

(Rec'd Senator's office
October 11, 1954)

Punch
Oct 19

Department of the Army
Office of the Chief of Legislative Liaison
Washington 25, D. C.

File a Hash
Huachuca
DTA

WHERRY HOUSING -- FORT HUACHUCA, ARIZONA

The Secretary of Defense, on 8 October 1954, approved a 500-unit Wherry housing project at Fort Huachuca, Arizona.

The Department of the Army will issue a development directive to the Chief of Engineers who will then direct the South Pacific Engineer, 130 Sutter Street, San Francisco, California, to develop the project.

The project will be designed by an architect-engineer under contract to the Corps of Engineers. The project will be advertised and the lowest acceptable bidder to the Federal Housing Administration will be selected.

The Department of the Army estimates that it will be approximately May 1955 before the project is ready for advertising.

original to Paul
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SECTION B

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Huachuca Wherry Units Fill Portion Of Need

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Staff Correspondent

FT. HUACHUCA, Oct. 14. — Despite Monday's approval of 500 rental units under the Wherry housing law, this electronics proving ground still faces a serious housing shortage for which no permanent solution has as yet been found.

In fact, the Wherry units, even if ready for occupancy at this time, would do little more than meet one-fourth of the need for housing for military and civilian personnel assigned to this recently re-activated base in the southern part of Arizona.

Total personnel on the base—military and civilian—is scheduled to reach 9,500 by next July 1, making it one of the largest military installations in Arizona and potentially the largest center of population in Cochise county.

Gen. Emil Lenzer, commandant, has just returned from Washington in connection with the housing problem.

He welcomed approval of the Wherry project, under which one or more firms will construct and operate rental units on the base, but said he is concerned over the fact that it may be as late as 1956 before any are ready for occupancy.

In an effort to speed up the project and to save an estimated \$40,000 to \$60,000 in architectural services, General Lenzer said he recommended that the plans used in construction of the Davis-Monthan air force base Wherry housing project be adopted for use here.

"During informal conversations in Washington, I got from one source the information that it may take one year from the time the first shovel of earth is turned before the first unit will be ready for occupancy," he said.

"I was a little annoyed by this information, because I had already recommended use of the Davis-Monthan plans, and our need is very great."

Information released at the time approval of the Wherry housing for Ft. Huachuca was announced, was that bids could not be called before next May 1.

The general said approximately three months in time and between \$40,000 and \$60,000 in cost could be saved by using the Davis-Monthan plans.

Ft. Huachuca's billeting officer estimated that about 2,000 families—civilian and military—currently live off of the base. General Lenzer said that figure sounded "a little high," but that it could not be far off.

Some of these families, he explained, live as far away as Tucson. In fact, two military buses currently are transporting an average of 47 people daily between the fort and Tucson.

Although military equipment is used, each of these people is re-



GENERAL LENZER

quired to pay a round-trip fare of \$1 to help defray cost of the transportation.

A third bus makes a round-trip daily to Benson.

The reason it is difficult to determine the exact housing need is that some of the civilian employes, such as plumbers, electricians, and other skilled laborers, already had homes in the vicinity before they were employed.

Also, many of those currently occupying bachelor quarters both on and off of the base have families who were left behind pending the availability of housing.

General Lenzer said he advised civilians, officers, and enlisted men to leave their families elsewhere, but pointed out that such a situation should not be allowed to continue any longer than necessary.

Now employed on the base are 945 civilians, of which 630 are men and 315 are women. The total of civilian employes is scheduled to reach 1,500 by next July 1.

The September figure for military personnel showed 3,800 enlisted men and 407 officers, but both figures have substantially been increased since that time.

The official schedule calls for 7,200 enlisted men and 800 officers by next Jan. 1.

Thus, the total personnel, civilian and military, is scheduled to reach a peak of 9,500 by the middle of 1955. Including members of families, the total number of people involved will greatly exceed this.

General Lenzer explained that military assignments are being made under a systematic schedule, whereas the civilian employes, including highly-trained engineers, are being received as quickly as they can be qualified under federal civil service.

Fort Housing Start Slated

Although faced with an acute housing shortage, the Ft. Huachuca military installation may find some relief in a 100-unit project by Tucson builders that starts construction Monday.

Fred Busby, of the Busby & Carroll Construction Co., said today their Garden canyon development in Fry—at the main gate of the Huachuca electronics proving grounds—will begin next week and may expand to as many as 1,500 homes.

Busby said installation of a \$50,000 water system for the community is under way now, streets are being cut in and the firm hopes to have its first 100 houses finished by the first of the year.

A HOUSING shortage at the fort is a key problem, despite approval recently of a 500-unit Wherry housing project. The installation is expected to reach a strength of 9,500 military and civilian personnel by next July 1—making it the second largest center of population in southern Arizona.

Commanding officer, Gen. Emil Lenzer, has welcomed approval of the Wherry program, but has been slightly dissatisfied with the delays before the project will get under way. It may not call for bids until May 1, 1955, and may

not start housing families until 1956.

Builder Busby said that Lenzer predicted "a minimum of 1,000 outside homes are going to be needed in the next three to four years." And Jack Duran, civilian housing director, said. "Based on the probable military and civilian personnel with families, we'll need 1,500 homes when the base is at maximum strength."

BUSBY PREDICTED that, when the first 100 homes his firm is building are completed, they will go right on building 50 more on the present tract. (The first 100 have been sold, and will be occupied immediately on completion. The remainder will be built as sales progress.)

"We're trying to establish a community," Busby explained. "We're taking care of immediate shelter needs now with \$7,000 two and three-bedroom houses, and hope to establish a community so we can go ahead with long-range plans for more expensive houses. Our mortgage limit is now \$3,650. If a community is formed, the mortgage limit may go up."

TO DO THIS, the firm has donated land for a school, he said, and given money to help start a volunteer fire department. It has purchased the franchise to furnish water for the township of Fry, and a well is now being dug for it. The contractors have 160 acres of land being subdivided and plotted now, with room for 400 additional homes. "And if we need it, we have land for 1,500 houses."

Two other home-building projects are part of the Huachuca scene, the housing director pointed out—one near Bisbee and another four and one-half miles from the fort's main gate.

and Relief

