

**MNDOT HISTORIC ROADSIDE DEVELOPMENT
STRUCTURES INVENTORY**

MO-GRE-047
CS 4908
Camp Ripley Entrance Walls

Historic Name Other Name	Camp Ripley Entrance Walls	CS # SHPO Inv #	4908 and 4912 MO-GRE-047
Location	N & S sides of TH 115 at the jct of TH 115 and TH 371	Hwy District Reference	TH 115/371 3A 8
City/Township County Twp Rng Sec USGS Quad UTM	Green Pr, Belle Pr Township Morrison 130N 29W Sec 16 42N 32W Sec 35 Belle Prairie Z15 E397050 N5102860	Acres Rest Area Class	NA
Designer	Bettenburg, Philip C. Minn Dept of Highways (MHD) (bridge)	SP #	115-131-21-1 4908-03
Builder	Fed/State Emerg Relief (FERA/SERA) Works Progress Administration (WPA) Work Projects Administration (WPA)	SHPO Review #	94-1493
Historic Use Present Use	Entrance/ Boundary Marker Bridge/ Culvert/ Dam Entrance/ Boundary Marker Bridge/ Culvert/ Dam	MHS Photo #	013531.01-07 013561.00-15
Yr of Landscape Design	1934-42	MnDOT Historic Photo Album	
Overall Site Integrity	Intact/Slightly Altered		
Review Required	Yes		
National Register Status	Eligible, see Statement of Significance		
Historic Context	Development of Camp Ripley, 1929-1945 Roadside Development on Minnesota Trunk Highways, 1920-1960		
List of Standing Structures			
Feat#	Feature Type	Year Built	Fieldwork Date
01	Bridge/Culvert	1930	08-03-97
02	Entrance Wall	1934-42	
NOTE: Landscape features are not listed in this table			Prep by Gemini Research Dec. 98 G1. 9
			Prep for Site Development Unit Cultural Resources Unit Environmental Studies Unit
Final Report	Historic Roadside Development Structures on Minnesota Trunk Highways (1998)		

■ BRIEF

The Camp Ripley Entrance Walls are located on the northern and southern sides of T.H. 115 and on the western side of T.H. 371 at the junction of T.H. 115 and T.H. 371. The site consists of a series of long, stone walls that mark the entrance to the Camp Ripley Military Reservation and define the southeastern corner of the Camp's cantonment area. Bridge 4969 is also within the boundaries of the inventoried property. Only some portions of the walls are located within the limits of trunk highway right-of-way (for example, most of the wall's gateposts do not appear to be on right-of-way), but the entire wall is described below.

■ STANDING STRUCTURES

Bridge 4969. Built 1930 by the Minneapolis Bridge Company. Designed by the Minnesota Department of Highways. Bridge 4969 is a 410'-long, steel deck girder bridge that was built in 1930 to carry T.H. 115 and a Great Northern railroad track spur over the Mississippi River. The bridge has a concrete substructure and was built to carry a 24'-wide roadway. It has metal railings. Across the northern side of the bridge is a 5'-wide concrete walkway.

Stone Walls. Built 1934-1942 by the FERA/SERA and the WPA. Designed by Philip C. Bettenburg. The walls were constructed of a black stone known as Little Falls Black Granite, which was laid without mortar (mortar was used for the gateposts, however). Most of the stone is laid in a random rubble pattern, with the pieces carefully set so that they fit closely together. The stones vary considerably in size, with the largest being about 2' by 4' by 18". Many stones are triangular in shape, and some were set intentionally so that their drilling marks are exposed. There are a few pieces of tan-colored stone mixed with the black stone. The walls are approximately 3-4' tall and 2' wide. They are interrupted at about 50' intervals by distinctive, rounded, hollow, tower-like structures.

The walls run westward along the southern edge of the Camp Ripley cantonment area, from the T.H. 115/T.H. 371 junction to Artillery Road. They were built in the following sections, listed below by order of construction:

1. Walls east of Bridge 4969. Built 1934-1935 by the FERA/SERA (Hess, Roise 1994). This symmetrical pair of 1,800'-long, curving wall segments runs from the T.H. 115/T.H. 371 junction to the eastern end of Bridge 4969. These walls mark the T.H. 371 entrance to the Camp Ripley area. At their northernmost and southernmost extremes on T.H. 371, the walls end in rounded, coursed ashlar, pseudo-guard towers. The towers are about 10' tall and have crenelated tops and narrow, lancet-like window openings. Each tower has a base made of one course of pinkish-gray granite. Plans for the walls east of Bridge 4969 were jointly drawn by the National Guard and the Highway Department as part of a roadside beautification project (Hess, Roise 1994:56). (The plans are apparently filed at Camp Ripley.) These walls appear on the Highway Department's 1942 planting plan (S.P. 4908-03).

A short distance east of Bridge 4969 on the northern side of T.H. 115, the wall is interrupted by a set of recent stone gateposts that was built circa 1994-1998. This gate provides an entrance to the Minnesota State Veterans Cemetery and a Visitor's Center.

2. Main Gate B Walls. Built circa 1935-1937 by the WPA. This pair of 400'-long, curving wall segments is located on the northern side of T.H. 115 at Walsh Drive (formerly Infantry

Road). These walls curve to form Main Gate B, the camp's main entrance gate. Main Gate B is the largest and most elaborate set of gateposts in the Camp Ripley Entrance Wall. The Main Gate B Walls apparently appear on an undated drawing (filed at Camp Ripley) that identifies them as a WPA project (Hess, Roise 1994:56). These walls appear on the Highway Department's 1942 planting plan.

3. Wall west of Bridge 4969. Built circa 1942, apparently by the WPA. This wall segment is located on the northern side of T.H. 115 and runs from the western end of Bridge 4969 to the Main Gate B Walls (which are listed as #2 above). This wall segment has two sets of stone gateposts. East Gate A is located at Bettenburg Avenue (also known as Minnesota Avenue), just west of Bridge 4969. The Commander's Gate, located at Leach Avenue, leads to the Commander's House (which was built in 1941). The wall west of Bridge 4969 does not appear on the Highway Department planting plan that was signed in February and March of 1942, but may have been built during the 1942 construction season (after the planting plan was drawn).

4. Wall at West Gate C. Built circa 1942, apparently by the WPA. This 400'-long wall segment is located on the northern side of T.H. 115 at Artillery Road, about 2,000' west of Main Gate B. This segment is about 400' long and contains a set of stone gateposts at Artillery Road that is known as West Gate C. This wall segment also does not appear on the Highway Department planting plan that was signed in February and March of 1942.

■ OTHER LANDSCAPE FEATURES AND PLANTINGS

At the junction of T.H. 115 and T.H. 371 is a triangular island that has a berm on which a tank has been placed. The northeastern and southeastern sides of the berm have white lettering reading "Camp Ripley". Railroad track spurs (formerly the Northern Pacific) curve along the junction, join to become a single spur, cross Bridge 4969 in alignment with T.H. 115, and enter Camp Ripley's cantonment area west of the bridge, following Minnesota Avenue northward.

A chain-link fence extends off the northern end of the northern wall and runs along the eastern edge of Camp Ripley (along the western side of T.H. 371). There are modern street lights along T.H. 115 and T.H. 371 near the walls.

Original Planting Plan

A Roadside Development Division planting plan for the site was signed in 1942 (S.P. 4908-03). East of Bridge 4969, the plan specifies that each corner of the triangular island at the T.H. 115/T.H. 371 junction be planted with a clump consisting of 15 Mugho Pine, 25 Savin Juniper, and 15 Black Hills Spruce. It specifies the placement of 10 Red Cedar "at each corner of [the] bridge approach." The plan notes that the outsides of the walls (away from the trunk highways) are lined with a dense row of existing Black Hills Spruce and Red Cedar (6' to 12' tall) that should be thinned and that trees taken from these rows should be transplanted onto the triangular island and the bridge approaches as per the plan.

West of Bridge 4969, the plan specifies 1,200 evergreen transplants along T.H. 115 between the bridge and Infantry Road (now Walsh Drive), 60 Black Hills spruce to be planted in clumps of 10 east and west of the camp's main gate, and two groups of 7 Red Cedar to

be planted near West Gate C. The plan notes existing spruce and cedar in two curved lines east and west of the main gate.

Existing Plantings

Most portions of the walls are currently lined with dense rows of mature evergreens such as juniper or cedar. There is well-manicured grass along the trunk highway sides of the walls. The triangular island at the T.H. 371/T.H. 115 junction is planted with evergreens and deciduous trees.

■ SETTING

The walls are located in a rural setting at the southern side of the cantonment area. The site is bounded by T.H. 371 and farm fields on the east; by Camp Ripley to the west and north; and by farm fields on the south. The topography is flat.

■ INTEGRITY

Alterations

The stone gateposts just east of Bridge 4969 at the entrance to the Minnesota State Veterans Cemetery were added circa 1994-1998. The walls appear to be otherwise intact.

The site retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Notes on Condition

The walls are in fairly good condition. The landscaping near the walls is well-maintained.

■ HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

T.H. 115 along the southern boundary of Camp Ripley was apparently constructed circa 1930. It became a trunk highway in 1934.

A set of railroad tracks (formerly the Northern Pacific) run north and south past Camp Ripley on the eastern side of T.H. 371. There was originally a small Northern Pacific depot located on the eastern side of T.H. 371, just across from the current T.H. 371/T.H. 115 junction. This railroad stop was known as Camp Ripley Junction.

Bridge 4969 was built in 1930. The bridge was a joint project of the Northern Pacific Railroad and Morrison County, working in cooperation with the Minnesota Department of Highways. It was designed by the Minnesota Department of Highways and built by the Minneapolis Bridge Company during the 1930 construction season. When T.H. 115 became a trunk highway in 1934, the Department assumed jurisdiction over the bridge.

The Camp Ripley Entrance Walls were built in several phases, as described under "Standing Structures" above.

In its study of Camp Ripley's historic structures, consultant Hess, Roise indicates that the Camp Ripley Entrance Walls were completed by 1942 (Hess, Roise 1994). The two wall segments that do not appear on the 1942 planting plan (#3 and #4 above) may have been built during the 1942 construction season, after the planting plan was drawn.

Hess, Roise quote a WPA document (on file at Camp Ripley) that states that rock for the walls was "taken from the waste stock piles" of "an abandoned quarry a short distance from the [military] reservation" (Hess, Roise 1994:56-57).

The 1942 Roadside Development Division planting plan was for a 2.17 mile-stretch of T.H. 115, including this site (S.P. 4908-03). It was signed in February and March of 1942. The plan title sheet indicates that the Highway Department was cooperating with the Adjutant General Department [Minnesota National Guard] and the Work Projects Administration (WPA) on the planting project.

Camp Ripley

Camp Ripley, located about six miles north of Little Falls, is the largest National Guard training camp in the country and the headquarters of the Minnesota Army National Guard. The camp was established here in 1930 and now encompasses 53,000 acres. (It was established near the site of Old Fort Ripley, a military post that had been constructed in 1849-1850, occupied until 1878, and has been razed.) Most of the buildings at Camp Ripley were built between 1930 and 1942. Most of those dating from 1933-1942 were built with labor provided by Depression work relief programs. The Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), through the State Emergency Relief Administration (SERA) program, for example, employed men to construct buildings at the camp in 1933-1934. The Works Progress Administration (WPA) employed large numbers of workers at the camp during 1935-1942. (The WPA was known after 1939 as the Work Projects Administration.) The Civil Works Administration (CWA), the Public Works Administration (PWA), and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) also participated in construction projects (Hess, Roise 1994:28). By the end of the 1930s, Camp Ripley had the capacity to train an infantry division of approximately 9,000 men in two weeks. Most of the buildings at the camp were designed by the camp's architect, Philip C. Bettenburg.

See Hess, Roise 1994 for more information on Camp Ripley.

■ PREVIOUS SHPO REVIEWS

In 1994 the SHPO determined that both the Camp Ripley Entrance Walls and Bridge 4969 were eligible for the National Register. The evaluation occurred as part of a cultural resource study conducted of Camp Ripley in 1993-1994 for the Minnesota Army National Guard by Hess, Roise and Company (SHPO review 94-1493). (See Hess, Roise 1994.) Bridge 4969 was also included in the Mn/DOT Historic Bridge Inventory. (A photocopy of the bridge study inventory file has been placed in the Camp Ripley Entrance Walls roadside development inventory file.)

■ STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Camp Ripley Entrance Walls were built in 1934-1942 by the National Guard collaborating with the MHD Roadside Development Division. Federal relief labor was provided by the

FERA/SERA, the Works Progress Administration (WPA), and the Work Projects Administration (WPA). The property is one of seven sites in the inventory known or suspected to have been built by the FERA/SERA, and one of 23 properties known or suspected to have been built by the two WPA programs. The walls were designed by architect P. C. Bettenburg, a major in the Minnesota National Guard.

In its 1994 study of Camp Ripley, which became the basis for the historic context entitled "Development of Camp Ripley, 1929-1945," consultant Hess, Roise indicates that the Camp Ripley Entrance Walls provided the Minnesota National Guard with a distinctive public symbol of Camp Ripley and the work of the Guard. Hess, Roise writes that,

Unlike most other facilities constructed at the installation, the wall did not have a strictly utilitarian purpose. Rather, it functioned as a visible symbol of military presence. . . . The general public immediately appreciated the wall's significance as the symbol of Minnesota's only National Guard training camp. Even while the wall was still under construction, reporters found a visual focus for their stories in 'the massive and impressive black granite portals.' Photographs of the camp routinely featured 'the imposing granite entrance' (Hess, Roise 1994:57).

The Camp Ripley Entrance Walls have been evaluated within the historic context "Roadside Development on Minnesota Trunk Highways, 1920-1960." It is recommended that the property is ELIGIBLE for the National Register under this historic context because it meets the following registration requirements:

Important Federal Relief Project. The Camp Ripley Entrance Walls were built as part of the 1933-1942 construction of Camp Ripley, which was one of the largest and most diverse work relief efforts in the state (Hess, Roise 1994:39). (National Register Criterion A.)

Rare Federal Relief Property Type. The Camp Ripley Entrance Walls are the only set of entrance walls in this inventory that have been confirmed to have been built through a collaboration between the Roadside Development Division and another agency. (National Register Criterion A.)

Significant to the History of Roadside Development. The Camp Ripley Entrance Walls are among the 68 Depression-era properties in this inventory that represent the MHD's first large-scale effort to construct roadside development facilities in the state. The site is important as a well-preserved example of the accomplishments of federal relief agencies. The property is an example of the distinctive and well-constructed public facilities, built by the state agencies in partnership with federal relief agencies, that met state objectives while providing essential work and job training to the nation's unemployed during the Depression. (National Register Criterion A.)

Design Significance. The Camp Ripley Entrance Walls are a distinctive and well-preserved example of the "National Park Service Rustic Style" with an interesting military motif. The walls have stonework of excellent quality, and display the special labor-intensive construction techniques and distinctive use of indigenous materials that characterize both the Rustic style and federal relief construction in Minnesota. They represent the longest wall in this inventory that was laid dry, without masonry. Furthermore, the walls are probably significant within the body of work of P. C. Bettenburg, an architect of statewide reputation. (National Register Criterion C.)

Both the Camp Ripley Entrance Walls and Bridge 4969 (as two separate properties) were determined to be eligible for the National Register by the SHPO in 1994 following the Hess, Roise study. They comprise two of the three properties at Camp Ripley (the other is the Governor's Lodge) that were determined to be eligible for the National Register under the "Development of Camp Ripley, 1929-1945" historic context.

The Camp Ripley Entrance Walls are also associated with the "Iron and Steel Highway Bridges, 1873-1945," "Federal Relief Construction, 1933-1943," and, possibly, "Tourism and Recreation in the Lake Regions, 1870-1945" historic contexts.

■ OTHER COMMENTS

This property may require further evaluation for potential archaeological resources.

T.H. 371 is quite busy past this site. T.H. 115 is generally a quiet highway except when large numbers of people and vehicles are moving to and from the camp.

This portion of T.H. 371 is apparently part of the Great River Road.

■ REFERENCES

Anderson, Rolf T. "Federal Relief Construction in Minnesota, 1933-1941." National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form. Oct. 9, 1990; amended Aug. 30, 1993.

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Bloomberg, Britta L. Letter to Colonel Wayne A. Johnson, Minnesota Army National Guard. Nov. 21, 1994.

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Hess, Roise and Company. *Historical and Architectural Inventory of Camp Ripley, Minnesota*. Prepared for the Minnesota Army National Guard. July 1994.

Murphy, Patricia. *The Public Buildings of the State of Minnesota: An Architectural Heritage*. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1986.

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Tweton, Jerome D. *The New Deal at the Grass Roots. Programs for the People in Otter Tail County, Minnesota*. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1988.

Weber, Deanne Zibell and Jeffrey A. Hess. Camp Ripley Resources Historic Resources Inventory form for the Camp Ripley Bridge (Bridge No. 4969). March 3, 1994.

Works Progress Administration Accomplishments, Minnesota, 1935-1939. Works Progress Administration of Minnesota, circa 1939.

■ **ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Local Stone

Little Falls Black Granite was quarried between about 1888 and the 1930s by several companies. This hard, dark slate underlies the bed of the Mississippi River near Little Falls.

In Morrison County, the WPA completed a number of projects built with Little Falls Black Granite. The WPA reopened and operated the Little Falls Black Granite Company plant in 1935. (The Little Falls Black Granite Company operated the Buh Quarry in Buh Township.) Another local quarry that provided granite for WPA projects, the Gravelville Quarry, was located on County Road 45 about two miles south of Freedham. In the Little Falls area, the WPA constructed at least five public buildings, the city water plant, stone structures at Lindbergh State Park, structures at Pine Grove Park, a recreational area near Pierz, and stone structures at Camp Ripley with Little Falls Black Granite.

Philip C. Bettenburg

Philip C. Bettenburg (1901-1968) studied civil engineering at the College of St. Thomas and joined the Minnesota National Guard after World War I. In 1922 he began to practice architecture and engineering in St. Paul. In addition to Camp Ripley, Bettenburg designed several armories throughout the state for the Minnesota National Guard (Hess, Roise 1994:16).