



REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES - ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION

11. ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The criteria adopted by the Heritage Council in November, 1996 have been used to determine the cultural heritage significance of the place.

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE *

The *Northam Army Camp* has the aesthetic characteristics and layout of a military training camp. It comprises of approximately 70 timber-framed buildings; including residences, dormitory huts, a brick and corrugated iron headquarters building, mess hall, hospital, a sentry box, a parade ground with stone retaining walls, plinths and a network of bitumen and gravel roads. (Criterion 1.1)

The formal qualities of the barracks contribute to the aesthetic qualities of the place. (Criterion 1.3)

The simple, timber framed barracks, kitchens, ablution blocks and other structures form a coherent townscape of buildings of similar scale and style. The network of roads helps to define the site, particularly where buildings are no longer extant. (Criterion 1.4)

11.2. HISTORIC VALUE

Northam Army Camp contributes to the understanding of Western Australia's involvement and home front activities in World War Two. The place has direct links with events which are associated with the War, including Prisoners of War and post war immigration. (Criterion 2.2)

Northam Army Camp was the training camp for the special forces in Western Australia, among those army units linked to the camp were the 10th Light Horse and the Second Australian Imperial Force. It has close associations with the young men of Northam and Western Australia who have trained there since the 1930s. (Criterion 2.3)

In the 1940s, *Northam Army Camp* became the 'final' internment camp for Italian Prisoners of War awaiting repatriation after the end of the Second World War. (Criterion 2.3)

* For consistency, all references to architectural style are taken from Apperly, Richard; Irving, Robert and Reynolds, Peter *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture: Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present*, Angus & Robertson, North Ryde, 1989.

From the late 1940s, *Northam Army Camp* was the initial 'home' for thousands of immigrants to Western Australia and Australia. (Criterion 2.3)

11. 3. SCIENTIFIC VALUE

11. 4. SOCIAL VALUE

Northam Army Camp is valued by various groups which have been associated with and/or occupied the camp since the 1930s, including the 10th Light Horse, the 2nd AIF and Citizens Military Forces, and Italian POWs during World War Two. (Criterion 4.1)

The place is highly valued by the approximately 15,000 immigrants who were initially accommodated in the Reception and Training Centre before moving to different areas in Western Australia. As a result, its historic associations contribute to a number of different ethnic communities' sense of place and identity. (Criterion 4.1 & 4.2)

Northam Army Camp is regarded by the local community because of its associations as a military facility, a Prisoner of War camp and a camp for new immigrants. The camp has historic associations with the Northam community itself, which has long used the camp as a training and recreational centre. (Criterion 4.1)

Northam Army Camp contributes to Northam's sense of place in that it greatly influenced the development of the town, due to the large influx of soldiers during World War Two. Following the war, the even greater impact of thousands of immigrants helped boost the town's economy and gave it multicultural diversity. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12.1. RARITY

The *Northam Army Camp*'s parade ground, stone retaining walls, steps and memorial plinths were constructed by Italian prisoners held there during World War Two. In the steps and plinths (one of which housed a time capsule), the following words are inscribed: 'POW 24/9/46' and '24/9/46 POW ITALIANI'. These are uncommon structures. (Criterion 5.1)

Northam Army Camp is significant for being one of the three Prisoner of War camps in Western Australia used to accommodate Italian prisoners during the World War Two. (Criterion 5.2)

Northam Army Camp is significant, along with Cunderdin Camp and Holden Camp, in that for a relatively brief period it was effectively a small town and home to thousands of immigrants. It is likely that the accommodation huts in the central camp area were used to accommodate the immigrants but, apart from these huts and the foundations of a number of toilet blocks, little remains to signify this period. (Criterion 5.2)

12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Northam Army Camp is characteristic of its class, that of an army camp. (Criterion 6.1)

12.3 CONDITION

Northam Army Camp is in good condition.

12.4 INTEGRITY

The place has high integrity. It was built to be an army camp and is being used as such today.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

Authenticity as an army camp is high. A large number of huts used for migrant accommodation have been subsequently removed. Foundations still exist of some of the buildings which have been removed.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Natasha Georgiou, History Researcher. The physical evidence has been compiled by John Loreck, Architect. Additional research has been compiled by Heritage Council staff.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Northam Army Camp comprises about seventy timber and corrugated iron huts, forty concrete foundations which are the remains of ablution blocks, Battalion Headquarters, iron mess hall and other military purpose built buildings which were constructed by the Department of the Army for military training from the 1930s. Most of the buildings would date from 1939. There is also a parade ground built by Italian Prisoners of War (c. 1946), a caretaker's residence (c. 1960), and another residence (c. 1970).

Although the first land grants in the Northam district were taken up in 1830 and the town of Northam gazetted in 1830, development of the area was slow.¹ However, the town of Northam grew substantially with the arrival of the Great Eastern Railway in 1886.²

In 1896, the Mounted Rifle Troops were established in Northam. In 1903, this troop, together with all existing volunteer and militia units in Australia, combined to form the Australian Commonwealth Military Forces.³ Following recommendations from Field Marshall Lord Kitchener in 1910, National Training for youths was introduced. Blackboy Hill Camp and its successor, *Northam Army Camp*, became two of the many places where camps and training for school cadets took place.⁴ Once a boy reached 18 years of age, a school cadet graduated to senior cadet in the Citizen's Forces.⁵

Typical training for the young men included parade work, drill work, rifle exercises, physical training, organised strategic games and examinations. Although the training had evolved since its first inception during World War One, and again during World War Two, the philosophy behind it has remained the same. According to a manual for training Australian Military Senior Cadets,

A thorough grounding in the elementary work, together with the development of a soldierly spirit, is essential as a foundation for the higher training of the soldier, and officers charged with the training of the Senior Cadets should realise their great responsibility in the power that they have over the ultimate success of the training of the Military Forces.⁶

With the outbreak of World War One in 1914, the Australian Government decided not to expand the existing military forces for

¹ Survey Department Letter Books, SI, 1830.

² Erickson, R., *Old Toodyay and Newcastle*, Toodyay Shire Council, Toodyay, 1974, p.281.

³ Goodacre, J., *The Northam Post Office and Telegraph Office*, Avon Valley Arts Society, Northam, 1992, p. 23.

⁴ Tony Fennois, Department of the Army, conversation with Natasha Georgiou, 24 April 1998.

⁵ S Diss, personal reminiscences, OH 249, Battye Library.

⁶ Australian Military Cadets, *Training, Musketry and Rifle Exercises*, Government Printer, Melbourne, 1917, p. 5.

overseas service and instead chose to enlarge the Australian Infantry Forces.⁷ However, the community was bitterly disappointed that there would be no mounted troop and as training continued, it became evident that Western Australia could turn out at least one full mounted regiment. Authority was given to form a Light Horse Regiment in Western Australia, to be known as the 10th Light Horse.

By 7 October 1914, the 1st Northam Light Horse contingent was ready to leave for battle. Together with the 8th and 9th Light Horse Regiments, the 10th Light Horse formed the 3rd Light Horse Brigade. The Brigade disembarked at Gallipoli on 21 May 1915 and, a little under three months later, were involved in the fateful attack at the Nek.⁸ C. E. W. Bean wrote that 'with the Regiment that were killed that day "went the flower of youth of Western Australia"'.⁹

During World War One, the Northam army unit of the 10th Light Horse became a prestige military group. Much has been said and written about the 10th Light Horse, which substantiates the blending of the legend of bushman and digger, later glorified by war historian C. E. W. Bean.¹⁰ The 10th Light Horse was particularly important for having provided military training for Northam's young men.

The army's close association with Northam continued throughout the interwar period. It was the Department of the Army's decision to establish a new permanent camp in 1935, which was to have the most significant impact on Northam and on the town's economy. The following is a clear account by Colonel G. F. G. Wieck of how Northam was selected for its strategic position; far enough from the coast to be unaffected by surprise landings yet close enough to ensure that troops could be rapidly deployed.

For a number of years prior to 1934, camps of training for the Citizen Forces of Western Australia were held at Karrakatta, firstly because "economy at the expense of efficiency" was the diction of the politicians at Canberra; secondly it was doubtful if the standard of training reached by the troops at that time justified the occupation of a camp area where advanced training was possible but facilities for other training were lacking.

However, by 1934 it was realised that some progress was vital and it was decided to hold the 1933/34 camp in a country district and thereafter alternate between coastal and inland areas so as to give the troops experience in the various types of terrain and condition. Northam was chosen for 1933/34 and York for 1934/35. The Northam area was badly affected by the heavy unseasonal [sic] rain, which fell during the currency of the camp. The experience gained in both camps was most useful, proving the wisdom of giving the troops more elbow-room. Early in 1935, directions were issued by the Army Headquarters that in Western Australia a reconnaissance should be made forthwith with a view to selecting a permanent site for a camp which would be used as (a) a peace training area for Citizens Forces, (b) a mobilisation site in time of war and (c) a receiving camp for reinforcing troops in case of invasion.

The site was to be 30-50 mile inland, protected from view, provide training facilities and with means of access to likely points of landing by hostile forces on

⁷ Goodacre, op. cit., p. 25.

⁸ This battle took place on 7 August 1915.

⁹ Goodacre, op. cit., p. 26.

¹⁰ Garden, op. cit., p.209.

the coast of Western Australia. The deciding factor was supplies of water, therefore the site could be only in areas served by water piped from the Darling Range. Study of the map indicated a site somewhere in the Avon River basin was the only answer to the problem. The Assistant Adjutant and Quartermaster General (Wieck) of the 5th Military District was instructed to make the required reconnaissance and report results. Commencing at Pingelly and working northwards, Colonel Wieck arrived at Northam on Easter Sunday, April 1935. Next day, having co-opted Squadron Sergeant Major Thackrah (10th Light Horse) the Traffic Inspector employed by the Northam Municipal Council, he drove by car to the then Northam Rifle Range and with Thackrah travelled on foot in a southerly direction studying the country as they went. By this time they had reached the Great Eastern Highway; all requirements seemed to be available except the actual camp site itself. Eventually the area covered for the most part by trees and dense undergrowth, located immediately south of the highway, was thought to have possibilities; investigation (in some parts on hands and knees) showed the area to be suitable...it was revealed that the area involved Town Common and that the town council might agree to a lease. Next day a formal request was submitted to the Northam Municipal Council on behalf of the Department of the Army and at their next meeting the council agreed to lease the area for the purpose of building a permanent camp for a period of 20 years at £15 per annum, and with the right of renewal. This was put into form and signed by all concerned.

Training camp for 1935/36 was to be held in the financial year and for reasons never made clear the Military Commandant decided to erect a tented camp on the new site. Time was short but with the aid of a detachment of Gunners from the Artillery Barracks, Fremantle, and teams of horses from the Remount Depot, Guildford, the area was cleared in time and the camp was held there. During the following years as money became available various amenities and buildings such as store-rooms, cook-houses, officers and sergeants messes were erected. Plans were prepared by the Quartermaster Generals and Works Branches in collaboration, for the housing of a complete Infantry Brigade Group. When World War Two broke out it was founded. Funds became available and before long the camp was complete with buildings, training facilities and various amenities, and indeed as the war went on, with many things not contemplated when the camp was founded. Very little consideration is needed to perceive the great importance of the site selected. Northam is the strategic centre of the State – far enough from the coast to be unaffected by surprise landings, yet close enough to ensure that troops would speedily reach any threatened areas; it stands at the crossroads of both rail and highway systems; it is on the direct line of approach from the east; it has a good water supply, with the Avon River as an alternative source; it has excellent training facilities at its door; it is protected from view, from westerly winds and has good defensible country to the west. Finally there is within reasonable distance a civil community (Northam) large enough to provide such amenities as the camp itself could not normally do. High authority has stated that the Northam Camp is one of most satisfactory in the Commonwealth.¹¹

This quotation shows that although Northam had been selected as site for a permanent camp in 1933/4 it was not until the advent of World War Two that funds became readily available to begin the camp's construction. In 1939, the *Northam Advertiser* reported that the camp went up with 'immense building activity. Some of the larger buildings on the site, like the mess huts, had been relocated from the old training ground of Blackboy Hill. Still, within one month, 175 huts had been erected; most of the material for the huts also came from the Blackboy Hill camp.'¹²

¹¹ *Northam Advertiser*, 14 October 1960, p.2.

¹² *ibid*, 4 October 1939, p. 2.

Les Cody, a soldier trained at the *Northam Army Camp* during the War, describes the camp as:

A collection of corrugated iron, wooden floored huts, each housing approximately 50 recruits (a platoon). Three huts to a company serviced by company H.Q., a Quartermaster's Store, cook house, mess hut and ablution block. Officers and senior NCOs were housed in separate accommodation and had their own mess. Five such groups plus Battalion Head Quarters, the Regimental Quartermaster Store and the Regimental Aid Post constituted a Battalion. [There were four such Battalions] General camp facilities, canteen, YMCA¹³, Salvation Army, Red Cross etc., and a Camp Hospital serviced the whole camp. The recreation huts provided activities for every night of the week, including concerts from such groups as the Merrymakers of Perth and Handcocks Orphans. There were Talkies on Tuesday and Friday nights...bridge, table tennis...boxing tournaments were held most weeks and they [recreation huts] were used for church services on Sundays.¹⁴

The *Northam Army Camp* was built to serve two specific functions during World War Two. The camp was the brigade training camp for the newly formed the Second Australian Imperial Force. The 2nd AIF left for Britain on the 10th of January 1940, disembarking at Ismailia in the Suez Canal for further training. When Mussolini declared war on British Empire in 1940, Australian troops stationed in the Middle East began to prepare for combat with Italian forces in North Africa. The 2nd AIF was a significant part of the British offensive, which began in the Middle East and North Africa in December 1940/January 1941.¹⁵

The Camp also continued to be used (as it is today) for the intense short-term training of the Citizens Military Forces, which included the Volunteer Defence Corps and military cadets. These groups were a useful adjunct to the Australian Army in Western Australia at a time when Australia's resources were stretched. The training at *Northam Army Camp* ensured that these men would be in a fit condition to be deployed elsewhere, either in the field or as mobile reserves. Of course, in addition to this training, each man still carried on his normal occupation and duties. These voluntary forces also served to be a morale building exercise for the community, local men were able to contribute 'something positive' to Australia's defence.

During World War Two, more than 25,000 Prisoners of War were brought to Australia from the Middle East and India; most of them were Italian. Prisoners were held in camps around Australia from 1943 to 1946. In 1943, Western Australia requested aid from the Federal Government for its home front activities. Western Australia's rural industry was struggling because of a shortage of farm labourers and the metropolitan area needed to be provided with firewood. The solution was to use POW labour. (Part of the Rural Employment of POWs Without Guards Scheme.)¹⁶ From 1943 to 1946, there were three prisoner of war camps which operated in WA in conjunction with twenty-seven POW Control Centres.

¹³ The *Northam Advertiser* reported that the YMCA building, including a stage, cost £1,800 to erect. *ibid*, 14 October 1939, p.2.

¹⁴ Cody, L., *Ghosts in Khaki*, Hesperian Press, Victoria Park, 1997, p.8 & 14.

¹⁵ Polis, E., 'Study and Survey of Prisoner of War Facilities in Western Australia', National Estate Grants Program, 1996, p. 7

¹⁶ *ibid*, p.9

The *Northam Army Camp* had been a huge operation during World War Two, but by 1945, it was almost deserted. In early 1946, when the prospect of repatriation to Italy finally became a reality (as shipping became available¹⁷), plans to close the Control Centres began. It was soon realised that the main camp at Marrinup did not have the capacity to hold the 2,500 POWs located in other parts of Western Australia. The only other facility which had the infrastructure capable of dealing with the sudden influx of personnel was the now nearly abandoned camp at Northam. In May 1946, and within the short space of about two weeks, 2,500 POWs were removed from 28 other sites in Western Australia and taken to Northam to prepare for repatriation to Italy. The POWs detained, with a promise of quick repatriation, were held on a trust situation which was described at that time as being 'under parole'.

Approximately 1,000 prisoners remained at Marrinup, and these too were transferred to Northam in July 1946. At the same time, the Headquarters of No. 16 POW Camp was transferred from Marrinup to Northam. This increased the number of prisoners to over 3,500. In 1946, *Northam Army Camp* consisted of four POW compounds.¹⁸

The POWs were in residence at Northam between May and November 1946, by which stage all repatriation had been completed, or those remaining had been sent to POW facilities in the Eastern States. During this short period, the prisoners awaiting repatriation built a new blue metal parade ground and erected retaining walls, steps and memorial plinths, one of which housed a time capsule. In the plinths and steps, the following words are inscribed: 'POW 24/9/46' and '24/9/46 POW ITALIANI'. The POWs were in residence at Northam between May and November 1946, by which stage all repatriation had been completed, or those remaining had been sent to POW facilities in the Eastern States.¹⁹

On 24 October 1949, the Department of Immigration accepted the use of the *Northam Army Camp* from the Department of the Army in lieu of the partial occupation of Swanbourne Garrison Camp. The Camp was officially known as the Department of Immigration Accommodation Centre Northam. Like Cunderdin Camp and Holden Camp, it initially opened to house 'Displaced Persons' and then accommodated the influx of 'New Australians'. Both of which were integral parts of the Federal Government's post war immigration policy and its plans to stimulate Australia's population and development.

Northam was considered to be strategically placed as it was near a railhead, thus enabling immigrants to travel to work in many parts of the state.²⁰ As the camp was not in good repair, fifty men from the transport ship *Mozzafari* were brought to Northam to help prepare the camp to receive the large numbers of immigrants. This preparation included the

¹⁷ War The repatriation of German and Italian POWs was expected to commence at the end of World Two, May 1945. The continuing war with Japan had delayed this process and the POWs continued to work for the war effort.

¹⁸ Australian Heritage Commission, 'Register of the National Estate Database Place Report', 31 March 1998, p. 2. (It has not been possible to determine which part of the camp the POWs occupied, apart from the remaining structures which they built.)

¹⁹ ibid

²⁰ Australian Archives, A443, Item 51/15/5171.

construction of six large dining rooms, improvements to the hospital, and the establishment of a canteen and post office.²¹

The Northam Accommodation Centre functioned as a Reception and Training Centre. All immigrants were interviewed individually by the Commonwealth Employment Service and Department of Social Security representatives. The employable generally commenced contract work within three to four weeks of admission to the Reception Centre. Their wives and children were then relocated to the longer term residences at Holden Holding Centre, also located in Northam.²² Holden Camp was opened on 10 August 1949 and finally closed in 1963, during which time it provided accommodation for over 8,000 wives and children until the men could secure accommodation for their families.²³

The 1,600 immigrants who arrived at Fremantle aboard the *Anna Salen* on 24 August 1949 were the first to be accommodated at the *Northam Army Camp*.²⁴ They were brought by train to Northam, given food at the accommodation centre, then sent to their designated barracks. Families were given a room in a barrack, whereas single people were given space in dormitory style barracks. A thin grey army issue blanket, hung to a height of six feet, served as a partition between different family groups. Beds were Army issue camp stretchers with straw filled mattresses. Facilities at the camp were primitive. *Northam Army Camp* was not sewered, instead toilet pans were cleared weekly by the Northam Council and, as a result, there was a constant fly problem. There was no hot water available in the camp and toilets and showers in the ablution facilities had no doors.²⁵ By 1950 the camp housed up to 5,000 immigrants and two new blocks of huts had to be built to accommodate the increasing numbers. Other facilities built included a State School (opened up in March 1950, with 400 children attending) and a recreation hall which was used for concerts, dances and films and Children's Christmas parties.²⁶

The Northam Accommodation Centre closed in September 1951. It had been the first place of residence in WA for approximately 15,000 immigrants from the Baltic States, Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Italy, Yugoslavia, the Ukraine, White Russia and Bulgaria.²⁷ During the peak immigration period, Northam had the largest immigrant receiving facilities within the State and the third largest in Australia. By May 1954, 23,000 migrants had passed through the Northam Camp.²⁸ Once the Accommodation Centre had closed, the base reverted back to the Department of the Army and was subsequently used by Western Command to train Military personnel for the Korean War.²⁹

²¹ Australian Archives, PP6/1, Item W49/H/3647; AA. PP6/1, Item 1950/H/6532.

²² Peters, N., Bush, F., & Gregory, J., *Holden Army Camp*, Centre for WA History, Nedlands, 1997, p. 19.

²³ *ibid*, p. 23.

²⁴ *Northam Advertiser*, 29 September 1949, p.4.

²⁵ *ibid*, 28 October 1949, p. 3.

²⁶ *ibid*, 24 September 1949, p.4; 9 December 1949, p.1; 3 March 1950, p.6; 17 March 1950, p.8.

²⁷ Australian Archives, PP340/1/0 Item 210/1/4 Pt.2

²⁸ *ibid*, p. 33.

²⁹ Peters, et. al, op. cit., p.20.

From the late 1950s, buildings at *Northam Army Camp* have gradually been sold off to various clubs, social clubs, charities, and communities.³⁰ Many other buildings have been demolished due to white ant infestation. In 1967, Avon Locations 28243 and 28244 were granted to the Commonwealth of Australia for \$1,568.³¹ After the Meckering earthquake in 1968, many of the better buildings were given to the farmers of that region.³² In 1971, more of the original town common lots that were being used by the Army (Avon Locations 28465, part Avon Location d, and C1) were transferred to the Commonwealth Government.³³ In 1974, part Avon Locations 28243 and 28465 were granted to the Commonwealth Government and this was finally followed by part Avon Location d in 1983.³⁴ In March 1976, the 10th Light Horse Squadron moved its Headquarters from the old Post Office to the *Northam Army Camp*.³⁵ Only recently, the Recreation Hall was removed to become a movie theatre.³⁶

Approximately 85-90% of the buildings in the *Northam Army Camp* have been removed or demolished and the remaining few are under threat of demolition by the Department of Defence. This is so that a new camp, designed to accommodate around 300 with much improved facilities, can be provided for the SAS training base and for the Citizens Military Force, which still uses *Northam Army Camp*.³⁷

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Northam Army Camp is situated on both sides of the Great Eastern Highway, about five kilometres south-west of Northam. The Great Eastern Highway at this point runs along a south-west to north-east axis. That section of the Army Camp north of Great Eastern Highway includes a rifle range and sewerage ponds, and is not included in this assessment.

South of Great Eastern Highway, the camp consists of approximately seventy buildings in use, which are concentrated towards the centre of the site, the majority of which date from the 1939s. There is, however, evidence that the maximum number of buildings in *Northam Army Camp* was far greater as the majority of the site is covered by an extensive network of bitumen and gravel roads. In addition, there are about forty concrete foundations, presumably the remains of ablution blocks, evenly distributed throughout the site. It is likely that the dormitory huts used for housing migrants were similar to those extant, that is, timber framed, with corrugated iron wall and roof cladding. Beyond those huts in the central camp area, however, no evidence of these accommodation huts was found at the time of this inspection and it is reasonable to assume that they have been demolished or relocated.

³⁰ Australian Archives, File No. 1967/411; 1958/105.

³¹ Certificate of Title Vol. 225, Fol. 69A.

³² Tony Fannois, op. cit.

³³ Certificates of Title Vol. 671, Fol. 89; Vol. 1359, Fol. 239.

³⁴ Certificates of Title Vol. 225, Fol. 69A; Vol. 1359, Fol. 239; Vol. 671, Fol. 89.

³⁵ Goodacre, op. cit., p. 44.

³⁶ Fannois, op. cit.

³⁷ *The Northam Independent*, 22 July 1997, p.4; Fannois, op. cit.

Unless described otherwise, all buildings are constructed of corrugated iron walls and roofs, on a timber frame.

The visitor to *Northam Army Camp* turns off Great Eastern Highway onto an access road that runs at right angles to the highway, past a fibrous cement and corrugated iron sentry box, a brick and corrugated iron headquarters building, and a parade ground, paved in blue metal (Block A).

The parade ground is rectangular in plan with the long axis aligned south-west to north-east. The ground in this area falls away to the north-east, towards a creek which flows north-east and parallel to Great Eastern Highway. The creek was dry at the time of this inspection. A concrete and timber bridge spans the creek (c.1939).

The level of the parade ground is such that the south-west half is cut into the ground and the north-east half is on fill. The sides of the parade ground consist of dry laid stone or gravel banks. At the north-eastern end there are sets of steps about two metres high that lead from the parade ground to natural ground level. The steps in the south-east side have, inscribed in the cement 'POW 24/9/46'. A free standing cement render plinth about half way along the north-west side of the parade ground has the inscription '24/9/46 POW ITALIANI'. A memorial plaque to the immigrant occupants of Northam Army Camp is in the western corner of the parade ground.

The headquarters building (Block A) is built in an Inter-War Georgian Revival Style, as evidenced by the rectangular plan, symmetrical form and domestic scale. The dominant feature of the headquarters is the brick entrance portico, consisting of two intermediate piers and two corner piers supporting a parapet wall. Immediately beyond the headquarters building is a road running at right angles to the access road.

Facing the road are the headquarters (c.1939), the brick and tile caretaker's residence (c.1960), a mess hall (c.1930s) and another brick and tile residence (c.1970), beyond which the road changes direction to run almost north-south. After the change of direction there is a carpenter's store (c.1939 but re-clad in recent times), a target shed (c.1939), a store (c.1939), after which the road turns ninety degrees to run west-east, leading into the Central Camp Area. All of these buildings are located in Block A.

The central camp area consists of from west to east, Blocks D, E, F, G and H. Buildings within each block have an alphanumeric code commencing with the letter of the respective block followed by the number of the building. All buildings in blocks E to H are aligned with the long axis running north-south.

Block D consists of three accommodation huts (c.1950), two kitchens (c.1939), a transportable lecture room (c.1990), a weatherboard and zincalume post office (c.1990), and two brick ablution blocks (c.1939 and c.1950). Block E consists of three accommodation huts (c.1939), an orderly room (c.1939), two kitchens (c. 1939) and two brick ablution blocks (c. 1939 and c.1950). Block F consists of six accommodation huts (c.1939), a kitchen (c.1939), a freezer store (c.1939) and two brick ablution blocks (c.1939 and c.1950). Block G consists of four accommodation huts (c.1939), a kitchen

(c.1939), and two ablution blocks (c. 1939 and c.1950). Block H consists of four accommodation huts (c.1939), a lecture room (c.1939) and two brick ablution blocks (c.1939) and (c.1950). East of Block H is a hospital and dental and nurses' quarters (c.1939). The road between Blocks F and G extends north and joins the main access road near the parade ground.

On a road parallel but south-west of the access road are two huts containing cool rooms (c.1939). This road continues south-west then changes direction to run west-east and crosses the main access road which at this point runs north-south. Beyond the intersection with the main access road is a petrol and lubricants compound, consisting of a workshop (c.1939) with a petrol bowser on a concrete slab adjacent, a gravel yard, and a perimeter chain link fence. Opposite and east of the compound is a large brick industrial store (c.1970), with a saw toothed metal roof with south facing roof lights, and opposite this is a workshop (c.1939) and store (c.1939). West of the workshop is a storage hut (c. 1950) that is clad in thick gauge profiled steel, which minimises the number of purlins and girts.

The accommodation huts are built in an utilitarian style without any decoration. They are rectangular in plan and aligned north-south. They are generally of similar construction, having timber floorboards, joists, bearers and stumps. The walls are clad in vertical corrugated iron, with timber framed awning windows with one pane per sash. The roofs are of corrugated iron at a pitch of about 22 degrees, with an overhanging verge of about 600mm. At the apex of each gable there are ventilation louvres set into the wall. Internally, the layout of the accommodation huts are similar to one another, and consist of a central corridor aligned north-south with six rooms of equal size to each side. Each room has one centrally located window.

The floors are 75mm wide tongue in groove timber, with quarter round skirtings. The walls have 75mm wide 'v' jointed horizontal timber boarding up to dado height, with fibrous cement over, up to a covered fibrous cement cornice and fibrous cement ceiling. The doors are ledged and braced.

Northam Army Camp has an extensive stormwater drainage system consisting of open trenches about 600mm wide and 300mm deep, of random stone in a cement mortar, running typically parallel to the roads, and discharging into bush at the lowest point of the site.

The ablution block foundations generally consist of brick perimeter walls, presumably on concrete footings, supporting the edge of a concrete slab. The surface of the concrete slabs have in many cases iron bolts protruding. These bolts were probably used to fix a timber bottom plate, which would indicate that the walls of the ablution blocks consisted of timber studs, and were probably clad in corrugated iron.

The road between blocks E and F continues south-west, past an iron incinerator with a galvanised iron flue and onto a gravel airstrip, which is about a kilometre long and 100 metres wide.

13.3 REFERENCES

Polis, E., 'Study and Survey of Prisoner of War Facilities in Western Australia', National Estate Grants Program, 1996.

Australian Heritage Commission, 'Register of the National Estate Database Place Report', 31 March 1998.

13. 4 FURTHER RESEARCH

Archaeological survey.

Thorough physical inspection and documentation of individual buildings.