

Maryland Historical Trust  
State Historic Sites Inventory Form  
Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties

Survey No. HA-1964  
Magi No.  
DOE  yes  no

1. Name

Historic Name Field Service Warehouse District

Common Name and Building Number Building 507

2. Location

Street and Number Aberdeen Proving Ground - Aberdeen Area

City, Town Aberdeen

Congressional District

State and Zip Code MD 21005

County Harford

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present use	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum
<input type="checkbox"/> Building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> Private	<input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Park
<input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input type="checkbox"/> Work in Progress	<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence
<input type="checkbox"/> Site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious
<input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> In Process	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes: Restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes: Unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: Storage

4. Owner of Property

Name U.S. Army Aberdeen Proving Ground Support Activity (STEAHP-DIC)

Street & Number Building 310

Telephone No.:

City, Town Aberdeen Proving Ground

State and Zip Code MD 21005-5001

5. Location of Legal Description

Courthouse, Registry of Deeds, etc. Harford County Courthouse, Land Records Liber#        Folio#       

Street & Number Main Street

City, Town Bel Air

State and Zip Code Maryland 21014

6. Representation in Existing Historic Survey

Yes  No

Title Cultural Resource Management Plan - Aberdeen Proving Ground

Date July 1993

Federal  State  County  Local

Depository for Survey Records

City, Town

State and Zip

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**7. Description**

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Survey No. *HA-1964***Condition** Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated Ruins Unexposed Unaltered Altered Original Site Moved

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SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS

NA-1964

### Overview

Building 507 is a large assembly-line crating building located in the midst of a group of field service warehouses; these buildings were built in 1919 as temporary structures to store the large quantities of materiel purchased, produced, or captured during World War I. Building 507 is the result of expansion during World War II, during which time two of these 1919 warehouses were joined by a large central building. The resulting enormous building, which was named Building 507, became the central point for all shipping activities of the Aberdeen Ordnance Depot. The warehouse group that contains Building 507 is situated along Mulberry Point Trestle to the southeast of Aberdeen Proving Ground's original airfield. Building 507 is bordered on the north and on the south by additional warehouses of this complex, and on the east by the water (the Spesutie Narrows). On the west, the warehouse is bordered by the rail lines that facilitated access to the complex, bringing in the storage materials.

### Architectural Description

Building 507 is the largest structure in the 1919 field service warehouse grouping. It is comprised of two of the original 1919 one-story, gable-roof warehouses, and a large basilica-shaped, two-story structure (connecting the two) constructed circa 1942, soon after America's entry into World War II.

When this grouping of warehouses were originally constructed in 1919, they were designed to be temporary. Although the Construction Division of the Army initially authorized the construction of 26 warehouses, this number was later reduced to 12. Each of the 12 warehouses that was built consisted of wood framing with galvanized corrugated siding and roofing. In the interior, two transverse fire walls divided the warehouses into three separate sections. The floors were cinder. In 1922, a portion of the cinder floor in Building 8 (one of the warehouses that subsequently became a part of Building 507) was graded and replaced with a concrete slab. This southern section of the building that received the concrete floor was also outfitted with two concrete ramps connecting with Mulberry Point Road, as well as an electric lighting system.<sup>1</sup>

The original warehouses, which now comprise the end bays of the enlarged structure called Building 507, are identical in form; they are both long, gable-roof, single-story warehouses. Nearly 20 bays in length, they are constructed of concrete block and have corrugated metal roofs. The primary entrance doors, located in the south end gables, have been replaced. The new doors are metal garage doors, contained in large metal rolls at the head of the door. On the easternmost bay of Building 507, the end bay has four of these doors; on the westernmost bay only one. In the gable of each of these end bays are two small ventilation windows.

All of the visible elevations of these original warehouses, excepting the south end facades, have

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<sup>1</sup>National Archives, Record Group 77, Box 2, Aberdeen Proving Ground Book Number 3.

HA-1964

multiple bays each with typically two windows of three vertical fixed-sash lights. Along the eastern facade of Building 507, about six bays from the south end, is a large, two-story, shed-roofed projection, adjacent to a tall brick stack. A coal silo was added to the building in 1944; the heating system was converted from coal to an oil-fired one in 1957. Seven years later, in 1964, the District Engineer disposed of the coal silo. The shed-roofed section with the stack is flush with the main facade and has a row of multipane fixed-sash windows in the upper story. In the lower story there is a large garage door and an additional opening.

The central, two-story bay was added in ca. 1942 to provide an adequate shipping center for the Depot after America's entry into World War II.<sup>2</sup> Clad in transite board, the connector building is built with a wood-frame system and has a slightly pitched gable roof and two smaller half-gables that extend at mid-height; both are accentuated by a wooden cornice. Along the upper register of the central bay is a large window aperture which runs the length of the building and has been enclosed by sheaths of corrugated fiberglass painted green. On the end facade, there were originally three door openings, marked on the facade by the metal lintels. The center door remains today, as a garage door, although it appears to have been altered and is much narrower than the lintel above. In the second story there was perhaps at one point a band of industrial sash, which is today covered in a wide sheath of corrugated fiberglass painted green.

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<sup>2</sup>This central structure was not yet in existence in 1941. *Sketches of the Ordnance Research and Development Center in World War II*, Aberdeen Proving Ground, 1945, pp. 58-59.

## 8. Significance

Survey No. 1A-1964

Period	Areas of Significance			
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Archeology-Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Community Planning	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> Archeology-Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> Law	<input type="checkbox"/> Science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Economics	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanit
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Music	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Exploration/Settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> Philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Politics/Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> Invention		

Specific Dates	Architect				Builder	Area
Applicable Criteria:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A	<input type="checkbox"/> B	<input type="checkbox"/> C	<input type="checkbox"/> D		
Applicable Exception	<input type="checkbox"/> A	<input type="checkbox"/> B	<input type="checkbox"/> C	<input type="checkbox"/> D	<input type="checkbox"/> E	<input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> G
Level of Significance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> National		<input type="checkbox"/> State	<input type="checkbox"/> Local		

SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS

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Overview

Building 507 is located in the midst of a 1919 Field Service Warehouse complex that was erected at the close of World War I, when Aberdeen Proving Ground was designated as a general storage depot of the U.S. Army. Aberdeen was one of three such places designated in the country, and was the largest artillery storage point on the Atlantic seaboard. These 1919 warehouses, located to the southeast of the original airfield on Mulberry Point, were designed as temporary buildings to provide storage for artillery and equipment purchased, produced, and captured during the War. Building 507 was created during World War II, when two of these 1919 warehouses were joined by an enormous two-story connector. The building then served as the Aberdeen Ordnance Depot's central point for shipping. Building 507 today is used by the Supply Division as an Excess Turn-In Warehouse.

Aberdeen Proving Ground, located along the western shore of the Chesapeake Bay, about thirty miles north of Baltimore, was established in 1917 as the Army's principal ordnance center for proof-firing of weapons and ammunition. Prior to that time, the Army had tested weapons and equipment at Sandy Hook Proving Ground in New Jersey; the increasingly sophisticated and mechanized military equipment developed at the onset of World War I necessitated a testing facility with larger ranges. From its creation until World War II, Aberdeen served as the U.S. Army's primary location for the acceptance testing of new weapons and development testing for new types of weapons. During the years prior to World War II, a single proving ground adequately met the military's needs; however, with the onset of the war, the greatly expanded activities necessitated other locations. New proving grounds were established in Ohio, Indiana, and Arkansas. These new areas for the acceptance testing of weapons enabled Aberdeen to focus in particular on the developmental testing of new weapons and equipment.<sup>1</sup>

Warehouses: Storage for the U.S. Army

With the entry of the United States into World War I, the U.S. Army found itself unprepared in many ways. Storage facilities were especially needed; in November 1917, the Quartermaster Corps possessed less than three million square feet of storage space.<sup>2</sup> Over a period of less than one year, between 1917 and 1918, the Quartermaster Department of the Army constructed many installations for the recruitment and training of soldiers, and for the production and storage of weapons, ordnance, and other military supplies. Aberdeen Proving Ground, established primarily for research and testing of new weapons, was joined by the New Cumberland Army Depot, and the Savanna Army Depot Activity. Despite these depots that were constructed, the Army was forced to supplement such properties with commercial warehouses and railroad cars for their storage needs. This situation led to

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<sup>1</sup>Goodwin (1995), p. 91; *Historic Context for AMC's WW2 Facilities (1994)*, p. 195.

<sup>2</sup>Goodwin (1995), p. 69.

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the creation of a Warehousing Division with the Office of the Quartermaster General.<sup>3</sup>

Although Aberdeen Proving Ground's primary purpose was not as a storage depot, it was designated as one at the conclusion of World War I. At that time, the Secretary of War authorized the establishment of storage depots for the large quantities of materiel purchased or produced during the war, as well as for foreign equipment that had been captured. Supply bases typically contained two types of storage buildings, multistory buildings and one-story warehouses. The multistory warehouses, which were of fireproof with reinforced concrete construction, were located usually in urban areas; this building type was abandoned after World War I. The one-story warehouses were found at places like Aberdeen, where land was more plentiful, and were constructed in a variety of materials, including structural clay tile, brick, and wood frame.

#### The Field Service Warehouse Complex at Aberdeen

When Aberdeen Proving Ground was designated as a storage depot, on May 5, 1919, a contract was let to build twelve artillery sheds along Mulberry Point Road. The contract had initially called for 26, but the number had been reduced to 12 because of financial constraints. The warehouses were designed to be temporary. Built by the Aberthaw Construction Company of Boston, Massachusetts, they were of wood framing with corrugated, asbestos-protected metal siding and roofing. The buildings had concrete pier foundation footings, and the floors were of cinder. The vehicles and weapons, produced or captured during the war, that began to arrive -- many before the storage facilities were complete -- formed the basis of what is today the collection of the Ordnance Museum.<sup>4</sup> Some 1200 feet of standard-gauge rail tracks, combined with 900 feet of temporary railroad tracks which had been laid down during construction and kept, provided access. The total area of the Depot was 3,000,000 square feet, of which some 500,000 square feet consisted of covered storage areas. The warehouses were completed on September 15, 1919, and turned over for use on September 20.<sup>5</sup>

During the interwar years, Aberdeen's role as a storage depot took on a much greater significance, as research and testing programs were cut back. These 1919 warehouses are evidence of the use of the Proving Ground as a Ordnance Depot during times of downsizing. Aberdeen Depot was the largest artillery storage point on the Atlantic seaboard and one of three major points for storage in the country. The others were Savanna Proving Ground, Illinois, and Erie Proving Ground in LaCerne, Ohio.

In 1922, the cinder floor in the south section of Building 8 (one of the warehouses that subsequently became part of Building 507) was graded and replaced with a concrete slab. This contract work also

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<sup>3</sup>Goodwin report, p. 23.

<sup>4</sup>Because the warehouses were not yet completed when these items began to arrive, much of the materiel was stored outside in open fields, attracting visitors and students. DARCOM Historic Building Survey, APG. HABS/HAER 1982.

<sup>5</sup>National Archives, Record Group 77, Box 1, Aberdeen Proving Ground Book Number 1A, p. 162.

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included providing two concrete ramps connecting the warehouse with the road, as well as an electric lighting system in this area. In 1931, fire destroyed one of these artillery warehouses, which was full of field guns, carriages, and tractors. The loss was estimated at \$10,000.<sup>6</sup>

#### Aberdeen Ordnance Depot During World War II

Even prior to the entrance of the United States in World War II, activities at Aberdeen Proving Ground greatly increased. In April of 1941, the Aberdeen Ordnance Depot (which also continued to be known by its popular name Field Service) began its first shipments of American armaments to Europe. These weapons had been stored at Aberdeen since the first World War, and though considered obsolete in many ways, nevertheless provided essential materiel for the British fighting the Axis powers. As the field warehouses that had been built at the close of World War I were emptied, much of the crating of weapons had to be conducted outside. Regardless of the weather and the inadequate facilities, this shipping was carried on. In less than 90 days, 400 8-inch howitzers, all available 75-mm guns, and 435 outdated light and medium tanks were shipped out.

In 1942, the Proving Ground began construction on an enormous shipping center. Incorporated within this new building were two pre-existing warehouses constructed in 1919. The final structure, which was defined as an assembly-line crating center, resulted in what is today Building 507.

Building 507, as the heart of the Aberdeen Ordnance Depot, played an important role in providing supplies during the war. Operation Torch was one such example, during August 1943. Eighty carloads filled with crates of 40mm Bofors antiaircraft and 57mm antitank guns left Aberdeen in a continuous caravan, bound ultimately for the coast of Africa. Every last 155mm and 240mm howitzer on hand was shipped out of Aberdeen at the time of the Battle of the Bulge in December 1944, along with 57mm and 8-inch guns.<sup>7</sup>

Because of the Depot's proximity to East Coast ports, the Field Service at Aberdeen was often required to fill urgent orders in a minute amount of time. In *Sketches of the Ordnance Research and Development Center in World War II*, one such order is explained:

On 8 March 1945, a rush acceptance test of 75mm recoilless rifles ran until late in the evening. During the night, the rifles were processed and packed -- and early in the morning Lt. Willard A. Smith of Field Service rushed them to Washington's airport for immediate shipment to Europe. Three days later the rifles were in Paris for the airborne troops who used them in the jump across the Rhine River.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Ordnance Department, U.S. Army, *Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland*, 1930. *Baltimore Sun*, August 7, 1931. Both items located in the Office of the TECOM Historian, Aberdeen Proving Ground.

<sup>7</sup>*Sketches of the Ordnance Research and Development Center in World War II*, Aberdeen Proving Ground, 1945, pp. 58-59.

<sup>8</sup>*Sketches*, p. 58.

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**Maryland Historic Trust Inventory Form**  
**Continuation Sheet. Section 8: Significance**  
**Field Service Warehouse District (Building 507)**  
**Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD**

**Section 8 Page 4**

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As the largest artillery storage point for the U.S. Army on the Atlantic seaboard, the warehouse district that includes Building 507 provided a critical function throughout much of Aberdeen's history. From its erection after World War I for the storage of weapons and vehicles, to its key role in the supply of materiel to the Allies during World War II, the Aberdeen Ordnance Depot quietly supported the nation's war efforts. Building 507, in particular, served as the central point for all activities of the Depot. Its location in the center of the warehouse grouping, adjacent to the main railroad tracks and Mulberry Point Road, had always meant that this building (and prior to Building 507's construction, Warehouse Number 8) had served an especially important role in the shipping of materiel out of Aberdeen.

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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Survey No. *HA-1964*

SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS

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**10. Geographical Data**

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## Verbal Boundary Description

Building 507 is part of a cluster of warehouses located along Mulberry Point at the southeastern end of Aberdeen Proving Ground. The proposed district is bordered on the north by the edge of the original airfield, on the east by the Spesutie Narrows at the edge of the Proving Ground property, on the south by the southern end of the last warehouse in the group (Building 510), and on the west by the road to Mulberry Point, along which ran the railroad tracks which brought materials to the warehouses.

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**11. Form Prepared by**

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Name/Title Heather Ewing and Judith Robinson, Architectural Historians

Organization Robinson &amp; Associates, Inc.

Date March 20, 1996

Street &amp; Number 1909 Q Street, NW #300

Telephone (202) 234-2333

City or Town Washington, D.C.

State 20009

Concurrence of State Preservation Officer

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The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

Return to: Maryland Historical Trust  
DHCP/DHCD  
100 Community Place  
Crownsville, Maryland 21032-2023  
(410) 514-7600

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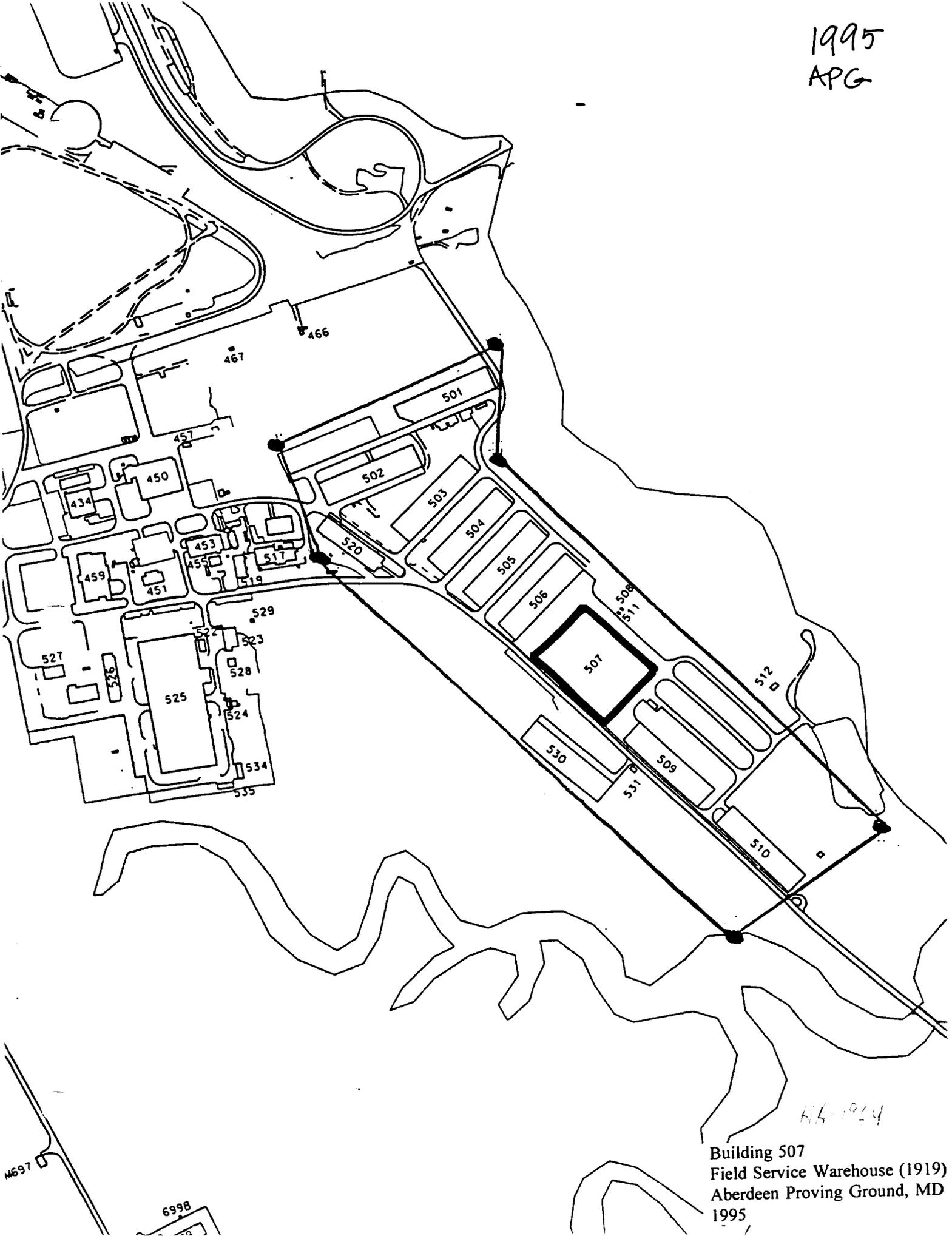
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1995  
APG

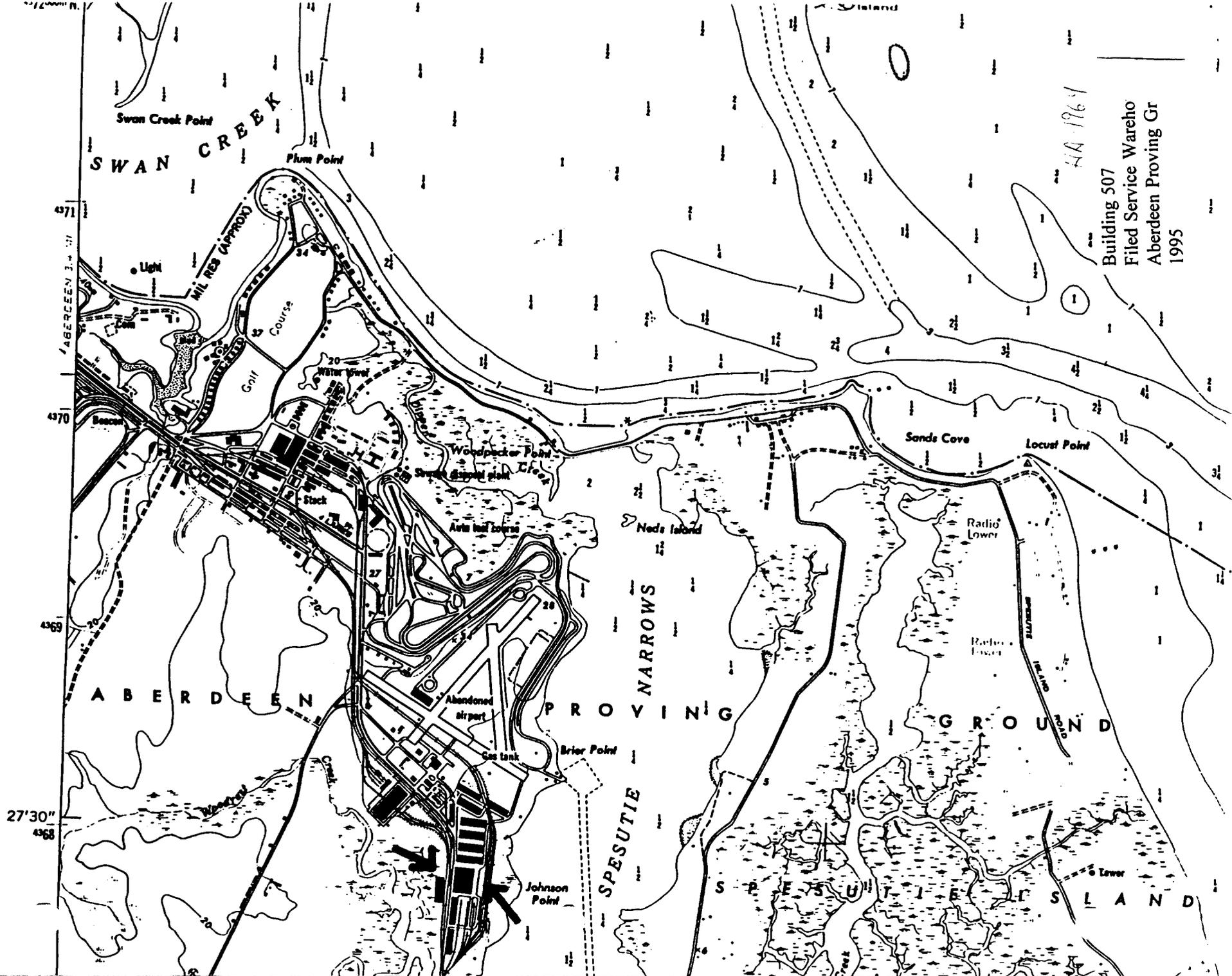


66-1924

Building 507  
Field Service Warehouse (1919)  
Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD  
1995

6697

6998



SWAN CREEK

Swan Creek Point

Plum Point

4971

4970

4969

27'30"  
4968

ABERDEEN

PROVING

GROUND

SPESUTIE

SPESUTIE ISLAND

44 1964

Building 507  
Filed Service Wareho  
Aberdeen Proving Gr  
1995

Light

MIL RES APPROX

Golf Course

Water Tower

Stack

Woodpecker Point

Swamp disposal plant

Artis test course

Neds Island

Sands Cove

Locust Point

Radio Tower

Radio Tower

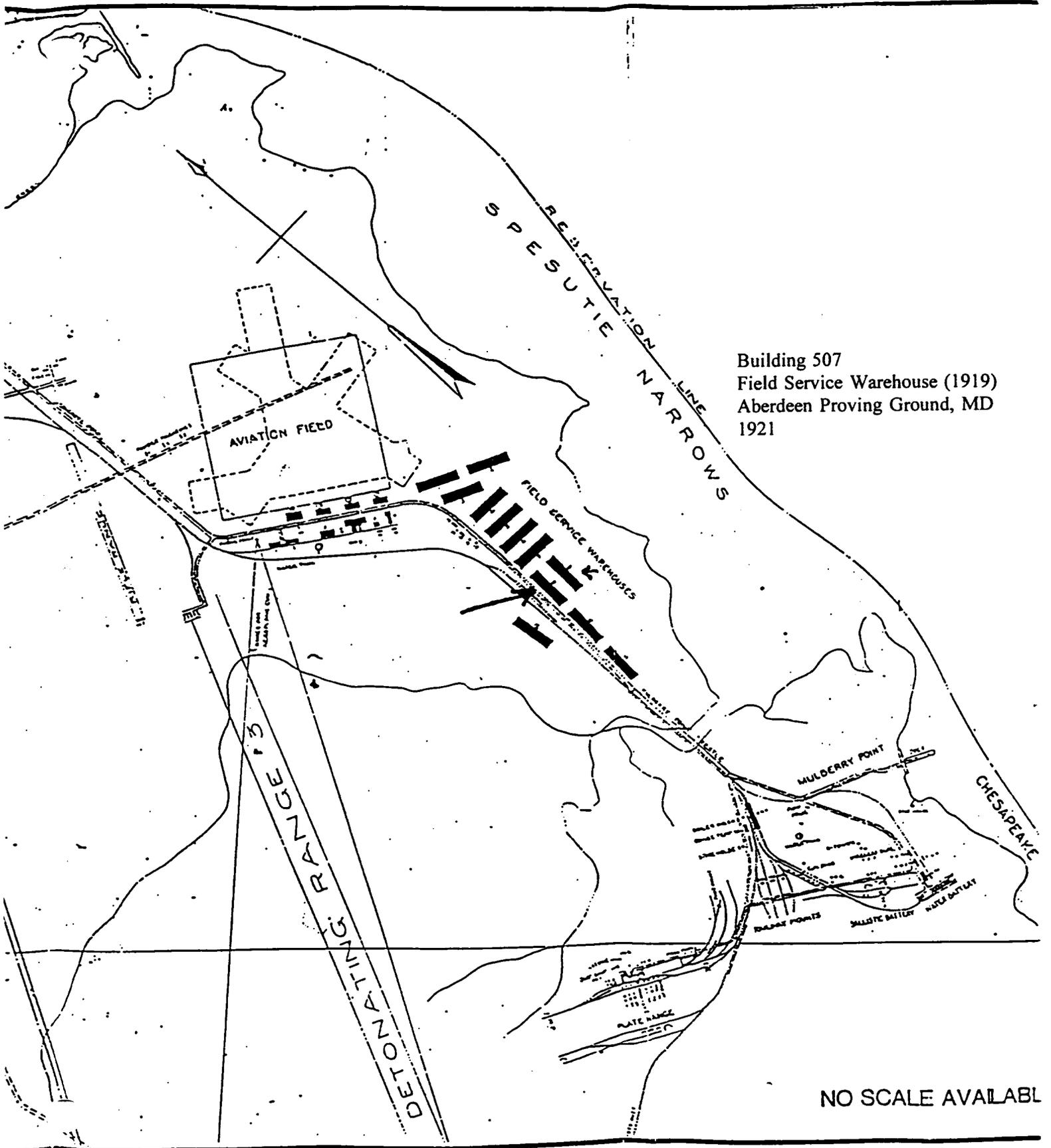
Abandoned airport

Gas tank

Brier Point

Johnson Point

Lower



Building 507  
Field Service Warehouse (1919)  
Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD  
1921

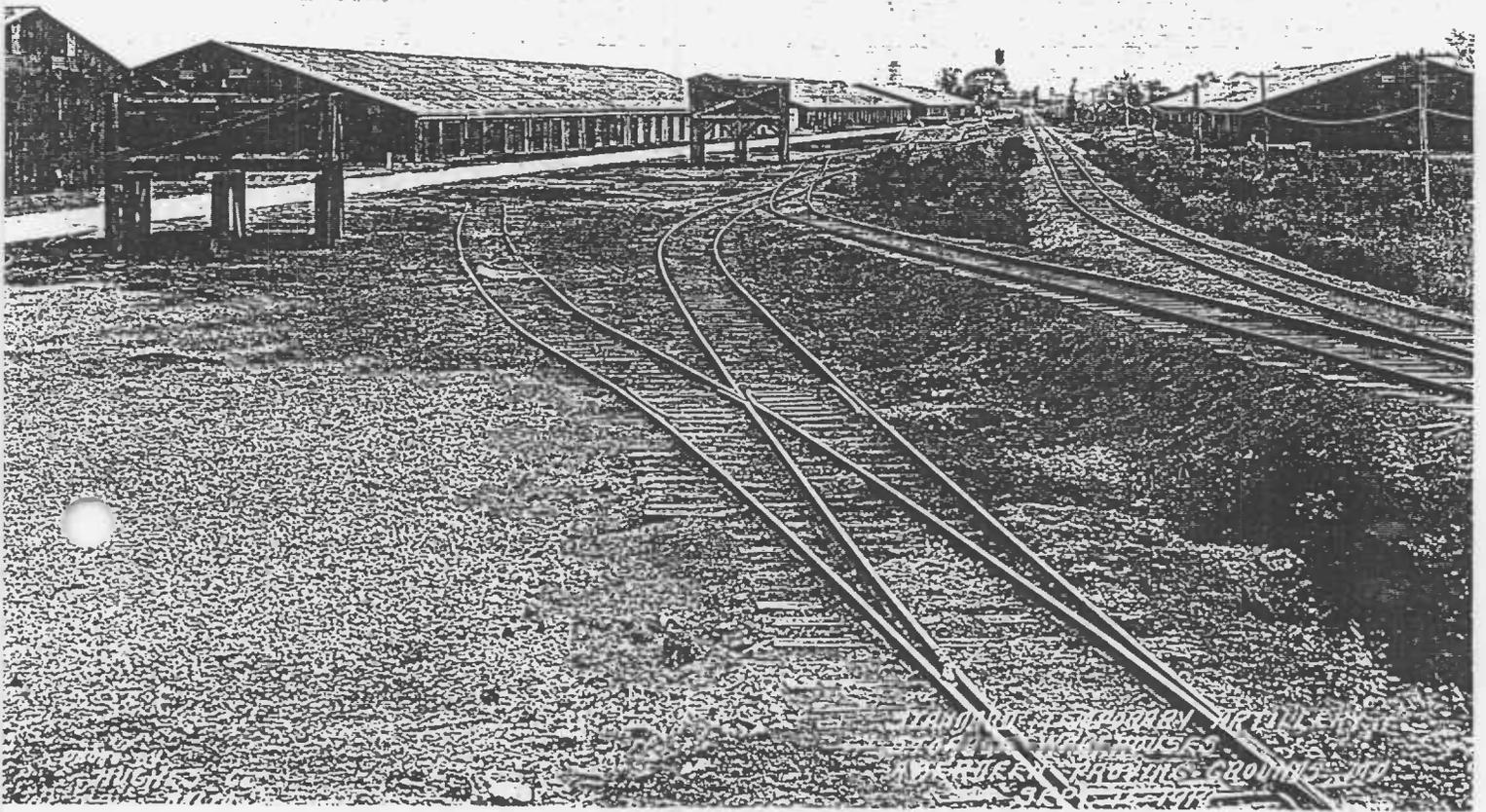
NO SCALE AVAILABL

Engineers Department Map of Aberdeen Proving Ground  
Northern Portion (1921)

WA-1964

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MHT Inventory Form  
Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD  
Robinson & Associates, Inc.

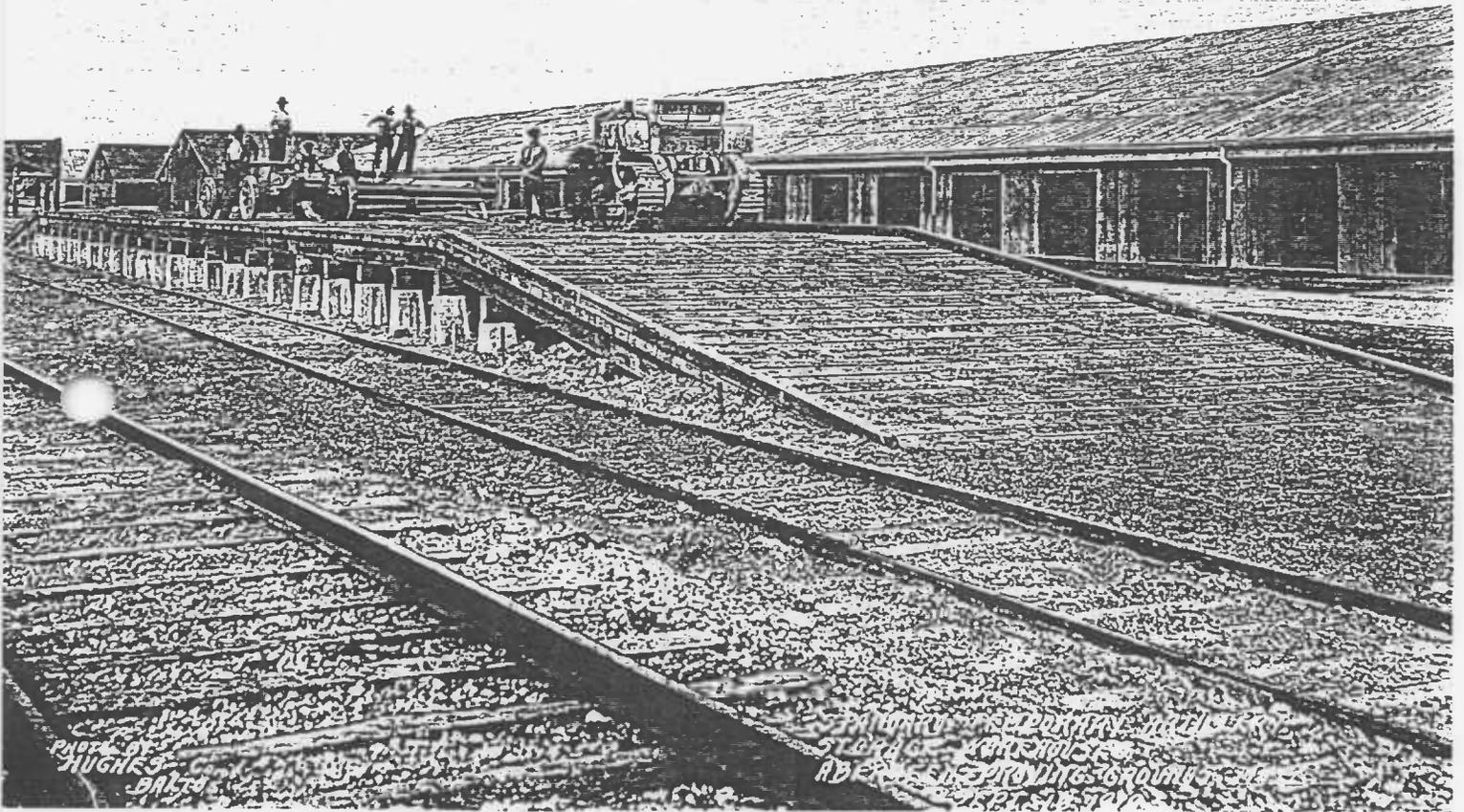


Building 507  
Field Service Warehouse (1919)  
Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD

Looking South at Field Warehouse District, September 1919  
(large warehouse in left foreground later became part of Building 507)

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MHT Inventory Form  
Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD  
Robinson & Associates, Inc.

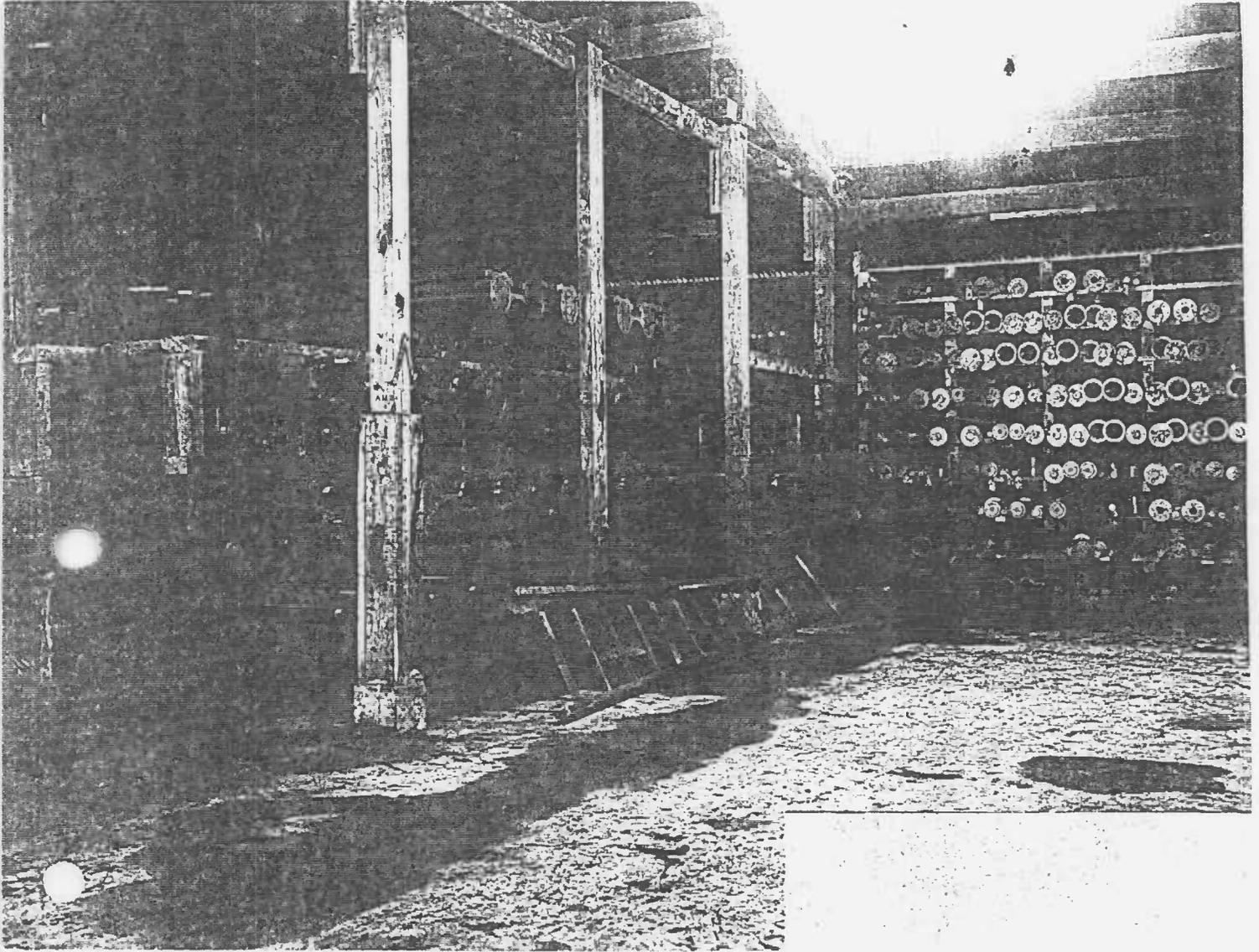


Building 507  
Field Service Warehouse (1919)  
Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD

View of Loading Dock Platform Used in Construction and Filling of  
Field Service Warehouse District  
September 1919  
(with warehouse that later became Building 507 in rear)

WA-1964

MHT Inventory Form  
Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD  
Robinson & Associates, Inc.



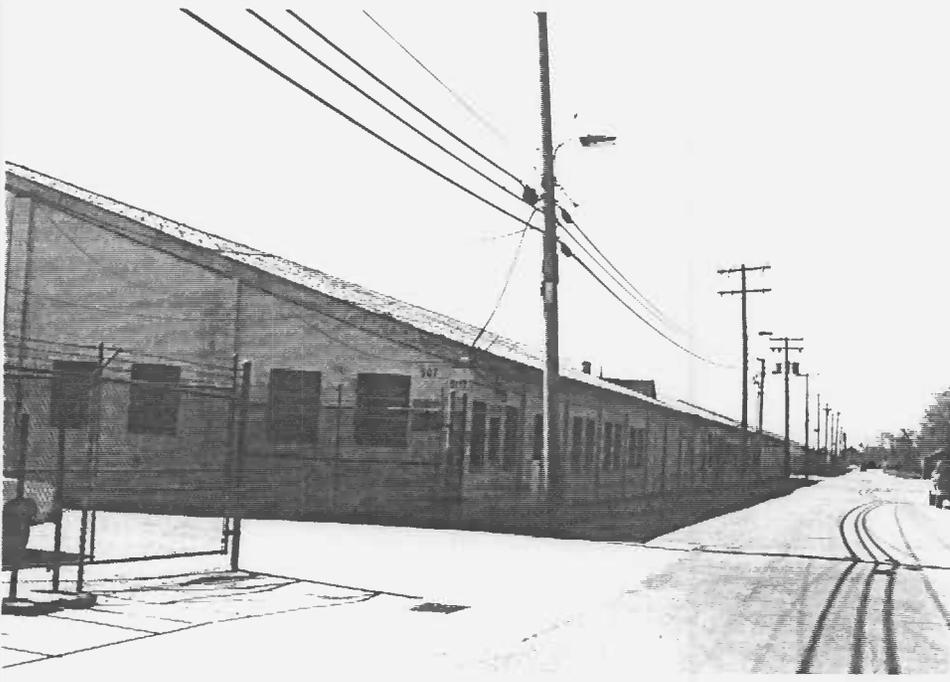
Building 507  
Field Service Warehouse (1919)  
Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD

Interior View of Warehouse No. 8 (later Building 507)  
Field Service Warehouse District, December 1922

HA-1964

MHT Inventory Form  
Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD  
Robinson & Associates, Inc.

Building 507,  
Central Bay (constructed 1942)



Building 507,  
Railroad-Side Elevation

Building 507  
Field Service Warehouse (1919)  
Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD  
April 1995