NPS Form 10-900
(3-82)

NHL — WWII, PACIFIC

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic San Francisco Port of Embarkation, U.S. Army

and or common

2. Location

street & number Fort Mason, Golden Gate National Recreation Area ___ not for publication

city, town San Francisco ___ vicinity of

state California code 06 county San Francisco code 075

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
_X_ district	_X_ public	_X_ occupied	___ agriculture	_X_ museum
___ building(s)	___ private	___ unoccupied	___ commercial	_X_ park
___ structure	___ both	___ work in progress	_X_ educational	___ private residence
___ site	**Public Acquisition**	**Accessible**	_X_ entertainment	___ religious
___ object	___ in process	___ yes: restricted	_X_ government	___ scientific
	___ being considered	_X_ yes: unrestricted	___ industrial	___ transportation
		___ no	___ military	___ other:

4. Owner of Property

name Regional Director, Western Region, National Park Service

street & number 450 Golden Gate Avenue

city, town San Francisco ___ vicinity of state California

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. San Francisco City Hall

street & number Polk and McAllister Streets

city, town San Francisco state California

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Fort Mason, Golden Gate NRA has this property been determined eligible? _X_ yes ___ no

date April 25, 1972 _X_ federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records National Register of Historic Places

city, town Washington state D.C.

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
___ excellent	___ deteriorated	___ unaltered	_X_ original site
_X_ good	___ ruins	_X_ altered	___ moved date _____
___ fair	___ unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Headquarters Building, FM-201

In 1901, Fort Mason was a coast artillery post guarding San Francisco Bay. That year, the army's surgeon general approved construction of a new post hospital. He provided a set of standard plans for a twelve-bed, brick-walled building and estimated the cost at $20,000. A local contractor, James Campbell, completed the attractive building in 1902. The main section measured 42 feet by 44 feet and stood three stories tall. A 1½-story wing on the east was 27 feet by 57 feet. Modest changes to the exterior of the building have been made over the years; for example, the original slate roof has given way to composition shingles and a veranda around the brick wing has been removed. The interior floor plan is little changed from 1902.

The hospital survived the 1906 earthquake with only minor damage. By then, however, the facility was no longer needed at Fort Mason, a new army general hospital having been built at the nearby Presidio of San Francisco. At the same time, the army had a great need for storage space in San Francisco for supplies destined to new overseas possessions, as well as military posts on the West Coast. Before long, the hospital building housed offices and supplies of the army's technical services.

Its coastal defense role behind it by 1912, Fort Mason became an army general depot that year. World War I brought a great increase in depot activity at Fort Mason, now called the San Francisco General Intermediate Depot. To house the depot's administrative offices, the army constructed an annex on the west side of the hospital in 1917-1918. The frame addition measured 60 feet by 100 feet and had 2½ stories. It was joined to the brick structure by a narrow, one-story corridor. For the time being, the army regarded the structure as being two separate buildings. Both were occupied throughout by depot offices by 1923.

The approach of America's entry into World War II brought increased activity at the depot as haste was made to strengthen military installations. Additional bodies required more space. In 1939 the first of several additions was made to the headquarters, now called the San Francisco Port of Embarkation and General Depot. This was a two-story, frame wing on the west, measuring 24 feet by 35 feet. A second identical wing was constructed paralleling the first in 1941. This addition contained the office of the commanding general.

A further increase in staff resulted in the space between the two new wings being filled with a three-story addition having a flat roof with a parapet around it. A single-story addition was made to the north side of the former hospital's brick wing, and another single-story frame addition was constructed at the east end of this wing. The one-story corridor connecting the two main units grew to a four-story observation tower and elevator shaft.

The structure's military architecture reflects army construction from the beginning of the century to World War II. Total interior space amounts to

40,000 square feet. Little embellishment is evident on the exterior. One noticeable feature is the main entrance, in the brick portion. This was reconstructed in the 1930s. Here, at the bottom of a short flight of brick steps are two ornamental gate post lights, each having one large globe.

Port Area, Lower Fort Mason

At first, the U.S. Army Transport Service leased wharfage at San Francisco for its transport ships supplying installations in the Pacific. In 1903, the army considered establishing its own facilities for the transports as well as a general depot for military supplies. Fort Mason was selected as the site for these operations. Although the post was federal property, the submerged lands bordering the bay side of the fort were privately owned. Condemnation proceedings were initiated and in 1909 the 12.5 acres comprising those lands were added to the military reservation. Meanwhile, Congress authorized the construction of four permanent storehouses and three piers on the submerged land.

The army employed the architectural firm of Rankin, Kellogg, and Crane of Philadelphia to design the buildings. Breaking from traditional military architecture, the architects proposed that Fort Mason adopt Spanish Mission Revival architecture. The army readily agreed. The San Francisco Bridge Company won the construction contract for a seawall along the north side of the submerged land, a crib wall on the west, three wharves, one permanent wharf shed, and railroad tracks within the reservation at a price of $1,182,200. Two of four permanent storehouses were also funded. Construction got underway in 1909; dredged sand from the bay built the area behind the seawall into firm land; and reinforced-concrete piers took shape to support the wharves and storehouses. The wharves were completed in 1912, and the first army transport, Sherman, docked at Fort Mason on January 6.

In 1913, Congress funded construction of the two additional storehouses. Like the earlier buildings, each had three stories. The walls were cement-gun finished and colored a light buff. Red clay tiles covered the roofs. The following year, a railroad tunnel was constructed under Fort Mason and tracks were laid into the port area, single tracks to the three wharves and double tracks to the warehouses. At that time only the roads in the port area were asphalted; in the 1930s the entire area was asphalted.

The army acquired new transport ships in the 1920s that were 75 feet longer than the older vessels, requiring extension of the piers at Fort Mason. Improvements and additions did not get underway until the 1930s, when Public Works Administration funds became available. Pier 2 and its permanent-type shed were both extended in length, bringing its dimensions to 118 feet by 654 feet. A permanent shed was built on Pier 3 which was enlarged to 155 feet by

650 feet. A permanent shed was erected on Pier 1 which retained its dimensions of 60 feet by 425 feet. In 1934, a contract was let for a permanent marine repair shops (carpenter, machine, blacksmith, sheet metal, and tinning) building on the west side of the port area. Another contract was let for a battery charging station on the east.

The railroad tracks were relayed and repaired, steel ties replacing the wooden ones and new tracks laid to the enlarged Pier 3. Other improvements included a heating system for the port area, remodeling the electrical system, dredging, replacement of fender piles, and a new fire station.

The new buildings were all steel-frame with concrete walls and floors. To complement the older buildings, the shops and battery charging structures had buff-colored stucco on the exterior walls and clay tile roofs.

The port area today retains its historical integrity to a great extent. As part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, its buildings house a wide variety of community activities: theaters, shops, crafts, studios, and more.

The historically significant features of the former San Francisco Port of Embarkation at Fort Mason are:

The port headquarters building, FM-201
The lower port area
Railroad tracks
Four storehouses, FM-310, 312, 314, and 315
Three piers, FM-316, 318, and 320
Three pier sheds, FM-317, 319, and 321
Marine repair shops, FM-308
Fire station, FM-309
Battery charging station, FM-322
Provost Marshal office, FM-302
Entrance gate to port area and guard post, FM-301 and 303

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
___ prehistoric	___ archeology-prehistoric	___ community planning	___ landscape architecture	___ religion
___ 1400–1499	___ archeology-historic	___ conservation	___ law	___ science
___ 1500–1599	___ agriculture	___ economics	___ literature	___ sculpture
___ 1600–1699	___ architecture	___ education	X military	___ social/ humanitarian
___ 1700–1799	___ art	___ engineering	___ music	___ theater
___ 1800–1899	___ commerce	___ exploration/settlement	___ philosophy	___ transportation
X 1900–	___ communications	___ industry	___ politics/government	___ other (specify)
		___ invention		

Specific dates 1912-1945 **Builder Architect**

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

During the early months after the United States entered World War II, the U.S. Army's San Francisco Port of Embarkation (SFPE) shipped more military supplies than all other military ports in the United States combined. The statistical returns for the entire war showed that San Francisco was second only to New York in the numbers and amounts of personnel and supplies shipped to the war zones. Between December 1941 and August 1945, 1,745,000 personnel embarked at San Francisco. In addition, more than half a million veterans of the war debarked at San Francisco during the same period. An equal number came home through the Golden Gate after the conclusion of hostilities. All American dead being returned to the United States from the Pacific were brought through the port. Japanese and German prisoners of war were processed through its facilities. More than 25 million measurement tons of cargo were shipped through San Francisco. For various periods of time between 1941 and 1944 the ports of Los Angeles, California; Portland, Oregon; and Seattle, Washington, were administered by San Francisco. In the Bay Area, Fort Mason oversaw port operations at no fewer than thirteen other installations. San Francisco was the primary port for the Central, South, and Southwest Pacific Areas. Moreover, the task force that drove the Japanese from Alaska's Aleutian Islands was mounted from San Francisco.

History

The U.S. Army's first troop movement in modern times through San Francisco Harbor was brought about by the Spanish-American War. In May 1898, chartered vessels carried the first of more than 5,000 troops and their supplies to the Hawaiian Islands (before that republic was annexed) and to the Philippines. By 1905, the Quartermaster Corps' Army Transport Service had established a regular monthly service from San Francisco to Hawaii, Guam, and Manila. At San Francisco, the army leased the Folsom Street wharf, from where it operated four transport vessels: Logan, Sheridan, Sherman, and Thomas. In 1903, the army decided to construct its own supply depot and port facilities at Fort Mason within the city. The first of these permanent facilities were completed in 1912 and, on January 6, Sherman docked at Fort Mason, having arrived from Manila via Nagasaki, Japan (a coaling station), and Honolulu. World War I resulted in an increase of activity at Fort Mason. A spate of "temporary" buildings sprang up in both the upper and lower levels of the post and still other storehouses were built at the Presidio of San Francisco. In 1918, the expeditionary forces to Siberia were supplied and mounted at Fort Mason, as well as in the Philippines. In 1923, a second transport service was established between San Francisco and New York via the Panama Canal. By that year, the administrative offices of the depot occupied all of the headquarters building, FM-201, on upper Fort Mason.

In 1925 the depot was reorganized as the San Francisco General Depot. It was responsible for supplying the Ninth Corps Area (West Coast), Alaska, the Philippines, Hawaii, Panama Canal, and United States forces in China. Another reorganization in 1932 resulted in renaming the installation the San Francisco Port of Embarkation and General Depot. Brig. Gen. Charles S. Lincoln commanded the operation. He established two positions under him, a supply officer to handle depot operatons and a superintendent for the transportation service, both of whom had offices in the headquarters building. During the 1930s, the mission of supplying Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camps on the West Coast was added to Fort Mason's duties (459 camps, 94,715 men). As late as 1939, when war broke out in Europe, Fort Mason's small acreage could still comfortably house the port administrative headquarters and store the required levels of supply for the Quartermaster, Medical, Signal, and Engineer departments; the CCC camps; and a salvage operation. Ordnance, Chemical Warfare, and Air Corps materials passed through Fort Mason but were not stored there. They were unloaded directly from freight cars to ships. SFPE's personnel strength in the fall of 1939 amounted to 130 military personnel and 501 civilians.

World War II

By the end of 1940, the army realized that Fort Mason's port was too small to handle the increasing demands made upon it as tensions rose in the Pacific. The first step taken to remedy the situation was the acquisition of port facilities in Seattle in January 1941 to serve as a terminal for transports supplying Alaska. Seattle remained a sub-post of SFPE until January 1942, when it acquired an independent status.[1] Also in early 1941, 624.5 acres of land were acquired at Oakland, California, for the construction of the Oakland Army Base, that city being the terminus of transcontinental railroads. Unlike Seattle, this new base remained under the direct control of the SFPE at Fort Mason. The Overseas Supply Division moved from Fort Mason to Oakland in June 1942. Los Angeles, California, and Portland, Oregon, soon became sub-posts of San Francisco. Los Angeles remained a sub-post until September 1943, when it achieved an independent status with responsibilties for the China-Burma-India Theater. Administration of Portland's port activities were transferred from SFPE to Seattle in November 1944, when military operations in Alaska were ebbing. These transfers did not lessen San Francisco's responsibilities in supporting the Allies in the Central and Southwest Pacific. One of the more important changes concerning Fort Mason was the transfer of

1. The task force organized for driving Japanese forces from the Aleutian Islands was, nevertheless, mounted from San Francisco in 1943.

ports of embarkation from the Quartermaster Department to the newly constituted Transportation Corps in 1942. This meant removal of general depot responsibilities and a resulting improvement in the integration of army transportation operations.

Fort Mason supervised transportation activities at other installations in the Bay Area. Oakland Army Base oversaw the shipment of all types of supplies and equipment to forward areas. Fort McDowell on Angel Island grew into a large personnel center processing returning veterans and prisoners of war. More than 6,000 Japanese prisoners passed through the camp. An unusual group of prisoners of war at Angel Island was a number of high-ranking German generals whom the British had captured in the Tunisian campaign. These officers were sent on to a camp in New Mexico, but not until they were interrogated at a secret center near San Francisco.

Between 1941 and 1944, SFPE leased eight piers at the San Francisco Embarcadero. Seven of these were used for shipping cargo, the eighth, for personnel. When Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, Benicia Arsenal, near the head of San Pablo Bay, did not possess deep-water berthing. Ammunition was moved to Fort Mason by barge or rail. This situation ended in July 1942 with the completion of dredging at Benicia that allowed the berthing of larger ships.

Camp Stoneman, near Martinez, became the port's largest (2,565 acres) processing center for troops moving overseas. Other facilities under the port headquarters at Fort Mason included the Alameda Piers, an Air Force depot; Emeryville Ordnance Shops; Richmond Parr Terminals; Hamilton Field, for air shipments; and the Presidio of San Francisco, which was stripped of its infantry garrison to provide room for such activities as an animal depot. Farther away were the Stockton Piers and the Humboldt Bay Piers. The headquarters building at Fort Mason was the center of planning, supervision, and direction for all these.

Immediately after the attack on Pearl Harbor, before the outposts were developed, the San Francisco Port of Embarkation became clogged with the scramble to reinforce Hawaii against invasion. Nor did the situation improve swiftly. The Transportation Corps listed a number of persistent problems: the great distances involved, limited shipping, the large number of Pacific bases, a rapidly developing strategic situation, and the low level of stocks in depots. Wartime investigations disclosed, too, that the port's early commanding general failed to give his oversea supply division the authority and support it needed. Changes in command brought improvements.

Despite the varied problems, the San Francisco Port of Embarkation made a substantial and critical contribution to the successful conclusion of World War II in the Pacific. One of its enthusiastic supporters has written, "The part played by the San Francisco Port of Embarkation in winning that half of the

global war which stretched from California to Australia, India, the Aleutians, and Japan and took in every Pacific atoll along the way is a tribute to the war of transportation which swept from the Golden Gate of San Francisco to the very gates of Tokyo."[2]

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2. James W. Hamilton and William J. Bolce, Jr., Gateway to Victory, The Wartime Story of the San Francisco Army Port of Embarkation (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1946), vii.

9. Major Bibliographical References

10. Geographical Data

Headquarters Building FM-201

Acreage of nominated property less than 1 acre

Quadrangle name San Francisco North

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	10	550440	4184210
B			
C			
D			
E			
F			
G			
H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title

organization | date

street & number | telephone

city or town | state

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national ___ state ___ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title | date

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: | date 2-4-85

Chief of Registration

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1983 O - 419-311

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Port area, Lower Fort Mason

Acreage of nominated property 21 acres

Quadrangle name San Francisco North

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	10	550320	4184650
B	10	550370	4184440
C	10	550100	4184170
D	10	550030	4184590
E			
F			
G			
H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

See continuation sheet.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Erwin N. Thompson, Historian

organization National Park Service, Denver Service Center date July 8, 1984

street & number 755 Parfet Street telephone (303) 234-4509

city or town Denver state Colorado 80225

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national ___ state ___ local

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State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title date

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The Army Almanac, A Book of Facts Concerning the United States Army. Harrisburg: Stackpole Company, 1959.

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_____. Office of the Quartermaster General. General Correspondence, 1890-1914. Fort Mason. Record Group 92. National Archives, Washington, D.C.

_____. San Francisco Port of Embarkation Transportation Corps, Fort Mason, Camp Stoneman, Oakland Army Base. n.p., n.d.

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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Headquarters Building, FM-201

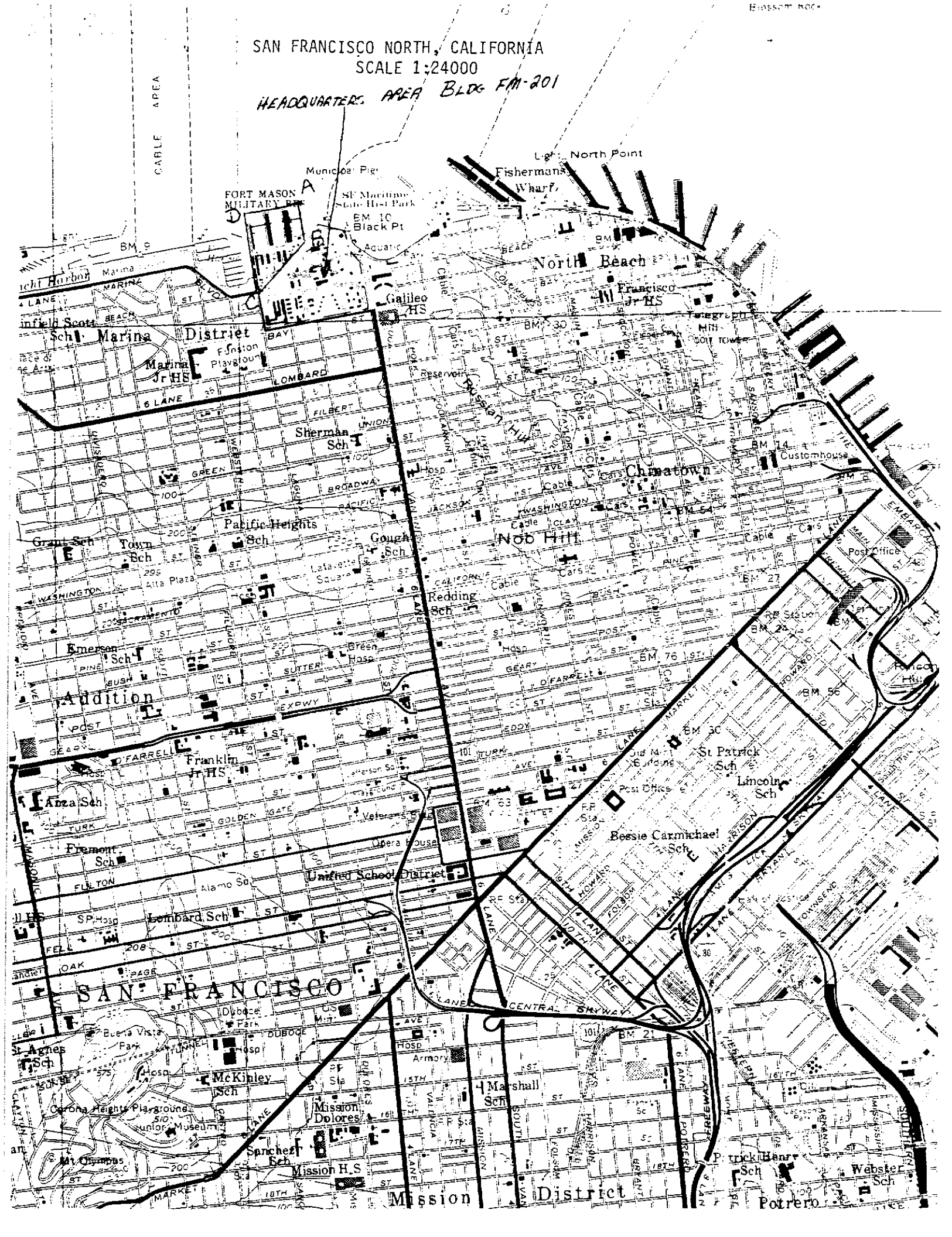
Beginning at the northwest corner of the intersection of MacArthur Avenue and Franklin Street, then westerly in a straight line along the north curb of MacArthur for 470 feet, then in a northerly direction in a straight line that parallels the west wall of the headquarters building for 120 feet, then in a straight line in an easterly direction paralleling the north side of the headquarters building and ten feet from it to the southwest corner of the intersection of Shafter Place and Pope Road, then in a straight line southeast along the southwest curb of Pope Road to the point of beginning. These boundaries enclose the headquarters building and its grounds, including a flagstaff to the east of the building that identifies it as a headquarters.

Port Area, Lower Fort Mason

Beginning at a point on the western boundary of the Fort Mason military reservation where the southwest corner of the port area adjoins the intersection of Laguna Street and Marina Boulevard, then in a straight line in a northerly direction along the western boundary of Fort Mason and the west side of Pier 1, FM-316, then projecting that line in the same direction to a point in the bay opposite the northern end of Pier 2, FM-318, then in a straight line east northeast past the northern ends of Pier 2, FM-318, and Pier 3, FM-320, to a point in the bay 200 feet beyond the northeast corner of Pier 3, then in a straight line in a southerly direction to meet a north-south boundary of the reservation, then continuing in the same direction along this boundary line to its end, then continuing in the same direction 90 feet to the foot of a bluff, then in an irregular line, generally southwest, along the foot of the bluff and its several retaining walls to the point of beginning. These boundaries enclose all the port area, lower Fort Mason, including historically significant buildings, railroad tracks, the three piers, and the berthing areas along the piers (the west side of Pier 1 was not used for berthing transports, its being outside the reservation).

SAN FRANCISCO NORTH, CALIFORNIA
SCALE 1:24000

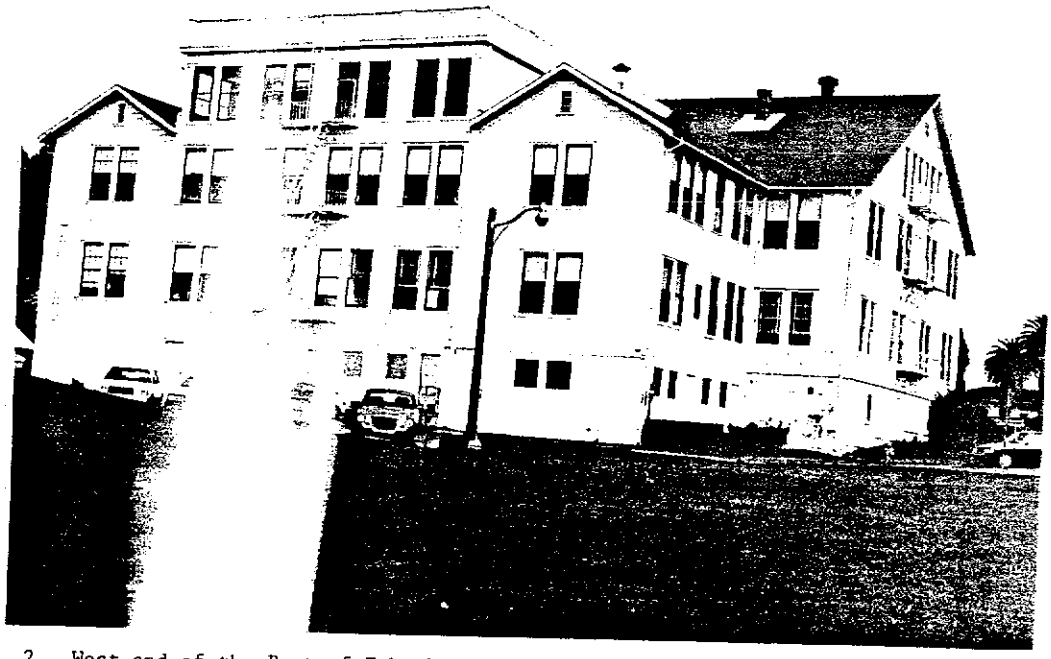
HEADQUARTERS AREA BLDG FM-201



1. Brick portion of the headquarters building, San Francisco Port of Embarkation, Fort Mason. The U.S. Army constructed this unit as a posh hospital in 1902.

Photo by E.N. Thompson

February 1984



2. West end of the Port of Embarkation headquarters, Fort Mason. The structure today is the headquarters for Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

Photo by E.N. Thompson

February 1984

3. The four permanent army storehouses at the San Francisco Port of Embarkation in lower Fort Mason.

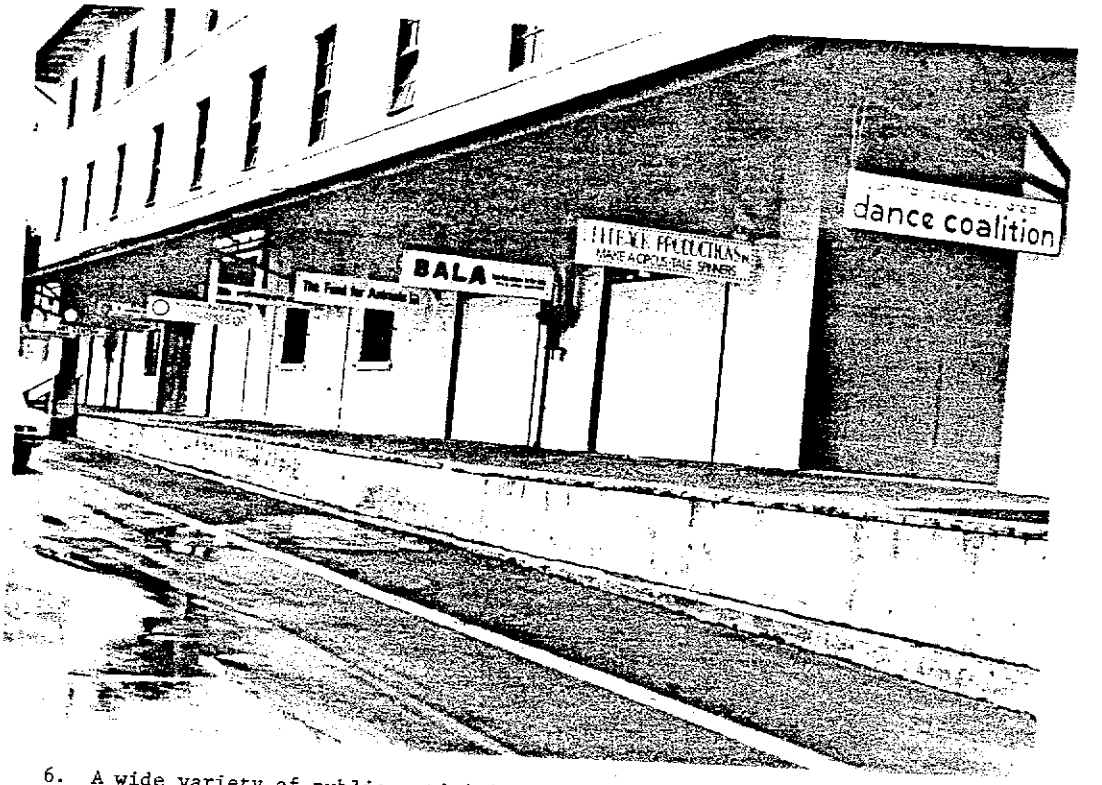
Photo by E.N. Thompson

February 1984

4. Piers 1, on left, and 2, San Francisco Ports of Embarkation. The shed on Pier 2 is the original, permanent shed. Pier 1's shed was reconstructed in the 1930s.

Photo by E.N. Thompson

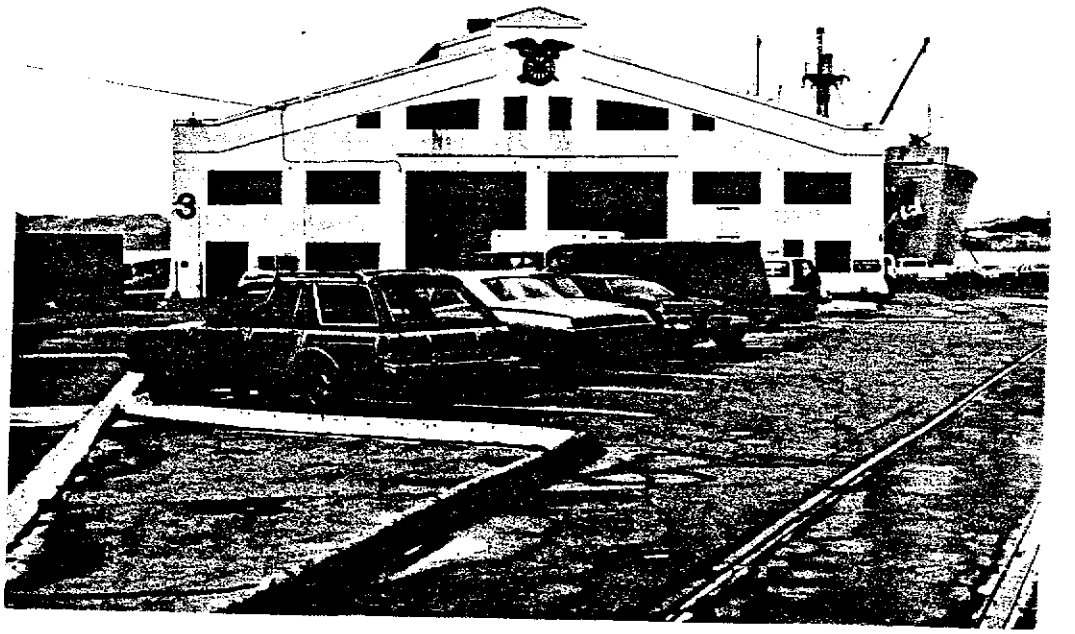
February 1984



6. A wide variety of public activities are carried on in the former port's storehouses.

Photo by E.N. Thompson

February 1984



5. Pier 3 shed. Although the San Francisco Port of Embarkation came under the Transportation Corps early in World War II, the insignia of the Quartermaster Corps was retained. Note the railroad tracks leading to the pier.

Photo by E.N. Thompson

February 1945