

**SEMI-MILITARY BUILDINGS
· · · IN THE · · ·
NATIONAL ARMY CANTONMENTS**

By Robert H. Moulton

THE War and the Navy Departments Commissions on Training Camp Activities were created at the beginning of the war to supply our young men everywhere in training with the normalities of life. Mr. Raymond B. Fosdick, chairman of these twin commissions, wished to accomplish this by creating as little new machinery as possible. Therefore, the Young Men's Christian Association, the Knights of Columbus, the Jewish Welfare Board, the American Library Association, and all such already existing organizations, were called upon to lend their cooperation. The Young Women's Christian Association came into the camps later with that unique institution, the Hostess House. This house was designed primarily to take care of women visitors to the camps and furnish a place of meeting between them and the men.

The commissions were determined to cover the whole ground in furnishing recreational and educational facilities for the soldiers and sailors. Wherever there seemed to be a gap that no existing agency was particularly prepared to fill, the commissions supplied the need direct. In this way the Liberty Theatres were furnished, meeting the problem of a place to go to and be entertained in the evenings. The Post Exchange, or soldiers' cooperative stores, were similarly started in the sixteen National Army camps, and furnish a place where the men may spend their money. Everything is on sale there, from a shoestring to a pink valentine and from an ice cream soda to a song book of the kind that the men use when they gather together by the thousands for mass singing. Club life in the camps is furnished through



LIBERTY THEATRE, CAMP DODGE, IOWA.

the Y. M. C. A., the K. of C., and, in a few camps, the Jewish Welfare buildings. Here men may read, write, loaf and smoke, listen to music and write let-



A STANDARD ARMY Y. W. C. A. HOSTESS HOUSE.

the Y. M. C. A., the K. of C., and, in a few camps, the Jewish Welfare buildings. Here men may read, write, loaf and smoke, listen to music and write letters home; and in the auditorium of each building entertainments of all sorts are held. Camp talent musicales, athletic stunts and imported entertainment programs all take place here, in addition to those given in the larger Y. M. C. A. auditorium in each camp and in the Liberty Theatres. The Hostess House furnishes the home life of the camp and has come to be popular with the men in the evenings during all the week. With the library to furnish him with plenty of good reading matter and a quiet place to read in, and the Post Exchange playing the role of country store or corner drug store, the men's needs are pretty thoroughly taken care of. Thirty-six library buildings have already been completed in the military camps of the country, and others are under way. These buildings are made possible through a special grant from the Carnegie Corporation of \$320,000, supplemented with other funds.

The type of building chosen is new in the library world, and will be of interest to those who are concerned with camp building designing. They are wooden structures of rather plain design, similar to the usual type found in modern camps. They were designed by Edward L. Tilton of New York City, who contributed his services. Most of the buildings in the cantonments are 120 by 40 feet, while those in smaller camps are 93 by 40 feet. Special attention has been given to adequate facilities for heating, ventilation and light, and many features are now being added to make these quiet, restful buildings more attractive and inviting than would be expected in the usual camp equipment. Some of the buildings have spacious, open fireplaces built into inviting nooks. Others have closed porches, and all are equipped with fire extinguishers, drinking fountains and running water.

The interior is a large reading room, with two bedrooms at one end for housing the library staff. Trained librarians are in charge. All of the shelves are open for inspection and contain from

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10,000 to 20,000 volumes. Each building has a comfortable seating capacity for about 200 readers. In the library building is housed the main supply of books for the camp, and from it branches are maintained in the barracks, the mess halls, hospitals, Y. M. C. A. and K. of C. buildings.

Each of the sixteen National Army cantonments has been provided by the Commissions on Training Camp Activities with a Liberty Theatre building having a seating capacity of 3,000 and a stage accommodating the scenery for "Broadway" productions. The buildings are furnished with footlights, dressing rooms, and scenery for any ordinary production. There is also an orchestra pit, where regimental bands play at every performance.

Nine theatres of a smaller type have been completed in the National Guard camps and others are in course of construction. The approximate size of the larger cantonment theatres is 179 by 120 feet, with a seating capacity of from 2,500 to 3,000. The stages in these theatres are 60 by 32 feet and the floor of the house 132 by 120 feet. The National Guard camp theatres have a seating capacity of 1,000; the building being 60 by 120 feet and the stage 22 by 40 feet. The house floors are approximately 90 by 60 feet.

Each theatre has five entrances and fifteen exits and is so constructed as to be easily emptied in case of fire. Much of the work of constructing these theatres has been carried on by the many electricians, scene painters and other expert mechanics who were discovered in the camps. Chautauqua tents are used for shows in the smaller camps, where regu-



**LIVING ROOM OF Y. W. C. A. HOSTESS HOUSE,
CAMP DEVENS, AYER, MASS.**

lar dramatic productions, vaudeville and movies are provided by the Government for the men.

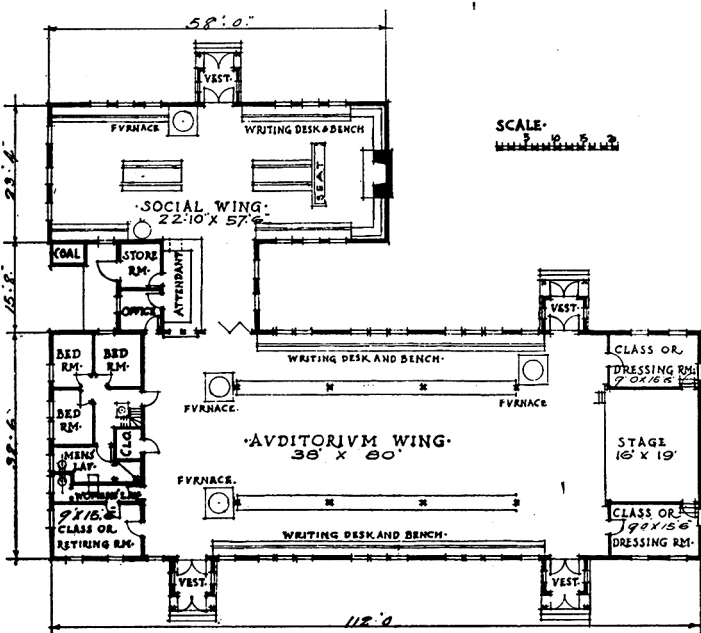
The Knights of Columbus have erected, so far, in the camps three styles of buildings. Like the Y. M. C. A., they furnish a main or auditorium building in each of the sixteen National Army cantonments. This is of squatty construction, with a front elevation in Spanish design, and is 60 by 100 feet. There is a main entrance at one end of the building and two entrances on each side, with plenty of win-

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dows to furnish light and air. Each building has an altar and a chaplain's and secretary's room in one end, and other offices in the other end. In each cantonment there are also two smaller club buildings 40 by 100 feet, with a ten-foot porch running the length of the building on one side. The interior arrangement is the same as in the main building and only differs from the latter in that there is a monitor through the middle of the building, affording the maximum of light and air. This type of building has also been erected in all of the National Guard camps.



A STANDARD ARMY Y. M. C. A. BUILDING,
DESIGNED TO SERVE 6,000 MEN.



PLAN OF ARMY Y. M. C. A. BUILDING (Type E-2).

PLAN OF ARMY Y. M. C. A. BUILDING (Type E-2).

Portable buildings are also being put into use by the K. of C., of the same style and arrangement as the club buildings, with porches over the entrances on one side, and resembling a country club or bungalow. These are of special value in case of a temporary camp or of a camp being moved. Each building is equipped with room heaters, player pianos and music rolls, chairs, tables, desks, stationery, books, magazines, athletic equipment, etc. One hundred and eight of these different buildings will have been put in operation by the middle of May in army camps and marine and naval stations.

The Hostess House is a large brown, bungalow-like building set near the entrance to the camp, and stands out distinctly against the background of un-

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painted army buildings.

Of the \$5,000,000 Y. W. C. A. war fund, \$1,350,000 was appropriated as an initial fund in starting the Hostess House work. Seventy of these buildings are



Y. M. C. A. AUDITORIUM AT CAMP DEVENS,
AYER, MASS.



Y. M. C. A. HUT.

Each camp and training station has from four to fifteen of these buildings, and every camp of importance also has a large auditorium.

already in operation. Some of the larger cantonments have two, or even three where the number of negro troops makes one seem advisable for colored women. Women architects have had entire charge of the plans for the Hostess Houses. While these houses vary somewhat in size and detail according to the local demands, in general structure and style they are similar. The utmost degree of attractiveness in keeping with camp life has been attained both inside and outside these buildings. Each one has a large chimney in the middle of the big living room, with great double fireplaces. There is a parcel checking room, a rest room for women, out of which opens a fully-equipped nursery; and the back of the building houses a cafeteria, where attractive meals are served. The buildings are electric-lighted and steam-heated, as are also the sun parlors, which usually extend across two sides of the house. The second floor of the larger buildings contains not only the bedrooms of the resident hostesses and staffs, but emergency sleeping quarters for women stranded in camp.

The Y. M. C. A. has been on the ground from the first. Before the camps were entirely completed, the Y. M. C. A. workers had their headquarters established in tents and were present with a welcome to the incoming recruits. They dispensed information and good cheer;

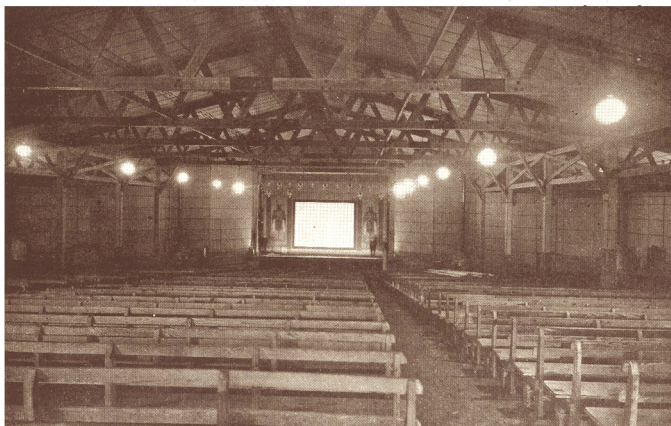
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in fact, one of them accompanied each of the incoming troop trains, going from car to car, addressing the men informally, telling them what the Y. M. C. A. stood for in camp. The Y. M. C. A. operates 178 army and navy stations at present. At the largest of these there are fourteen buildings, with a large force of secretaries and other officials.

The new standard service or so-called type "E" Y. M. C. A. building is an interesting architectural achievement. It is the last word in utility, compactness, economy of space, material and money, efficiency and adaptability to a multitude of dissimilar uses. The problem was to find buildings that would be "all things to all men" in the cantonments. The demand was for some sort of structure that would simultaneously be home, club, church, schoolhouse and entertainment centre for the men in the ranks, a place where the whole varied army Y. M. C. A. program could be going on at one time without any phase seriously interfering with other phases of the work; where there would be facilities for the movies, the lectures, or the religious talk, and where at the same time the man who wanted to write home, buy a stamp or a money order, wrap up a package, borrow a book or a magazine, play a game of checkers or chess, enjoy a chat with his chum or a heart-to-heart talk with the secretary could do so.

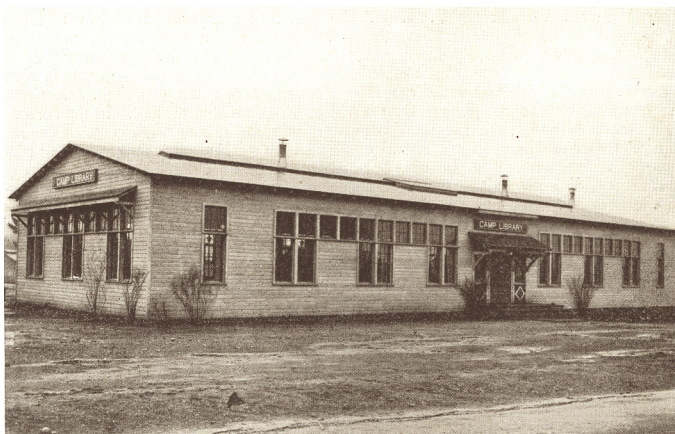
The type "E" building—with its modification, the type "F" building in use in National Guard camps—is the solution of the problem. Only a visit to one of these great camp centres, however, can give an adequate idea of how admirably it fulfills its purpose. The six to eleven single-story Y. M. C. A. buildings are easily distinguishable by their dark green coat of stain from the bare and unpainted barracks that flank them. Numerous broad windows in the sides and double dormer windows in the roof flood the interior with sunshine, and doors placed at convenient intervals afford ready access. Alongside and parallel to the large wing snuggles a smaller one, connected to the larger by a broad passageway.

Once inside of the building, it is seen that the larger wing is the auditorium, the smaller the social hall. In the former



INTERIOR OF A LIBERTY THEATRE, SHOWING STAGE, CAMP TAYLOR, LOUISVILLE, KY.

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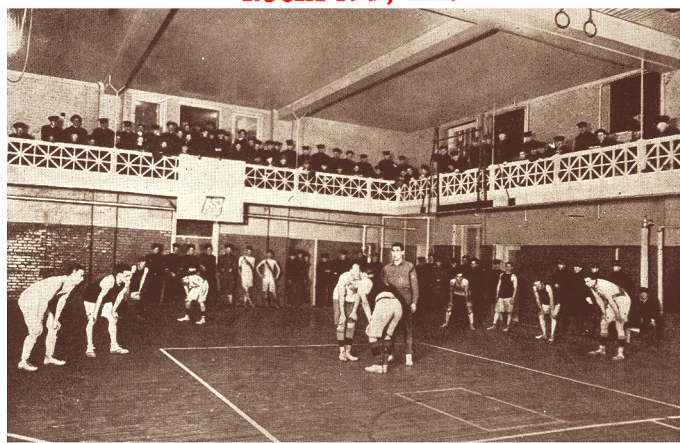
EXTERIOR VIEW OF AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION CAMP LIBRARY, CAMP LEWIS, AMERICAN LAKE, WASH.

are permanent benches, a stage at the far end with a piano on it and a moving picture screen. Shelf-desks for writing run all around the walls and two long hinged shelves, one in the middle of each half of the auditorium, are ingeniously fastened to the posts that support the roof and may be raised for writing or lowered when the room is to be used for any gathering.

At the end of the smaller wing farthest from the desk (which is located in the connecting passageway) a huge stone or brick fireplace lends a cheerful, homelike atmosphere. The ubiquitous shelf-desks on the walls for writing here, too, are on all sides, but the space in the centre of the long room is frequently full of comfortable chairs donated by forethoughted friends. The rocking-chairs are often the only ones to be



INTERIOR OF CAMP LIBRARY AT CAMP GRANT, ROCKFORD, ILL.



A NAVY GYMNASIUM—BOTH THE WAR AND THE NAVY DEPARTMENTS COMMISSIONS TRAINING CAMP ACTIVITIES PROVIDE GYMNASIUMS.

found in camp; settees, too, and great armchairs help the soldier to forget for a time how long it has been since he said good-bye to the formerly unappreciated furniture comforts of civilian life.

The daylight hours, when the men for

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the most part are drilling, are a good time to find the secretaries "at home." Home to them means a small, bare bedroom at one side or other of the stage or at the opposite end of the auditorium back of and to the side of the desk. At this end, too, from amidst the secretaries' quarters, a narrow stairway leads to an upper room, the most of which is usurped by a huge movie projector booth. The space that remains on either side of this booth is delegated as sleeping quarters to two assistant secretaries. Other rooms at this end of the auditorium provide classroom, storage and office facilities.

At the big cantonments a Y. M. C. A. headquarters building is necessary, and from it the activities in all the centres in any one camp are directed. There the head camp secretary, the camp athletic director, the camp song leader, the camp religious work director, the camp educational secretary, the camp social director and the other head secretaries have their offices and rooms. Their building, too, is the acme of convenience and efficient arrangement. It is an oblong two-story structure, with the entrance slightly to the right of the middle of the longer side. This entrance leads into a diminutive lobby, where are desks, very welcome heating furnaces for the entire building, chairs, and halls leading to right and left. Numerous offices for the various camp secretaries, a larger committee room, and storerooms lined with shelves on shelves and filled with all manner of requisites for the camp work open onto the two halls. Clear across one end of the building at the extreme end of the hall is a one-story lean-to storeroom for heavier materials and supplies. This place is equipped with scales, a truck, a small block and tackle, and the like.

The second floor of the headquarters building is divided lengthwise by a hall which runs from end to end. Doors on this open into the bedrooms of the secretaries, into a well-filled linen closet and into the bathroom. The latter is equipped with basins, shower bath and other customary fixtures. Every inch of space is skillfully made use of, and the headquarters buildings of the Y. M. C. A. in the various cantonments are interesting and convincing examples of the thoroughness with which the Association has attacked the whole problem.

In addition to the auditoriums comprising one wing of every type "E" building, a huge central auditorium is being erected in each of the large cantonments. This structure measures 131 by 106 feet and will seat 2,803 men. It will be used for staging plays, vaudeville, concerts, lectures and the large religious gatherings. On Sundays it will be open to Protestant, Catholic and Jewish chaplains in turn, and week days will find it in almost constant use. The central part is

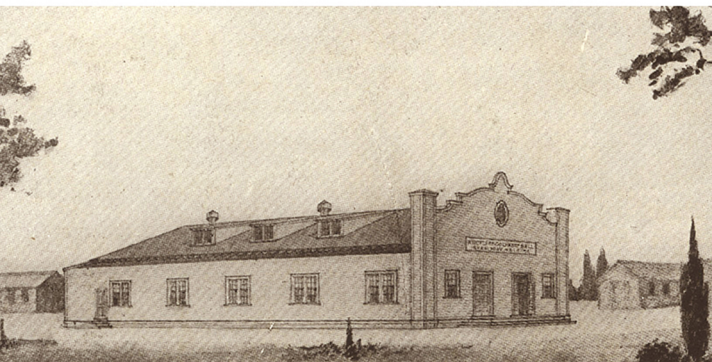
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free from all supporting posts and is large enough for two basketball courts. At one end is a commodious stage. Foot-light, spotlight and scenery facilities have not been overlooked. The auditorium, like the other Y. M. C. A. buildings, is heated by stoves placed on concrete foundations at frequent intervals.

The building known as type "F" is in use in some of the camps and cantonments. It is simply the "E" building with the social hall left off, and is intended for serving units of less than 2,000 men. The auditorium wing is made to serve all the many needs of the men. In this style of building the desk is placed in the middle of the end opposite the stage. Movie booth, bedrooms and store-rooms are tucked away above the desk, and offices are at either side. The space under the stage in this type of building, as in all the others, furnishes storage facilities.

The total number of Y. M. C. A. buildings either in operation or under construction in the camps and cantonments of this country is somewhat in excess of four hundred. Of these about 150 are standard service buildings and approximately 125 of the "F" type. Besides these permanent buildings 130 tents are in use at various points. Headquarters buildings for each of the thirty-two National Army cantonments and National Guard camps are included in the total, as well as eighteen auditoriums for the National Army, for one embarkation camp, and one Regular Army expansion camp. A standard service building costs usually from \$7,500 to \$9,000.

For serving the American Expeditionary Forces in France, a modified form of "F" building is in use. It costs two to three times as much to put up such a building in France as to erect the same building in the United States. The explanation, of course, is the scarcity and high cost of materials in France, the great distance some materials have to be transported and the scarcity of cargo space. Until permanent buildings can be constructed large tents must suffice for much overseas work.



KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS FIELD HEADQUARTERS,
U. S. ARMY CANTONMENTS.

ARCHITECTURAL RECORD