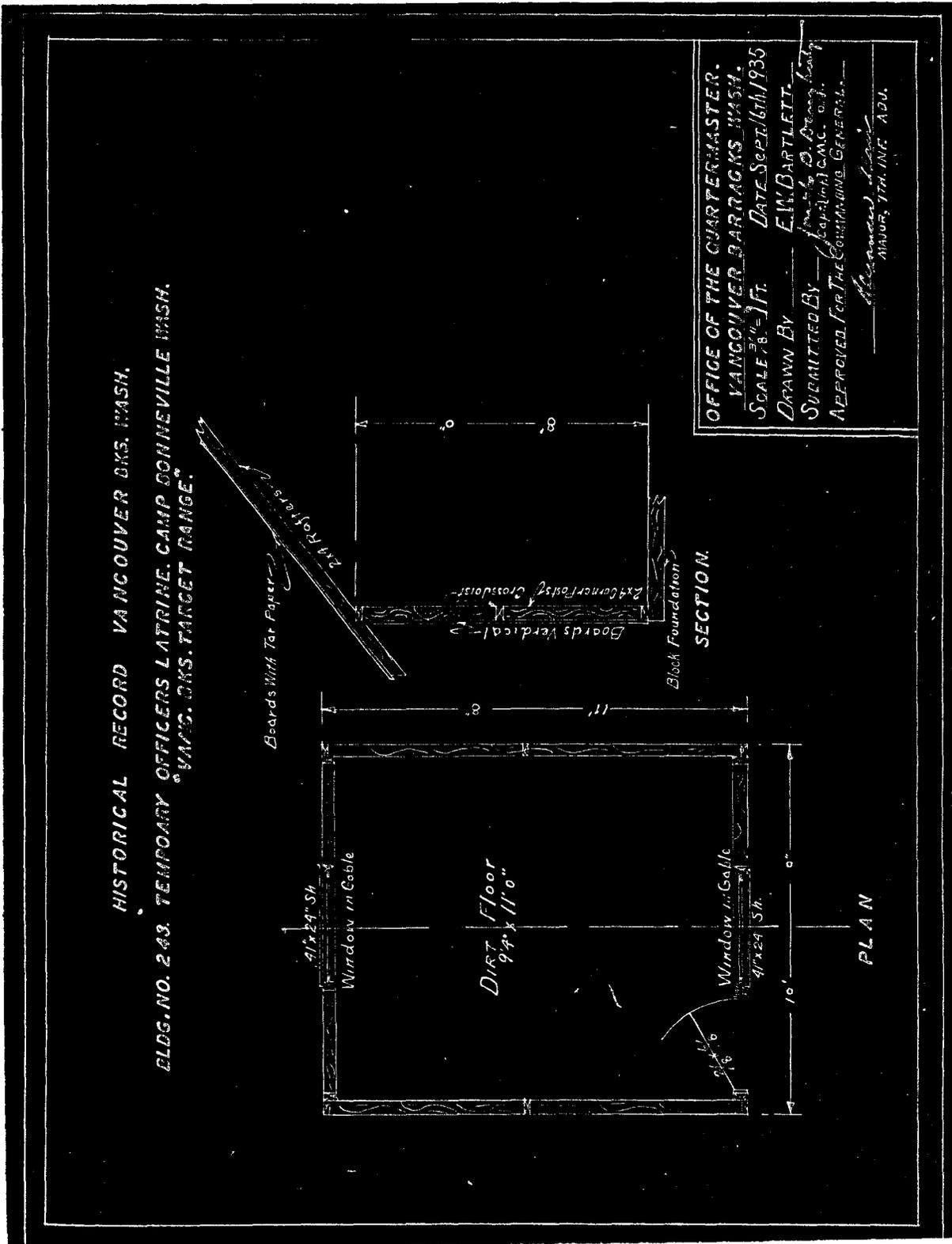


Figure M. Vancouver Barracks, Camp Bonneville
 Temporary Officers' Latrine (removed)