

ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: "FAIRLY COMFORTABLE:" TEMPORARY
OFFICER HOUSING AT CAMP A. A.
HUMPHREYS, VIRGINIA, 1919-1922

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This study examines the evolution of American prefabricated architecture and its confluence with Army construction practices during the first quarter of the twentieth century, specifically during the World War I era. Using established criteria and methodology as defined by the National Park Service, the study applies an enhanced historic context to evaluate the significance and integrity of extant prefabricated units constructed by the Army between 1919 and 1922 at present-day Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

Primary source research in federal repositories and archives at the local, regional, and national levels is the foundation for an improved understanding of the historical significance of the temporary quarters. Preliminary research into the topic suggested that the temporary officers' housing at Fort Belvoir was likely constructed between

1919 and 1922 as a considered, deliberate response to the constraints and restrictions of the post-World War I military establishment, to include (but not limited to): public attitude towards the military, standing government orders concerning limits on new construction, ongoing Congressional inquiries into wartime construction contracts, and the uncertainty of the permanence of post-war infrastructure. Ultimately, this statement is proven mostly correct through extensive research on the origin of the quarters, including the intent and details of their construction.

Using the expanded understanding of the units' history as a guide, the study reevaluates the integrity of extant quarters and reconsiders previous determinations of their significance. This study concludes that eleven quarters retain sufficient historic identity to be considered significant and worthy of preservation.