

Fort Ethan Allen Park

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PANEL 1		
Text Level	Draft Text/ Content	Notes /Comments/Questions
Title	Welcome to Fort Ethan Allen	
Header	Much remains of Fort Ethan Allen, a critical part of the Defenses of Washington, D.C., during the Civil War.	
Main text	Fort Ethan Allen defended the southern approaches to Chain Bridge, one of three spans Confederate troops could have used to cross the Potomac and invade Washington. Unlike many Civil War sites, Fort Ethan Allen saw no major battles. But that does not diminish its value: The fort’s very existence deterred an assault. The Confederate army never launched a successful attack on the capital.	
Quote	<p>“The possession of Chain Bridge communication with the opposite shore of the Potomac . . . was essential to the operation of our forces in Virginia and to the prestige of our arms.”</p> <p>General John G. Barnard, U.S. Army, 1871</p>	<i>Quote from: John G. Barnard, A Report on the Defenses of Washington to the Chief of Engineers, U.S. Army, 1871, pp. 13-14</i>
<p>Graphic caption:</p> <p>Map of the Defenses of Washington</p>	<p>Defenses of Washington</p> <p>Washington, D.C., was the most heavily fortified city in the Union during the Civil War. By the war’s end, 164 major forts and batteries comprised a 37-mile defensive perimeter.</p>	

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<p>Graphic caption and callouts</p> <p>Topographic map (new illustration)</p>	<p>Fort Ethan Allen The fort was strategically located on high ground between Pimmit Run and a natural ravine. Surrounding land was cleared of trees to open sight lines in all directions.</p> <p>Fort Marcy Fort Marcy also protected Chain Bridge, while it and Fort Ethan Allen protected each other: Ditches and rifle pits connected the two forts and the range of their guns overlapped.</p> <p>Chain Bridge The strategic importance of Chain Bridge was reflected in the degree of protection it received on both sides of the Potomac.</p>	
<p>Photograph caption</p> <p>Chain Bridge with Civil War soldiers</p>	<p>Chain Bridge from Washington, D.C.</p> <p>Military control of the bridge began in 1861 so that Union soldiers could maintain communications and troop movements across the Potomac between the capital and Union-held territory in Virginia.</p>	
<p>Photograph caption</p> <p>Abraham Lincoln</p>	<p>Abraham Lincoln</p> <p>In late May 1861, President Lincoln ordered U.S. Army troops to seize strategic areas and build fortifications in northern Virginia across the Potomac River from the capital. Lincoln inspected Fort Ethan Allen during its construction in September 1861.</p>	

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PANEL 2		
Text Level	Draft Text/ Content	Notes /Comments
Title	A Defensive Stronghold, Heavily Armed	
Header	No enemy would have gotten as close to Fort Ethan Allen as you are now.	
Main text	A half-mile perimeter of earthen walls and deep ditches enclosed the fort. Inside, as many as 1,000 soldiers manned the fort's artillery of 36 guns, some with a range of several miles. A rugged, steep ravine between the fort and the Potomac River near Chain Bridge also deterred an attack. The closest fighting to Fort Ethan Allen occurred at Fort Stevens, six miles to the northeast in Washington, D.C.	
Bolded statement	You are looking at a replica 20-pounder Parrott rifle behind the surviving rampart and positioned at the remains of gun platform #23.	
Illustration caption (will be in color)	A Confederate Sneak Attack?	
Enemy soldiers	Unlikely. Attacking Confederate soldiers would have been moving across open terrain and greeted by defending	

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approaching the fort	Union riflemen, concealed in deep trenches and firing from higher ground. Advance warning of Confederate movements would have been relayed from nearby Union forts.	
Photograph caption soldiers at cannon	Man Your Guns When firing cannons, artillery soldiers stood on a level earthen platform behind the fort's thick, steep walls.	
Subtext	Sections of the Fort Remain Parts of the south face of the fort are visible. A rampart — the fort's main earthen wall — rose behind a deep ditch that surrounded the fort to impede enemy access. Cannons fired through gunports , usually openings in the top of a parapet elevated on the main wall	
Photograph caption profile before erosion; gun ports labeled	The Face of the Fort The red line indicates the location of the gunports and the height of the rampart before they had eroded. Trees now grow in what was a steeply sloped, six-foot ditch.	
Graphic caption Section drawing before erosion – labeled	The Fort in Profile The red line superimposed on an 1871 engineer's drawing shows changes in the profile of the landscape.	

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Banner text	Help us preserve this piece of Civil War history. Please do not climb on the earthworks. Thank you.	
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Panel 3		
Text Level	Draft Text/ Content	Notes /Comments
Title	A Bastion-Style Fort Is a Mighty Fortress	
Header	Fort Ethan Allen’s star-shaped design enabled soldiers to defend all sides of the fort.	
Main text	Constructed primarily from earth and wood, Fort Ethan Allen was a bastion-style fort. Bastions are angular structures that jut out from the enclosing walls. They eliminate blind spots, giving defending soldiers a full range view of oncoming troops. Bastions also allowed crossfire from multiple angles, making it nearly impossible for an attacker to approach the fort or scale its walls without being exposed to the line of fire.	http://www.syler.com/SiegeWarfare/basicconcepts/basicbastion.html
Bolded statement	Fort Ethan Allen is the best-preserved example of a bastion-style fort in Arlington County.	NPS form section 8, page 5
Graphic labels Illustration based on Versar’s 3-D rendering	[Labels on the graphic] Surviving Magazine, Guard House Surviving Bombproof Surviving Rampart Abatis You are here	

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	Covered Way	
Subtext	<p>Clearing the Way</p> <p>To build Fort Ethan Allen, trees were cleared to open lines of sight and to provide building materials. Timbers hewn from the trunks of large oaks, hickories, and chestnuts supported the fort's thick earthen walls. Sharpened tree branches became abatis, a defensive obstacle around the fort's perimeter.</p>	
Graphic caption	<p>Soldier's Sketch of Fort Marcy</p> <p>The stumps of trees felled to build Fort Marcy were captured in this soldier's sketch. The land cleared to create the Defenses of Washington eroded quickly, sending tons of sediment into the Potomac River.</p>	
Photo caption Military Road or wagon train	<p>Military Road a Priority Task</p> <p>In September 1861, Union troops quickly cut a road through dense forest to connect the fort with Leesburg Turnpike at the Virginia end of Chain Bridge. Extended several times during the war, "Military Road" eventually ended near present-day Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport.</p>	<p><i>Wikipedia cites: National Park Service. A Historic Resources Study: The Civil War Defenses of Washington. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of Interior, 2009, p. 89.</i></p>
Bolded text banner	<p>Walk up Old Glebe Road to view additional remaining earthworks and a model of Fort Ethan Allen.</p>	

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PANEL 4		
Text Level	Draft Text/ Content	Notes /Comments
Title	A Defensive Artillery Fort	
Header	Fort Ethan Allen contained emplacements for 36 guns.	
Main text	The forts that comprised the Defenses of Washington were spaced at half-mile intervals, supplemented with artillery batteries and rifle pits, making a nearly continuous connection between them. The armaments were chosen for their range of fire and positioned to ensure that the line of defenses had no gaps. The strategy worked: No successful attack on Washington, D.C., occurred during the war.	
Bolded statement	The 20-pounder Parrott rifle (replica) in front of you — like other field guns — was portable, transported on a gun carriage, and called into service where needed.	
Sidebar text List of typical armaments	Arming Fort Ethan Allen The fort's artillery inventory in 1865 included: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• three 6-pounder guns• four 24-pounder guns• three 32-pounder guns	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• two 8-inch howitzers• three 32-pounder guns• three 10-pounder Parrott rifles• eleven 30-pounder Parrott rifles• six 12-pounder Napoleon guns• four 10-inch mortars• two 24-pounder Coehorn mortars <p>The term “pounder” refers to the weight of the ammunition that could be fired.</p>	
Subtext	<p>What is Artillery?</p> <p>Artillery consists of large-caliber weapons, operated by a crew of soldiers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cannons, guns, howitzers, and mortars: These have smooth bores (barrels) and fire ball-shaped ammunitions.• Rifles: Rifled arms shoot elongated, bullet-shaped projectiles from barrels with spiraled grooves. They fire more accurately than smoothbore weapons.	
Locator map	You are here	

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<p>Photo caption</p> <p>Gun crews, Company H</p>	<p>Positioning the Guns</p> <p>Fort Ethan Allen’s configuration of guns would have been similar to this one at Fort Lincoln in Washington, D.C.</p>	
<p>Graphic caption or subtext</p>	<p>What Ammunition Was Fired?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solid shot: a spherical shape (cannon ball) made from a dense material such as iron or lead — smashed its target • Canister: a thin-walled metal cylinder filled with lead pellets, scraps of metal, and saw dust — turned a cannon into a giant shotgun • Explosive shell: a hollow casing filled with black gunpowder — burst into large pieces on impact 	<p>http://www.roquescove.org/info/cannons/ammunition.shtml</p>
<p>Graphics title and callouts</p> <p>New art being done showing soldiers loading, readying, and firing a cannon</p>	<p>How many men did it take to fire a 20-pounder Parrott gun?</p> <p>The art of firing a cannon was the result of a skilled team effort. A well-drilled gun crew, consisting of 7 men plus a gunner, could fire 2 to 3 rounds per minute from a field cannon. Gunners and their crew followed a strict set of rules to load, ready, aim, and fire a cannon — a sequence that required coordinated precision and practice.</p> <p>Load</p> <p>6 and 7 cut fuses and distribute rounds to 5, who carries them to 2. 1 sponges barrel. 2 puts round in gun. 1 rams</p>	

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	<p>round into barrel while 3 closes vent with thumbnail.</p> <p>Ready</p> <p>1 and 2 step clear. 3 pricks cartridge with priming wire. 4 hooks lanyard to primer, puts primer in vent, and moves to the rear.</p> <p>Fire</p> <p>3 steps clear. 4 pulls lanyard and fires the gun.</p>	
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PANEL 5		
Text Level	Draft Text/ Content	Notes /Comments
Title	The View in 1865 [An Artillery Company Poses for History, 1865]	<i>Alternative title is highlighted</i>
Header	Taken from near where you are standing.	
Photo caption	<p>Company M, 2nd New York Heavy Artillery, August 1865</p> <p>The war ended in April 1865, but troops continued to occupy the fort temporarily. With their guns cleaned and polished, Company M would be mustered out at Washington, D.C. on September 29.</p>	<p><i>I think this battery (company) was mustered out on September 29th or that is what is on the official website:</i></p> <p>http://dmna.ny.gov/historic/reghist/civil/artillery/2ndArtHvy/2ndArtHvyMain.htm</p> <p><i>There is also an interesting bit of information about the photo on the website.</i></p> <p>http://dmna.ny.gov/historic/reghist/civil/rosters/Artillery/2ndArtCW_Roster.pdf</p>
Graphic label	<p>Photographer was here</p> <p>You are here</p> <p>To take this image, the photographer stood on top of the bombproof (remains to your right) and looked towards the magazine that would have been directly in front of you.</p>	

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Callout 1	Entrance to Powder Magazine/Filling Room Ammunition was stored in magazines and filling rooms, underground chambers with an aboveground entrance. Filing rooms sometimes stored armed shells, while magazines held black powder and projectiles.	Notes: The bunkers were constructed on a stone foundation with timber walls covered with tar, resin, earth, and sod. The entrance to the structure was above ground. Ethan Allen had four magazines.]
Callout 2	Field Cannon/Limber A field cannon hitched to a limber formed a four-wheeled vehicle moved by a team of six horses. The company mascot sits on top of the cannon's wooden ammunition chest.	Note: Some siege cannons did have wheels depending on the carriage type. For example, all the cannons seen in the background are siege cannons and have wheels. In fact, they are 30-pounder Parrott rifles but are much more complicated to move. Some did travel with the army in the field in "Siege Trains."
Callout 3	Revetment Horizontal wood boards helped support the fort's earthen walls. Vertical posts provided stronger protection against enemy fire, but were more time-consuming to install.	Note: To hold up the parapet, Fort Ethan was constructed with horizontal boards instead of vertical posts revetment. Vertical posts provide better protection for soldiers manning the fort.
Callout 4	Folded Tarpaulin Tarpaulins protected cannons from harsh weather. Here, one sits on a canister box.	
Callout 5	Gunner This soldier wears a tube pouch with "No. 23" stenciled on it. He was part of the artillery crew assigned to gun platform 23 on the south face of the fort.	
Callout 6	30-pounder Parrott Rifles	

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	Siege cannons usually remained in a fixed location, as they were more complicated to move than the 20-pounder field cannons in the foreground.	
Callout 7	Gabion Large wicker containers filled with earth or rubble reinforced openings in the parapet by absorbing the shocks of artillery fire.	
Callout 8	Freedman The Union Army hired servants for some officers, depending on their ranks. Servants received room, board, and often clothing.	<i>Were the servants typically freed blacks? Did the army of the officer hire them personally?</i>
Callout 9	Sentry Box The guard post mounted on the parapet has remains of the canvas that had enclosed it. The fabric walls could be quickly moved aside during an attack to give the guard a clear field of fire.	<i>Wasn't this sentry box constructed of wood (roof and a frame) and with the addition of canvas, much like a tent?</i>
Callout 10	Ladder to the Parapet Ladders provided quick access to the top of the parapet. Only an on-duty guard or an officer who needed a clearer view of a distant target was allowed on parapets.	
Callout 11	Commanding Officer Captain William Parrish stands to the right of a little girl, who is not his daughter but possibly a visiting relative. After the war, Parrish became sheriff of Genesee County, N.Y.	

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Callout 12	10-inch Mortar A model 1841 mortar. Mortars fire ammunition in a high arc that can reach targets shielded by elevated terrain.	
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Panel 6		
Text Level	Draft Text/ Content	Notes /Comments
Title	Fort Ethan Allen — What to Look For	
Header	The earthen mounds that surround you are the remains of the fort's construction.	
Main text	The model behind you re-creates Fort Ethan Allen as it was depicted in U.S. Army engineering drawings published after the war. Use the drawing and model to locate features that survive and to visualize those lost by erosion and later development. Imagine the area during the war: cleared of trees, orchards, and farms to make way for forts, rifle trenches, and military roads.	
Bolded statement	Built by volunteers of the 2nd Vermont Infantry, the fort was named to honor Ethan Allen, a Revolutionary War hero from their state.	
Graphic labels Barnard plan view of the fort.	Surviving Magazine, Guard House Surviving Bombproof Magazine Entrance Magazine Bastion	

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	Magazine Surviving Rampart Magazine You are here	
Subtext	Civil War Engineering Fort Ethan Allen shared features with other forts in the northern Virginia Defenses of Washington. Built in September 1861, it was one of the earliest of the forts, and with a perimeter of 768 yards, it was one of the largest. All the forts followed the directives of General John G. Barnard, the chief engineer for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.	
Callout for plan view	Entrance Cut through the raised parapets and ramparts, entrances were at ground level and faced away from fronts that could be exposed to enemy action.	
Callout for plan view	Guard House Near the front entrance, this structure housed offices, a room for holding prisoners, and an area for mustering guards.	
Callout for plan view	Powder Magazine and Filing Rooms Ammunition for the fort's guns was kept in underground storage rooms. Shells were armed and sometimes stored in the filling room, while the magazine was used to hold black powder and projectiles. Implements for firing the cannons could also be kept in the filling room. The magazine was often	

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	protected by a guard and soldiers had to take special precautions handling the powder.	
Callout for plan view	Bombproof Partially underground and near the center of the fort, this thick-walled shelter provided protection against incoming artillery fire.	
Callout for plan view	Covered Way A trench-like passageway that concealed soldiers from enemy view while taking defensive positions outside the fort's walls.	
Graphic caption Newspaper ad for auctioning the fort's materials after the war	Where did it go? After the war ended, the fort was ordered closed. At public auction, the U.S. Army engineers sold whatever materials and tools could be salvaged. Legend has it that lumber retrieved from the fort was used to construct the house at 3311 North Glebe Road, known as Bellevue.	<i>USD/NPS NRHP registration form</i>
Banner text	Walk down Old Glebe Road to view additional remaining earthworks and a 20-pounder Parrott rifle.	

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PANEL 7		
Text Level	Draft Text/ Content	Notes /Comments
Title	Lives of the Soldiers	
Header	At the peak of the Civil War, as many as 1,000 soldiers were garrisoned at Fort Ethan Allen.	
Main text	The men who built and defended the fort belonged to volunteer regiments recruited from New York, Massachusetts, and other northern states. While stationed at Fort Ethan Allen, troops saw little action, but continually trained, maintained their weapons, and felled trees to keep a clear line of sight toward Chain Bridge and Leesburg Pike.	
Quote	<p>“He [Lincoln] will shake hands with a common soldier that he has never seen or heard of before with as much warmth and friendship as he would with an old acquaintance.”</p> <p>Venando Bruce, private, Fourth New York Heavy Artillery, August 7, 1862, writing about a visit to Forth Ethan Allen by President Lincoln.</p>	
Graphic caption Adapted plan view showing	Advantages of Fort Living Troops garrisoned at the fort generally lived in barracks, while infantrymen camped in tents further away from the fort. After serving at Fort Ethan Allen, soldiers often headed to southern	

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locations of outbuildings	campaigns where life on the field of battle was harsher than in the forts and camps around Washington, D.C.	
Graphic labels	<p>Fort Ethan Allen</p> <p>Commissary Store</p> <p>Signal Tree</p> <p>Officers Quarters</p> <p>Barracks</p> <p>Mess House; Mess Houses</p> <p>Officers Quarters</p> <p>Cook House</p> <p>Cook House</p> <p>Barracks</p> <p>Barracks</p> <p>Mess Houses</p> <p>Mess Houses</p> <p>Mess House</p> <p>Fort Ethan Allen</p>	
Photo caption	<p>The Bonds of War</p> <p>Often acquaintances or kin before the war, the regiment became a soldier's family away from home. When not working,</p>	

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	the soldiers played games, read, and occasionally visited nearby sights. War forged strong relationships that only ended with death in battle or old age after the war.	
Quote	<p>“This morning we had to pitch our tents in line and then wash up so as to be as clean as possible for inspection. Then I got a chance to go where I wanted to for a long time. I went in the direction of Fairfax Courthouse.”</p> <p>James B. Randall, sergeant, Co. F, 169th New York Volunteer Infantry, October 19-23, 1862.</p>	<i>Photo of Randall located!</i>
Subtext	<p>Women at the Fort</p> <p>At Fort Ethan Allen and other posts, officers often hosted their wives, children, or relatives during the winter season when the armies went into winter camp. In addition, each fort had two authorized laundresses, often soldiers’ wives. One such wife added pie making to her services, and ended up making more money than her husband.</p>	
Photo caption	Tent life of the 31 st Pennsylvania Infantry (later, 82 nd Pennsylvania Infantry) at Queen’s Farm, near Fort Slocum, D.C.	
Photo caption	<p>Officers Quarters</p> <p>One of the first forts built, Fort Ethan Allen initially housed troops in tents erected inside the parapet walls. Later, barracks, officers’ quarters, mess houses, and cook houses were built outside the fort’s walls.</p>	
Photo caption	<p>Headquarters</p> <p>Black crepe draped the fort’s administrative center as the nation</p>	

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	mourned the death of President Lincoln on April 15, 1865.	
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PANEL 8		
Text Level	Content	Notes /Comments
Title	Communications Along the Defensive Line	
Header	Fort Ethan Allen was a repeating station, transmitting messages back and forth to other nearby stations.	
Main text	The forts that comprised the Defenses of Washington communicated by a series of signal stations: Coded messages were relayed — repeated — from station to station. U.S. Army records list 70 such stations in 1863. The soldiers who served in these stations had to learn new languages, communicated by waving flags, blinking lights, flaring rockets, or telegraphy.	
Quote	<p>“It was a repeating station in every sense of the word. I gradually opened with other stations until the number of directly communicating was six. This compelled me to destroy the beauty of the large chestnut . . .”</p> <p>Lt. J. Willard Brown, 1864</p>	<p>http://archive.org/stream/signalcorpusain00brow - page/654/mode/2up [Lt. Brown served at FEA from March 1864 to May 1865]</p>
Photo caption	Signal Tower	
Signal tower in chestnut tree	Stripped of its top and branches a large chestnut tree served as a base for Fort Ethan Allen’s signal tower. The log house at the base of the tree, which housed the fort’s commanding	

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	officer, became the residence of the superior signal officer and finally the signal station itself. No trace of the signal tower remains.	
Photo caption	Members of the Signal Corps Each Union signal officer was issued a set of seven flags in red, black, and white, each with a contrasting center square.	
Subtext	A First in American Warfare On September 24, 1861, Thaddeus S.D. Lowe, Chief of the newly formed U.S. Army Aeronautical Corps, launched a balloon from Fort Corcoran to direct artillery fire on Confederate soldiers three miles away in Falls Church. Aloft in the balloon, Lowe signaled trajectory instructions to soldiers on the ground, who in turn relayed messages to gunners at Fort Ethan Allen. For the first time in warfare, gunners could accurately fire on an enemy they could not see.	<i>Evans, Charles. War of the Aeronauts, p. 112-13</i>
Photo captions Lowe and his balloon the Intrepid during the Peninsula Campaign	Army in the Air Lowe commanded seven balloons and eight aeronauts. In the photos from left to right, operators fill the balloon <i>Intrepid</i> using portable hydrogen generators; replenish <i>Intrepid</i> with air from <i>Constitution</i> , and hold tether lines as Lowe — aloft — surveys enemy positions during the Peninsula Campaign near Williamsburg, Virginia, in May 1862.	http://images.historyinfullcolor.com/p640525974/h4E955A34 - h4e955a34 <i>Intrepid being re-filled from the balloon Constitution</i>

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PANEL 9		
Text Level	Draft Text/ Content	Notes /Comments
Title	Protecting the Fort	
Header	Fort Ethan Allen depended on more than its thick exterior walls to protect it from enemy attack and infiltration.	
Main text	Stationed outside the fort, sentries checked every wagon, animal, and person that neared the fort. Underground bunkers with 12-18 foot-thick walls and heavy timber roofs housed stores of ammunition, a guardhouse, and bombproof shelters for soldiers in the event of a Confederate attack. Guards patrolled inside the fort and stood watch from the fort’s parapets.	
Photo caption Guards posted at Fort Reynolds	Standing Guard A wooden sentry box with canvas roof and door stood outside the main gate at Fort Reynolds.	
Photo caption Checking orders	Checking Orders As field officers and orderlies looked on, Colonel Robert Tyler examined a dispatch delivered to Fort Richardson.	
Photo caption Guarding the magazine	Protecting Ammunition A soldier guarded the magazine and filling rooms that held	

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	ammunition and weapons at Battery Rogers.	
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