



UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

RELEASED

116021

LOGISTICS AND COMMUNICATIONS
DIVISION

JUNE 23, 1980

B-199127

The Honorable John M. Murphy
House of Representatives



116021

Dear Mr. Murphy:

Subject: [Transfer of Fort Wadsworth to the Gateway
National Recreation Area] (LCD-80-80)

This report is in response to your April 30, 1980, letter requesting us to review certain aspects of the transfer of Fort Wadsworth to the Department of the Interior's National Park Service. You expressed concern that the Army may be removing installed fixtures and equipment from the fort's facilities before the fort is transferred. Specifically, you said this may be counter to assurances and agreements made by the Army concerning the condition of the property to be transferred. You said, more importantly, this may result in unnecessary cost to the Government, if the Army has no valid use for the equipment removed, and unnecessary cost later, if the Interior is required to replace the equipment or fixtures removed.

In summary, we found that:

- The Department of the Army has removed certain equipment from the facilities being transferred.
- The Army said it removed the equipment from Fort Wadsworth in compliance with its regulations.
- The Army and the Interior had no written agreement on the items to be removed by the Army.
- Park Service officials believed some of the items removed could have been used to support the Park Service's plans for the recreation area.

Fort Wadsworth, located on Staten Island, New York, is currently under the jurisdiction of the Department of the Army. On or about July 1, 1980, Fort Wadsworth will become

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part of the Gateway National Recreation Area as provided for in Public Law 92-592, dated October 27, 1972.

In conducting our review, we discussed the transfer with Army and National Park Service officials, examined records concerning the type and condition of the property to be transferred, and inspected fort facilities.

BACKGROUND

Public Law 92-592 created the Gateway National Recreation Area in the New York harbor area to preserve and protect for future use and enjoyment an area possessing various natural and recreational features. The law provided that

"* * * with the concurrence of the agency having custody thereof, any Federal property within the boundaries of the recreation area may be transferred, without consideration, to the administrative jurisdiction of the Secretary [of the Interior]."

Various other locations in the New York harbor area, such as the former Miller Field, Great Kills Park, Floyd Bennett Field, Breezy Point, and Sandy Hook, are also part of the recreation area. We previously issued a report on the transfer of Miller Field to the recreation area (B-165868, Apr. 1, 1974).

In anticipation of the actual transfer, the Army, on November 1, 1979, issued a permit allowing the Interior Department to occupy and use 81 acres of Fort Wadsworth. The 81 acres consisted of land, fortifications, and facilities bordering the entrance to New York harbor. On or about July 1, 1980, the Army expects to transfer the remainder of Fort Wadsworth to the Interior. After that date, the Interior will have jurisdiction over all of the fort with the exception of about 26 acres under easement to the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority (a New York City governmental unit) and about 12 acres to be operated as an Armed Forces reserve training center. (Enc. I illustrates those parts of Fort Wadsworth described above.)

Fort Wadsworth was formerly the location of the Army's Chaplain School. An Army Band unit and a military police unit were also stationed there. As a result, Fort Wadsworth has several large multistoried buildings that were used

for classroom instruction, administration and housing, and feeding of personnel. In addition, several other structures were used for recreation and support of personnel. Numerous single and multifamily housing units and outdoor recreation areas are also located at Fort Wadsworth.

The National Park Service will be operating the facilities at Fort Wadsworth when they become part of the recreation area. The Park Service plans to use the buildings at Wadsworth for programs in the arts, humanities, recreation, conservation, and education. The Park Service will use the buildings in a manner similar to the Army (i.e., for offices, group activities, and temporary lodging). For this reason, the Interior would like to have the buildings at Fort Wadsworth transferred to it as fully equipped as possible. An internal draft study assessing the condition of buildings and discussing planned use of the facilities was prepared by Park Service officials. It concluded that loss of mechanical equipment or other important fixtures before transfer might cause prohibitive costs when the Park Service tries to activate the facilities.

REMOVAL OF EQUIPMENT

The Army has removed some equipment and personal property from the facilities at the fort. According to Park Service officials, some of these items, such as kitchen and food serving equipment, public address systems, water fountains, and bowling alleys, could have been used in support of Gateway's planned activities.

On May 7, 8, and 9, 1980, we toured a number of buildings at Fort Wadsworth to determine what equipment and fixtures had been removed. We were particularly interested in items that were permanently or semipermanently attached to the buildings. As expected, items, such as desks, chairs, and beds, were gone. However, other items, such as kitchen and food serving equipment, stainless steel sinks and counters, public address systems, loudspeaker units, and electric water fountains, also had been removed before they were deactivated and winterized. 1/ Lighting fixtures, heating and

1/Winterize--a term used to describe the closing of a building for an extended period of time. This includes such procedures as turning off the heat, flushing and draining pipes, and boarding up windows.

air-conditioning systems, restroom fixtures, venetian blinds, and some carpeting and paneling generally were present in the buildings. The Army said these items would remain. Some buildings had copper gutters and downspouts missing. The Army said these had been stolen. (Enc. II lists the buildings inspected and examples of the items removed and the items still present.)

Basis for removal of equipment and fixtures

Army Regulation (AR) 710-2 and Common Table of Allowances define nonexpendable property as accountable property to be carried on various Army units' accountable property books. When property is excessed, the regulations (AR 755-1) prescribe that this accountable property will be screened for further use. Then, the property will either be transferred with the Army unit; transferred to another Department of Defense organization in need of similar property; or sent to storage, repair, or disposal. At Fort Wadsworth, 12 various Army or Army-affiliated units had property books before and during the Fort Wadsworth closure. (Enc. III lists these units.) Each group removed, or will remove, before July 1, 1980, its accountable property. (The photographs in enc. IV illustrate examples of equipment removed from Fort Wadsworth.)

We inspected the property books of the units involved to determine the disposition of the items. We traced a sample of the accountable items to their eventual destination. (Enc. V details the results of our efforts.) Of 11 items traced, 7 were transferred to other operating Army units and 4 were disposed of because they were either unusable or economically irreparable.

We were told that the Army did not remove any equipment or fixtures that were not carried on an accountable property book. Since we did not examine the facilities while they were occupied and fully equipped, and since there was no practical way for us to determine all the property previously located in each building, we are not certain of all the items removed from the buildings.

NO WRITTEN AGREEMENT ON TRANSFER

The Departments of the Army and Interior do not have a written agreement or a description of the condition of the buildings and facilities that will be transferred or the items that will remain in those facilities. Although

representatives of these organizations and other interested parties had met in a series of discussions attempting to coordinate the specifics of the property transferred, there was no written agreement. Army and Interior officials told us they expected the facilities would be transferred in an "as is" condition. The Army and the Interior each may have a different interpretation of what that means.

In a May 24, 1979, letter, shortly after the Army decided to transfer the fort to the Interior, the Secretary of the Army described the conditions for transfer of Fort Wadsworth as follows:

"Our policy requires that all real property and permanently affixed personal property will remain in place so that all buildings are fully functional when disposed of. Removable personal property and equipment essential to the mission of the Chaplain School and the 26th Army Band will be taken by those activities to their new locations. Other removable personal property and equipment will be screened for requirements elsewhere in the Department of Defense. If there is no other Department of Defense requirement for this property, it will be available for transfer to the Department of Interior."

Army officials said this is consistent with Army regulations and the way property was removed from Fort Wadsworth. On the other hand, it appears that the Interior may have assumed that many of the items removed by the Army were installed property, and therefore, would remain with the facilities.

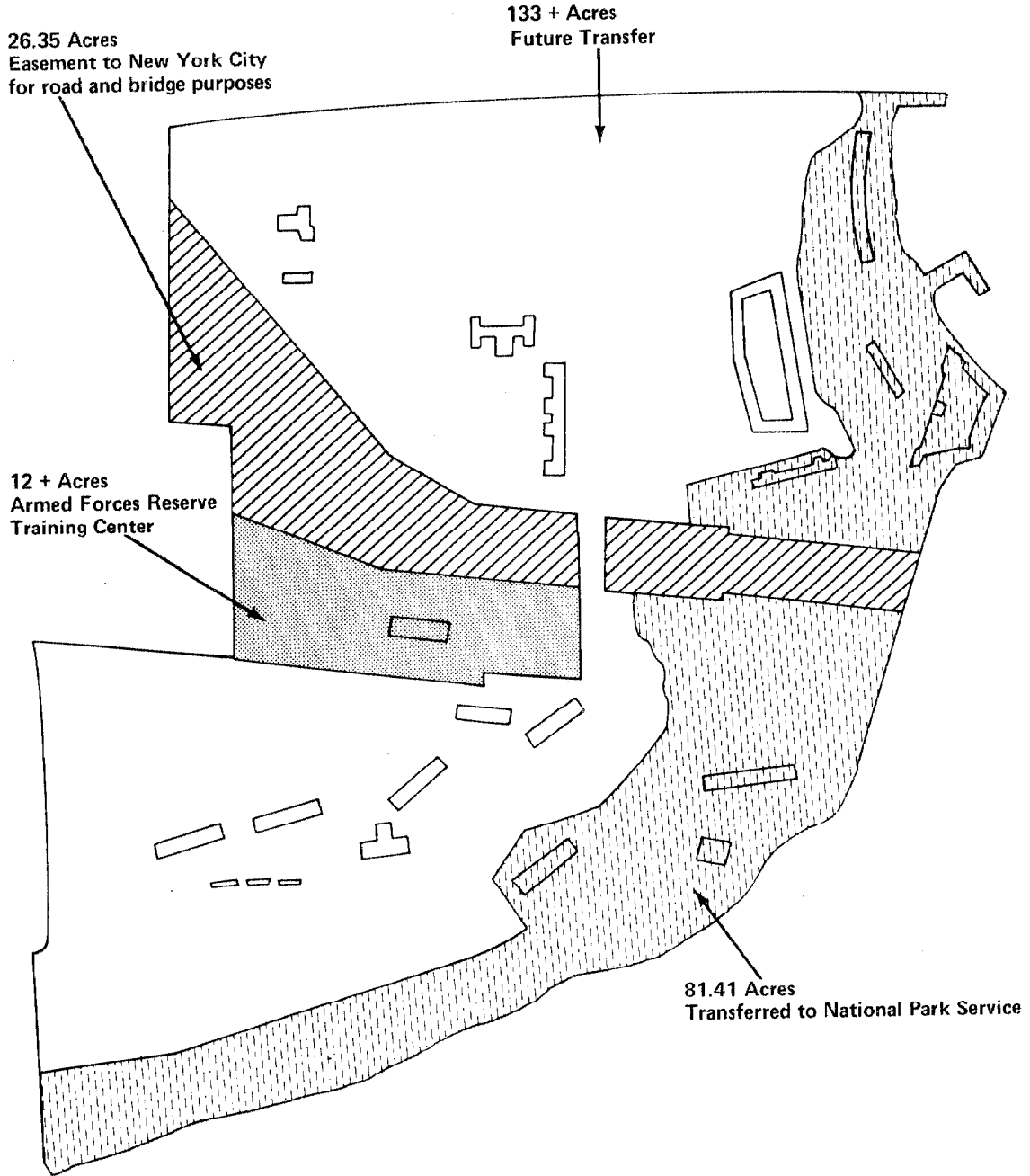
As arranged with your office, unless you publicly announce its contents earlier, we plan no further distribution of this report until 2 days after the date of the report. Then, we will send copies to the Director, Office

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of Management and Budget; the Secretaries of Defense and the Army; the Secretary of the Interior; and other interested parties upon request.

Sincerely yours,

for Donald J. Horan
R. W. Gutmann
Director



**Fort Wadsworth
Staten Island, New York
226 Acres**

BUILDINGS INSPECTED BY GAO

<u>Building number</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Examples of fixtures or equipment removed</u>	<u>Examples of fixtures or equipment remaining</u>
203	Chapel	Water fountains, public address system, organ.	Lighting fixtures, heating equipment, restroom fixtures, pews, carpeting.
204	Recreation building (gymnasium, bowling alley, photography lab, kitchen, crafts shop)	a/Bleachers, scoreboard, backboards, bowling alleys and mechanical equipment, stainless steel kitchen equipment, photo lab equipment, crafts shop equipment.	Lighting fixtures, heating and air-conditioning equipment, some built-in lockers, decorative fixtures in main corridor, restroom fixtures.
205	Theater	Screen, drapes, projection equipment, sound system.	Lighting fixtures, heating and air-conditioning equipment, restroom fixtures, carpeting, seats.
206	Post exchange	Shelving, display cases.	Lighting fixtures, heating and air-conditioning equipment, restroom fixtures.
208	Enlisted men's barracks	Kitchen and serving equipment, water fountains, public address system.	Lighting fixtures, heating and air-conditioning equipment, restroom fixtures.
209	Dispensary	Stainless steel kitchen equipment, some stainless steel counters.	Lighting fixtures, heating equipment, restroom fixtures.
210	Administration/Chaplain's School	Closed-circuit TV system.	Lighting fixtures, heating and air-conditioning equipment, restroom fixtures, wood paneling, carpets.
342	Swimming pool and bathhouse	Diving boards, some bathhouse equipment.	Lighting fixtures, pool filtration equipment, restroom fixtures.
(b)	Capehart housing	Ranges, refrigerators, some gutters, and downspouts.	Lighting fixtures, heating equipment, bathroom fixtures, kitchen sinks.
(c)	Other quarters	Ranges, refrigerators.	Lighting fixtures, heating equipment, bathroom fixtures, kitchen sinks.

a/While these items are still in place, Army officials informed us they would be removed before July 1, 1980.

b/Sixty-six Capehart family units are at Fort Wadsworth.

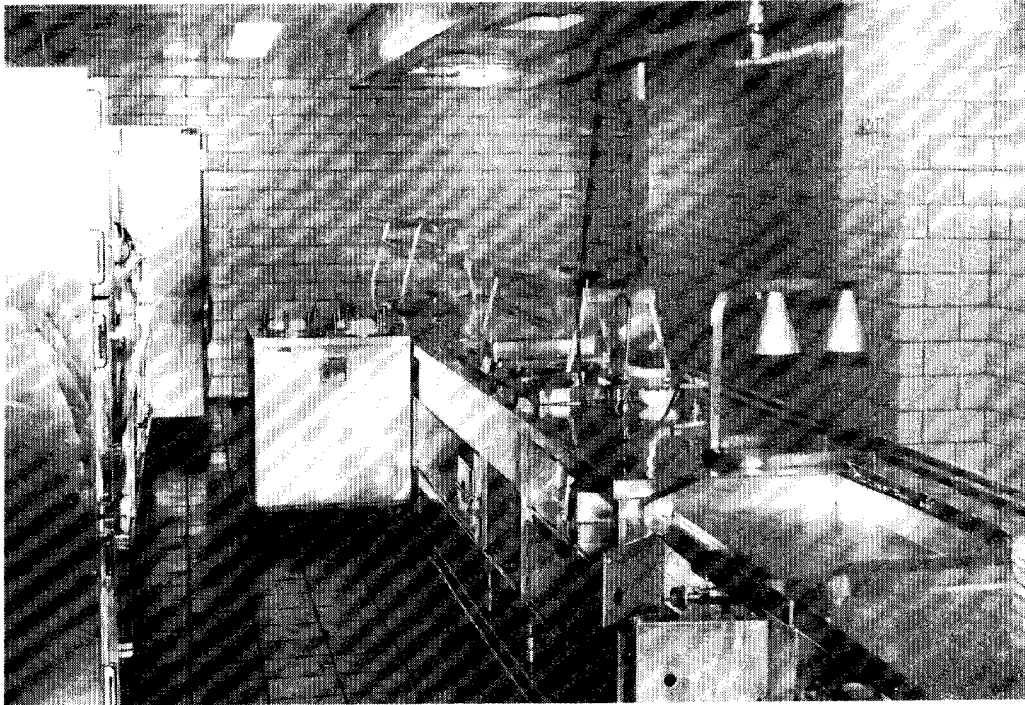
c/Fifty other quarters comprised of duplex and row-type housing are at Fort Wadsworth.

LIST OF PROPERTY BOOK HOLDERS

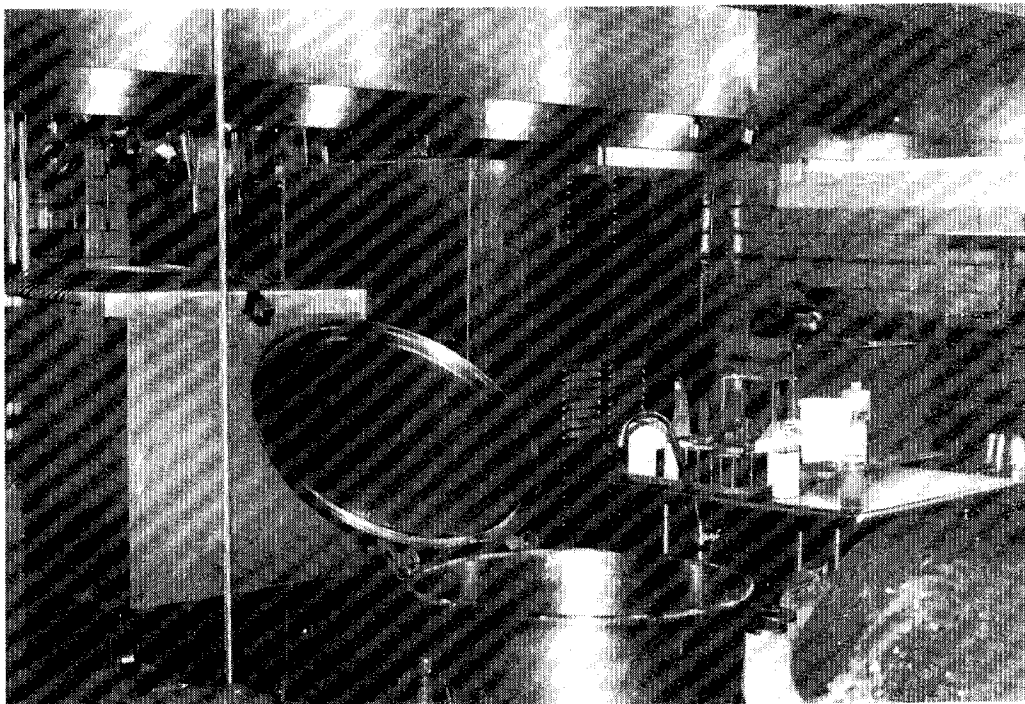
BEFORE AND DURING FORT WADSWORTH CLOSURE

Property Book Officer, New York Area Command
Morale Support Group
Facilities Engineer, Fort Hamilton
Headquarters Company, New York Area Command, Fort Hamilton
563d Military Police Company, Fort Hamilton
26th Army Band, Fort Wadsworth
Furnishings Management Section, Fort Hamilton
Army-Air Force Exchange Service, New York Area Exchange
Fort Wadsworth Commissary
Chaplain's Center and School
Chaplain's Board, Fort Wadsworth
Chapel, New York Area Command

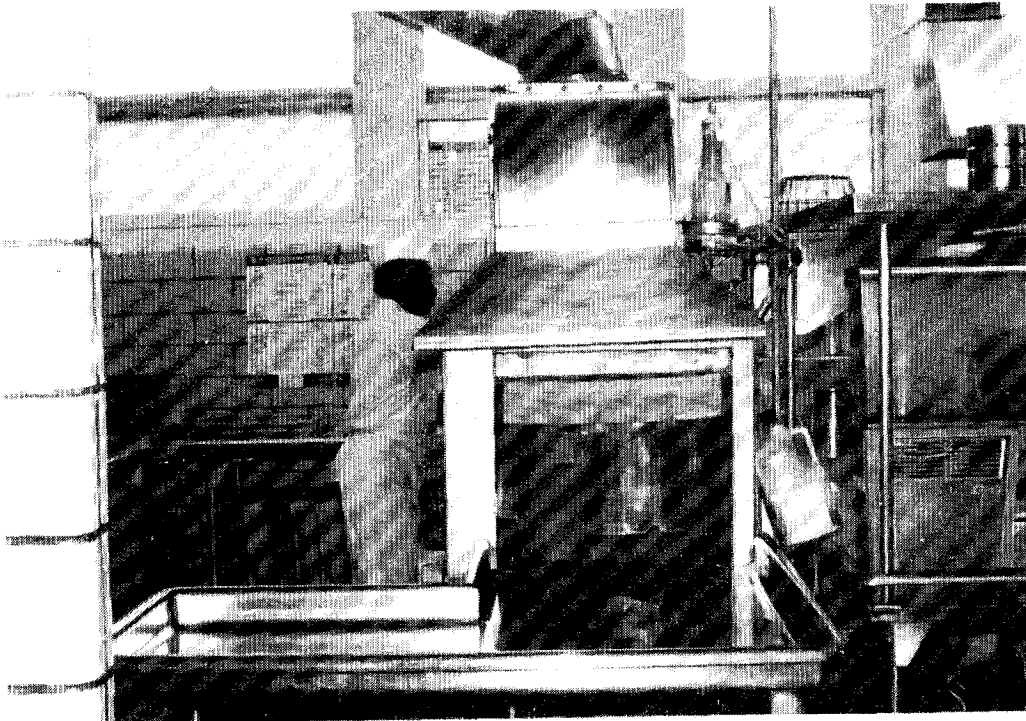
EXAMPLES OF EQUIPMENT REMOVED FROM FORT WADSWORTH



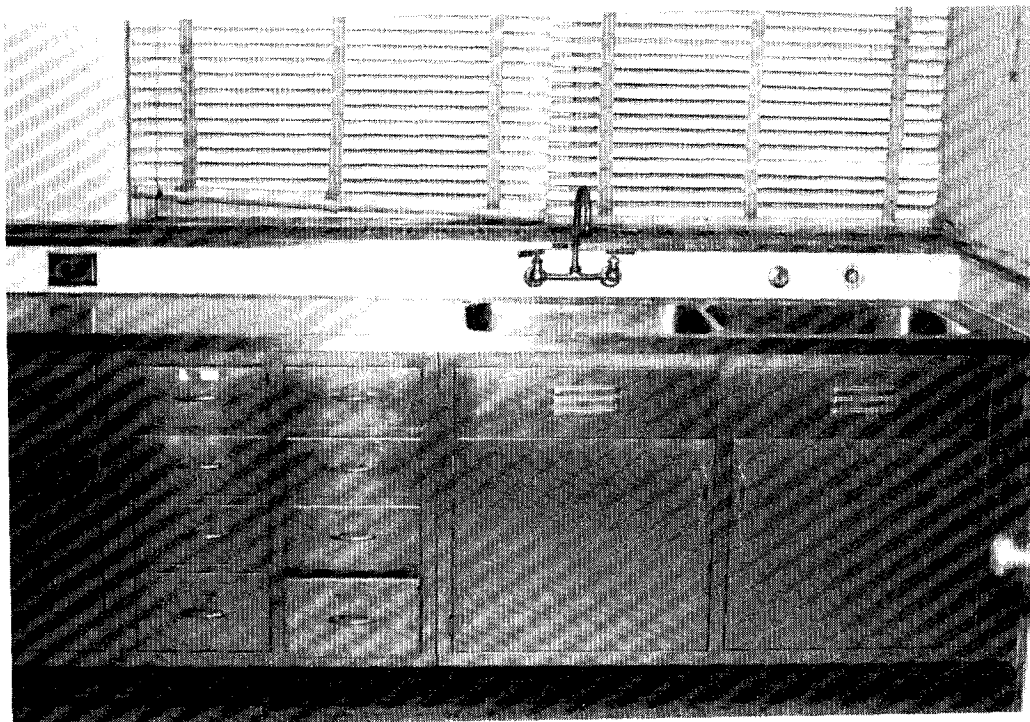
KITCHEN SERVING LINE EQUIPMENT SIMILAR TO THAT REMOVED FROM FORT WADSWORTH



KITCHEN COOKING EQUIPMENT SIMILAR TO THAT REMOVED FROM FORT WADSWORTH



KITCHEN DISHWASHING EQUIPMENT SIMILAR TO THAT REMOVED FROM FORT WADSWORTH



STAINLESS STEEL SINKS SIMILAR TO THOSE REMOVED FROM FORT WADSWORTH

DISPOSITION OF ACCOUNTABLE PROPERTYITEMS REMOVED FROM FORT WADSWORTH

<u>Item name</u>	<u>Destination</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
Pan fry braising unit	Fort Dix	In use by 1st Battalion, 5th Brigade, Fort Dix.
Dishwashing machine	Fort Dix	To replace aging machines at Fort Dix. At Fort Dix warehouse.
Ice cream cabinet	Fort Dix	In use by 5th Battalion, 3d Brigade, Fort Dix.
Urn, coffee and stand	Fort Dix	In use by reception station dining establishment, Fort Dix.
Beverage dispenser	Fort Hamilton	In use by Headquarters Company, New York Area Command, Fort Hamilton.
45 cu. ft. frozen food cabinet	Fort Hamilton	In use by Headquarters Company, New York Area Command, Fort Hamilton.
18- to 22-cu. ft. frozen food cabinet	Fort Wadsworth	In use by 26th Army Band members still stationed at Fort Wadsworth.
Stereo component	Area Maintenance and Supply Activity (Bellmore)	Determined to be either unusable or economically irreparable. Disposed of by property disposal officer.
Icemaker machine	Bellmore	Army supply system returned it to Bellmore as unusable. Disposed of by property disposal officer.
Gas range	Bellmore	Army supply system returned it to Bellmore as unusable. Disposed of by property disposal officer.
Scale, dial	Bellmore	Determined to be either unusable or economically irreparable. Disposed of by property disposal officer.