



Inventory of Ethnic Segregation in the Military Built Environment: Civil War to 1948

Project # 15-775

Background:

Individuals of multiple ethnic minorities have served in the military for every major conflict in U.S. history under shifting segregation policies that ranged from “no segregation at all” to “separate but equal.” Policy typically varied from one ethnic minority to another, with some integrated into white units and others completely segregated. Most official policies that discriminated based on race concerned Black soldiers; however, other ethnic and racial minorities were also institutionally segregated on the basis of race. There is no previous investigation of segregation in the built environment of the Department of Defense (DoD). Structures built to enforce racial and ethnic segregation of all minority groups at U.S. installations has significance for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) at the national level and potentially at the state and local levels.

Objective:

This report seeks to review and expand the 1998 *An Historic Context of African-Americans in the Military* through reviewing the archival construction record, compiling an inventory of previously evaluated properties, and locating as many extant properties as possible.

Summary of Approach:

The research team established what information had been discovered since the 1998 report’s publication and was therefore missing from the historic context. The team then established from this inventory a preliminary list of sites for which to search the historic record for evidence of construction funded for ethnic minority groups other than African Americans. After determining what resources had already been evaluated for the NRHP for their significance to the ethnic minority military experience, the team determined what remained of the built environment of ethnic minorities. Based on the information gathered, the team wrote a context to provide a history of ethnic segregation in the U.S. military, examples of segregated facilities at installations of all services, and examples of extant segregated facilities.

Although information is included for all services, the report contains disproportionately more information about the Army due to the Army’s longer institutional

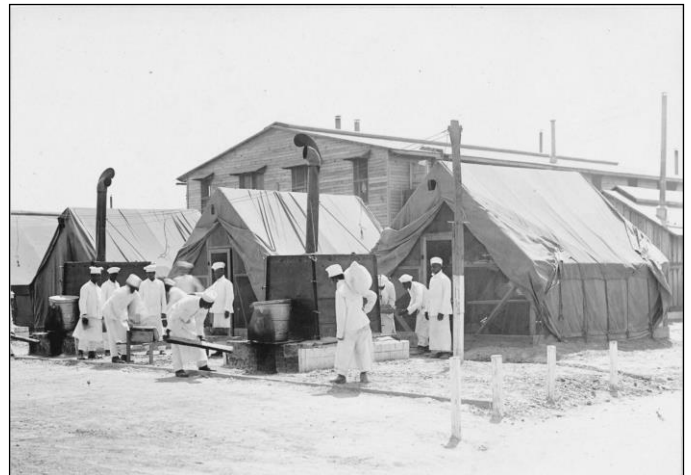
history and more robust built environment when compared to other Services.

Benefit:

In the last few years, several prominent buildings important to the military experiences of African Americans have come under threat of demolition. Although the 1998 *Historic Context of the African American Military Experience* answers many questions on how to determine significance for these buildings, it does not determine the importance of their role across the military or assess what is left of these buildings on DoD installations. It also does not study or assess the built environment of other minority and ethnic groups. The current Legacy Project #15-775 facilitates the management of those resources across the DoD.

Accomplishments:

This report may be used as a basis for future research into segregation on U.S. military installations. It may also be used for architectural and landscape evaluations of segregated facilities at the installation level.



Bakery at Camp Lee, Virginia for African American troops, 1917 (Source: NARA).

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