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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

1. Name of Property

historic name N/A
other names/site number Fort Mill Ridge Civil War Trenches (preferred), Fort Mill Ridge Wildlife Management Area

2. Location

street & number Fort Mill Ridge Road not for publication
city or town Romney vicinity
state West Virginia code WV county Hampshire code 027 zip code 26757

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination
request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic
Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets
does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant
 nationally statewide locally (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Susan M. Pierce 12/2/13
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See Continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

- I hereby certify that the property is:
- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet
 - determined eligible for the National Register.
 See continuation sheet
 - determined not eligible for the National Register
 - removed from the National Register.
 - other, (explain:)

Edson H. Beall 1.22.14
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property		
		Contributing	Noncontributing	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	0	0	buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	0	0	sites
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	1	1	structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> structure	0	0	objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	1	1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

Current Functions

DEFENSE: fortification

RECREATION AND CULTURE: outdoor recreation

7. Description

Architectural Classification

Materials

none

foundation Earth

walls Earth

roof N/A

other N/A

Narrative Description

See Continuation Sheets

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B.** removed from its original location.
- C.** birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance:

See Continuation sheets

Levels of Significance (local, state, national)

Local

Areas of Significance

Military

Engineering

Period of Significance

1863

Significant Dates

1863

Significant Person

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

4th Brigade, US Army/54th Pennsylvania Regiment

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- Previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

WV State Historic Preservation Office

Record # HM-0102

Fort Mill Ridge Civil War Trenches
Name of Property

Hampshire County, West Virginia
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 201 acres

UTM References

1
Zone Easting Northing
2

3
Zone Easting Northing
4

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See Continuation Sheets

Boundary Justification

See Continuation Sheets

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Sandra Scaffidi, Historian
organization Mills Group date July 23, 2013
street & number 206 High Street telephone 304-296-1010
city or town Morgantown state WV zip code 26505

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location
- A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

- Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.
- CD with electronic images if digital photographs.

Floorplans for individual listings

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Property Owner

name West Virginia Department of Natural Resources (WV DNR)
street & number 324 4th Avenue
city or town South Charleston WV 25303

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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Narrative Description¹

The Fort Mill Ridge Civil War Trenches are located on the eastern side of Mill Creek Mountain approximately two miles southwest of the town of Romney (Figure 1). The watershed-defined landscape consists of high mountain peaks carved by the Mill Creek, Cove Run and the South Branch of the Potomac River. The Ridge consists of porous sandstone bedrock which, in addition to the windswept terrain, offers a hostile environment to host agriculture.

Fort Mill Ridge Civil War Trenches are situated on a bluff approximately 400 feet above the South Branch of the Potomac River on Mill Creek Mountain.² The rural area is heavily forested with deciduous trees which create a thick blanket of fallen leaves along the trenches. It is located south of U.S. Route 50, once known as the Northwest Turnpike. This east-west passage was an important trading route after its development in 1830 and gained even more prominence during the territorial struggles during the Civil War. The site is currently known as the Fort Mill Ridge Wildlife Management Area and is overseen by the WV Department of Natural Resources and the Fort Mill Ridge Foundation. A paved road leads from Core Road east up a steep drive to a flat, asphalt parking area north of the interpreted site. The road continues northeast as a hard dirt path traveling downhill ending at the edge of the river. The road and parking area are collectively considered a noncontributing structure.

As illustrated on the accompanying map (Figure 5), the National Register boundary for the Fort Mill Ridge Trenches includes the central redoubt, earthwork trenches, and immediate forested area and its features. The interpreted site includes the oblong earthwork structure with three outer rings, serving as entrenchments, and a central redoubt surrounded by a traverse, ditch, and parapet. The shape of the fort and the steep topography indicates that the largest threat from attack was assumed to be from the south, though it also provided protection against threats from the east.

The area overlooks the Mechanicsburg Gap to the west and the South Branch of the Potomac River to the east. The fortification overlooks U.S. Route 50 (formerly the Northwestern Turnpike), - and River Road, which runs north/south along the east side of the Potomac River. Although the view shed is not included in the boundary, it is an important element in understanding and defining the historical significance of the redoubt and trenches.

¹ Unless otherwise noted, the vast majority of the property description was derived directly from the draft report, John Milner and Associates, *Wayside Signage for Fort Mill Ridge, Hampshire County, WV*. On file, Hampshire County Planning Commission, Romney, WV, 1998.

² On historic maps, this mountain has been referenced as South Branch Mountain (Hotchkiss c. 1861, Shaw c. 1862). Later maps (Meig's c. 1864) indicate that the South Branch Mountain was located east of the South Branch River and do not name the subject mountain. For consistency, the modern name of "Mill Creek Mountain" is used throughout this nomination when referencing the location of Fort Mill Ridge.

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The trenches and redoubt are located approximately 500 feet south of the parking area and are surrounded by a second or third growth forest consisting of deciduous trees. The centrally located square redoubt is approximately 90 feet in length with an interior dimension of approximately 50 feet (Photograph 1). At each corner, a bastion extends outward to offer additional protection by allowing soldiers to protect every flank. The redoubt is accessed by an entrance on the north elevation cut into the fortification. Two openings for canons (called embrasures) are located on the east, west and south elevations and are approximately 21 feet apart. The flat, open area in the center of the redoubt (the terre-parade plein), would have housed the troops and the artillery. Currently, the terre-parade plein is covered in gravel and surrounded by a split rail fence (Photograph 2). On the west side of the redoubt, a modern pressure-treated wood platform is ready to display cannon (at a future date) at the northwest embrasure (Photograph 4). The elevated position of the redoubt allowed an unobstructed view of the Mechanicsburg Gap. Because of the small size of the redoubt, it does not appear that the structure had a powder magazine which would have been typical of a forward fortification (Figure 4).

Surrounding the redoubt is a parapet wall made of rammed earth, measuring approximately 5 feet in height (Photograph 3). It is currently covered by moss and has several trees growing out of its walls. A ditch is located at the base of the parapet which allowed soldiers to protect the fort while also serving as an obstacle to the advancing enemy. Currently, the ditch is approximately four feet in depth and is covered by decaying leaves.

The centrally located redoubt is surrounded by three rings of entrenchments which are laid in an irregular oval shape with dimensions of approximately 680 feet by 360 feet (Photographs 5 and 6). The irregular, angular features on the eastern and western ends of the entrenchments offered the encamped soldiers the ability to create a cross-fire scenario to protect the redoubt. The outer entrenchments were also connected to the central redoubt by a straight, east-west trench. These trenches vary in depth but are approximately 3-4 feet in depth and 11-18 feet in width. A graveled path within the entrenchments allows visitors to walk through the site and learn about its history through interpretive signage.

The property outside of the interpreted area includes a number of additional features. It is unknown if any of the features were associated with the Civil War site or if they existed during the period of significance. Further, some of the features may be naturally occurring.³ For example, approximately 1700 feet northeast of the outer entrenchments is a crescent-shaped earthen feature that faces east across the valley toward the river. It measures approximately 60 feet in length, 30 feet in width, and 6 inches in height (Photograph 8).⁴ Nearby

³ This nomination discusses the features identified in the John Milner report as features of the overall property and setting since their association with the 1863 Civil War site is not currently evident. However, their future potential eligibility is not precluded since additional information or archaeological investigation may reveal significance.

⁴ Though this feature is referenced as the "Lower Battery" in the John Milner report, it is unknown if the feature is naturally occurring or if it was associated with the Fort Mill Ridge earthworks. However, the George Tyler Moore Center for the Study of

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are several oval-shaped piles of stones, including several between 5 and 8 feet in diameter and one approximately 12 feet in diameter (Photograph 9). Two additional piles, approximately 16 feet in diameter are located near the Parallel Road Trace (Photograph 12).

A small ditch (Photograph 10) is situated within approximately 130 feet of this feature and may be naturally occurring. Another depression, possibly a pond depression, is located approximately 150 feet south of the outer entrenchment and is 120 feet long, 180 feet wide, and approximately 4-5 feet deep (Photograph 7). An earthen platform approximately 93 feet by 50 feet by 99 feet by 36 feet is located south of the pond depression. This platform is cut into the landscape on the east, south and west elevations with the north elevation dropping 8 feet.

Fort Mill Ridge is reached by a modern, asphalt paved road that continues from Core Road to the crest of the ridge culminating in a rectangular-shaped, modern parking lot. The lot is approximately 170 feet by 100 feet wide and is covered in asphalt paving material (Photographs 15 and 16). The property also includes several earthen pathways. Ridgeline Road Trace extends from Mill Meadow on the northern face of the mountain along the ridgeline to the southern side of the mountain. A deep carved track leads the trail up the western face of the mountain approximately 8 feet in width. This trace may have been in existence in 1864 as it was referenced on Lieutenant Miegs' map of the area. The modern access road cuts through this trace (Photograph 13). Yankee Path is located on the west side of Fort Mill Ridge and extends approximately 1600 feet. This road extends from the modern access road to the Ridgeline Road Trace. Along the Yankee Path trail is a large bolder-lined ditch (Photograph 14). Parallel Road parallels the Ridgeline Road approximately 400 feet north from Yankee Path. This trace is approximately 2,000 feet in length. East Side Trace begins at Mill Meadow and winds up the east side of the mountain and turns south towards the river. The modern access road cuts across this path. (Photograph 11).⁵

The Fort Mill Ridge earthworks are collectively counted as one contributing structure while the modern-constructed parking lot and road are counted as one noncontributing structure. Other described features of the site, which may be natural, are included as part of the overall setting.

the Civil War at Shepherd College (currently Shepherd University) found a .54 or .58 caliber bullet in the embankment and a .69 caliber bullet was found approximately 20 feet south of the feature.

⁵ The names of the pathways and traces were taken from the John Milner report and may or may not represent historic names of the features.

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STATEMENT of SIGNIFICANCE

Fort Mill Ridge Civil War Trenches are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A: Military for its local and state association with the Civil War in Hampshire County, West Virginia. The site is also eligible for listing under Criterion C: Engineering as the fort is an excellent example of a rammed earth fortification constructed during the Civil War to protect important transportation routes.⁶ The Period of Significance is 1863, the approximate date of construction and occupation.

Fort Mill Ridge retains its integrity of location, association, setting and feeling situated high above the Northwestern Turnpike overlooking the Potomac River and Mechanicsburg Gap. The original design, workmanship and materials of the fort remain which provide insight into the construction techniques of mid-19th century American military defense fortifications. The topography and setting of the trenches are an important element of the resource.

HISTORY

Hampshire County became a crossroads during the Civil War. Originally part of Virginia, the county seat of Romney became a prize as it was located adjacent to several important transportation links including the Northwest Turnpike and the B&O Railroad in nearby New Creek. Both of these avenues were the key to controlling the northern and western supply routes, thus favoring the outcome of several important battles. As such, the town of Romney reportedly switched hands between the Federal and Confederate troops nearly 56 times.⁷

The Northwestern Turnpike (U.S. Route 50) travels through the Mechanicsburg Gap, a narrow mountain pass cut by the Mill Creek.⁸ This important road oftentimes was at the center of skirmishes as both Confederate and Federal troops understood its strategic importance. Another topographic feature of great importance was the Mill Creek Mountain through which the Northwest Turnpike traveled. From this mountain outpost, soldiers could view the Mechanicsburg Gap to the west and the South Branch of the Potomac River and Romney to the east.

On October 26, 1861, Federal troops tried to take Romney with Brigadier General Benjamin Kelley attempting to attack from the west. According to accounts, the troops were able to travel through the

⁶ Fort Mill Ridge is not being considered at this time for the potential archaeological significance of the Redoubt, Trenches, Lower Battery, East Side Trace, Parallel Road, Yankee Path, Yankee Path Entrenchment, or the Ridgeline Road Trace, however, archaeological significance of the sites is not precluded.

⁷ Richard Sauers, *The Devastating Hand of War: Romney, WV During the Civil War* (Glen Farris: Gauley Mount Press, 2000), 9. Later research provided by Dr. Richard Sauers proved that while opposing forces rode through the city, the town was only occupied nine times.

⁸ The Mechanicsburg Gap was also sometimes referred to as the Mill Creek Gap named after the waterway that ran through the gap. For consistency's sake, the term "Mechanicsburg Gap" is used throughout this nomination.

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Mechanicsburg Gap without resistance. It appeared that Confederate defensive measures continued to be held at the Indian Mound Cemetery, east of the South Branch of the Potomac but on the western outskirts of town.⁹ The Union Army, however, saw the strategic advantage of the Mechanicsburg Gap and its location approximately one mile west of the Confederate outpost at the cemetery. General Kelley, US Army, noted that the Mechanicsburg Gap was “a position of natural strength of which is unsurpassed by any other in the country.”¹⁰ It may have been this notion that caused the Federal troops to later occupy Mill Creek Mountain, construct fortifications, and use this area as their primary location to defend the region.

Where the Federal troops saw opportunity in the topography of the mountain pass, the Confederates saw danger. In his letter to Brigadier General W. W. Loring, Confederate Chief Engineer S. M. Barton described the landscape around Mechanicsburg Gap (January 1862). It read:

Defenses- on the left front, a pass, through which Mill Creek runs. This is a narrow and tortuous part of the road, half a mile long, and ending at Mechanicsburg, 3 ½ miles from Romney. The pass is difficult to defend, the approach from the west offering no obstruction to the enemy, but affording them cover; it can also be turned on the south by a road practicable for artillery. It would be dangerous, therefore, to use artillery in or beyond this pass. . . . The road through this pass is at the base of a precipice on the right and on the bank of a deep stream on the left, straight 800 yards in length and enfiladed by our guns, the mountain in our possession commands all neighboring heights. . . . To secure our flanks and rear, a large number of scouting parties and pickets are required. For a small force, this point is indefensible. For a large one, (say 20,000), it could be made a strong position.¹¹

Because of the rough terrain, organized battles were not practical near Romney and both the Federal troops and Confederates adapted their techniques to the topography. Two groups formed and brought fear into the region and caused havoc on the organized troops: Ringold's Calvary and McNeill's Rangers.

Ringold's Calvary was an independent militia unit from western Pennsylvania that fell under the command of John Keys. Formed during the Mexican War, the group continuously drilled in preparation of future hostilities. This group operated without an official outfit until it was reorganized in 1863 as the 22nd Pennsylvania Calvary, Company A.¹² McNeill's Rangers were a Confederate outfit headed by Captain John McNeill, a Moorefield native (Hardy County). Although technically part of the 18th Virginia Calvary, the Rangers were known to act independently as guerillas, raiding and terrorizing the Union troops.¹³ As small Union outfits foraged for food and supplies, the Rangers would take advantage of the isolated soldiers and attack.

⁹ Thomas M Rankin, *Stonewall Jackson's Romney Campaign, January 1-February 20, 1862* (Lynchburg, Virginia: H.E. Howard, 1994), 41.

¹⁰ US Department of War, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1881), 379. Hereafter referred as Official Records.

¹¹ Official Records, 1046-48, 1054-56.

¹² Richard Pitts, “An Education for Civil War Militia Cavalry: The Ringgold Cavalry Company in the Alleghenies, June to November, 1861”. <http://www.militaryhistoryonline.com/civilwar/articles/ringgoldcavalry.aspx> accessed 3/19/2013.

¹³ Sauer, 48.

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These two units constantly scouted over the terrain and caused mayhem for their opponents. Romney and the Northwest Turnpike became a sought after prize causing the regular armies to direct efforts to secure the region. The newspapers at the time even poked fun at the brazen attackers and soldiers who found themselves captured by the enemy. The *Wheeling Intelligencer* published an editorial from New Creek regarding the capture of 16 Federal wagons and approximately 80 horses by the McNeill Rangers, writing:

when will our men learn wisdom? Only last week as they were fully aware McNeill threatened them near the same point, and yet with a battalion of cavalry in camp idle, such a disgraceful occurrence as this take place is it is too bad. This McNeill should be taken as an example by our men. He is doing his party vastly more service with less than fifty men that the whole Keys Battalion is doing the Government.¹⁴

Exasperation gives way to anger as the article ends, "Why is this? Who is at fault? Not the men surely. Verily at this rate we shall keep the rebels supplied with horses for some time."¹⁵

On March 3, 1863, the 54th Pennsylvania, led by Colonel Jacob M. Campbell, was transferred to Romney. In addition, Campbell also assumed leadership of the 1st (West) Virginia and Battery E, 1st (West) Virginia Light Artillery.¹⁶ This unit's major goal was to protect the region against the continued raiding of McNeill's Rangers.

The troops originally camped on the northeast side of Romney where General Washburn's troops were previously located. In order to take advantage of the natural defenses of the Mill Creek Mountain, Campbell decided to "move the forces from Romney to east end of Mechanicsburg Gap" as noted in his personal diary.¹⁷ Private Joshua Winters confirmed this move by writing (phonetically) in his diary that on Monday, March 16. "We moved our camp today three miles from Romney on the New Crick rode at the end of MacCanicksvill Gap [sic]."¹⁸

In addition to the atmospheric conditions, which were not favorable, the troops had to deal with poisonous snakes they nicknamed "blowing vipers."¹⁹ Winters mentions that the troops raised their tents up on pickets and puntions [sic], inevitably to protect against the elements.²⁰ Trees from the adjacent ridge were cut to provide lumber and firewood for the growing encampment. As Private Winters explained, "we was hauling

¹⁴ *Wheeling Intelligencer*, February 20, 1863.

¹⁵ *Wheeling Intelligencer*, February 20, 1863.

¹⁶ Sauer, 50.

¹⁷ Jacob Campbell Papers, West Virginia and Regional Collection. West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV.

¹⁸ Elizabeth Davis Swigar, *Civil War Letters and Diaries of Joshua Winters: A Private in the Union Army Company G, First Western Virginia Volunteer Infantry*, McClain Printing Company, Parsons, West Virginia, 1991, 61.

¹⁹ Charles J. Rawling, *History of the First Regiment Virginia Infantry* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1887), 142 as found in Sauer, 51.

²⁰ Swigar, 61.

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timber off of the hill to fix our tents.”²¹ This new camp was located on the north side of the Northwest Turnpike and the Mill Ridge Mountain.

In addition to relocating the camp, Campbell may have also ordered the construction of fortifications on the ridge of Mill Creek Mountain. This mountaintop allowed a commanding view west toward the Mechanicsburg Gap and east toward the South Branch and Romney. First, the team needed to construct a road up the steep mountain (on the north elevation), which began on March 17. Soon thereafter, six, three-inch ordnance rifles were placed on the ridge to protect the slope.²² By March 24, 1863, Private Joshua Winters wrote that he was “on gard [sic] at the battery tonight. It rained all eaving [sic] and all night.”²³

Soldiers from the 54th worked throughout the wet spring to construct the earthwork structure; digging trenches and building parapets to protect soldiers against possible attack. Private Winters mentioned on June 6, 1863, that they “are about dun [sic] with the fort and the intrenchments [sic], then our deuty [sic] won’t bee [sic] so heavy.”²⁴ Although no official documentation names the defensive structure, Fort Mill Ridge appears to take its name from its location on Mill Creek Mountain’s ridge top.

At the start of the war, the United States only possessed 48 trained engineers within the US Army Corps of Engineers and 45 officers in the Corps of Topographical Engineers who possessed skills necessary to help transform the nation.²⁵ Congress authorized four companies of engineering battalions although they were never filled to capacity with qualified candidates. The Confederates also established a Corps of Engineers soon after the outbreak of the war, although its small size made it ineffective.²⁶ Those units without engineers used established publications to help them defend their efforts.

One of the most extensive reports on 19th century military defenses was written by D.H. Mahan, a professor of military engineering at the United States Military Academy at West Point. In 1836, Mahan wrote *A Treatise on Field Fortification, Containing Instructions on the Methods of Laying Out, Constructing, Defending and Attacking Intrenchments [sic], with the General Outlines Also of the Arrangement, the Attack and Defence [sic] of Permanent Fortifications*. This book, based on European precedents adapted for the United States, became the manual for understanding and implementing military tactics. The *Treatise* also was written for the common man and local militias who must “quit their peaceful avocations to meet the

²¹ Swigar, 61.

²² Sauers, 51.

²³ Swigar, 61.

²⁴ Swigar, 69.

²⁵ Earl J. Hess, *Field Armies and Fortifications in the Civil War, the Eastern Campaigns 1861-1864* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina 2005), 12. Eight of these engineers resigned at the outbreak of the war.

²⁶ Hess, 17.

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foe.”²⁷ As such, the book was republished several times over the ensuing decades and became an important read for both Confederate and Federal tacticians. Mahan’s book offered a complete “how-to” guide on how to design and construct protective structures. While adapted for topography, the Fort Mill Ridge site followed these instructions.

According to Mahan, the square redoubt is the most common form due to its ease of construction.²⁸ The trenches offered soldiers “protection from enemy fire; [were] an obstacle in themselves to the enemy’s progress and afford[ed] the assailed the means of using their weapons with effect.”²⁹

The design of Fort Mill Ridge shows that the troops were concerned not only about protecting the Gap to the west and the South Branch of the Potomac to the east, but also to protect themselves from a possible attack from the ridgeline along the top of Mill Creek Mountain.

The fort is surrounded by two entrenchments with a ditch and parapet placed in an oval shape approximately 680 feet long and 360 feet wide.³⁰ The east and west entrenchments are connected to a central redoubt by covered ways (also entrenchments) that extend from the east to the west in the approximate center of the fortification.

The square shaped redoubt had two depressions cut into the sides of the east, west and south elevations of the approximately 4 foot high parapet walls. These depressions, called embrasures, indicated the locations of the artillery cannons, which were approximately 21 feet apart. The parapet walls are assumed to be constructed of rammed earth due to the barren nature of the ridge top (Figure 3).³¹

The central redoubt was surrounded by a ditch or entrenchment from which the infantry would have defended the redoubt. The infantrymen located in the ditches would have to fight with cannon fire erupting overhead and the frontal assault of the enemy. Mahan explained that an additional benefit of the entrenchments included causing the enemy to fatigue as he is fighting his way into the fort.³² The angle of the ditch and parapet also aim to slow the assault of the enemy.

²⁷ Dennis Hart Mahan, *A Treatise on Field Fortification, Containing Instructions on the Methods of Laying Out, Constructing, Defending and Attacking Intrenchments [sic], with the General Outlines Also of the Arrangement, the Attack and Defence [sic] of Permanent Fortifications* (Wiley and Putnam: New York, 1836) xi.

²⁸ Mahan, 13.

²⁹ Mahan, 2.

³⁰ John Milner and Associates, 3-16.

³¹ No archaeological work has been completed to determine the composition of the parapet walls.

³² Mahan, 2.

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Because of the fear of the enemy flanking the defending troops, the fort was built to have small bastions to prevent against “dead space” where the enemy could hide.³³ These traverses both protect the soldiers inside the redoubt from artillery but also allow soldiers to defend themselves while firing at enemy attackers.³⁴

Within the central redoubt, the open area is quite small; approximately 50 feet in width. Battery E, 1st (West) Virginia Light Artillery possessed six, three inch rifled cannons that could propel approximately 10 pound ammunition between 300 and 1830 yards. Although these canons would have been very useful to protect the Gap and the River Road east of the South Branch, it would not easily protect against an assault up the steep mountainside. It is assumed that four cannons were situated inside the redoubt while two cannons would have been located in the lower battery.³⁵

Generally, the interior wall of the redoubt would have been fitted with wood planks to help minimize erosion and help fortify the earthwork, although archaeological research has not been conducted to evaluate if Fort Mill Ridge had a reinforced face.³⁶

The soldiers thought well of the newly erected fort as indicated by a letter from a soldier published in the Wheeling newspaper. M.H., a soldier with the First Virginia Regiment (US Army) wrote on June 1, 1863 that, “There has been a very good fort erected on Battery Hill [Mill Creek Mountain] which commands the safety of the post. Scouting parties are sent out almost every day, who bring in more or less prisoners. Yesterday, four were captured and brought into camp and now are at the Romney jail.”³⁷

Campbell’s men occupied Mill Creek Mountain from March until June 1863, and then returned from August to November 1863. Campbell’s last diary entry from November 6, 1863 read, “break camp at the Mechanicsburg Gap and march to Springfield, Virginia.”³⁸ Although skirmishes were fought in the area after the winter of 1863, no evidence has been uncovered to indicate that either the Federal or Confederate Armies utilized the fort after Campbell’s troops.

The steep embankment slowly overgrew with foliage and was forgotten. The Stump family (who owned the property from prior to the Civil War until its sale to the state) allowed the land to lay as fallow woods with no development or agricultural pursuits near the fortifications. In the mid-1980s, the property became opened to a failed land speculation venture which encouraged the development of the current access road. Later that decade, the Department of Natural Resources purchased the property and opened the fort to the public which has hastened the erosion and its decay.

³³ Mahan, 5.

³⁴ John Milner and Associates, 3-12.

³⁵ John Milner and Associates, 3-13.

³⁶ John Milner and Associates, 3-14.

³⁷ *Wheeling Intelligencer*, June 4, 1863.

³⁸ Jacob Campbell Papers.

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Presently, the Fort Mill Ridge Wildlife Management Area occupies the northern portion of the mountain and the fortifications fall within the 216 acre property.³⁹

AREAS of SIGNIFICANCE

The Fort Mill Ridge Trenches is recommended for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A: Military for its association with the military campaigns of western Virginia during the Civil War. Fort Mill Ridge represents the importance of taking advantage of topography to protect a strategic transportation route. As a result of this defensive position, Union soldiers were able to quickly travel and defend other important areas including Romney, the B&O stations at New Creek (modern day Keyser) and Cumberland as well as eastern cities such as Shepherdstown.

The structure is also recommended eligible under Criterion C: Engineering as an excellent example of a mid-19th century earthen fortification constructed during the Civil War. *A Treatise on Field Fortifications* by D.H. Mahan provided a blueprint for understanding and implementing defensive military tactics and offered a complete guide on how to design and construct protective structures. The *Treatise* also was written in such a way that common militiamen could understand and adapt the instructions for varying topographic needs.

Because of the nature of earthen fortifications, few entrenchments survive in West Virginia although several fortifications have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

- The Butcher Hill Historic District in Randolph County was listed on the NRHP in 1989. This district consists of a “V” shaped earthen trench approximately 3 feet in depth and 73 feet long. The Butcher Hill Historic District is significant as the site of a major Federal encampment/entrenchment.
- The Carnifex Ferry Battlefield in Nicholas County (listed on NRHP in 1973) has entrenchments and 150 rifle pits at the entrance of the park. The Union Civil War Fortifications (Braxton County) were listed on the NRHP in 1984 as part of the Bulltown MRA. In addition to the defensive trenches, the property historically also included blockhouses, a commissary and cavalry sheds.
- The Rich Mountain Battlefield (Randolph) was listed on the NRHP in 1990 and contains earthen fortifications and rifle pits. Fort Marrow in Randolph County was also listed on the NRHP for its fortifications (2010).
- Although not listed on the NRHP, Fort Mulligan located near Petersburg in Grant County serves as an excellent example of an intact entrenchment.

Each of the West Virginia fortifications listed on the NRHP adapted techniques from Professor D. H. Mahan’s *A Treatise on Field Fortifications*. The number of extant fortifications illustrate how important defensive earthen work structures were to the soldiers fighting in the rough terrain of western Virginia.

³⁹ Although the entire tax parcel is 216 acres, the region pertaining to this National Register Nomination is 201 acres.

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Earthwork forts were inexpensive, easily constructed and offered a measure of protection from projectiles. These important defensive qualities made trenches and redoubts a ubiquitous feature on both sides of the battle lines.

Fort Mill Ridge's fortifications, while seemingly simplistic, illustrate a common defensive maneuver that engineered the natural topography in order to protect both Federal and Confederate soldiers.

SUMMARY

The Fort Mill Ridge Trenches retain excellent integrity and illustrates the importance of the strategic location of the Mechanicsburg Gap in protecting the town of Romney as well as the Northwest Turnpike during the Civil War. The redoubt and trenches retain excellent integrity and signify the defensive fortifications constructed by the Union army during the Civil War. The traces, depressions, ditches and batteries throughout the ridge retain integrity. The integrity of the setting remains intact as the view of the Gap, the South Branch of the Potomac River and the old Northwest Turnpike remain. Additionally, the area retains much of its rural identity without modern intrusions interrupting the feeling or setting of the environment.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated boundaries of the Fort Mill Ridge Civil War Trenches are shown on Hampshire County Tax Map 07, parcel 07-26-52 (Figure 5) excluding the portion on the northwest side of the roadway where it stops at Core Road (Figure 6).

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The recommended National Register boundary follows the current tax parcel 07-26-52 excluding the portion on the northwest side of the roadway where it stops at Core Road and includes the land currently and historically associated with the fort during its period of significance. The western portion of the boundary was ended at Core Road because of the geographic and topographic disruption of the property by a modern road and bridge. The boundary includes the earthwork trenches, central redoubt, and the manmade and topographic features that may have been associated with the Fort Mill Ridge and the protection of the Mechanicsburg Gap during the Civil War. Although not included in the boundary, the view shed of the Mechanicsburg Gap and the 54th Pennsylvania encampment on the northwest side of the turnpike is an important element of this historic resource (Figure 7). The property boundary includes enough acreage to reflect the rural setting and ridgetop association of the fort.

UTM COORDINATES

A	17N 689654N	4354851E
B	17N 689972N	4355301E
C	17N 689861N	4355324E
D	17N 689929N	4355414E
E	17N 690150N	4355316E
F	17N 690421N	4355739E
G	17N 690641N	4355818E
H	17N 690857N	4356185E
I	17N 690969N	4356151E
J	17N 690807N	4355524E
K	17N 690360N	4354565E

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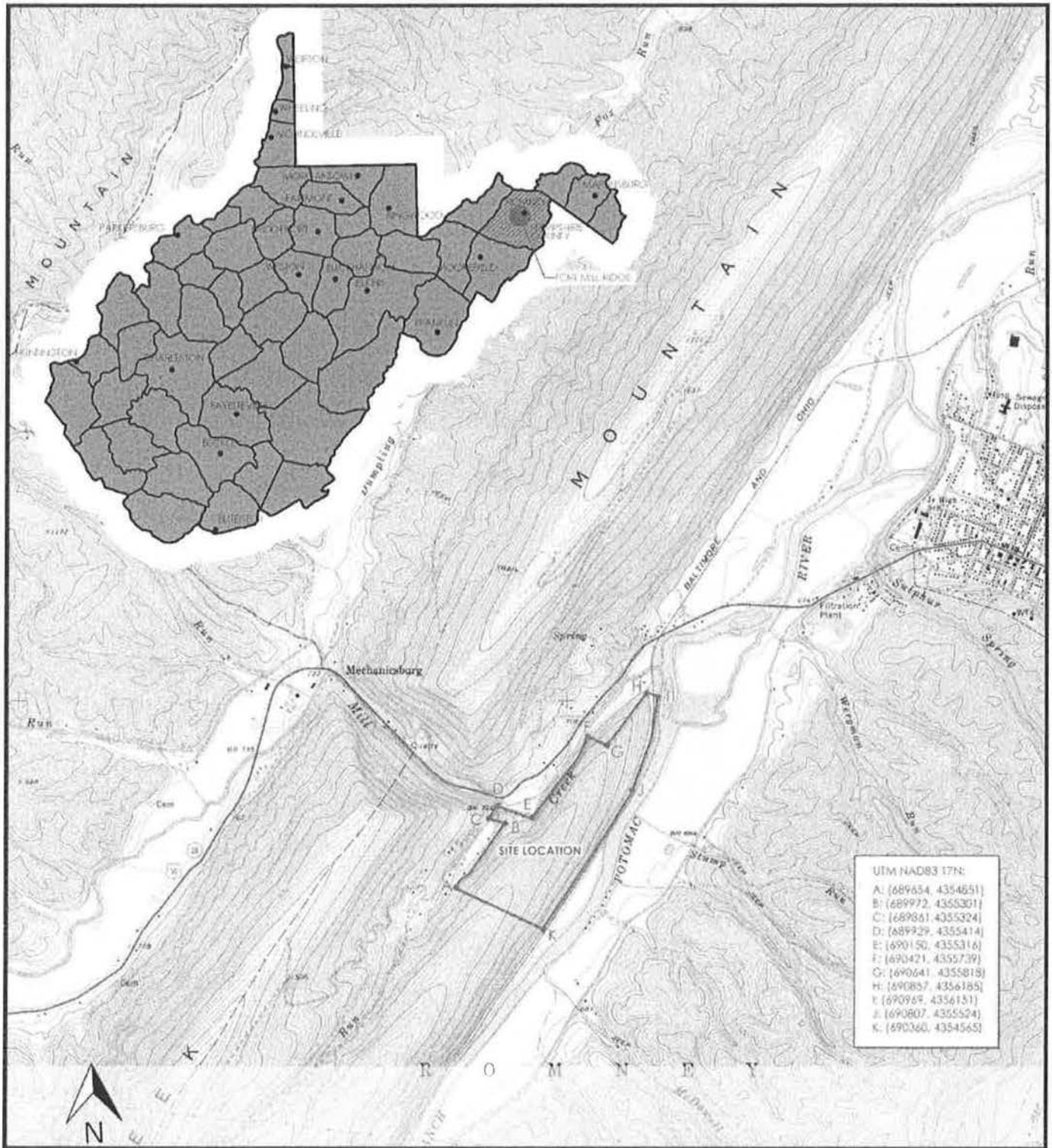
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PHOTOGRAPH LOG

Name of Property: Fort Mill Ridge Civil War Fortifications
Address: Fort Mill Ridge Road
Town: Romney Vicinity
County: Hampshire
Photographer: Vivian Neely and Sandra Scaffidi
Date Photographed: February 24 and March 23, 2013

Photo 1 of 16 Approach to the Redoubt, facing south
Photo 2 of 16 Interior of Redoubt, facing south
Photo 3 of 16 Parapet and Trench, facing east
Photo 4 of 16 Cannon embrasure, facing west toward Mechanicsburg Gap
Photo 5 of 16 Trench, facing southwest
Photo 6 of 16 Parapet wall along east elevation, facing northeast
Photo 7 of 16 Possible pond depression, facing east
Photo 8 of 16 Possible lower battery, facing south
Photo 9 of 16 Rock scatter near lower battery, facing west
Photo 10 of 16 Ditch (and possible latrine) facing south
Photo 11 of 16 Lower Trail facing northeast
Photo 12 of 16 Rock pile adjacent to lower trail, facing east
Photo 13 of 16 Ridgetop trail facing north
Photo 14 of 16 Yankee Trail facing west
Photo 15 of 16 Access Road facing uphill, facing south
Photo 16 of 16 Parking facility and access road, facing northeast

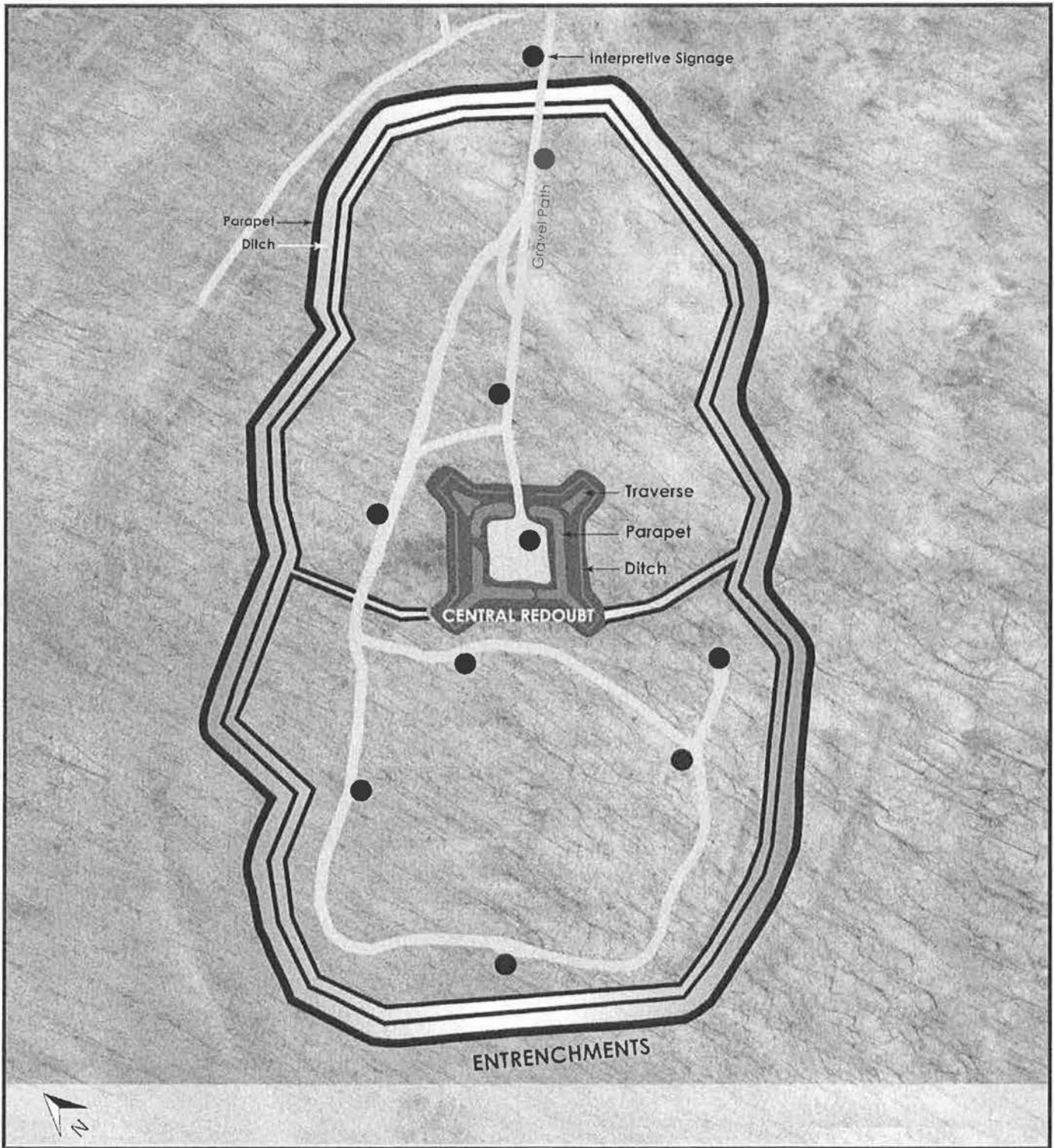


Scale: 1" = 3000'

Base Imagery from WVGIS.com



Figure 1
 Location Map
 Fort Mill Ridge Trenches
 Romney Vicinity, Hampshire County, West Virginia

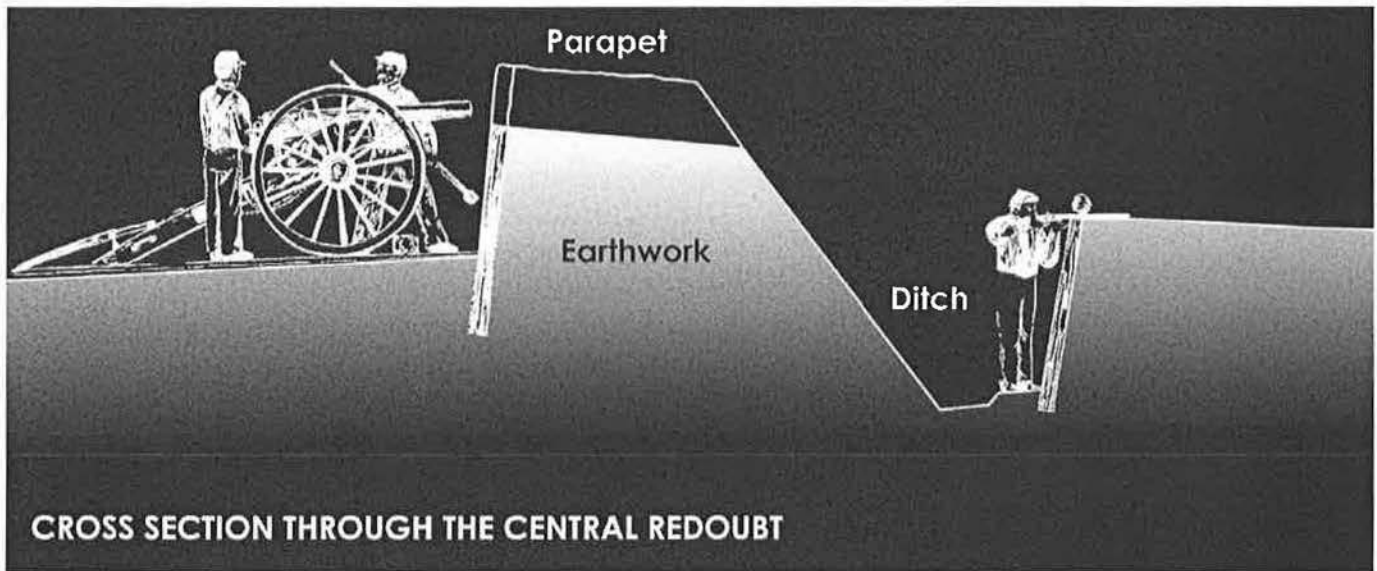


Scale: NTS

Base Imagry from WVGIS.com



Figure 2
Detail of Redoubt
Fort Mill Ridge Trenches
Romney Vicinity, Hampshire County, West Virginia



Imagry Adapted From the Fort Mill Ridge Brochure.

Created by the Fort Mill Ridge Foundation, John Milner and Associates, and General Graphics.



Figure 3
Cross Section of Central Redoubt
Fort Mill Ridge Trenches
Romney Vicinity, Hampshire County, West Virginia

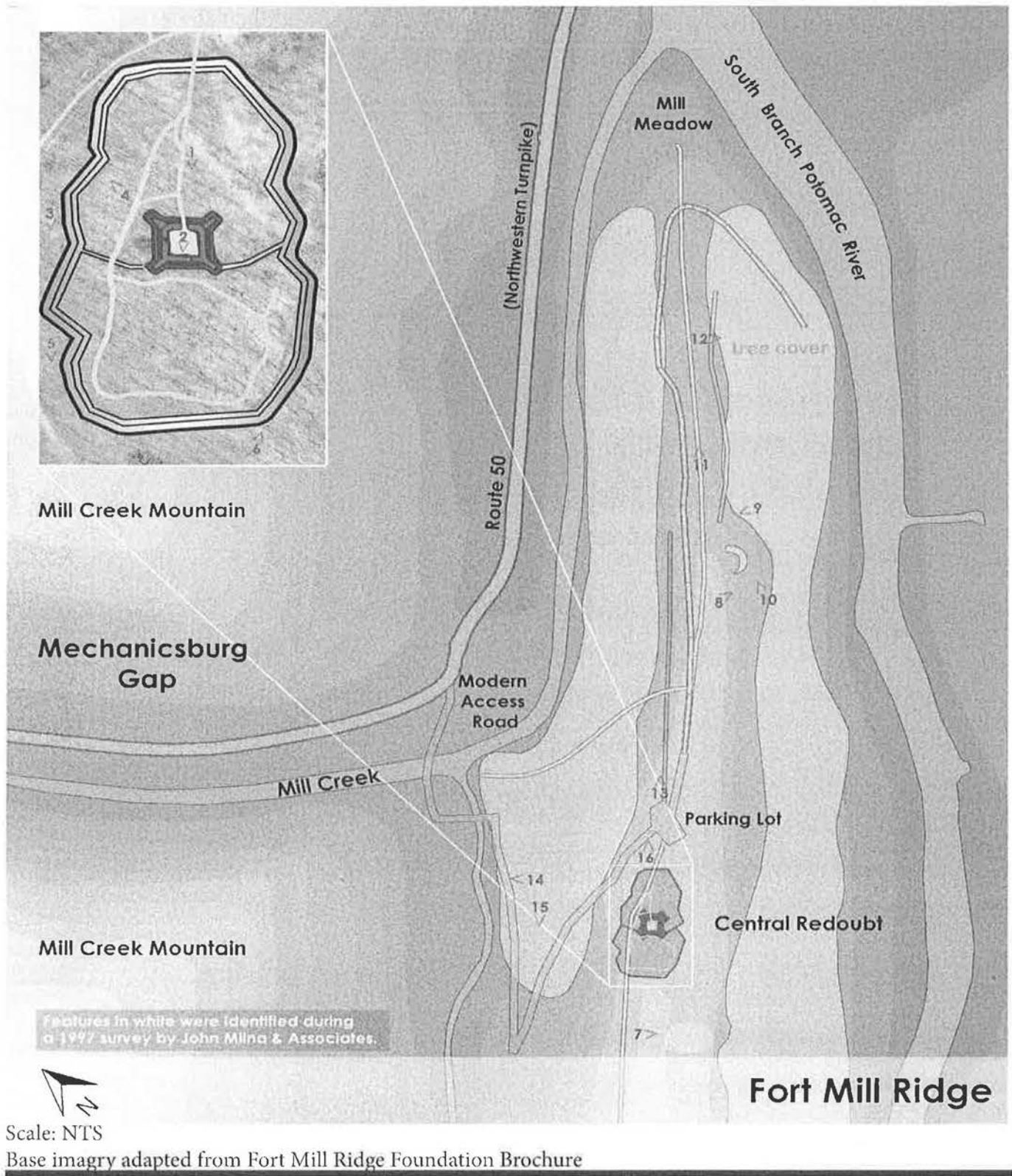
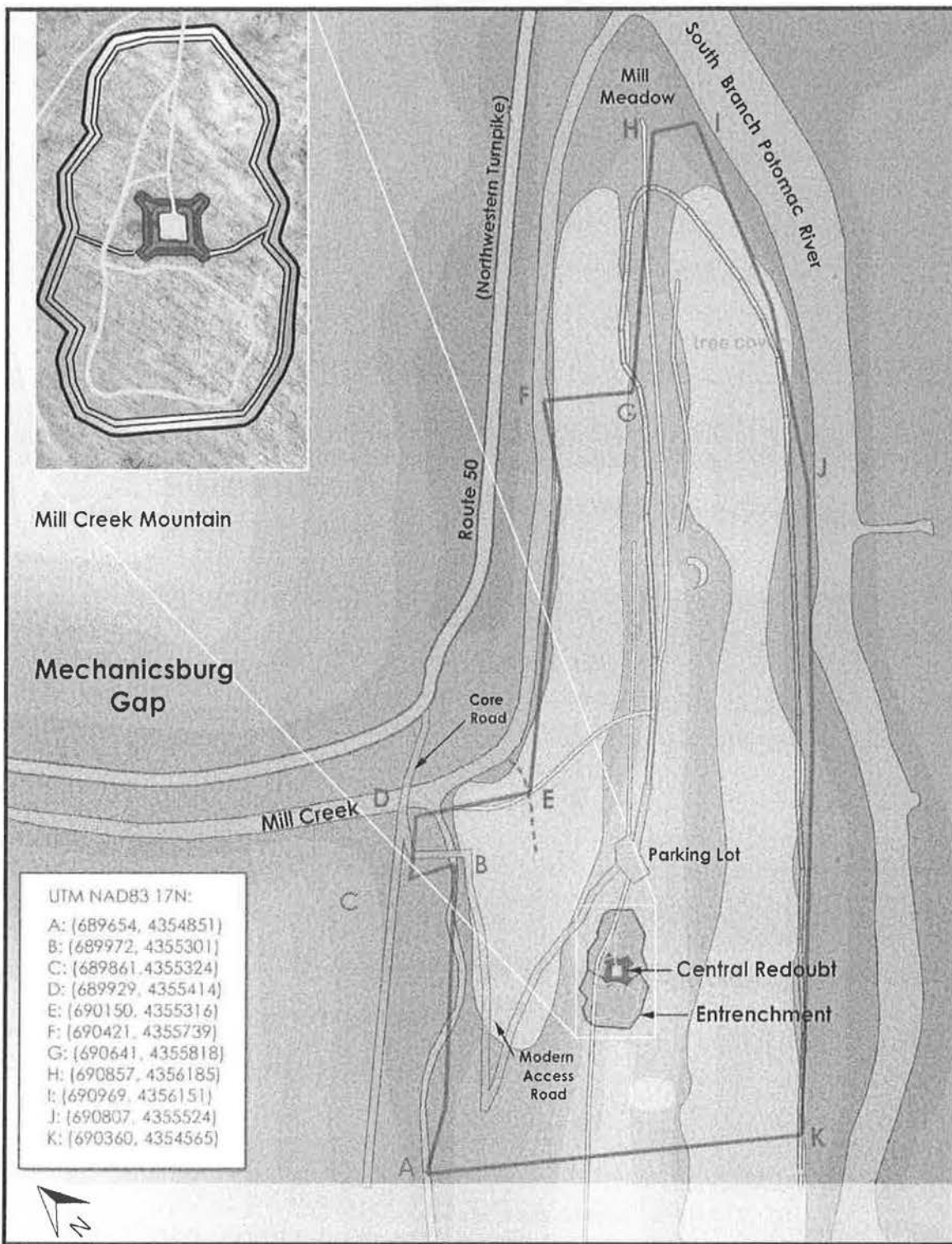


Figure 4
 Photo Location Map
 Fort Mill Ridge Trenches
 Romney Vicinity, Hampshire County, West Virginia

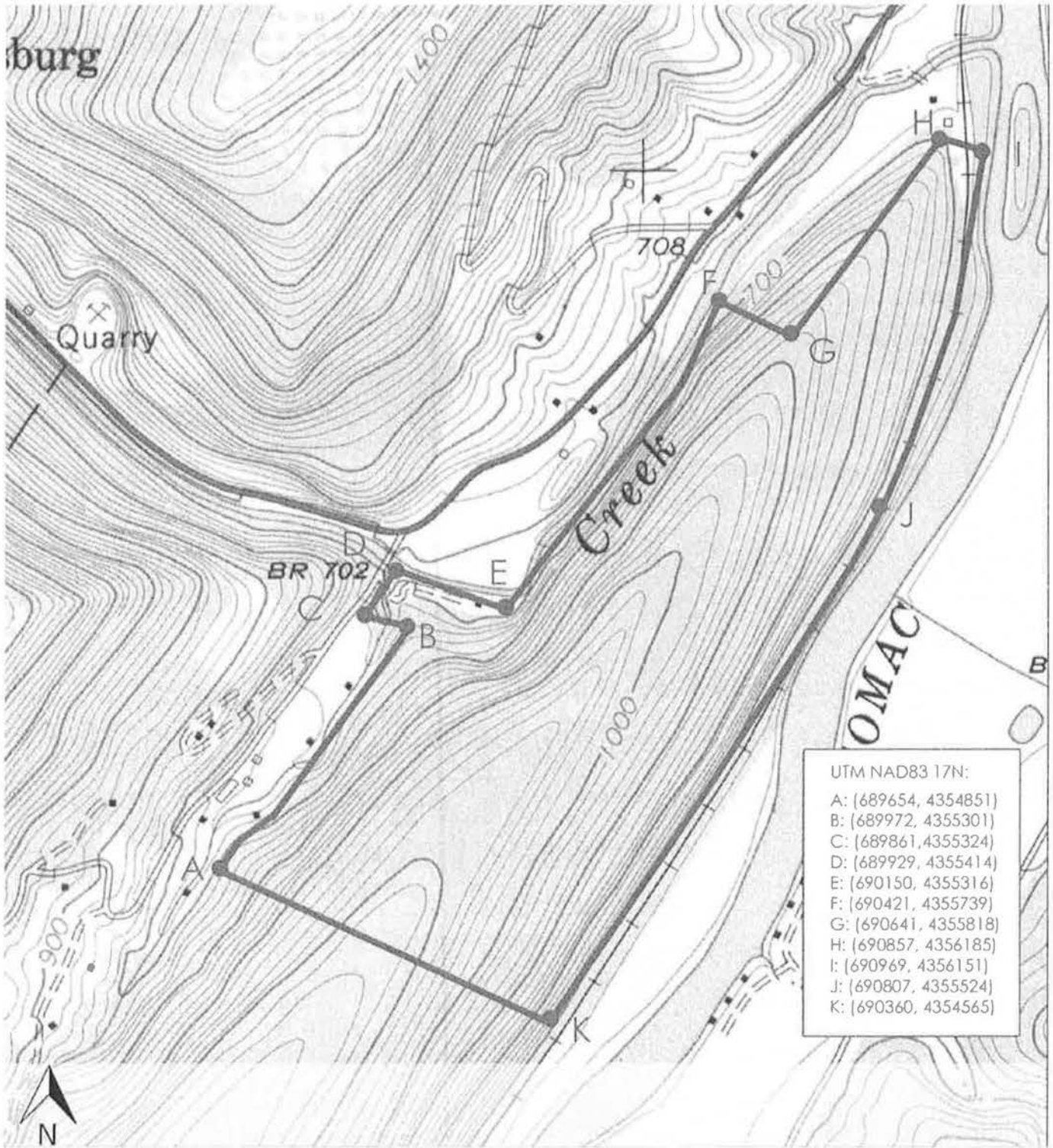


Scale: 1" = 800'

Base imagery adapted from Fort Mill Ridge Foundation Brochure



Figure 5
 NRHP Boundary
 Fort Mill Ridge Trenches
 Romney Vicinity, Hampshire County, West Virginia



Scale: 1" = 800'

Base Imagery from WVGIS.com - Winchester USGS Topographic Quadrangle



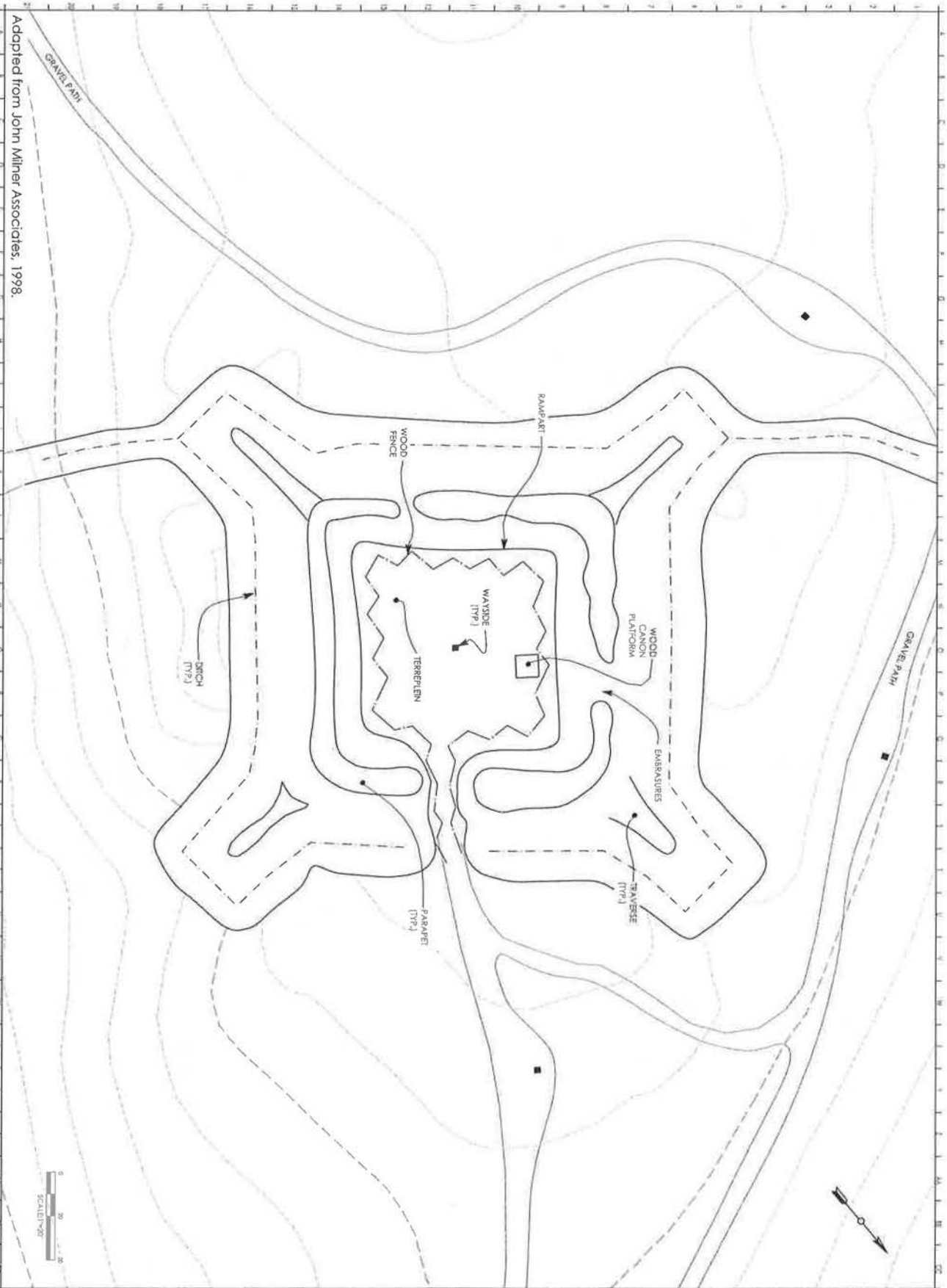
Figure 6
 NRHP Topographic Boundary Map
 Fort Mill Ridge Trenches
 Romney Vicinity, Hampshire County, West Virginia



Scale: NTS



Figure 7
Drawing of View From Fort Mill Ridge by Lucian Grey
Fort Mill Ridge Trenches
Romney Vicinity, Hampshire County, West Virginia

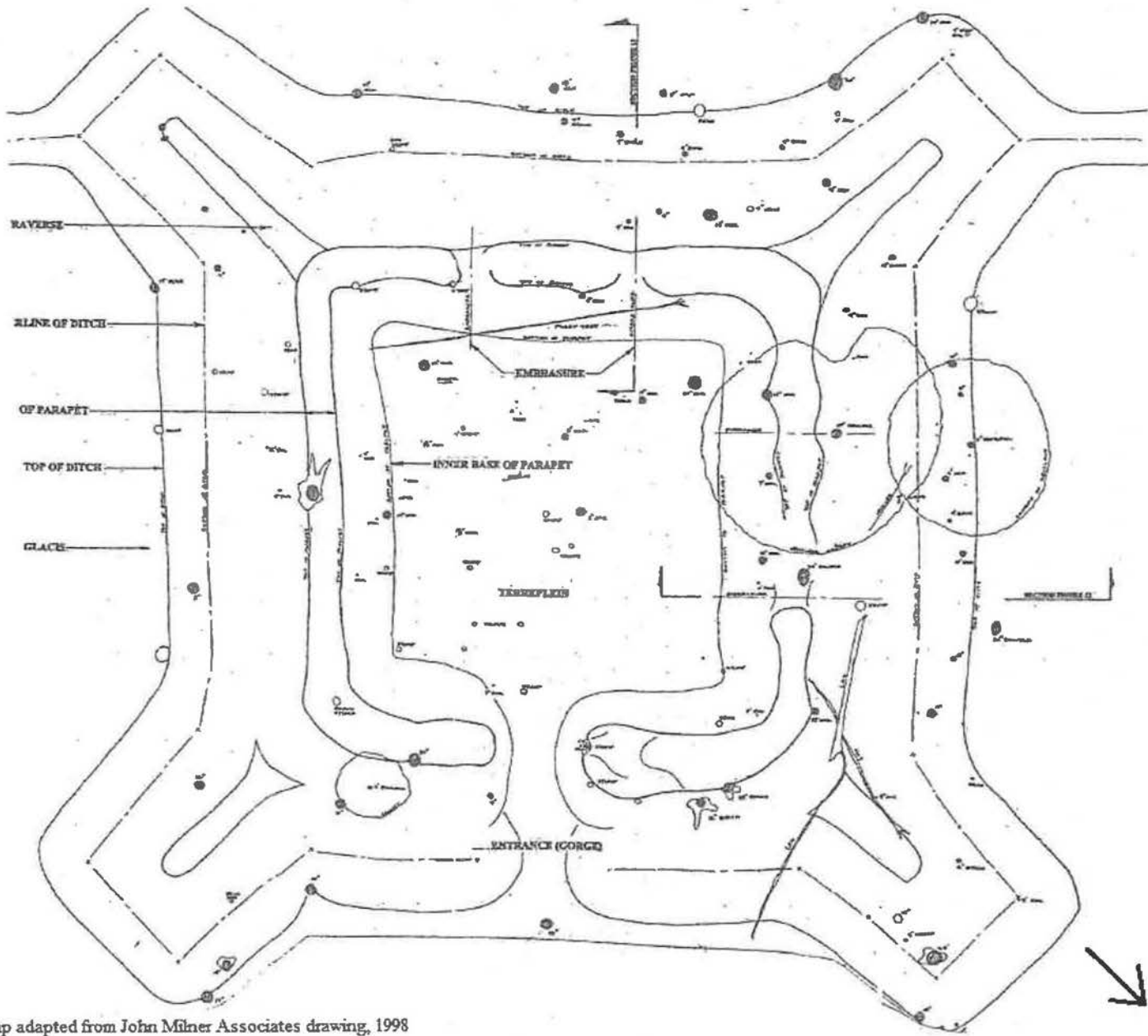


DATE	
DRAWN BY	
CHECKED BY	
DESIGNED BY	
PROJECT NO.	
CLIENT'S AV.	
APPROVED BY	
APPROVED DATE	
STATE	
SHEET	21

PROJECT SCOPE:
FORT MILL RIDGE CIVIL WAR TRENCHES
 HAMPSHIRE COUNTY, WV
 EXISTING CENTRAL REDOUBT

MILNER GROUP, INC.
 1000 MILLER ROAD
 HARRISBURG, WV 26030
 PHONE: 304.752.1111
 FAX: 304.752.1112
 WWW.MILNERGROUP.COM

Fort Mill Ridge Civil War Trenches
Hampshire County, WV
Central Redoubt



































UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Fort Mill Ridge Civil War Trenches

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: WEST VIRGINIA, Hampshire

DATE RECEIVED: 12/06/13 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 1/07/14
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 1/22/14 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 1/22/14
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 13001121

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 1.22.14 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



The Culture Center
1900 Kanawha Blvd., E.
Charleston, WV 25305-0300

Randall Reid-Smith, Commissioner
Phone 304.558.0220 • www.wvculture.org
Fax 304.558.2779 • TDD 304.558.3562
EEO/AA Employer

December 2, 2013

Ms. Carol Shull
Keeper, National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service 2280
National Register of Historic Places
1201 "I" (eye) Street, NW
Washington D.C. 20005

Dear Ms. Shull:

For your review, we are submitting the following National Register of Historic Places registration form:

*Fort Mill Ridge Civil War Fortifications
Hampshire County, West Virginia*

The enclosed nomination has been approved by the West Virginia Archives and History Commission in accordance with 36 CFR, Part 60. Should you have any questions please contact National Register Coordinator, Erin Riebe, at 304.558.0240.

Sincerely,

Susan M. Pierce
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

enclosure