



Survey and NRHP Evaluation of Three Quonset Huts at the SCARNG Clarks Hill Training Site

McCormick County, South Carolina



New South Associates, Inc.

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McCormick County, South Carolina

Report submitted to:

South Carolina Army National Guard • 1 National Guard Road • Columbia, SC 29201

Report prepared by:

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I. INTRODUCTION

The South Carolina National Guard (SCARNG) requested an architectural survey and National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligibility evaluation of three Quonset Huts, 5311 (the Edgefield Hut), 5461 (the Warrenton Hut), and 5462 (the McCormick Hut), which are located at their training site on Lake Thurmond in McCormick County, South Carolina (Figures 1 and 2). The buildings were moved to their current locations in 1967 and are the only buildings over 50 years of age at the facility. SCARNG is completing this work in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and SCARNG's Integrated Cultural Resource Management Plan.

The three Quonset Huts are used to house troops during training exercises and as lodging for recreational visitors. SCARNG has noted substantial maintenance issues with the buildings, including leaking roofs, rotten wood, and gaps in weatherproofing and seeks to repair and renovate the buildings. Proposed work includes the replacement of the existing roof, which would involve the stripping of the external foam that was applied to all of the buildings and covering the existing metal roof with new metal. Proposed interior renovations include the removal of the existing flooring, walls, ceiling, and the replacement of the end walls, which are compromised by rot and termites. Additional proposed work would include the installation of a mini-split HVAC system.

METHODOLOGY

On February 1, 2019 New South Associates Architectural Historian, Terri Gillett, visited the Clarks Hill Training Site of the South Carolina National Guard (SCARNG) to survey three Quonset Huts on site that date to 1967 in their present location. Each of the Quonset Huts was physically inspected and high-resolution digital photography was taken of the exterior and interiors of each resource. Archival research included gathering information on historic contexts related to the resources, including the history of the surrounding area, of Lake Thurmond, the Clarks Hill Training Site, and Quonset huts. This information was used to evaluate the three resources for NRHP eligibility.

Chapter II contains a historic overview of the area surrounding Clarks Hill Lake and the establishment of the SCARNG Training Site there, as well as a history of Quonset Huts. Chapter III presents architectural description of the setting and resources, along with a NRHP eligibility evaluation for each resource.

Figure 1.
Project Location Map



Source: ESRI Resource Data

Figure 2.
Resource Location Map



Source: ESRI Resource Data

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II. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The Clarks Hill Training Site of the South Carolina National Guard (SCARNG) is located on the eastern bank of Lake Thurmond in McCormick County, approximately 27 miles northwest of Augusta, Georgia. McCormick County, situated in the Piedmont region of the state, was formed in 1916 from portions of Greenwood, Abbeville, and Edgefield counties (Figure 3). The region's dominant source of income stemmed from a cotton economy, which developed shortly after the Revolutionary War and continued through the 1920s. Currently, the area's economy relies heavily on timber production and tourism/recreation in United States Forest Service lands and in nearby reservoirs (Kovacik and Winberry 1987).

The attack of the boll weevil in the 1920s, the economic collapse of the Great Depression in the 1930s, followed by New Deal programs, which paid farmers not to plant crops, combined to effectively end cotton agriculture in the region. Additionally, the appeal of industrial jobs in the cities during World War II motivated both black and white farmers to leave the region. Landowners began looking for a way out of the area and, conveniently, the federal government was buying. Most of the land purchased was in poor condition, depleted from poor agricultural practices and timber harvesting (Shapard 2009).

As a part of the New Deal in the 1930s, the Federal government directed the United States Forest Service to purchase private land from willing sellers, of which there were many. The goal of this project was to conserve and protect forests and watersheds from wildfire and poor forestry practices. Not long after, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers began to obtain land to build Clarks Hill Dam and Lake on the Savannah River. This reservoir would serve not only to alleviate flooding problems in Augusta but also to provide hydroelectric power and recreation for the rural area (Figures 4 and 5).

CLARKS HILL LAKE

In 1890, the first District Engineer of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Savannah District, recommended that the flooding problem in Augusta would only be solved by a system of dams and reservoirs on the upper Savannah River. His advice was not acted upon until almost 40 years later when Congress passed the 1927 Rivers and Harbors Act, which authorized the Corps to investigate interior streams for the navigation, power development, flood control, and irrigation. Although a Savannah District's 1933 report recommended against a flood control project for the river, two locations were ultimately proposed as suitable for future power dams, Clark Hill and Hartwell (Barber and Gann 1989).

Figure 3.
1916 Map of McCormick County

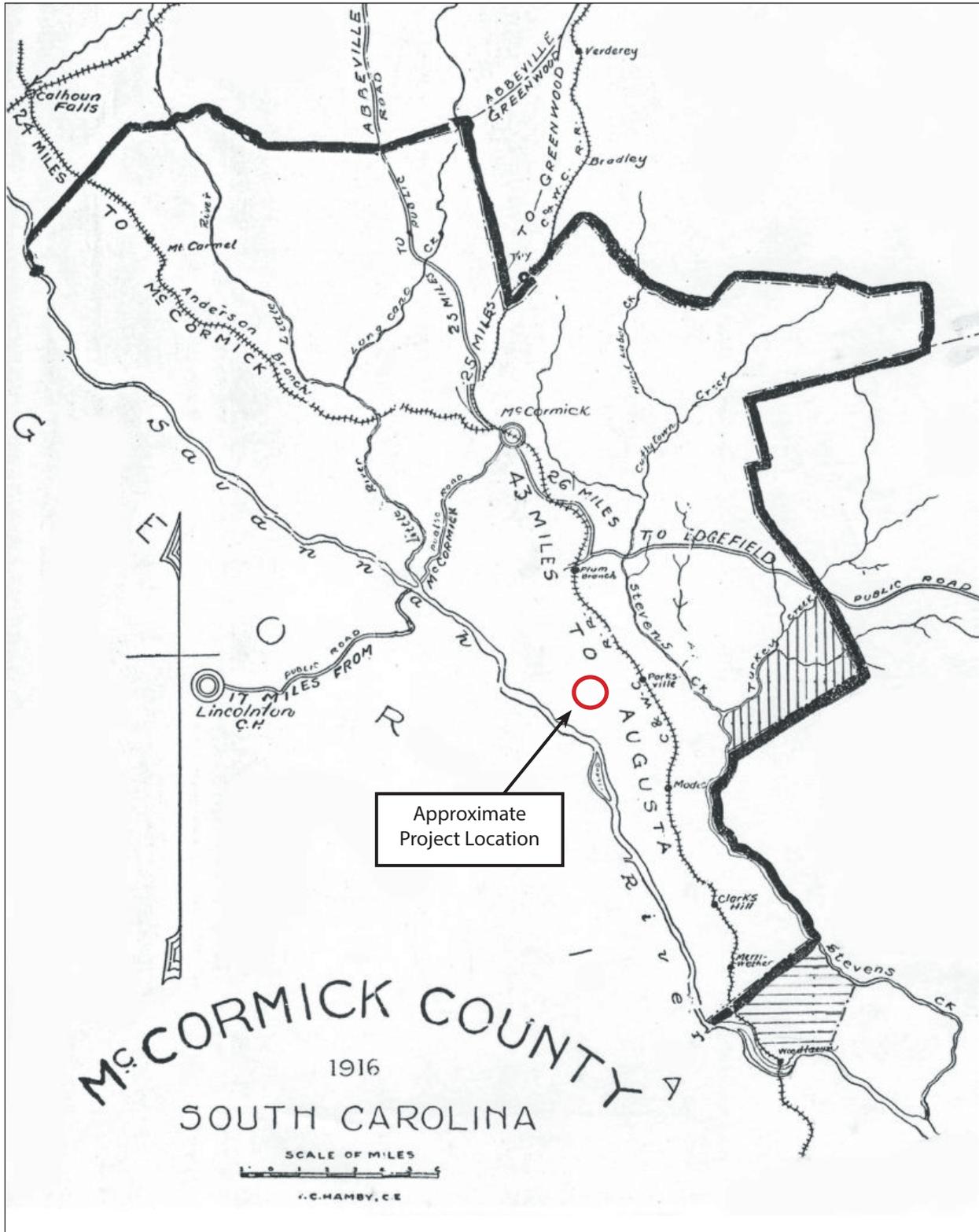
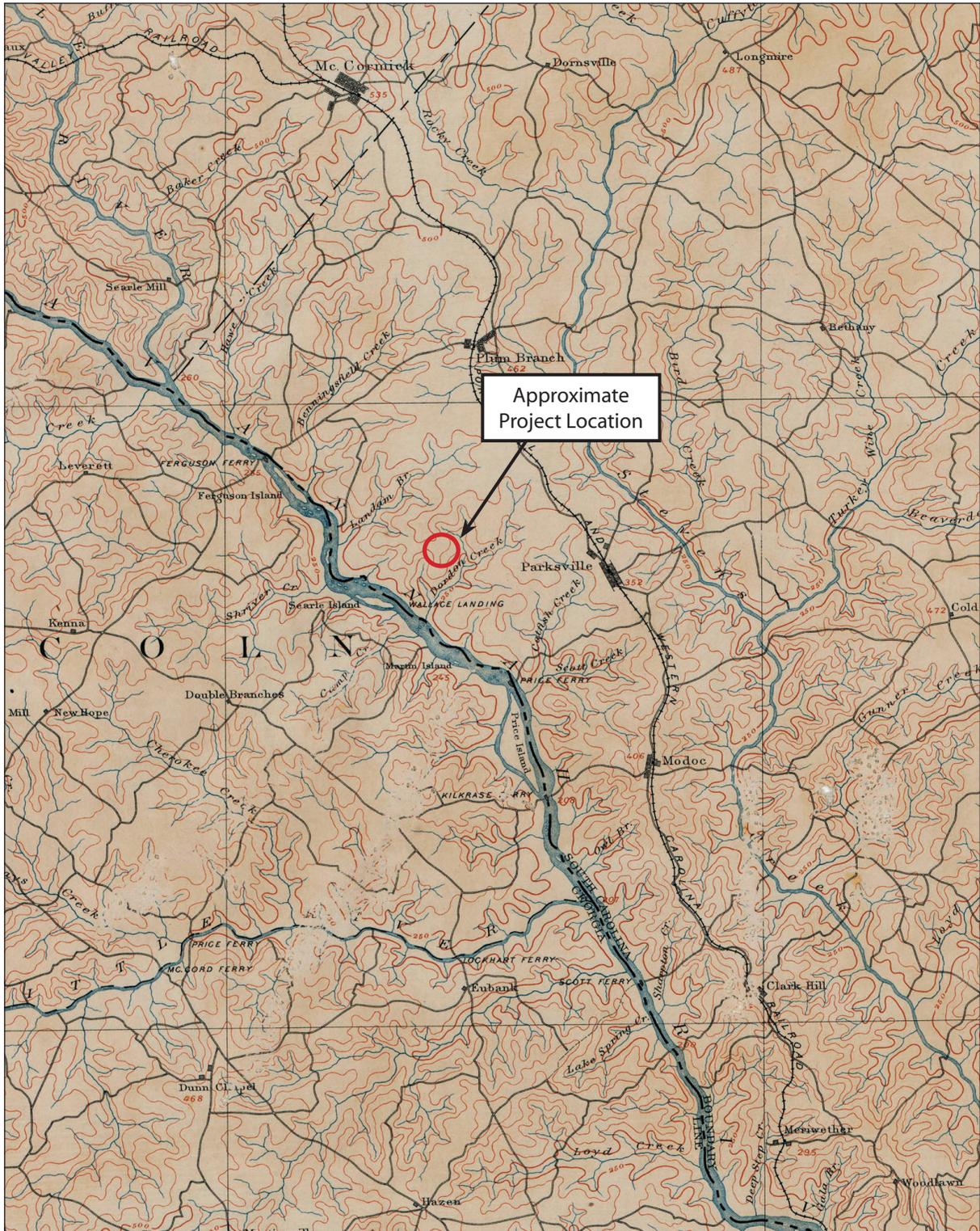


Figure 4.
1890 Topographic Map, Showing the Area Prior to the Flooding of Lake Thurmond



U.S. Geological Survey

Figure 5.
1951 Aerial Photograph of the Area Immediately Prior to the Flooding of Lake Thurmond



Push Piles from Timber Harvesting can be Seen in the Lower Elevations

U.S. Geological Survey

Over the next decade, interest in a hydroelectric project at Clark Hill was kept alive by Augusta community leaders, who travelled to Washington to gain the support of legislators and finally met with President Roosevelt. “The Corps and other advocates of the dam made a classic and effective “greater good” argument for the project, gaining the approval of Congress in the name of generating electricity for the region, holding back its waters during heavy rains so the river would not swamp streets in Augusta, and ensuring a navigable shipping channel on the river between Augusta and Savannah” (Shapard 2009). Eventually, it was determined that:

“the Savannah River Basin offered an exceptional opportunity for developing multipurpose projects and that the best plan for developing the water resources of the basin would start with the construction of the Clark Hill development, to include a full power pool of 335 feet above mean sea level...The top five feet of this maximum pool would be used for flood control, and the pool between elevation 305 and 330 was planned for power generation. When completed, this would be one of the largest inland bodies of water in the South. The reservoir impounded by the dam would extend 39.4 miles up the Savannah River and would have a surface area of 78,500 acres. The shoreline would be approximately 1,200 miles long” (Barber and Gann 1989).

Construction of the Clark Hill Dam was authorized in Public Law 534, 78th Congress, passed on December 22, 1944, with the dam being constructed between 1946 and 1954. The Corps acquired approximately 2,000 tracts of land ranging from just a few acres to thousands. All told, they totaled near 140,000 acres (Shapard 2009). Although much of the land was unoccupied, the project displaced several hundred people, 56 miles of road, and 59 cemeteries containing over 1,700 graves (Southall 2010). In 1951, the water began to backup and fill the reservoir, swelling the river banks and tributaries into the 71,000-acre Clarks Hill Lake. The dam measures 200 feet in height and spans 5,860-feet, with a power output estimated at 53,000 kilowatts.

The 1944 legislation authorizing the construction of the Clark Hill project also represents the first time that the Corps was empowered “to construct, maintain, and operate public park and recreational facilities in reservoir areas under the control of the War Department” (Barber and Gann 1989). The Corps worked closely with local residents to develop a recreation plan, but would depend on local and state agencies to develop and manage the parks. When the dam was nearing completion, the Corps began leasing shore lands to the state for recreational use. In 1987, Clark Hill Dam and Lake was renamed J. Strom Thurmond Dam and Lake after the former South Carolina governor and senator from neighboring Edgefield County.

CLARKS HILL TRAINING SITE

The South Carolina Army National Guard has held the lease for the Clarks Hill Training Site from the United State Corps of Engineers since the early 1960s. It is the largest SCARNG facility, at 871-acres, and is situated at the South Carolina-Georgia state line. The site is located in the Piedmont region of the state, which is characterized by rolling hills, approximately four miles south of Plum Branch and 80 miles west of Columbia. The Clarks Hill Training Site occupies a peninsula, consisting of several finger ridges, on the north bank of Lake Thurmond in McCormick County, bound by Landam Branch, Dordon Creek, and the waters of Lake Thurmond. At present, there are 94 buildings and structures at the Clarks Hill Training Site, most of which were constructed between 1973 and 1989. The only buildings over 50 years of age are three Quonset Huts, which are believed to have been relocated to the site in 1967, according to the SCARNG real property database. The property records provide no additional information regarding the provenance of the huts, where the buildings were moved from or when they were initially acquired by SCARNG.

QUONSET HUTS

According to Cyril M. Davis, in his *American Architecture: An Illustrated Encyclopedia*, the Quonset hut is defined as:

“A prefabricated structure, developed during World War II, that has a semicylindrical shape; commonly constructed of corrugated steel fasted to arched steel ribs that are attached to a concrete slab floor; used for a wide variety of temporary structures, such as barracks, storage sheds, and transient housing” (Harris 2003)

Quonset huts, named for the Navy yards at Quonset Point, Rhode Island where the structures were originally designed and built, were developed for the Navy during the preparation effort leading up to WWII. At the time, the Navy lacked adequate facilities for housing and storage. These corrugated metal half cylinders could be quickly deployed to serve those particular purposes along with an array of other uses (Thomas 2003).

The Quonset hut is loosely based on the Nissan hut, developed for the British during WWI, and improved upon by the George A. Fuller Construction Company of New York City and Stran-Steel, a division of the Great Lake Steel Corporation. These companies teamed up to accept a challenge by the Navy’s Rear Admiral Ben Morrell to produce an easily shippable, hurricane-resistant, prefabricated building that could be quickly assembled by untrained men and serve in 48 specific capacities. The Fuller-Stran team was given only 60 days to deliver (Thomas 2003). They presented their first prototype in 30 days.

The first Quonset hut measured 16-feet wide by 36-feet long and featured pressed wood interior lining, insulation, and a tongue and groove wood floor. The Navy approved 86 separate interior layouts for these small structures that could serve as barracks, latrines, medical facilities, kitchens, offices, garages, and a multitude of other purposes. This original form was constantly redesigned and improved throughout the war years and additional sizes added (Thomas 2003). It is estimated that between 150,000 and 170,000 Quonset huts were produced during WWII (Green 2016). The structures also had their shortcomings, most obvious to the soldiers that had to live and work in the huts. They were cold in winter and hot in summer, loud during rainstorms, and made noises as the metal contracted and expanded during temperature changes. They were not particularly homey either and were referred to as “sewer pipes” or “Spam cans” (Thomas 2003). Several thousand surplus huts were sold off after World War II, with a standard Quonset 20 going for \$1048 in 1946 (Rodgers, Ph.D., P.E. n.d.).

After the War, the Stran Steel Corporation began to focus on the civilian market for potential uses for the structure (Figure 6). By the 1950s, the company was manufacturing and marketing five models, which were identified by their widths (i.e. “20, 24, 36, 40 and the Multi”), and could be expanded lengthwise as needed. Quonset huts were offered through catalog sales domestically by Montgomery Ward and other retailers and helped to solve the housing shortage after the war. The popularity of the Quonset hut peaked in the early 1950s. By the 1960s and 70s, manufacturers had developed cheaper and stronger metal structures and the Quonset hut fell out of fashion, although several companies are still producing a version of the original design today.

Figure 6.
1946 Great Lakes Steel Corporation Advertisement for the "Quonset 20"

COUNTRY GENTLEMAN



The Stran-Steel "Quonset 20" is 20 feet wide and available in any length, in multiples of 12 feet.

**YOUR BUILDING DOLLARS ARE WORTH MORE
WHEN YOU BUY A STRAN-STEEL**

"Quonset 20"

The true worth of a building can be measured in several ways . . . but no matter how you figure it, the "Quonset 20" is a better buy!

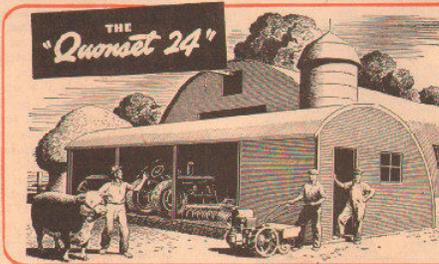
LOW INITIAL INVESTMENT—The "Quonset 20" costs no more than an ordinary building of comparable size—yet the "Quonset 20" provides the permanence and safety of *all-steel* construction.

INEXPENSIVE UPKEEP—Framed with Stran-Steel, covered with bright galvanized sheet steel, the "Quonset 20" is exceptionally economical to maintain . . . for Stran-Steel will not rot, sag or warp; it is impervious to termites.

GREATER USEFULNESS—The simplicity and flexibility provided by the Stran-Steel framing system, with its patented *nailing grooves* for attaching other building materials, make the "Quonset 20" adaptable to your particular needs. You can buy the

"Quonset 20" in the length you want—and add to it later if you require more space. Doors and windows can be arranged according to your plans for using the building; insulation, partitions and ventilators can be installed easily and economically; the clear-span interior gives

you 100% usable space. All told, you get greater usefulness from the "Quonset 20" because it's *tailored to your needs*. For a building of uniform quality—better from the ground up—investigate the "Quonset 20." See your local Stran-Steel dealer or write for complete information.



Twenty-four feet wide by any length desired, in sections of twelve feet. Solid end panels and open front standard. Extra equipment available: twelve-foot-wide, free-sliding front doors; panels with or without windows and walk-door in place of front sliding doors; walk-door and window in end panel. Interior sheet steel partition also available to enclose any twelve-foot section. The "Quonset 24" is just right for scores of farm uses.



GREAT LAKES STEEL CORPORATION

STRAN-STEEL DIVISION, 37th FLOOR PENOBSCOT BUILDING, DETROIT 26, MICHIGAN

UNIT OF NATIONAL STEEL CORPORATION

III. RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The three historic Quonset Huts located at the SCARNG Clark Hill Training Site are all semi-cylindrical steel-frame buildings, clad with corrugated metal. The Edgefield Hut (5311) is the largest, measuring 20-feet by 36-feet, while the Warrenton (5461) and McCormick (5462) huts both measure 16-feet by 24-feet. All three huts are situated at the eastern edge of the SCARNG Clark Hill Training Site, which is located on a peninsula on Lake Thurmond, bisected by Kay Waldrop Way. The area is covered in pine trees with very little undergrowth.

SC Site #	Resource Name	Size (W x L)	Date	NRHP Recommendation
0043	5311 – Edgefield Hut	20’ x 36’	1967	Not Eligible
0044	5461 – Warrenton Hut	16’ x 24’	1967	Not Eligible
0045	5462 – McCormick Hut	16’ x 24’	1967	Not Eligible

EDGEFIELD HUT (5311)

The Edgefield Hut is situated in a grassy clearing, surrounded by pine trees, on the south side of Kay Waldrop Way, overlooking Lake Thurmond (Figure 7). It is an example of the 20-foot Quonset model which could be expanded in 12-foot lengths depending on need, but was most often seen in a 48-foot length. One hundred twenty thousand of the 20 by 48-foot units were built for the Navy during World War II. The Edgefield Hut has a concrete slab foundation, with a corrugated steel barrel arch forming the roof and side walls (Figure 8). The entire arch has been coated with spray foam insulation, but the corrugation of the metal is still discernable. The end walls are comprised of vertical wood siding. The only openings in the hut are on the end walls, in which a single door is centered on each end (see Figure 7). There is one vinyl one-over-one window to the right of the door on the north end of the hut, while the south end has a window on each side of the door. The absence of windows on the sides indicates that the most basic “warehouse configuration” (Rodgers, Ph.D., P.E. n.d.). On the north side of the hut is a 20-foot by 16-foot concrete pad. The barrel vault on the interior of the hut is clad in wood paneling, but the end walls are sheetrock (Figure 9). A drop ceiling with fluorescent lighting has been installed. The floors are painted concrete.

Figure 7.
Photographs of the Edgewood Hut



A. Looking Southwest



B. Looking Northeast

Figure 8.
Edgewood Hut, Corner Detail Showing Foundation and Spray Foam Covering



Figure 9.
Edgewood Hut, Interior View



WARRENVILLE HUT (5461)

The Warrenville Hut is located on the north side of Kay Waldrop Way. It is nestled in a stand of pine trees on the eastern part of the peninsula, across the road from the Edgefield Hut (Figure 10). Like its neighbor, it is a corrugated steel barrel-vault structure coated in spray foam insulation. The end wall material is unknown, as it is obscured by a coat of spray foam insulation (Figure 11). The hut sits on a concrete block foundation, evidenced by the foundation venting on each end. Each end wall has a centered single door accessed by concrete block steps and flanked by one-over-one vinyl windows (Figure 13). There is a large concrete pad on the west side of the hut. On the interior, the arch and end walls are clad in wood paneling, while the floors are covered in sheet vinyl (see Figure 11).

MCCORMICK HUT (5462)

The McCormick Hut is located at the eastern end of the peninsula, on the north side of Kay Waldrop Way, near the boat launch. It is almost identical to the Warrenville Hut in its configuration, with a foam coated barrel vault and end walls, centered doors flanked by vinyl windows (Figure 12). It also sits on a concrete block foundation, but there are no foundation vents. There is a concrete pad on the north side of the hut and a short sidewalk leads to the south side entrance. The interior is clad in wood paneling (Figure 13).

Figure 10.
Photographs of the Warrenville Hut, 1 of 2



A. Facing East Along Kay Waldrop Road and Showing the Setting of Warrenville Hut



B. Looking Southeast

Figure 11.
Photographs of the Warrenville Hut, 2 of 2



A. Looking Northwest



B. Interior

Figure 12.
Photographs of the McCormick Hut



A. Looking North



B. Looking Southeast

Figure 13.
Interior View of the McCormick Hut



NRHP EVALUATION

In order to be considered eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, a resource must possess a significant association with important events or persons, design or construction features, or information potential and retain the historic integrity necessary in order to convey its significance.

DISCUSSION OF INTEGRITY

Properties being considered for NRHP must possess several, usually the majority, of the seven aspects of integrity: location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The Clarks Hill Quonset Huts no longer possess integrity in some of these areas. The huts appear to remain in their original locations, as placed in 1967, in the context of the Clarks Hill Training Site. By nature, Quonset huts were meant to be moved and repurposed. A 1964 aerial of the SCARNG peninsula shows that the area was wooded then and indicates that the setting has not changed much in the last 50 years. In the areas of materials, design, and workmanship, the huts have experienced a loss of integrity. The corrugated barrel arches of all three huts have been sprayed with insulating foam, obscuring the original material. The end walls of the Warrenville and McCormick huts have also been sprayed with foam, but the material underneath does not appear to be corrugated steel because no corrugation pattern is visible, as it is on the barrel arch. The end walls on the Edgefield Hut are clad in vertical wood siding, which appears to have replaced the original material. Normally, the end walls would be constructed from the same corrugated steel as the arch. The windows and doors have all been replaced with modern materials. Faux wood paneling covers the interiors of all three of the buildings.

EVALUATION OF ELIGIBILITY

Properties can be eligible for the NRHP under Criterion A if they are associated with events or pattern of events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history at the local, state, or national level. The three Clarks Hill Quonset Huts were not found to be associated with any historic event or theme. They are buildings that were likely constructed during or soon after the events of WWII and moved to their present location in 1967 from an unknown previous location. Therefore, the Clarks Hill Quonset Huts are recommended not eligible for listing under Criterion A.

Properties can also be eligible for the NRHP under Criterion B if they are associated with persons that have made contributions significant to our past. The Clarks Hill Quonset Huts were not found to be associated with any persons found to be historically significant within local, state, or national historic contexts. Therefore, the Clarks Hill Quonset Huts are recommended not eligible for listing under Criterion B.

Properties may be eligible under Criterion C if they embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represent the work of a master, or possess high artistic value. The Clarks Hill Quonset Huts embody the distinctive characteristics of their type, the Quonset Hut, which has been defined as a semi-cylindrical prefabricated building constructed of corrugated steel fastened to an arched steel rib frame; *however, due to the loss of their physical integrity through alteration, they are recommended not eligible for listing under Criterion C.*

Properties can be eligible if they are likely to yield additional information important in prehistory or history under Criterion D. The Clarks Hill Quonset Huts are unlikely to yield any important historical information not discoverable through other documentary sources. *Therefore, the Clarks Hill Quonset Huts are not recommended eligible for NRHP listing under Criterion D.*

CONCLUSION

New South Associates, Inc. was contracted to document and evaluate the NRHP eligibility of three Quonset Huts located at the Clarks Hill Training Site, which is leased by SCARNG from USACE. The site is located on the banks of Lake Thurmond, in McCormick County, South Carolina. After the resources were physically inspected in the field, documentary research was gathered so that the huts could be assessed within their appropriate historic context. They were then evaluated to see if they met one or more of the NRHP Criteria and possessed integrity. Although the Clarks Hill Quonset Huts do meet NRHP Criteria C for architecture, they were determined to have lost the integrity to convey their historic significance. NSA recommends all three Quonset huts not eligible for the NRHP, either as individual resources or as a unified entity, or district.

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**APPENDIX A:
CONCURRENCE LETTER**

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May 21, 2019

Rachel Morgan, MA, RPA
Cultural Resource Manager
SCARNG Environmental Office
MorganRB@tag.scmd.state.sc.us

Re: Quonset Hut Refurbishment, Survey and NRHP Evaluation of Three Quonset Huts at the
SCARNG Clarks Hill Training Site, McCormick County, South Carolina
SHPO Project No. 19-JS0165

Dear Ms. Morgan:

Thank you for your letter of April 29, 2019, which we received on May 1, regarding the above referenced undertaking at the Clarks Hill Training Site. We also received a Section 106 Project Review Form and the draft report *Survey and NRHP Evaluation of Three Quonset Huts at the SCARNG Clarks Hill Training Site, McCormick County, South Carolina* (April 25, 2019) as supporting documentation. The State Historic Preservation Office is providing comments to the South Carolina Army National Guard (SCARNG) pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and its implementing regulations, 36 CFR 800. Consultation with the SHPO is not a substitution for consultation with Tribal Historic Preservation Offices, other Native American tribes, local governments, or the public.

The survey recorded and evaluated three Quonset Huts (SHPO Site Numbers 0043 – 0045), which are recommended as not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Our office concurs with this recommendation. Based on the description of the Area of Potential Effect (APE) and the identification of historic properties within the APE, our office concurs that no properties listed in or eligible for listing in the NRHP will be affected by this project.

In the future please submit review and compliance survey documentation in accordance with our Electronic Submission Requirements for Planning Surveys and Review & Compliance Surveys available from <https://scdah.sc.gov/historic-preservation/programs/statewide-survey-historic-properties> and in our Survey Manual. Draft survey forms and photographs should be provided with the initial submittal.

Our office has additional technical comments on the report that we ask to see addressed (please see attached). We will accept the report as final once these comments are addressed; there is no need to send a revised draft for review.

Please provide the survey forms and photographs electronically for our review along with the revised final report PDF. We do not need any hard copies.

Please refer to SHPO Project Number 19-JS0165 in any future correspondence regarding this project. If you have any questions, please contact me at (803) 896-6129 or jsylvest@scdah.sc.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John D. Sylvest".

John D. Sylvest
Project Review Coordinator
State Historic Preservation Office