

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
 NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
 INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

 SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
 TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME Fort at Greenleaf's Point; Washington Arsenal; U. S. Penitentiary;
 HISTORIC Washington Barracks; Army War College

AND/OR COMMON

Fort Lesley J. McNair

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

4th and P Streets, SW

__NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Washington

VICINITY OF

Walter E. Fauntroy, Congressman

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

D. C.

CODE

11

COUNTY

CODE

001

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

4 AGENCY

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS. (If applicable)

U. S. Army (Commanding General, Military District of Washington)

STREET & NUMBER

Fort Lesley J. McNair

CITY, TOWN

Washington

VICINITY OF

STATE

D. C.

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Registry of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

6th and D Streets, NW

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

D. C.

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

District of Columbia Inventory of Historic Sites

DATE

__FEDERAL STATE __COUNTY __LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

National Capital Planning Commission

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

D. C.

DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Situated at the southwest tip of the District of Columbia where the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers meet, Fort Lesley J. McNair is today a verdant park-like reservation of a little over 89 acres. Of the sixty-one buildings on the installation, only six pre-date the 1903 Beaux Arts plan by the architectural firm of McKim, Mead and White that gives Fort McNair its present form. Three of these buildings (17, 20 and 21) are in the east-central side of the 29+ acre quadrangle around which the other buildings of the campus-like fort are symmetrically arranged. The main axis of the fort extends from the entrance gate on P Street south approximately 3,000 feet to the domed National War College building at the end of the peninsula. Buildings on either side of the axis form an allee for the first 500 feet to the edge of the parade ground. A line of quarters extends for a distance along either side of the parade ground; the western side has 15 houses plus the Officers' Club, the eastern side has the gymnasium and six houses. The continuation of these two rows along the edge of the parade ground shown in the McKim, Mead and White plan was never realized nor were the three nineteenth century buildings removed from the center green. Consequently, Fort McNair contains not only a Beaux Arts campus plan, but also a few reminders of its important nineteenth century history.

Listed below are the buildings, according to their present Army number, that contribute significantly to the historic district:

Buildings 1-15: Generals' Quarters, designed by McKim, Mead and White, built 1905-1906, colonial revival style, identical front elevations (excepting larger buildings 7, 8 and 9) designed to frame the vista down the quadrangle to the War College Building (61).

Buildings 16 and 19: Officers' Quarters, built around 1920, two story brick painted white.

Building 17: Officers' Quarters, built approximately 1882 with brick recovered from penitentiary walls, used as a guard house, converted about 1900 to housing; one and one-half stories, brick.

Building 18: Quarters, designed by McKim, Mead and White, built in 1905 as barracks for Army band members; two-story, brick, with arcaded front elevation to match buildings 47 and 52 forming north end of quadrangle.

Building 20: Quarters, built about 1830 at east end of penitentiary, used as administration building, west wall and interior remodeled in 1869 in Renaissance

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Godderd, Barbara and Palmer D. Wells. Fort Lesley J. McNair, An Historic Landmark.
 National War College Visual Aids, Washington, D.C. 1963
 Cameron Station, Building 17, Alexandria, Virginia, Ft. McNair files.
 Historian, National Defense University, Washington, D.C.
 National Archives, Washington, D.C. RG 48, 77, 92, 94 and 393
 Raymond, Julian E., Colonel, USA (Ret.), History of Fort Lesley J. McNair,
 Washington, DC (1794-1951)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____
 UTM REFERENCES

A	1,8	3 2,4 8,0,0	4,3 0,4 2,9,0	B	1,8	3 2,5 1,2,0	4,3 0,3 1,8,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	1,8	3 2,5 2,4,0	4,3 0,4 2,9,0	D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Fort McNair Historic District lies completely within the surrounding brick walls of the fort along P Street, SW to the north and over the former bed of James Creek to the east, the Washington Channel to the west, the Anacostia River to the south and the James Creek Yacht Basin to the southeast.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

Revised by Thomas P. Genis, Architect, MDW
 20 July 1977

NAME / TITLE

Constance Werner Ramirez for the Military District of Washington, U. S. Army
 ORGANIZATION

DATE

February 25, 1975

STREET & NUMBER

4600 N. 37th Street

TELEPHONE

(703) 533-7321

CITY OR TOWN

Arlington

STATE

Virginia

12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES ___ NO ___ NONE ___

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is ___ National ___ State ___ Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER.

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
 ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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revival style with roof parapet (later removed); Mary Surratt supposedly imprisoned on third floor before execution; courtroom for trial of Lincoln assassination conspirators supposedly in this building. Matching building at west end of former penitentiary demolished in 1903 for McKim, Mead and White plan. Only building remaining from the penitentiary complex.

Building 21: Quarters, built about 1832 as a model house for the Arsenal, converted to a writing office about 1860's, converted to quarters about 1881; brick, three stories, Federal door detail. Only building remaining from Arsenal.

Buildings 23-28: Quarters, designed by McKim, Mead and White, built 1906-1908, colonial revival style duplexes.

Building 30: Sentry station and Six-Gun Gate, station built in 1951, cast-iron gate and brick wall with iron finials built about 1850. Moved from original 4th Street entrance to present position by McKim, Mead and White plan.

Building 31: 67th Ordnance Detachment, part built before 1869, rebuilt 1904 as stable guard house. One-story, brick, gable roof.

Building 32: Post Headquarters, built 1914 on site of hospital and old Picket Guard House of 1883. Shown on McKim, Mead and White plan "to be constructed" as the Engineer School; brick, three-story, arcaded facade.

Building 34: Central Heating Plant and Carpenter Shop, built 1914, partially designed by McKim, Mead and White; brick, one-story with higher central section, arcaded facade.

Building 39: Post Exchange, designed by McKim, Mead and White, built 1904, one of two identical buildings that flank Third Avenue to form central axis of plan, arches bricked in before 1955.

Building 45: Mess Hall, designed by McKim, Mead and White to match building 50, built 1905.

Building 46: Bachelor Enlisted Quarters, design attributed to McKim, Mead and White.

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Building 47: Enlisted Men's Barracks and Chapel, designed by McKim, Mead and White, built 1904 to match building 52.

Building 48: Enlisted Men's Barracks, designed by McKim, Mead and White, to match building 39 and form west side of main axis of fort, built 1904.

Building 49: Gymnasium, in McKim, Mead and White plan but exact date of construction not known.

Building 50: Mess Hall, designed by McKim, Mead and White to match building 45, built 1905.

Building 52: Inter-American Defense College (IADC), designed by McKim, Mead and White to balance building 47 along north side of quadrangle, built 1905, but never extended west as far as planned because of the existing hospital (building 54).

Building 54: IADC Bachelor Officers' Quarters, formerly the Army General Hospital, built in 1881; building in which Walter Reed worked and died.

Building 56: Dental Clinic, built originally as death house for hospital in 1880, was to have been removed, but converted into clinic.

Building 58: Dispensary, built as part of Army hospital in 1881, used with building 54 as part of the hospital where Walter Reed worked.

Building 60: Officers' Club, designed by McKim, Mead and White at the end of Generals' Row, built in 1905, Georgian revival style.

Building 61: National War College (see National Register Nomination Form).

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Page 5

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Fort Lesley J. McNair, under its many earlier names, is the oldest United States fort in continuous use. Originally built strictly for defense of the Federal city, it soon became one of the first arsenals of the expanding nation. The present grounds of the fort also include the site, north of the arsenal, of the U. S. Penitentiary, where the trial and execution of the Lincoln assassination conspirators took place. Malaria research conducted on the post at the General Hospital by Walter Reed in the 1890's led to control of that disease. In 1903 the fort was redesigned by the architectural firm of McKim, Mead and White, into a Beaux-Arts, campus-like setting for the new Army War College and the Army Engineer School. Today it is the site of the new National Defense University (which includes the National War College and Industrial College of the Armed Forces), Inter-American Defense College and the Headquarters of the Military District of Washington. The area was designated a military post in 1791 by Pierre L'Enfant, planner of the new Federal city, who recognized the strategic location of Greenleaf's Point, as it was called. At L'Enfant's instigation, a one-gun battery was established here under the supervision of Andre Villard, a French follower of the Marquis de Lafayette. Occupying about 28 acres at the south edge of today's fort, the reservation became the first of two United States arsenals established in 1795. The arsenal was destroyed in 1814 by British troops, but not before many of them were killed and maimed by the explosion of powder hidden in a dry well by the vacating Americans.

From 1815 to 1821, the Washington Arsenal, as it was now called, was rebuilt at a cost of approximately \$32,000. Eight brick buildings were arranged in a quadrangle directly south of the present National War College building. The riverside location was an ideal site for the transportation as well as the experimentation in ballistics, manufacture of ammunition and storage and issuance of guns. The arsenal was expanded in the early 1830's, four acres of marsh was reclaimed, a seawall was constructed at the tip of the peninsula and additional buildings were erected to the north of the original quadrangle up to the present C Street mark. By 1840, the Arsenal contained over 20 structures.

Between 1826 and 1831, the U. S. Penitentiary was constructed to the north of present C Street, extending east to west between James Creek and the Potomac

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River. Built of brick, it consisted of a three-story block of cells, each cell approximately 3' by 7'. Administration buildings were attached to either end and a brick wall surrounded the entire site. Several smaller buildings within the enclosure included a shoe factory which was supposed to be used to support the penitentiary as well as to rehabilitate the prisoners by teaching them a trade. It took several years, however, for prisoners from other parts of the United States to be located here because of the name, U. S. Penitentiary at Washington, which seemed to imply it was only for criminals from the District of Columbia.

In 1857, the Federal government purchased additional land for the Arsenal and brought the boundary to its present northern limit at P Street SW, between the Potomac River and James Creek. The central portion of the penitentiary within the Arsenal's land stymied the real growth of the military operation. By 1860, the Arsenal, which had used one of the first steam presses, had developed the first automatic machine for manufacturing percussion caps and had even experimented in limited rocketry with the Hale Rocket. A large civilian staff was employed to mass-produce ammunition. At the time of the Civil War, the Arsenal was a vital part of the North's buildup. In addition the main military hospital was located on the fort, by now one of the major installations in the Washington area. For these reasons, as well as the fact that the neighboring prisoners might be used by the Confederacy, the penitentiary was closed in the early part of the Civil War and its inmates either released or transported to another jail.

The penitentiary was not used again until 1865, following the assassination of Abraham Lincoln. Eight prisoners as well as the body of John Wilkes Booth were conveyed there. The latter's body was surreptitiously buried under one of the cells so that Southern sympathizers might not use it or its location as a symbol of continuing resistance. The prisoners were Michael O'Laughlin and Samuel Arnold, both of whom had once conspired to kidnap President Lincoln; Mary Surratt, the mother of another conspirator in the kidnap plot; Lewis Powell, who is better known as Lewis Payne and who had attacked Secretary of State Seward as part of Booth's plot; George Atzerodt, a German immigrant who was supposed to have killed Vice-President Andrew Johnson but had not had the courage; Edward Spangler, a scene-shifter at Ford's Theater, whose crime was to admire Booth; Dr. Samuel Mudd, who had set Booth's broken leg; and David Herold, a retarded twenty-year-old who had accompanied Booth on his flight. The eight became known as the "hooded

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conspirators" because they were forced to wear thickly padded hoods and remain manacled even though their confinement was during the oppressive heat of a Washington summer. A military commission under the direction of Secretary of War Stanton convened, and the ensuing trial lasted from May to July 1865. Despite a plea by the commission to President Johnson that Mrs. Surratt's sentence be commuted to life imprisonment, she along with Payne, Atzerodt and Herold were hanged in the yard of the penitentiary on July 7, 1865. Their bodies were then interred where the tennis court is presently located. The body of Henry Wirz, commandant of the infamous Andersonville, was later buried there also for several years until finally all the bodies, including that of Booth, were released to their respective families for reburial. The other four conspirators were sentenced to imprisonment at Fort Jefferson on Garden Key in the Dry Tortugas, Florida.

By 1869, the cellblock and walls of the penitentiary were torn down. Only the west and east administration buildings, the latter being where Mrs. Surratt was supposedly imprisoned and where the trial is said to have taken place, were left standing. The bricks from the demolition were used to add extensions to the two buildings, to form a smaller building to the southeast of the east wing (building 17) and to be used to build a wall along the fort's boundary. An oval garden with a fountain was placed between the matching buildings on a direct line between the arsenal and 4th Street SW (then called 4 and 1/2 Street), thus giving a symmetric plan to the fortification. Of the three structures, only the east administration building (now Quarters 20) and the small southeast building (17) remain. The west administration building was demolished in 1903 to provide room for the present Quarters 14, one of the residences on Generals' Row.

In 1881 the Arsenal activities were abolished and the fort became the U. S. Barracks at Washington. The area was a health hazard as diphtheria, malaria and yellow fever as well as other diseases plagued the area. On the advice of various post physicians the Army covered the 57-foot wide James Creek or canal, which had become the sewer system for Southeast Washington and was dry in some areas at low tide, leaving the offal and other unsanitary waste open to the air. This provided an additional twenty or more acres along the east boundary, bringing the fort to its present size.

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The post's medical problems unfortunately were not all solved by covering the canal. From the pools of stagnant water on the flats opposite the point, which were being raised from the Potomac for a new peninsula to be called Hains Point, mosquitos crossed to the occupants of the Washington Barracks. Doctor Walter Reed at the Army General Hospital, then located on the fort, began a series of experiments with the resulting evidence that the mosquito did indeed cause the diseases. He contributed to medical science not only in malaria research but also in encephalitis, pneumonia and cystheria as well as in his later work during the Spanish American War. Ironically, he died at the Army General Hospital after an appendectomy. In 1908, the General Hospital was moved to new and larger facilities in Washington and renamed Walter Reed Army Hospital in his honor.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Fort McNair was chosen as the site for the new Army War College and Army Engineer School. Mr. Charles McKim, the architect, was complimented by the Army Chief of Engineers at the 1903 cornerstone dedication ceremony in these terms:

"He has treated the military reservation as a single plot and so arranged the character and location of the different buildings of the two systems of instruction as to form one harmonious whole, bearing proper relations with the proposed future parking plans of the city of Washington" (Ceremonies, p. 18). McKim, a member of the Senate Park Commission (established in 1901 by the U. S. Senate Committee on the District of Columbia to prepare a comprehensive plan for the center of Washington and its parks), was also involved at this time in the renovation of the White House as well as the construction of the Lincoln Memorial and Memorial Bridge. McKim's plan of 1903 consisted of a long and wide central axis extending south from P Street, terminated by the large domed structure designed for the War College. This Beaux Arts scheme was typical of the larger architectural designs of the period and the new interest in campus planning with green quadrangles dominated by a university's library, chapel, or other symbol of the center of learning.

All of Fort McNair's existing buildings were supposed to be razed in preparation for this grand plan, and, with the exception of three residences - Quarters 17, 20 and 21, as well as several buildings at the fort's northern end which have since been incorporated into other structures - this was accomplished. Although many

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of the buildings originally envisioned were never constructed, the original McKim, Mead and White plan remains much as it was conceived at the beginning of the twentieth century. The Army War College, with the exception of the time during World War I, continued to educate Army leaders and representatives from the Navy and Marine Corps until June 1940 when operations of the College were suspended. On 1 July 1946 the building was turned over to what became the National War College, and the Army War College was not reestablished until 1950 and is now at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania. The National Defense University was established 16 January 1976.

The fort was renamed for General Lesley J. McNair in 1948, who, as Commanding General Army Ground Forces during World War II, was remembered by his peers as the "Educator of the Army." He was killed in France in 1944 while observing the Army he had trained in action.

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1 NAME

HISTORIC Washington Arsenal, U.S. Penitentiary, Army War College

AND/OR COMMON
Fort Lesley J. McNair

2 LOCATION

CITY, TOWN Washington

____ VICINITY OF

COUNTY

STATE D.C.

3 PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT Thomas P. Genis

DATE OF PHOTO Nov 1974

NEGATIVE FILED AT Programs Branch
Dir of Engr, Ft. McNair

4 IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT. GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET
Bldg 47 south elevation taken from parade field

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CITY/TOWN Washington

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3 PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT Thomas P. Genis

DATE OF PHOTO NOV 1974

NEGATIVE FILED AT Programs Branch
Directorate of Engineering, Ft McNair

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DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT. GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET
Bldg 1, east elevation taken from 2nd Avenue

PHOTO NO.

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1 NAME

HISTORIC Washington Arsenal, U.S. Penitentiary, Army War College
AND/OR COMMON PORT Lesley J. McNair

2 LOCATION

CITY, TOWN _____ VICINITY OF _____ COUNTY _____ STATE D.C.

3 PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT Thomas P. Genis DATE OF PHOTO Nov 1974
NEGATIVE FILED AT Programs Branch
Directorate of Engineering, Ft McNair

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DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT, GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET PHOTO NO
Bldg 20, west elevation from 2nd Avenue.

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PHOTO CREDIT Thomas P. Genis

DATE OF PHOTO Nov 1974

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Dir of Engr, Ft McNair

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Ft McNair parade ground looking north from pediment of National War College

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Directorate of Engineering, Ft McNair

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DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT. GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET
Bldg 54 south elevation taken from B Street

PHOTO NO.