

Heritage



WWII Igloos

Key details

Also known as	Camp Seabee Igloos (former)
Addresses	At 104 Lavarack Avenue, Eagle Farm, Queensland 4009
Type of place	Warehouse, Defence site
Period	World War II 1939-1945
Lot plan	L826_SL3770
Key dates	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 July 2009 Date of Information — June 2009
Construction	Roof: Corrugated iron; Walls: Corrugated iron
People/associations	55th Naval Construction Battalion (US) (Builder)

Camp Seabee was constructed in early 1943, as part of the expansion of the United States Army Air Forces (USAAF) base at Eagle Farm. The camp housed the 55th Naval Construction Battalion that also built the camp. It was the smallest of the four camps that comprised the Eagle Farm base as the Seabee battalion also operated an USN ordnance depot at Mt Cootha. Camp Seabee operated until the end of the war in 1945.

History

The Seabees were a military unit component of the US Navy. Officially designated Naval Construction Battalions they were collectively known as Seabee battalions after the unit logo that was designed by Frank J. Lafrate in early 1942. A training centre for these battalions was established at Davisville, Rhode Island on 11 August 1942. It trained over 100,000 Seabees during the war.

Formed in 1942, the 55th Naval Construction Battalion shipped to Brisbane in early 1943. Initially they lived in tents at Camp Doomben. It took 10 days to construct the first part of Camp Seabee, largely sleeping quarters and a mess hall for the navy men. The main entrance was off Eagle Farm Road (now Kingsford Smith Drive). Camp Seabee was constructed after Camp Doomben (all services), Eagle Farm Airfield (USAAF), Camp Meandah (US Army Services of Supply) and the military stockade Camp La Fayette. Camp Seabee was built adjacent to Camp La Fayette with Camp Seabee having access to Bunour rail station on the Pinkenba Line.

The extant igloos were built at the rear of Camp Seabee are all that is left of the many permanent structures placed by the Seabees on this site. The Seabees also built the Mt Cootha sea mines depot, the USN 109th Hospital at Camp Hill, the USN Toombul warehouse complex at Northgate as well as other structures for the USN throughout Brisbane.

References

1. Brisbane City Council, aerial photographs for 1946, 2001 and 2005
2. Brisbane City Council, *Properties on the Web*, website, post-1946 building cards
3. Brisbane City Council, *Properties on the Web*, Applications/Site History
4. Brisbane City Council, Sewerage Map No. 199, 28 July 1927
5. Brisbane City Council, *New Farm Heritage Survey*, (Brisbane: BCC Heritage Unit, 1995)
6. Department of Natural Resources, Queensland Certificates of title and other records.
7. Environmental Protection Agency, "Walkerston State Butcher's Shop" citation
8. John Oxley Library, photographic collection.
9. Fisher, Rod & Crozier, Brian. *The Queensland House: A Roof Over Our Heads*. (Brisbane: Queensland. 1994)
10. Musgrave, Elizabeth, Kaylee Wilson and Brisbane City Council Heritage Unit. *New Farm and Teneriffe Hill: Heritage and Character Study*. October 1995
11. *Queensland Post Office Directories*, 1868-1949

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Note: This information has been prepared on the basis of evidence available at the time including an external examination of the building. The statement of significance is a summary of the most culturally important aspects of the property based on the available evidence, and may be re-assessed if further information becomes available. The purpose of this information is to provide an informed evaluation for heritage registration and information. This does not negate the necessity for a thorough conservation study by a qualified practitioner, before any action is taken which may affect its heritage significance.

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