

[Benjamin B. Talley papers, HMC-0241.](#)

Miss Gjelde  
Area Office

Fort Richardson, Alaska

January 28, 1941.  
ACW/mg

Subject: Fort Richardson Daily Log.

To: The District Engineer, U.S. Engineer Office, Seattle, Washington.

A Daily Log covering Fort Richardson from January 19 to January 24, inclusive, is inclosed.

A.C. Welling,  
Captain, Corps of Engineers,  
Acting Resident Engineer.

1 Incl.: Daily Log (dup.)

Copy to:  
~~Captain~~ Talley  
Major

## DAILY LOG

January 19 (Sunday) — Afternoon was spent with Mr. Coray in going over plans for the mobilization of men and materials for the enlarged construction program commencing April 1.

Mr. Coray pointed out that approximately 150,000 cubic yards of sand and gravel would be required for the runways, parking aprons and hangar, and that the capacity of the present gravel plant was around 7,500 yards for a 24-hour day. The capacity of this plant therefore is not sufficient to supply the necessary sand and gravel required for the foregoing construction. A choice must therefore be made as to whether the capacity of the plant will be increased or some of the construction carried forward to 1942.

Four hundred forty-four dwelling units are scheduled for construction during the coming season. No work is being done on these at present for the following reasons: (1) Officers quarters: The amount of money that can be expended on the officers quarters is limited by statute and if construction commenced at the present time with the ground frozen, the cost of excavating the basements in preparation for the foundations would be excessive; also there are few materials on hand; (2) NCO quarters: No money has been made available and little materials are on hand.

Other points were discussed and Mr. Coray was asked to prepare a plan of operation for the summer's construction and to compile a list of points I should discuss with the District Engineer when I go outside.

The office equipment with the exception of the Finance and Procurement Sections was moved from the old railroad office building in Anchorage to a CCC-type building in the construction area at Fort Richardson.

January 20 — Spent about half the morning trying to talk to the District Engineer, Seattle, over the radiotelephone but without results. Sent a radio to the District Engineer embodying the subjects of the intended conversation, the tenure of these being that it will be necessary to mobilize materials for construction of 444 dwelling units in the industrial area paralleling the hangar lines together with the necessary skilled men for their erection. Requested the District Engineer to have his office study this problem before my arrival in order that we might effect a solution. In the afternoon a conference was held with Colonel Peabody concerning the highway between Fort Richardson and Anchorage.

Over a period of several months the subject of an improved highway between Richardson and Anchorage has been under discussion by the Commanding Officer, Fort Richardson, The Commanding General, Alaska Defense Force, Colonel Ohlson of the Alaska Railroad, the Alaska Road Commission, and the City of Anchorage.

The present road was originally the wagon road from Anchorage to Whitney. It has been widened and straightened in the worst places over a period of years. It has a macadam surface. However, it is very crooked and narrow and is a second class road.

Two plans have been submitted for its improvement: (1) A project of a new route from Fort Richardson staying on the high ground until a point approximately opposite to the railroad wye; thence making a 90 degree turn down the hill across the railroad and across Ship Creek into the Town of Anchorage; (2) The other plan consists of constructing a new highway more or less

parallel to the present road to a point in the vicinity of the railroad wye, and thence making a 90 degree turn across Ship Creek and into the Town of Anchorage.

Certain specific recommendations had been made to The Commanding General, 4th Army, concerning the construction of this road. They were to the effect that the cost of the highway should be borne by the War Department from Fort Richardson to and including the bridge across Ship Creek. The crossing of Ship Creek is off the military reservation. It is understood that Anchorage and the Alaska Road Commission would bear the cost of the construction in Anchorage and to but not including the bridge.

I pointed out to Colonel Peabody that in my opinion the expenditure of War Department funds for the construction of the highway or of the bridge off the military reservation would be improper, that the construction of the new road on the military reservation could not be done at the present time as it was not in the approved plan of the Post. Inasmuch as Fort Richardson is not dependent upon this road for supplying the Post or as an access road for construction materials, it was suggested that the reconstruction of the road be placed on a later priority and that the necessary military construction of the Post be completed before such reconstruction was undertaken. Colonel Peabody agreed with my recommendations and it is my understanding that they were embodied in a radiogram from The Commanding General, Alaska Defense Force, to General DeWitt, wherein he modified his original recommendations accordingly.

The field office was opened at Fort Richardson with the exception of the Finance and Procurement Sections. The heating system at the office building was very unsatisfactory and the office was very cold.

January 21 — Discussed with Colonel Peabody the situation regarding the large number of requisitions for changes and additions to buildings not included in the original plans or estimates. Since taking over the project from the CQM there has been a steady stream of requests from the Post Commander of Fort Richardson and from various organizations of the Post for modifications and additions to the buildings previously c over to the Post. The cost of these changes in the past months have run into many thousands of dollars and if increased numbers of buildings are turned over to the Post, it is likely that the number of these requisitions will increase rather than diminish. Under the approved plans and estimate of funds for the project it is impossible to effect the changes requested regardless of how desirable they may be. It was suggested to Colonel Peabody and he concurred that the official nature of these requisitions should be recognized and that a means should be provided for coordinating them and getting the approval of The Commanding General before they were undertaken. Colonel Peabody concurred with this recommendation and instructions were issued to the Post Commanders, Fort Richardson and Ladd Field, that changes in buildings, additional buildings, etc, would be considered by The Commanding General, 4th Army, only when approved by the Commanding General, Alaska Defense Force, and in addition such recommendations would bear the comments of the Area Engineer regarding them. Many of these requisitions are those which ordinarily are taken care of from funds allotted to the Post Quartermaster for the maintenance of barracks. It is understood that funds have recently been made available to the Quartermaster of Fort Richardson for this purpose but up to the present he does not have an organization for the maintenance and repair has remained with the Constructing Quartermaster and lately with the Engineer Department. It is expected however that this work will be taken over by the Post Quartermaster in the near future.

January 22 — Captain Welling arrived by air from Fairbanks at 11 am together with Mr. Flood who will remain at Anchorage on temporary duty until about February 1, at which time he will go to Kodiak to replace Mr. Lottsfeldt, Construction Supervisor, resigned. Talked with the District Engineer at 9 am and briefly discussed the mobilization of materials and men for the heavy construction program of the coming summer. The District Engineer called again at 1:30 pm and inquired into the situation regarding materials on hand. He was informed that with the exception of electrical supplies, there were sufficient construction materials on hand to complete the temporary construction scheduled for completion prior to April 1. However there was very little construction material on hand for the construction to be undertaken subsequent thereto and it was these additional materials that had been requested and which should be procured and shipped to Anchorage prior to April 1. The District Engineer asked for a construction schedule in order that the materials might be procured as required.

The heating system of the office was much better and the rooms were not as cold.

Received from Colonel Peabody a comprehensive request for additional temporary construction at Fort Richardson. This was given to me for study following which it will be discussed with Colonel Peabody. It includes 113 additional buildings of various sorts.

Mr. Coray received a wire from Colonel George, late CQM, Fort Richardson, advising Mr. Coray that orders had been requested transferring Mr. Coray from Fort Richardson to Headquarters, Ninth Zone, San Francisco, for duty with Colonel George. Prior to taking over the Fort Richardson project, I had been assured by the District Office that Colonel George had released Mr. Coray so this notification that Colonel George had asked for his transfer came as quite a surprise. Instructions have been received by radio and by letter from the Quartermaster General that the civilian personnel would be transferred with the project. Sent a radio to the District Engineer requesting necessary action be taken to keep Mr. Coray at Fort Richardson.

Captain Tanner was sent to Ladd Field on temporary duty to represent Captain Rankin in the transfer of Ladd Field from the Constructing Quartermaster to the Engineer Department. This was requested by a radiogram of several days ago from the Quartermaster General to the Constructing Quartermaster, Fort Richardson, to have someone from among the officers available to represent Captain Rankin in this transfer. It was originally intended that Captain Williams, Quartermaster Corps, Ladd Field, would do this but Major Gaffney, Commanding Officer, Ladd Field, object. It is expected that Captain Tanner will be at Ladd Field from 10 days to two weeks. Miss Gunderson departed for Ladd Field by air to supervise the Personnel Section of Ladd Field in the transfer from the Constructing Quartermaster to the Engineer Department.

January 23 — Colonel Peabody called regarding the construction of shelving and minor modifications to the interiors of temporary buildings, etc. at Fort Richardson. I had previously discussed this question and mentioned that the cost of such shelving, etc. would probably run into as much as \$50,000 during 1941.

Discussed with Colonel Peabody changes in the closet arrangement of the single and double officers quarters. The Quartermaster General had previously indicated that he would approve a rearrangement of the bedrooms of the second floor of the double and single officers quarters to provide for additional closet space and furnished drawings showing the new arrangement. These were submitted to The Commanding General, Alaska Defense Force, for his comments and were returned with suggested changes on one and acceptance of the other. These

changes will not increase the cost of the buildings and I therefore shall recommend that the changes be incorporated. This is covered by correspondence which will be forwarded to the District Office. General Buckner recommended that a door be cut between the dining room and the maid's room of the single field officers set. I pointed out that this was the only suitable space for placing a buffet or sideboard and this recommendation was returned to The General for comments on this feature. The General likewise recommended consideration of a central heating system. I expressed the opinion that a central heating system would probably cost between one and one half and two million dollars and would delay the occupancy of the quarters until the late summer or fall of 1942. The correspondence was returned to the Alaska Defense Headquarters.

January 24 — Inspected Anderson's Camp and noted only very slight improvements although the Camp Manager is disturbed about the situation and I believe with proper prodding he will make the necessary improvements. Discussed with Colonel Peabody the following points: (a) Provision for additional construction to take care of any likely increase in personnel from Fort Richardson due to the change in the organization of several units; (b) increase in construction required to properly house the units already ordered to Fort Richardson; and (c) the changes in the officers quarters referred to in yesterday's log. The gist of the discussion was to the effect that I felt unable to discuss the details of the recommendations as I was unfamiliar with the policy of The Commanding General, 4th Army, concerning whether or not it was contemplated changing the strength of the tactical organization from the old "triangular division" organization to what is in effect the World War strength. Such a change would involve practically doubling the strength of the existing organization with correspondingly increased housing requirement. Secondly, it depended upon whether we were building for the next two years or for the next twenty years, and thirdly, I should like to know whether or not the permanent type of construction of barracks, etc. would likely to be commenced during the next few months and that until I knew the answers to these questions, I was unable to intelligently discuss the problem. It was take this to Seattle and endeavor to get an answer to the foregoing from the District Engineer or The Commanding General, 4th Army.

I talked to Major Goerz and Captain Booth at Seattle at 1 pm. I informed Seattle that we had no money to meet the payroll and it was agreed that I should ask the Finance Officer to release the checks without placing the proper symbols on the vouchers but would leave the space blank until funds were received. Major Goerz agreed to notify the Chief of Engineers that this was being done. Approximately \$200,000 is involved. I informed Major Goerz that Colonel George had offered employment to certain persons in Alaska and requested that Colonel George be informed that I would not recognize such orders and that he should address his communications to me. Major Goerz replied that this had been called to Colonel George's attention by wire but that Colonel Dunn was out of the office and was therefore unable to reach him by telephone. Major Goerz added further that the Chief of Engineers, and the Commanding General, 4th Army, had been informed that the personnel in question were not available for transfer away from the work.

I asked when Lieutenant Corey would come to Alaska and they informed me that he was waiting for me in Seattle, with which I concurred. I asked about additional reserve officers and found that two officers had been requested for me but no information was available upon them except that they were trying to get good officers.

Mr. Moats, Safety Engineer, arrived from Seattle. I discussed the general safety problem with Mr. Moats and informed him that it was my desire that he initiate the same safety program here that is in effect elsewhere in the Seattle District. He was directed to hold safety meetings with the foremen during the week of January 26 and instruct the foremen to hold safety meetings with their crews during the first week in February. Inasmuch as Captain Welling will be in charge during my absence, he will be acting as Safety Officer. Mr. Coray i to laxity on the part of one of the men on duty with the water supply, the Post was without water for about two hours this morning. Previously difficulty had been experienced with this employee and as a result of this laxity he was discharged.

I approved the change in designation of Mr. Kellogg from Foreman to Master Mechanic with his rate of pay increased from \$1.62 an hour to \$1.75.