

Heritage Citation

This is an image of the local heritage place known as United States Army General Depot Sentry Box

United States Army General Depot Sentry Box

Key details

Addresses	At 368 Earnshaw Road, Banyo, Queensland 4014; At 3 Guardhouse Road, Banyo, Queensland 4014
Type of place	Defence site
Period	World War II 1939-1945
Lot plan	Common property_SP233910
Geolocation	-27.380513 153.078940
Key dates	Significant Development — 1943 Local Heritage Place Since — 28 February 2020
People/associations	US Army (Occupant); Australian Defence Forces (Occupant)
Criterion for listing	(A) Historical; (B) Rarity

This small timber structure is the last remaining remnant of the large United States Army General Depot. Established in 1943, the Depot was the largest in Australia. A series of very large warehouses, as well as motor repair sheds and other military buildings, including a troop camp, were constructed on the site. Earnshaw Road passed through the depot and two sentry boxes were built at either end. Army guards were posted at the boxes who recorded the registration numbers and time of all civilian vehicles driving through. At the end of the war, the site was transferred to the Australian Army and became known as the Banyo Ordnance Depot.

History

Following the attack on Pearl Harbour on 7 December 1941, the US forces were redirected to Australia. On 22 December 1941, the USS Pensacola, heading a convoy of US naval ships carrying troops and equipment, arrived at Brett's Wharf, Hamilton. The General Headquarters South West Pacific Area, under the command of US General Douglas MacArthur, was also moved to Brisbane in July 1942. By December 1943, Brisbane was host to more than 75,000 US troops awaiting deployment to the conflict in the Pacific.

Large amounts of land in the Banyo and Northgate areas were acquisitioned by the United States Military for various purposes, including large-scale war-time stores and maintenance facilities. In 1942, the US Army initially quarried part of the undeveloped subject site. However in April 1943, it was decided that the seventeen acre site would be better used as a supply base as its proximity to the wharves and adjacent railway line were beneficial for such a facility.

Responsible for the design of the layout of the Depot was US Army Corps of Engineers' Lieutenant-Colonel Edward E Rosendahl who planned fourteen warehouses, vehicle storage area, railway siding and administration block. The land was cleared and the prefabricated buildings were swiftly erected. Earnshaw Road, then called Northgate Road, was widened and sealed with bitumen. The facility was known as the United States Army General Depot and was the largest army depot in Australia. The 338th Ordnance Company was based at the site. With their motto, 'Keep 'em Rollin'', the Company was responsible for the maintenance of army vehicles. Massive amounts of stores were held in the warehouses awaiting shipping to combat zones. Army vehicles were also stored at the depot ready for deployment to where the Pacific campaign was being fought.

Within the depot was a motor pool with two petrol pumping stations and two oil stores, motor repair shed, a railway siding, as well as a series of very large prefabricated timber warehouse buildings. There was also a large troop camp which consisted of rows of accommodation huts and associated buildings such as latrines, a postal exchange, recreation hut, canvas picture theatre, kitchens and several mess halls.

When construction first began at the depot, Earnshaw Road was closed to traffic. It was re-opened to local traffic once all security measures had been established. One of these measures included the construction of two sentry boxes which were located at either end of the depot on Earnshaw Road. From there, army guards took note of every passing civilian vehicle's registration number and time. The sentry box on Earnshaw Road is the only one remaining and the only extant building from the depot.

The depot remained an essential facility throughout the war. At the end of the conflict the Australian Army took over the depot. It became known as the Banyo Ordnance Depot. Part of the large site was purchased by the Committee of Direction on Fruit Marketing which soon after established the Golden Circle Cannery.

Description

The small, timber weatherboard structure has a simple, gabled corrugated iron roof with narrow eaves. It has tall, narrow, timber-framed double-hung windows and a timber access door. It is rectangular in plan and appears to have been relocated to its current position in the corner of the carpark as part of the recent industrial development of the larger site. Postal boxes appear to have been installed at the time of this relocation.

The timber sentry box located in the corner of the carpark, off Guardhouse Road, is the only significant structure on the site.

Statement of significance

Relevant assessment criteria

This is a place of local heritage significance and meets one or more of the local heritage criteria under the Heritage planning scheme policy of the *Brisbane City Plan 2014*. It is significant because:

Historical

CRITERION A

The place is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of the city's or local area's history

as the only extant building remaining from the important United States Army General Depot during World War Two, it is a reminder of the impact of the war on the Banyo area

Rarity

CRITERION B

The place demonstrates rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of the city's or local area's cultural heritage

as the only building remaining from Australia's largest army depot, the United States Army General Depot, established in Banyo during World War Two.

References

1. Bangee Festival Committee, BANYO-NUDGEE Heritage Trail – a pictorial history of Banyo, Nudgee, Nudgee Beach, Virginia and Northgate East, (Banyo: Bangee Festival Committee, 2000)
2. Brisbane City Council, 1946 aerial photographs.
3. Department of Environment and Heritage Protection, Queensland WWII Historic Places (website)
4. National Australian Archives, Series of Maps – Banyo Depot

Copyright Brisbane City Council

Note: This citation 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 citation 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.

Citation prepared by — Brisbane City Council (page revised September 2020)



Dedicated to a better Brisbane