

## Heritage Citation

### United States Army Transmitting Station (former)

#### Key details

<b>Addresses</b>	At 180 Youngs Road, Hemmant, Queensland 4174
<b>Type of place</b>	Transmission station
<b>Period</b>	World War II 1939-1945
<b>Lot plan</b>	L1_RP905292
<b>Key dates</b>	Local Heritage Place Since — 1 December 2017 Date of Citation — January 2014
<b>Construction</b>	Walls: Face brick
<b>People/associations</b>	United States Army Forces (Architect)
<b>Criterion for listing</b>	(A) Historical; (B) Rarity

The former US Army Transmitting Station in Hemmant was constructed in 1943 following the relocation of US General Douglas MacArthur's headquarters to Brisbane in July 1942. The transmitting station consisted of the large extant 'T' shaped brick transmitter hall, the extant timber generator building and several smaller auxiliary buildings that are no longer on the site. Communications were received at the station from MacArthur's headquarters in the city. The transmitters used at the station were extremely powerful and could send communications as far away as Washington DC. It was operated by US Army Signal Corps and Australian civilian women were employed as teletype operators. At the close of the war the station was acquired by the Commonwealth Government as a telecommunications centre. Today, the brick transmitting station has been converted into a house and the generator building is now a storage shed.

## History

The former United State Army Transmitting Station is one of the few remaining World War Two US built brick structures in Brisbane and is important in demonstrating both the intensive military activity that occurred in Brisbane during the war and the advanced technology utilised at the time.

Prior to the outbreak of World War Two, the swampy land on Youngs Road, Hemmant was property of local farmer Henry Thomas Carlill. However, with the United States of America entering the war following the bombing of Pearl Harbour on 7 December 1941 and the relocation of General MacArthur's headquarters to Brisbane in July 1942, the swampy land was requisitioned by the US Army. A small amount of compensation money was given to the Carlill family; approximately £10 for each calendar month as well as an extra £7 every six months.

As the headquarters for the important South West Pacific Campaign, Brisbane experienced an intensive level of construction throughout the city with camps, airfields, communications facilities, industrial buildings, docks and recreational facilities being built specifically for the US military. MacArthur's headquarters were located in the former AMP Building on the corner of Edward and Queen Streets and the US Army established their communications centre in the basement.

An effective communications system was imperative for the Allied campaign to not only transmit and receive messages from areas of conflict in the Pacific, but also to transmit and receive important messages to the US military heads in Washington DC.

The Hemmant site was chosen for its proximity to the mouth of the Brisbane River where a great deal of military activity was occurring, while being only five miles from the headquarters in the city. Additionally, the swampy land was covered in scrub that would provide a good level of camouflage from any possible Japanese reconnaissance planes.

In early 1943 the United States Army Services of Supply, South West Pacific Area's Corps of Engineers drew up plans for a new transmitting station. The US Army Forces in Australia (USAFIA) constructed several buildings on the site. The largest of these buildings was the brick transmitter hall that remains on the site. The other of extant buildings on the site is the generator building. Several smaller auxiliary buildings were also constructed at this time but no longer remain on the site. In November 1943 the transmitter hall was extended to include another wing and thus making the building a 'T' shape.

The Hemmant Transmitter Station worked in conjunction with another smaller communications station established at the same time at a site approximately eight kilometres away at Capalaba. This station received messages from both the areas of conflict within the Pacific and from Washington DC and then sent them on to MacArthur's headquarters. This station still exists.

The 832nd Signal Service Company, US Signal Corps, ran both the Hemmant and Capalaba stations and both were in use twenty-four hours of the day. The Americans employed Australian civilian women as teletype operators at the station.

The latest in communications technology was installed at the Hemmant site. The equipment on the site consisted of radio wirelasses, teleprinters, amplifiers and an antennae system on 100 foot steel towers. A cable ran from the transmitter hall into MacArthur's headquarters. All equipment has been removed from the site. When the equipment was removed from the former generator building three names of US Army engineers who assisted in

the construction were discovered written into the a slab of concrete, Sergeants BE Norris, HV Fowler and RJ Krotky. This is important as evidence of the presence of the United States Army personnel on the Hemmant site.

In December 1946 the US Army handed the site to the Commonwealth Government. Its control was given to the Post Master General's Department and arrangements were made for the entire property to be bought from the Carlill family. With this accomplished, the site continued to run as a radio station until the late 1980s when the land was sold to private investors. Recently, the transmission hall has been converted into a house and the generator building is currently a storage shed.

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## Description

The Former United States Army Transmitting Station is a low set, L-shaped, brick building with gable roof clad with corrugated metal sheeting. It stands in a large open native landscape well back from Youngs Road.

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## 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:

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### Historical

#### CRITERION A

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

the former Transmitter Station provides evidence of the intensive US Military activity in Brisbane during World War Two and General MacArthur's requirements for direct communication with Washington DC and the Pacific theatre of war.

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### Rarity

#### CRITERION B

The place demonstrates rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of the city's or local area's cultural heritage as an example of a United States Army Transmitter Station constructed during World War Two in Brisbane.

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## References

1. WWII Queensland Historic Sites, Queensland Government, "Hemmant United States Army Transmitting Station" <http://www.ww2places.qld.gov.au/pages/Places.aspx?PlaceCode=QWWIIHP-750>
2. Queensland Certificates of Title
3. Brisbane City Council, 1946 aerial photographs.
4. *Site Plan, Hemmant Radio Station*, Post Master General's Department, 1947, National Archives of Australia
5. *Memorandum*, Post Master General's Department, 15 February 1950, National Archives of Australia
6. *Letter*, To Department of Interior from the Post Master General's Department, 20 October 1949, National Archives of Australia
7. *Memorandum*, Australian Military Forces, Northern Command, 17 November 1947, National Archives of Australia
8. *Memorandum*, Australian Military Forces, Northern Command, 31 March 1947, National Archives of Australia
9. *Plans and Drawings of Hemmant United States Army Radio Building*, Office of Base Section Engineer USASOSSWPA, 26 November 1943, National Archives of Australia

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**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.

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