Form 10-300
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY – NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries – complete applicable sections)

STATE: Virginia	
COUNTY: Arlington	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME

COMMON:

AND/OR HISTORIC: Fort Myer Historic District (NHL)

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: between Arlington Blvd. and U.S. Highway 50

CITY OR TOWN: Arlington

STATE	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
Virginia		Arlington	

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP		STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
[X] District [ ] Building	[X] Public	Public Acquisition:	[X] Occupied	Yes:
[ ] Site [ ] Structure	[ ] Private	[ ] In Process	[ ] Unoccupied	[X] Restricted
[ ] Object	[ ] Both	[ ] Being Considered	[ ] Preservation work in progress	[ ] Unrestricted
				[ ] No

PRESENT USE *(Check One or More as Appropriate)*

[ ] Agricultural	[ ] Government	[ ] Park	[ ] Transportation	[ ] Comments
[ ] Commercial	[ ] Industrial	[ ] Private Residence	[ ] Other *(Specify)*	
[ ] Educational	[X] Military	[ ] Religious		
[ ] Entertainment	[ ] Museum	[ ] Scientific		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: U.S. Army (Commanding General, Military District of Washington)

STREET AND NUMBER: Fort Leslie J. McNair

CITY OR TOWN:	STATE:	CODE
Washington	D.C.	

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: County Clerk's Office--Arlington County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER: 1400 North Court House Road

CITY OR TOWN:	STATE	CODE
Arlington	Virginia	

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY: [ ] Federal [ ] State [ ] County [ ] Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:	STATE:	CODE

STATE: | COUNTY: | FOR NPS USE ONLY: ENTRY NUMBER | DATE

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	☐ Excellent	☐ Good	XX Fair	☐ Deteriorated	☐ Ruins	☐ Unexposed
	(Check One)		(Check One)			
	☒ Altered	☐ Unaltered	☐ Moved	☒ Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL *(if known)* PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Situated on the rolling terrain which rises gradually behind Arlington Cemetery on the west side of the Potomac River, Fort Myer commands a sweeping view of Washington. As conceived and built in the massive development program which occurred at the turn of the century, the post was oriented upon a cross-axis of two main thoroughfares: Jackson Avenue, extending roughly from east to west--or from the promontory where was located the Civil War earthworks forming the genesis of Fort Myer to a point some 1800 feet distant near the present Route 50; and Sheridan Avenue, the location of the post headquarters, extending south approximately 1500 feet from its intersection with Jackson. Branching off Jackson Avenue were other streets lined with various post structures. All buildings were constructed of brick and, in keeping with their function, all were spartanly simple in design and appearance, with but restrained Victorian touches in the broad wooden galleries and the interiors. Fort Myer has expanded since that time, but the heart of the post--the original brick complex--survive in altered condition. Some fifty permanent structures, most of them pre-dating the First World War, make up the group today. The interposition of "temporaries," primarily two-story frame structures, has marred but not destroyed the district's historic integrity. Fortunately, the two most historically-significant areas, the parade ground and "Generals' Row," have not been subjected to the extensive physical alterations that have changed the appearance of some of the barracks and administration structures.

The post headquarters on Sheridan Avenue consists of six austere, two story structures overlooking the parade ground. Building No. 246 is the principal headquarters structure, while to the south are five former barracks (Buildings No. 247-251), now used for additional administrative offices. Prosaic brick stoops have replaced the long, double-tiered porches which once fronted the buildings, and although the fenestration is for the most part original, the interiors have been in large part gutted.

Immediately north of the post headquarters buildings, at the southwest corner of Sheridan and Jackson Avenues, is the large brick riding rink erected in 1932, the most significant permanent structural addition within the original post area. Since Fort Myer ceased to be an active cavalry post in 1942, the rink has been converted into a gymnasium.

Across Jackson Avenue from the former riding rink, to the north, lies the range of eight long, low brick stables. A small parking lot has replaced the corral once situated immediately opposite the riding rink, adjacent to the first of the stables. This is the only one of the group still used for its original purpose. The other stables have been variously converted, with minimal exterior change, into administrative offices, recreational facilities, and warehouses. Of commond-bond brick construction, the stables feature segmentally-arched openings, with

(continuously)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

7. Description: (1) Fort Myer Historic District

with large doors at either end and equidistantly-spaced in the lateral walls. A shingle-covered clerestory along the gable ridge of each structure provides light and ventilation.

Perhaps the most arquitectonic of the original non-residential structures is the Post Exchange, which stands diagonally opposite the stables on the southeast corner of Jackson and Sheridan Avenues. A solidly-built edifice dating from about 1902, the Exchange is distinguished by massive rusticated brick pilasters supporting a plain brick architrave and a heavily-scaled white cornice, freely-adapted from the Doric order. A range of blind arches, emphasized by bold granite keystones, contains two tiers of sash windows. A low hip roof with skylight crowns the structure.

Opposite the Post Exchange is the small, single-story brick post office, fronted by a white porch and outwardly unchanged except for the removal of the louvered blinds that once flanked the windows. East of the post office on the north side of Jackson Avenue are a two-story administration building, the single-story provost marshal's office, and the two-story officers' mess all dating from about 1900.

The opposite side of the street is lined by a row of six brick double-houses, unchanged and in a very fine state of preservation, which have always served as officers' quarters. These form part of the original group of 20 residences, built on the post in the decade or so after 1892. The others are situated on Lee and Grant Avenues, lying respectively and appropriately to the south and the north of the principal thoroughfare, Jackson Avenue. All are characterized by broad wooden porches. The first of the quarters, today Quarters 10A, was completed in 1892 by the Corps of Engineers. Nineteen other houses for senior officers were built before 1910. Between 1932 and 1935, six more houses, neo-Federal in style, were added to the complex, which has become known as "Generals' Row." Also located on Lee Avenue is the post hospital. Standing at the southeast corner of the parade ground, the two-story brick structure is five-bays in length, with a projecting four-bay wing. The wing is enclosed by a wooden double porch with iron railings.

From the standpoint of historical significance, the most outstanding group of officers' quarters is that on Grant Avenue, at the entrance to the original post. The group consists of six large residences, ranged along the street, with a vista of the Potomac and Washington to the east. Four of the houses stand on the west side of Grant Avenue, while two more, including "Quarters 1," the home of the Army Chief of Staff, are at the north end of the street.

(continued)

7. Description: (2) Fort Myer Historic District

Quarters 1 was completed in May of 1899, and, since 1910, when General Leonard Wood first occupied it, the dwelling has been the home of all the Chiefs of Staff. Little changed since its construction, the house is two-and-a-half stories high and is built of pressed brick. The pedimented central portion projects slightly from the main bloc and is girdled by a broad, one-story porch. The porch balustrade, with its turned wooden balusters, and the slender, paired columns en podia, are original and are virtually identical to the porches of the other early residences. The porch extends beyond the main bloc of the house on the west side to form a porte-cochere. Except for the addition of a second-floor sunporch on this side of the house, the unobtrusive addition on the eastern side of an attic dormer, and the replacement of the original front door with one that is paneled, the facade of Quarters 1 is unaltered. The house contains 21 rooms, and interior changes have been for the most part superficial rather than structural.

Quarters 6 of the row of houses on the west side of Grant Avenue is the official residence of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Once a 32-room double-house, it has been converted in recent years into a single-family dwelling, the front porch being enclosed and the original sashing replaced. Quarters 6, as well as Quarters 7, which stands adjacent, are the most altered of all the earlier residences at Fort Myer.

Immediately west of the homes of the Chiefs of Staff are a row of small non-commissioned officers' dwellings also dating from around 1900 and, externally at least, little-changed. Opposite them, to the south, lie the bachelor officers' quarters.

The historic parade ground lies on the south side of Jackson Avenue, to the rear of the Post Exchange, between Sheridan and Lee Avenues. Originally enclosed by garrison structures on the north, east, and west, the parade ground stretched southward toward open fields, with Arlington Cemetery beyond. Construction since the Second World War has completely encircled the parade ground. Now called Summerall Field, in honor of General Charles P. Summerall, Chief of Staff and occupant of Quarters 1 from 1926 to 1930, the parade ground contains on its western edge two bronze plaques placed there by the Early Birds of Aviation (those who flew solo before December 1916) to commemorate the advent of military aviation at Fort Myer in 1908-09. From the late 19th century until World War II, the parade ground was also the site of the crack cavalry drills, led by such figures as Patton and Wainwright, for which Fort Myer was nationally-noted.

Today, bounded by U.S. Highway 50 on the west and Arlington National Cemetery on the east, the original Fort Myer complex is included in Zones 1, 2, and 3 of the North Post Area.

GPO 921-724

8. Significance: (1) Fort Myer Historic District

Weather Bureau during his tenure at Fort Whipple, and shortly after his death in 1880, the installation was commemoratively renamed Fort Myer.

In 1887, Fort Myer became a cavalry post, and construction began on new barracks and stables. The land to the south of the garrison structures, now the Fort Myer South Area and the Pentagon, was utilized as an experimental farm by the Department of Agriculture. With the decision at the turn of the century that Fort Myer should become a permanent army post, the extensive building program to which may be attributed the present aspect of the older portion of the fort was initiated.

Commodious senior officers' quarters appeared along Grant, Jackson, and Lee Avenues, and in 1908, five years after the position of Chief of Staff of the Army was created, Major General J. Franklin Bell became the first Chief of Staff to make his home at Fort Myer. He was succeeded by General Leonard Wood, who resided there from 1910 to 1914.

In the summer of 1908, before high military officials and thousands of spectators who flocked to Fort Myer, Orville Wright demonstrated the use of his flying machine in an attempt to convince the Army of its combat possibilities. On September 3, Wright kept his craft aloft for a full minute and 11 seconds in the first test flight. But two weeks later, a second flight ended disastrously when the airplane, bearing Wright and Lieutenant Thomas Selfridge, crashed after a four minute flight, near one of the gates to Arlington Cemetery, about half a mile south of the take-off point on the parade ground. Selfridge was killed and Wright injured. In June of 1909, Wright returned with an improved model of his aircraft. On July 31, he completed more than a month of preliminary test flights at Fort Myer by flying from the parade ground to Alexandria, five miles away, with his passenger, Lieutenant Benjamin D. Foulois. Two days later, the Army accepted Wright's plan as the first American military aircraft.

Although Fort Myer hosted numerous dignitaries during the First World War, the post did not become the scene of major military activity. But it was there, in 1920, that General John F. Pershing was decorated by the Government of France in gratitude for his leadership in achieving an Allied victory. In the two decades between the wars, Fort Myer continued to function primarily as a cavalry post under such distinguished commanders as General George S. Patton and Jonathan M. Wainwright. The cavalry was discontinued at the beginning of World War II, and today Fort Myer houses several elite military units such as the 3rd Infantry Regiment ("The Old Guard")--a famous adjunct of official Washington, and the Army Band and Chorus.

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8. Significance: (2) Fort Myer Historic District

Today, a memorial plaque at the edge of the parade ground attests to the aeronautical significance of events at Fort Myer. Most of the structures composing the historic ambiance survive, and Quarters 1 itself remains outwardly little-changed. Piecemeal encroachment of new facilities however, and alteration of many of the older post structures, have somewhat despoiled the original post area.

Form 10-300a
(July 1969)

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INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

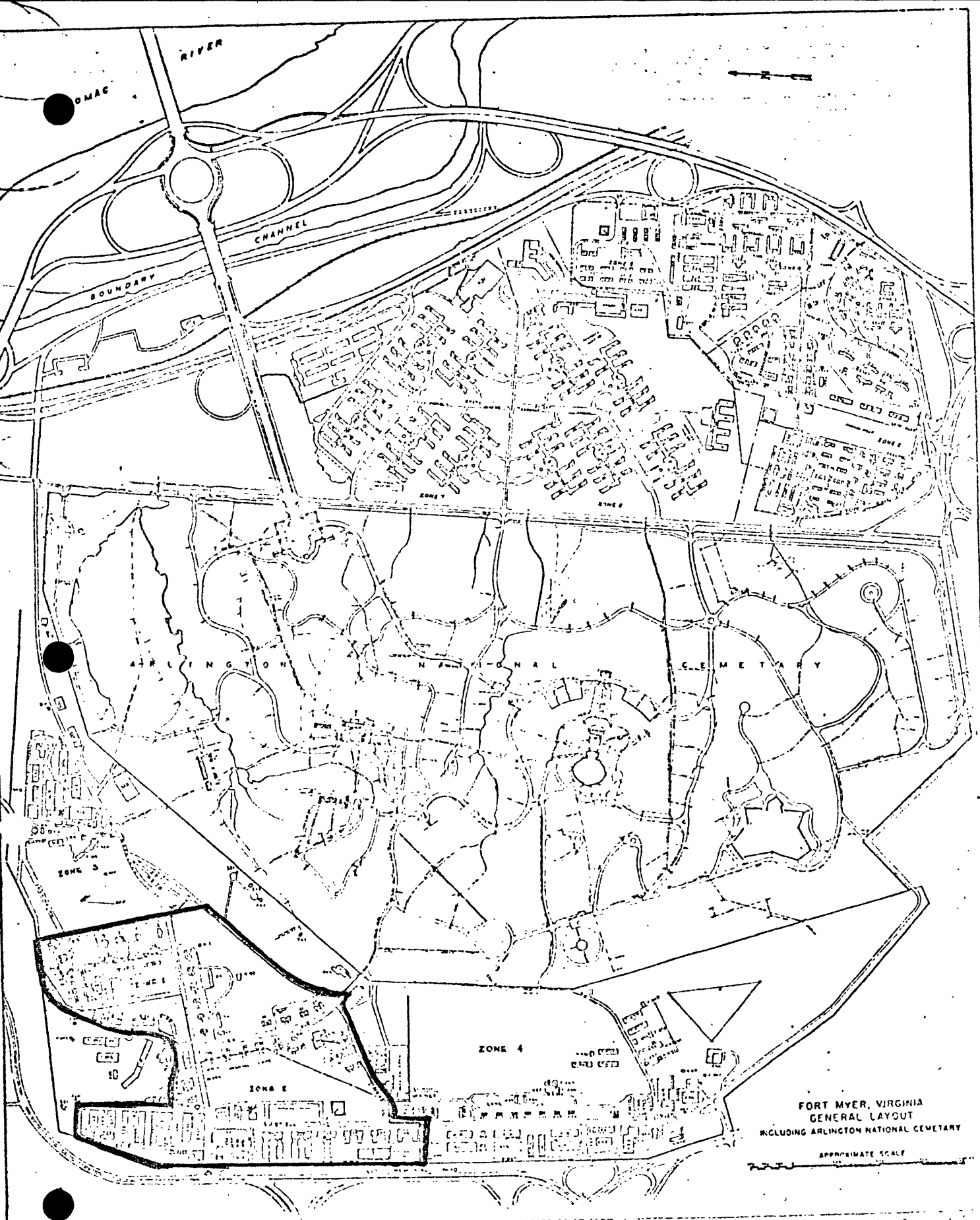
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ST	Virginia
COUNTY	Arlington
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

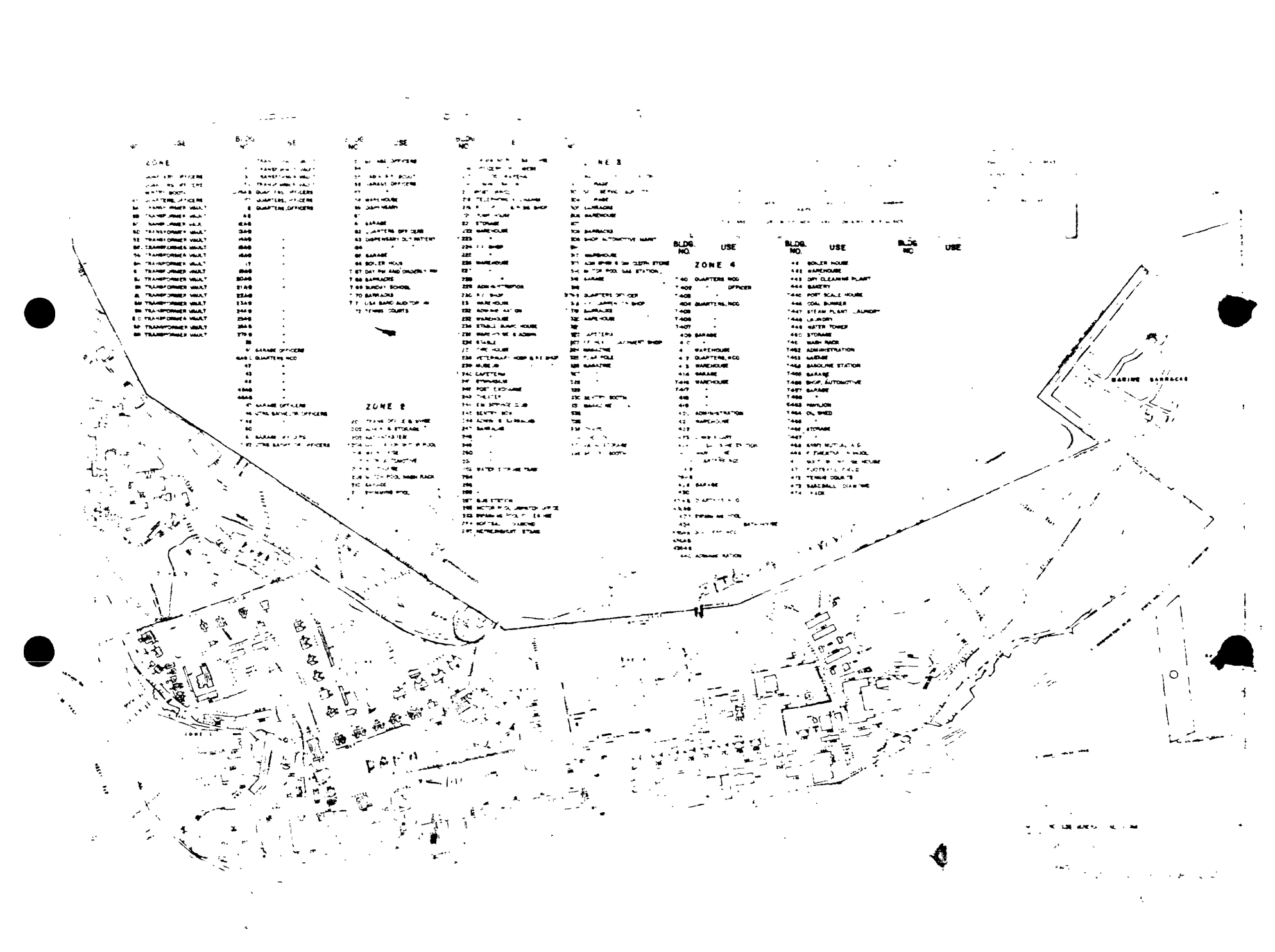
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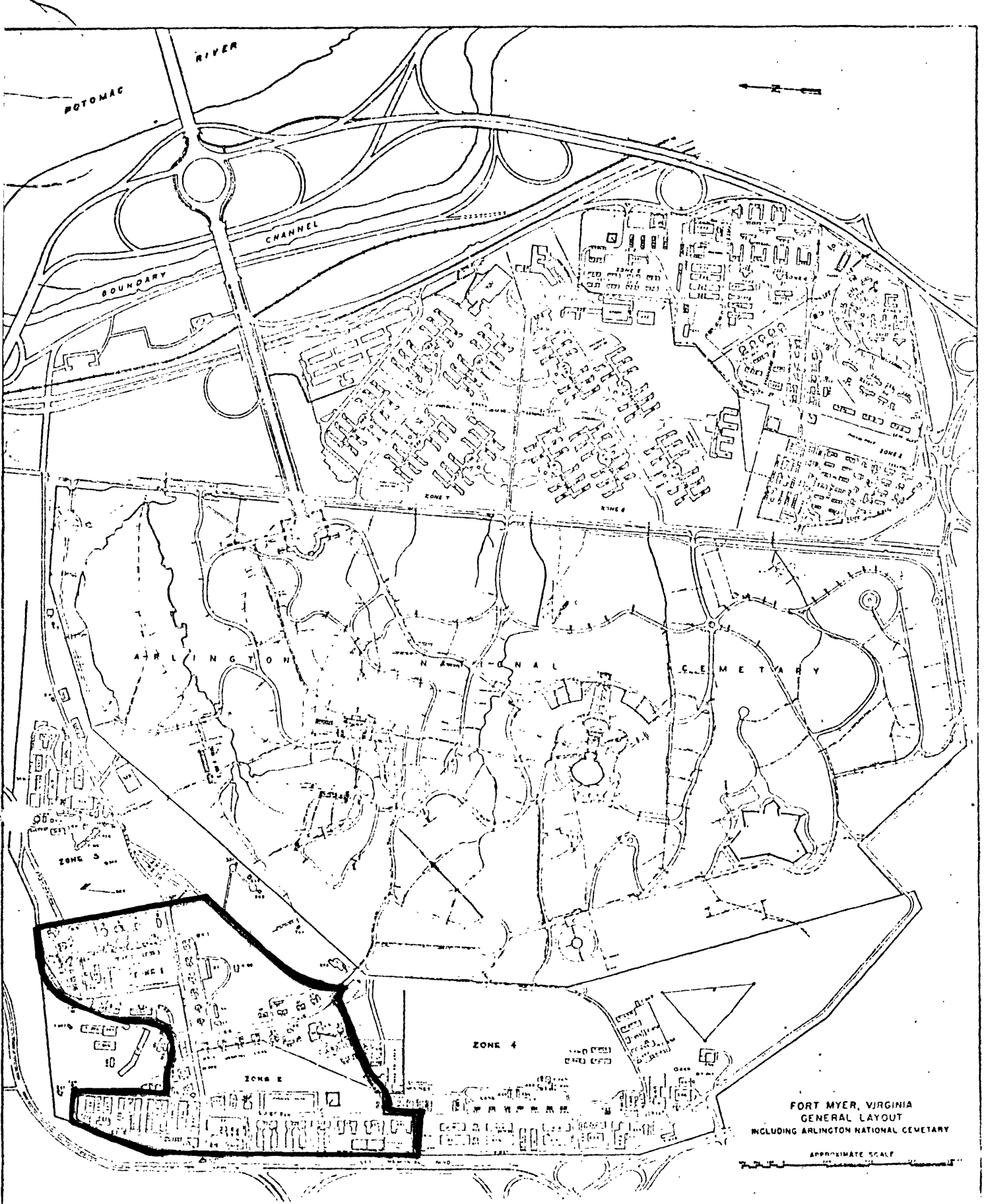
FORT MYER HISTORIC DISTRICT

Boundaries: Beginning at the intersection of Jackson and Grant Avenues, thence north along the east side of Grant Avenue to its juncture with Washington Avenue thence northeast along Washington to and including the Tassin Gates at the north end of the street; thence west and south along the north side of Custer Road to Building 201, and along the rear of this building and the others facing Custer Road, to Forrest Circle; thence north around the circle, circumscribing the stables and the firehouse, to the western boundary of the post; thence south along this boundary as far as the south side of Building 250 extended; thence east along the south side of Building 250 to Sheridan Avenue; thence north along Sheridan to its intersection with Pelham Road at the south end of the parade ground; thence east along Pelham to the southeast corner of the parade ground; thence along the south side of the old Radar Clinic to Lee Avenue; thence southeast on Lee Avenue to its intersection with McNair Road; thence northeast along McNair Road to Grant Avenue extended; thence north to the point of beginning.

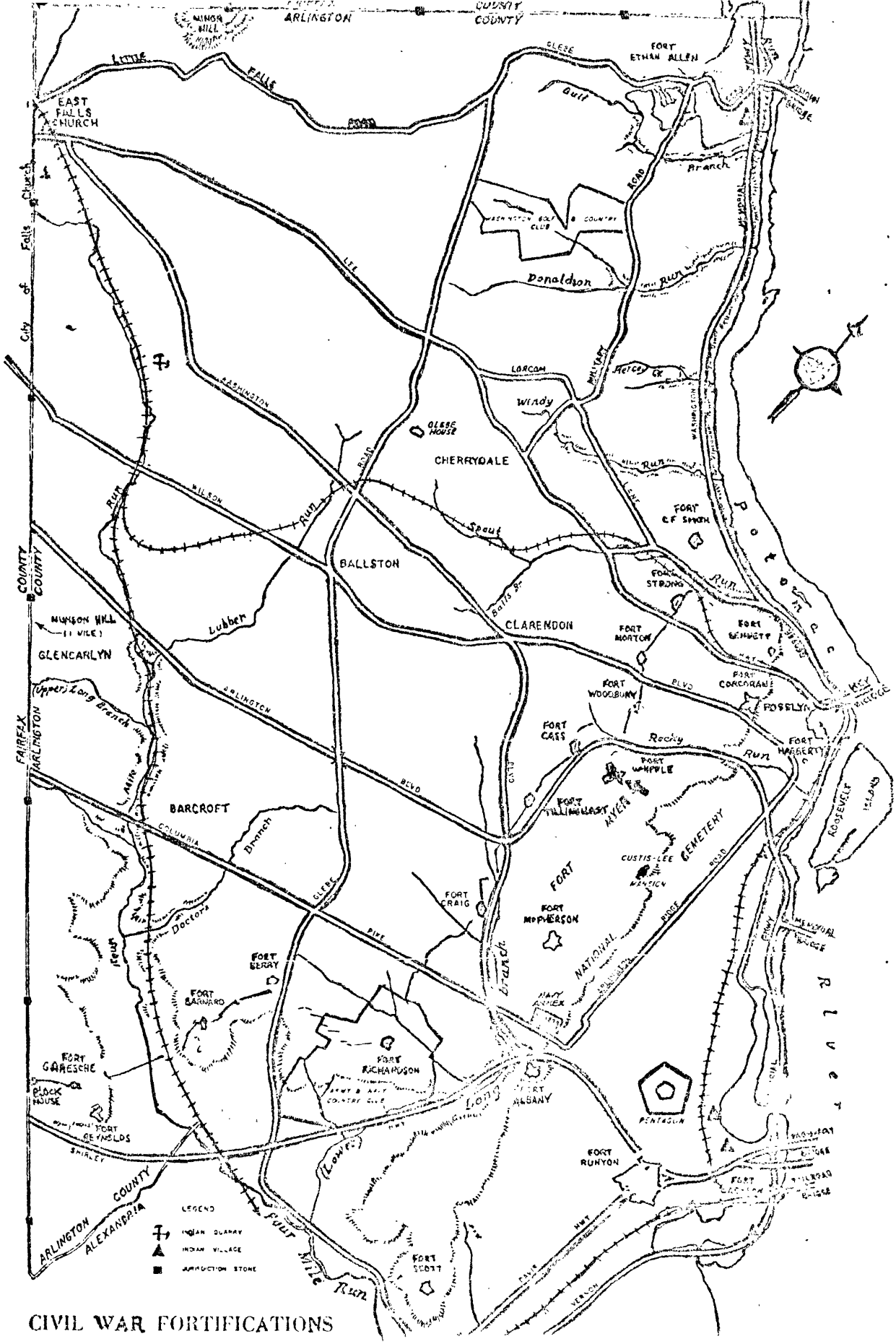


ANNEX II (Maps of Fort Myer, General Layout and North and South Areas) to GO Number 20, Fort Myer, Virginia, 1960





ANNEX II (Maps of Fort Myer, General Layout and North and South Areas) to GO Number 20, Fort Myer, Virginia, 1960



CIVIL WAR FORTIFICATIONS

and QUARRY SITES

in

ARLINGTON COUNTY