

NATIONAL HOME FOR DISABLED VOLUNTEER SOLDIERS,
MARION BRANCH, BUILDING NO. 25
(Hospital Annex No. 2)
(Ward Building)
1700 East 38th Street
Marion
Grant
Indiana

HABS IN-306-R
IN-306-R

PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

ADDENDUM TO:
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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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ADDENDUM TO NATIONAL HOME FOR DISABLED VOLUNTEER SOLDIERS – MARION BRANCH, BUILDING No. 25 (Hospital Annex No. 2)

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Location: 1700 East 38th Street, Marion, Grant County, Indiana. Building No. 25 faces west towards Flower Street. The building is directly east of the main hospital service ell (Building No. 20), and southeast of the main entrance gate on 38th Street.

The coordinates for Building No. 25 are 40.311528 N, -85.375571 W. These coordinates were obtained in January 2012 and with, it is assumed, NAD 1983. There is no restriction on the release of the locational data to the public.

Present Owner: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Northern Indiana Healthcare System

Present Use: Vacant

Significance: Building No. 25 was built in 1929-30 as a hospital annex for the Marion Branch of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers (NHDVS). This two-story structure was used to provide mental health and other medical care for the veteran residents of the campus. The NHDVS was a federal institution authorized by Congress in 1865 and charged with caring for Civil War veterans disabled by their military service. Congressman George Steele of the 11th Indiana Congressional District successfully promoted the creation of this Branch in Grant County with the promise of an on-site natural gas well for free heating and lighting. Founded in 1889 as the seventh NHDVS branch, the Marion Branch featured a picturesque campus of winding avenues and red brick Queen Anne buildings with wide porches and ornamental balustrades. By 1930 the system had eleven branches and became part of the new Veterans Administration.

In 1921, the Marion Branch became the Marion National Sanitarium, a facility dedicated to the treatment of World War I neuropsychiatric cases, including what was then called shell shock and other mental disorders. The emphasis throughout the NHDVS had been shifting from residential campuses to more sophisticated medical care for veterans. There was a large demand for the neuropsychiatric treatment offered at Marion and several new buildings were added during the 1920s. Building No. 25 was the last NHDVS building built on the campus. It continues the red brick of the neighboring structures, but is otherwise a plain L-shaped structure

with simplified Georgian Revival details. The two-story, 75-bed facility was finished in 1930 just as the Veterans Administration was created and the NHDVS properties and duties shifted to this new agency. The Marion Branch continued to specialize in psychiatric care as part of the Veterans Administration. In 1936, Building No. 25 was designated the Acute Building.¹ The building was vacated after a modern hospital was constructed on the west side of the campus in 1997.

Historian: Lisa Pfueller Davidson, 2011

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1929-1930²
2. Architect: Alvin M. Strauss, Fort Wayne, Indiana

Strauss was a prominent architect in Fort Wayne between 1918 and 1958. Some of his major projects in Fort Wayne include the Embassy Theater (1928), Indiana Hotel (1928), Lincoln Bank Tower (1930), and St. Vincent Villa complex (1932).³

3. Original and subsequent owners, occupants, uses: Building No. 25 was built as a hospital annex for the Marion National Sanitarium, National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers. Patients with acute conditions were housed here during the 1930s. In the 1980s, Building No. 25 was used for Geriatric Psychiatric Nursing Care, with a Physical Therapy unit in the basement. It is now part of Marion Campus of the VA Northern Indiana Health Care System and sits vacant.
4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: Unknown
5. Original plans and construction: Original architectural drawings are in the PLIARS database of digitized microfiche, housed in the Washington, DC Central Office of the Department of Veterans Affairs (Figures 1-4). They reveal that Building No. 25 remains the same on the exterior except for the addition of stairway shafts on the east side.
6. Additions and alterations: Along with the stairway additions, Building No. 25 has

¹ Typescript, Marion VA Hospital Inventory (29 April 1936), Marion and Grant County File, Marion Public Library.

² NHDVS Board of Managers, "Letter from the President," *Annual Report for the Fiscal Year 1929* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1930), 5. A 200-bed barracks was approved and built a year before Building No. 25.

³ Nancy J. Hubbard, "Marion Branch, National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers Historic District," Grant County, Indiana. National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 1999. (U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Washington, D.C.), 25.

had interior alterations such as adding walls to create smaller rooms, adding doorways along corridors, and some plumbing upgrades.

- A. Historical Context: See overview historical context HABS No. IN-306 for additional information on the Marion Branch and the NHDVS.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: Building No. 25 is a rather plain Georgian Revival institutional building with an L-shaped plan. It is built into a hillside with an exposed basement level on the rear (east elevation) and a two-story elevation on the front (west) and south façades. The Georgian Revival details include a limestone water table, hip roof, and modest Classical entrance portico with columns.
2. Condition of fabric: Good. Building No. 25 is in cosmetic disrepair, but basically sound condition.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: Each wing of this L-shaped structure is approximately 160 feet long and 42 feet wide.
2. Foundations: The foundations are reinforced concrete with a red brick veneer on the exterior. The brick is laid in repeating pattern of one header and two stretcher courses.
3. Walls: The walls are reinforced concrete with a red brick veneer laid in a Flemish bond. There is a smoothly dressed limestone water table with a course of soldier bricks above. Another course of soldier brick forms a belt course located along the tops of the second floor window openings. There is a slight wall projection at the south end of the west elevation, accenting the bay surrounding the entrance portico. There is a limestone date stone on the west façade near the lower southwest corner. It includes the date 1930 and a list of the NHDVS Board of Managers at this time.
4. Structural system, framing: Building No. 25 has a concrete joist and beam structural system with load bearing concrete masonry walls. The roof structure is wood truss.
5. Porches and stoops: The main entrance at the south end of the west (front) façade is accessed via porch with concrete steps on the west side and a concrete ramp to the south. The one-story porch has a shallow hip roof with a wood Classical entablature supported by square brick columns at the outer corners. Each brick column has a concrete base and capital, and is paired with a wood Doric column. There are brick pilasters flanking the doorway with concrete capitals and bases. A delicate wrought

iron balustrade, painted white, is located around the edge of the roof and between the walls and piers. Metal pipe hand rails are present on the ramp and steps. The porch ceiling is sheathed with bead board painted white.

There is a one-story on raised basement porch at the center of the east (rear) façade. The porch has a shallow hip roof with a simple wood cornice and stands on a tall foundation pierced by a door leading to the basement. The basement door is flanked by square window openings with concrete sills. The upper level is accessed only from the interior, but originally included a staircase rising to its north side. The roof is supported by four square brick columns with simple concrete bases and caps. Metal pipe rails are located between the columns and from the corner column to the brick pilaster at the wall. Screens have been added behind the railings.

6. Chimneys: There are original metal ventilators located on the east slope of the roof.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The door at the front portico is a replacement metal and glass commercial door with fixed sidelights. The original plans indicate a two-leaf wood panel door with glazing above the lock rail and a transom. There is a solid metal door set directly into the brick foundation wall at the rear porch and a metal rolling overhead service door just south of this opening on the east elevation.
 - b. Windows: The typical window is a one-over-one metal sash replacement set directly into the brick wall with a shallow limestone sill and a lintel of soldier bricks. The soldier brick belt course forms a continuous lintel for the second floor window openings. The original plans indicate a six-over-six wood sash. There are pairs of windows sharing a sill at the end of each wing in the location of the day rooms. The first floor windows on either side of the front portico have a segmental arch.
8. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Building No. 25 has an L-shaped hipped roof with a shallow pitch.
 - b. Cornice, eaves: Building No. 25 has plain wood box cornices with integrated gutters.
 - c. Dormers: Building No. 25 has four small hip roof ventilation dormers with louvered openings. Two dormers are located on the west roof slope of the north/south wing and two are located on the south roof slope of the east/west wing.

B. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: Building No. 25 has an L-shaped floor plan with two double loaded corridors meeting at the southwest corner (Figures 4-6). The end of each wing contains a large day room. The basement includes large spaces and some small rooms along a truncated double loaded corridor. Several larger spaces such as the ward on the south side of the east/west wing and the kitchen on the east side of the north/south wing have been divided into two or more small rooms.
2. Stairways: Building No. 25 has three dogleg stairways leading from the basement to the second floor. One is original and is located at the northeast corner of the junction of the two wings. This stair is terrazzo with a metal balustrade and posts. The other two are located near the end of the wings on the east/north façades in additions sheathed with metal. These additions appear to be in place by 1963. These stairways are replacements for exterior fire escapes included on the original plans. There is an elevator located directly east of the original stairway, as shown on the original plans. The current equipment is a replacement. The attic is only accessible via a wall-mounted metal ladder.
3. Flooring: Building No. 25 has tan terrazzo floors with a black border in the first floor entrance hall, original stair, and the dining area on the north/south wing. Square resilient tile flooring with concrete baseboards is found through the rest of the structure, as well as areas of concrete floor in the basement and larger bathrooms and two-inch white hexagonal tile in the small bathrooms near the southwest corner offices.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: The walls are plaster on concrete, or painted concrete block. The ceilings are acoustic tile drop ceilings which were added over the original plaster. The bathrooms have six-inch-square ceramic tile wainscots. There are wall-mounted stainless steel handrails throughout the hallways.
5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and Doors: The typical doors are solid metal or wood with a fixed porthole opening filled with wire glass. They do not have applied trim or moldings. Double metal doors with push-bar mechanisms have been added in the hallways.
 - b. Windows: The replacement windows do not have any applied trim on the interior. A few wood window sills with apron trim remain in the small bathrooms.
6. Decorative features and trim: N/A

7. Hardware: N/A

8. Mechanical equipment:

- a. Heating and ventilation: Building No. 25 had radiant heat with wall-mounted fin heating units behind metal covers.
- b. Lighting: Fluorescent ceiling light fixtures appear throughout Building No. 25.
- c. Plumbing: Building No. 25 has large patient bathrooms on either side of the original stair. The fixtures have been upgraded here and include wall-mounted vitreous china sinks with mixer faucets, tiled shower stalls, and metal toilet stalls. The two smaller bathrooms at the offices in the southwest corner have wall-mounted vitreous china sinks and one original toilet.
- d. Dumbwaiter: There is an electric dumbwaiter traveling between the kitchen on the first floor and the dining room on the second floor of the north/south wing.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. **Architectural drawings:** Original architectural drawings for Building No. 25 are located in the PLIARS database stored at VACO. The PLIARS database also includes some later floor plans documenting changes.

- Floor Plans, Elevations, Sections, and Details, “Hospital Annex Building No. 2 for NHDVS Hospital,” A. M. Strauss, (1929, revised May 1930), PLIARS database, VACO.
- Floor Plans, “Acute Building No. 25,” Veterans Administration (29 January 1943, last revised 19 July 1963), PLIARS database, VACO.

B. **Early Views:** Historic images of Building No. 25 have not been located.

C. Selected Bibliography:

Board of Managers – National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, *Annual Reports*, various years starting in 1867; many volumes include *Proceedings* of the Board of Managers meetings.

Hubbard, Nancy J. “Marion Branch, National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers Historic District,” Grant County, Indiana. National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 1999. U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Washington, D.C.

Inspector General. *Annual Report of Inspection - National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers*. Washington, DC: GPO, (annual – 1894-1925).

Julin, Suzanne. “National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers – Assessment of Significance and National Historic Landmark Recommendations.” 2008. U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Washington, D.C..

Kelly, Patrick. *Creating a National Home: Building the Veterans' Welfare State*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997.

National Military Home Indiana. Wabash, IN: Press of the Plain Dealer, c. 1908.

Rector, Matthew D. “The Early Development, Design, and Construction of the Marion Branch of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers,” M.A. Thesis, Ball State University, 2002.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

Documentation of selected buildings at the former Marion Branch of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers was undertaken in 2011 by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) of the Heritage Documentation Programs division of the National Park Service, Richard O'Connor, Chief. The project was sponsored by the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA), Office of Construction and Facilities Management, Kathleen Schamel, Federal Preservation Officer. Project development was coordinated by Catherine Lavoie, Chief, HABS and by Douglas Pulak, Deputy Federal Preservation Officer, DVA. The field work was undertaken and the written histories were produced by Lisa P. Davidson and Virginia B. Price, HABS Historians. The large format photography was undertaken by HABS Photographer Renee Bieretz; an initial photographic survey was completed by HABS Photographer James Rosenthal in 2008. Valuable assistance was provided by James A. Broyles, Project Engineer, Engineering Services, Marion Campus, VA Northern Indiana Health Care System.

PART V. ILLUSTRATIONS

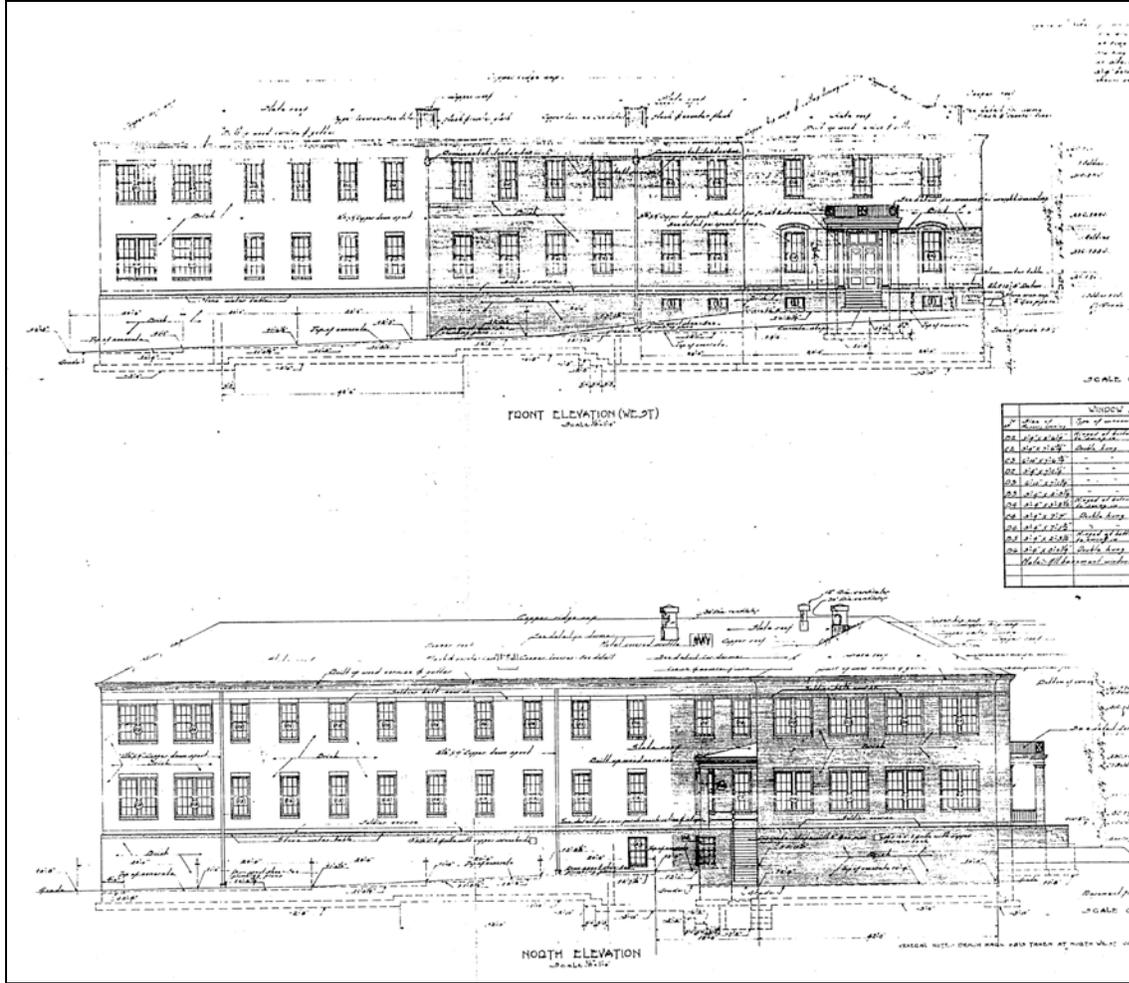


Figure 1: West and North Elevations of Hospital Annex No. 2, A. M. Strauss, 1929
Source: PLIARS database, VACO

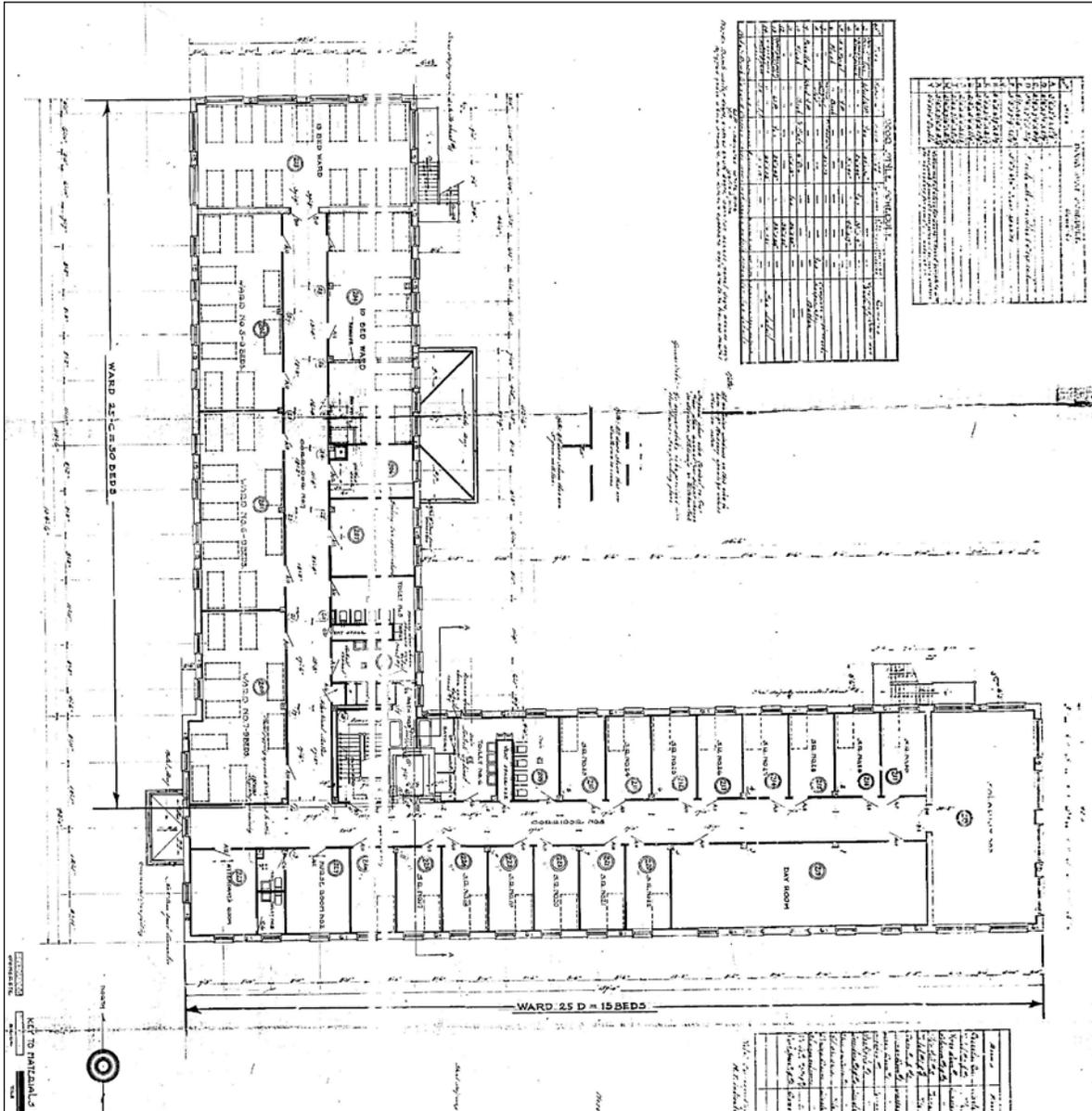


Figure 3: Second Floor Plan, Hospital Annex No. 2, A. M. Strauss, 1929
 Source: PLIARS database, VACO

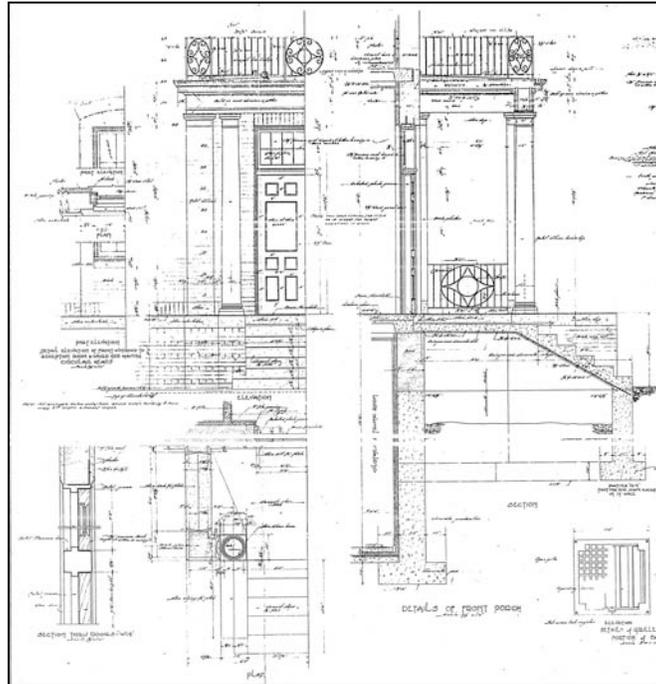


Figure 4: Details of Front Porch, Hospital Annex No. 2, A. M. Strauss, 1929
Source: PLIARS database, VACO

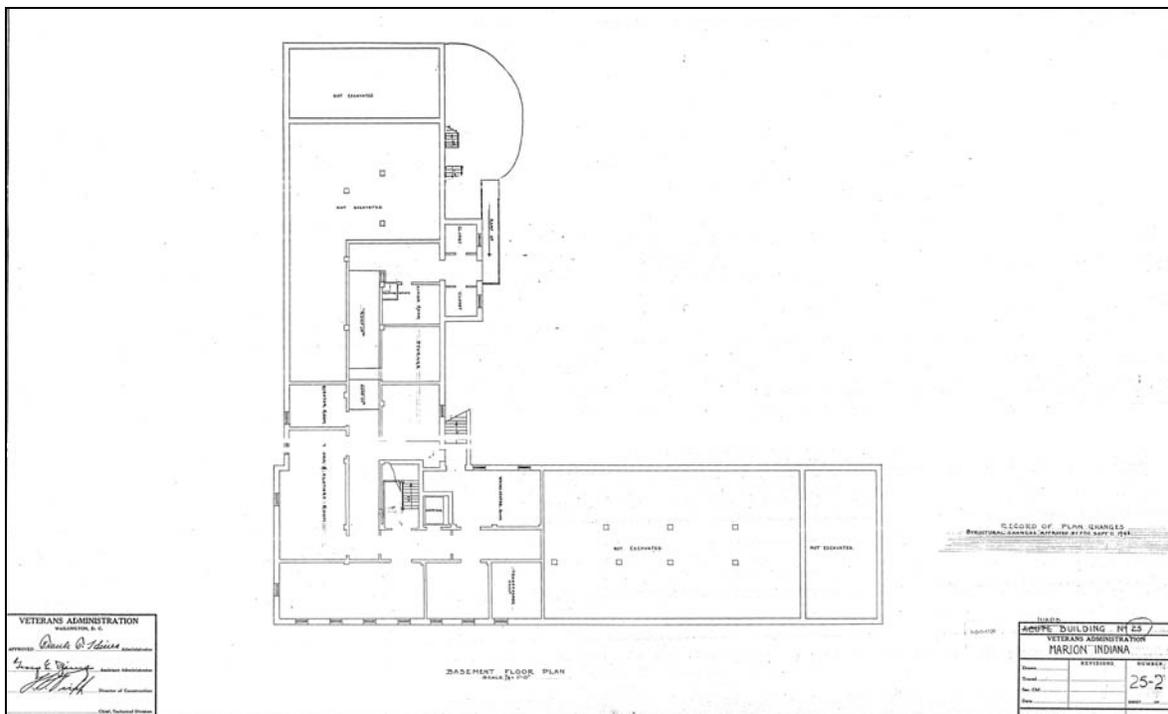


Figure 5: Basement Floor Plan, Building No. 25, c. 1943
Source: PLIARS database, VACO

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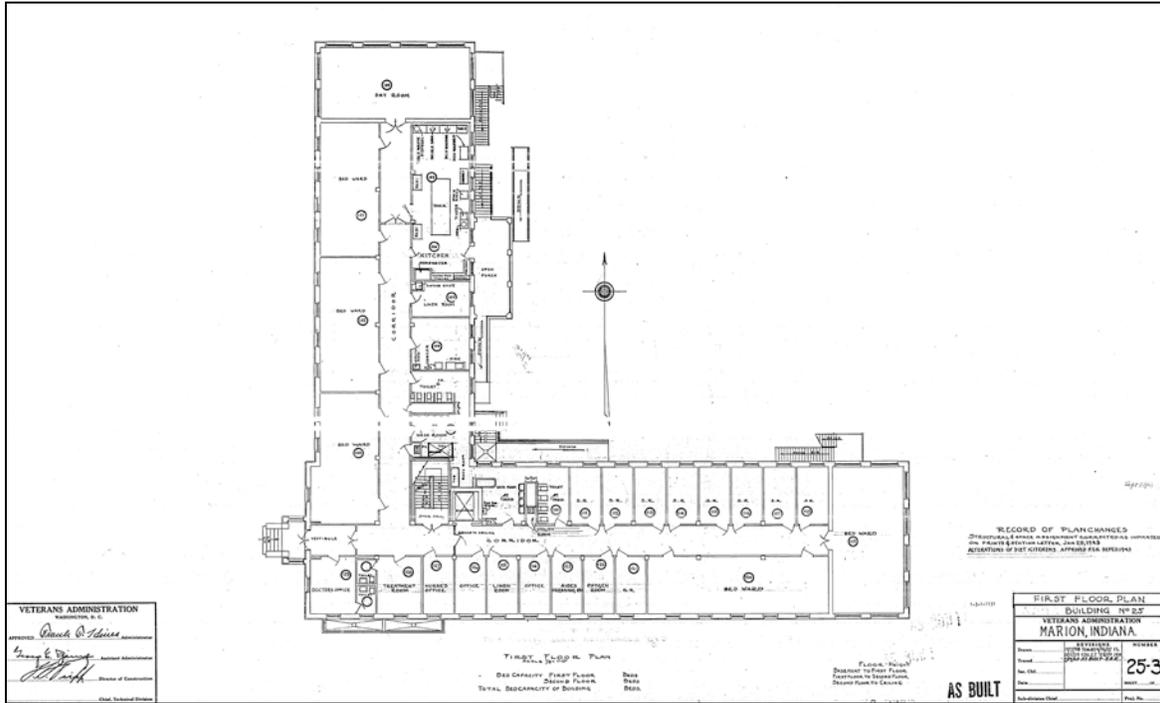


Figure 6: First Floor Plan, Building No. 25, c. 1943
 Source: PLIARS database, VACO

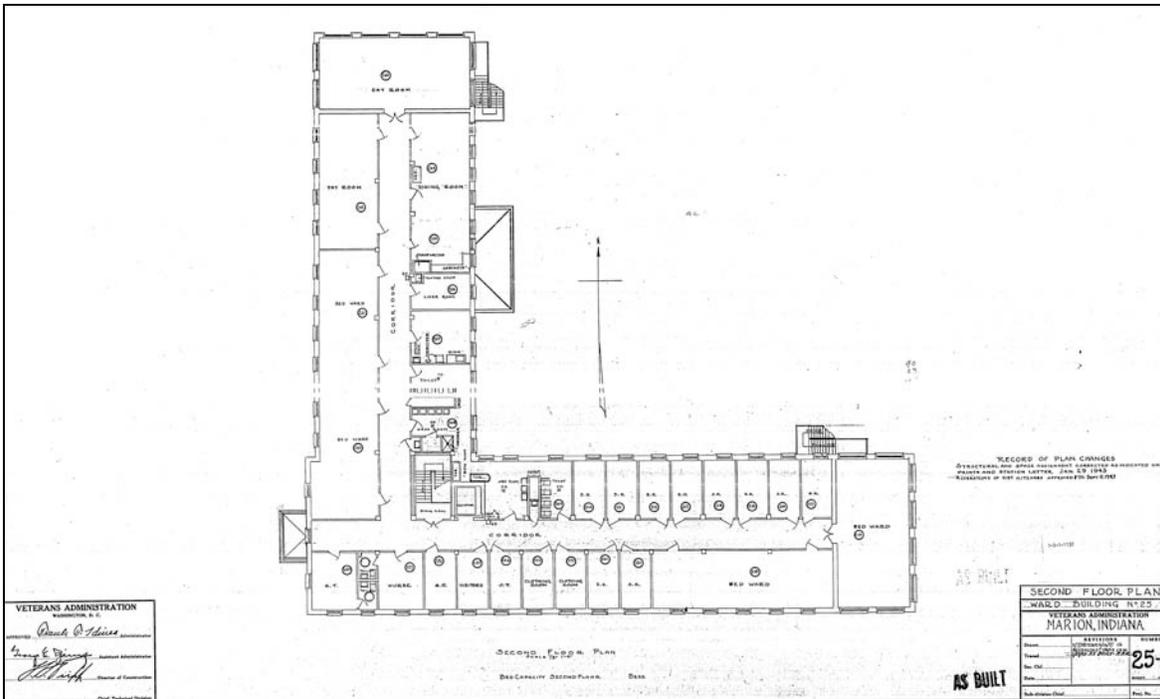


Figure 7: Second Floor Plan, Building No. 25, c. 1943
 Source: PLIARS database, VACO