

FORT RILEY WALKING TOUR

INTRODUCTORY HISTORY

Fort Riley's history stretches back over one hundred fifty years as the nation began to focus its attention on overland trails such as the Oregon and Santa Fe – arteries of immigration and commerce – promising challenges and a new beginning.

Selection of the fort's site occurred in the fall of 1852 and the following spring, soldiers began to garrison the post. Buildings were erected of native limestone quarried on the post. Set-backs, such as a cholera epidemic in 1855, did not stop the permanent establishment of the post, named in honor of Bennet C. Riley, a career Army officer who led the first military escort down the Santa Fe Trail in 1829 and distinguished himself during the war with Mexico.

In the years immediately preceding the Civil War, Fort Riley hosted many officers who would soon make their names known on the bloody battlefields of the Civil War: Philip St. George Cooke, "Jeb" Stuart and John Buford all served at this frontier post.

Following the Civil War, the 7th Cavalry organized here under the leadership of LTC George Armstrong Custer. During the next three decades, soldiers used Fort Riley as a staging area in protecting the expanding frontier.

As a new century neared, the fort became an important fixture in the Army's educational system. In 1892, the School of Cavalry and Light Artillery began operation, succeeded by the Mounted Service School in 1907 and eventually renamed the Cavalry School following World War I. These schools served as the Center for the evolution of cavalry tactics and training. The principles learned by officers such as Jonathan Wainwright, Terry Allen and George S. Patton, Jr., would be put to use in future campaigns.

Fort Riley also served as a training center during all of the major wars of the 20th Century. These centers were established at Camp Funston and later, Camp Forsyth, where soldiers learned skills that would be tested in the trenches of World War I and far-flung battlefields of World War II, to the cold of Korea, the jungles of Vietnam and the sands of Southwest Asia.

During the Cold War years of the 1950s and 1960s, the 1st Infantry Division trained to defend Western Europe from the threat of the Soviet Union. But in 1965 their attention turned to Southeast Asia and over the next six years, soldiers of the Big Red One fought in the Vietnam conflict. Upon returning to Fort Riley in 1971, the Division again assumed its mission of supporting the nation's N.A.T.O. treaty obligations.

In the spring of 1994, the headquarters of the 1st Infantry Division moved to Germany and the fort assumed a new mission – that of supporting combat brigades from the 1st Infantry Division and 1st Armored Division as well as the 937th Engineer Group. In 1999, headquarters of the 24th Infantry Division was activated at the fort and remained until the return of the Big Red One in the summer of 2006.

Following the terrorist attacks of "9-11", Fort Riley Soldiers were deployed to Southwest Asia as part of Operation Iraqi and later, Enduring, Freedom.

As you walk this route, you will experience the rich architectural styles that set Fort Riley apart from most Army installations. The buildings are of native limestone and attest to the fort's

permanence and service to the nation. We hope your tour will be enjoyable as well as educational.

WALKING TOUR ROUTE AND COMMENTARY

As you begin your walk, please remember to obey pedestrian safety rules and watch for traffic.

Your walking tour of historic Main Post begins at the front door of the U.S. Cavalry Museum. This building was constructed in 1854 and used for nearly thirty years as the Post Hospital. In 1889, as Fort Riley's mission changed from a frontier to a school post, this building was remodeled and became post headquarters. At that time, a new front entrance and bell tower were added.

Notice the change in architectural style from the smooth "pasture" cut limestone indicative of the fort's initial construction in the 1850's to the rough, "quarry faced" stone cut indicative of construction between 1885 and 1912. This building continued as headquarters until 1948. In 1957 it became the home of the Fort Riley Museum, which became the U.S. Cavalry Museum five years later. Today it's nearly 10,000 square feet of exhibit space displays examples of the American horse soldier's material culture – from the Revolutionary War to 1950 when the cavalry branch ceased to exist.

As you face the street in front of the Cavalry Museum, you will notice a limestone obelisk to your left. This monument commemorates the service of Major Edmund Ogden who came to Fort Riley shortly after its establishment and supervised the initial construction. Ogden along with fifty-six other civilians and soldiers, died in a cholera epidemic during the first days of July 1855. The city of Ogden, located at the eastern edge of the reservation, is named in his honor. Another monument to Ogden, erected in 1923, overlooks the post cemetery. The original monument to Major Ogden, erected at the quarry site on a hill overlooking Fort Riley, was destroyed in the late 19th century by cattle using it as a rubbing post.

Beyond the Ogden Monument is a horse statue, which was placed on the museum grounds in the fall of 1997. The statue is dedicated to the horses and mules, which perished during the Civil War. The horse figure is three-quarter sized and was commissioned by Paul Mellon who served at Fort Riley during World War II.

To your right is Building 203, which, was completed in 1889 and originally was used as the post guardhouse. After World War I, the building became the print plant for the Cavalry School. In 1941, the building was converted for use as post office and since the late 1970s has been the Museum annex for exhibits workshop and to house the museum's collections.

Begin walking down the sidewalk those angles from the Ogden Monument towards the street – which is known as Sheridan Avenue. Mid-way down this sidewalk are two monuments associated with the 9th Armored Division. This unit was activated on the Cavalry Parade Field in the spring of 1942. The 2d and 13th Cavalry Regiments formed part of this Division, which is remembered for securing the Remagen Bridge in World War II.

As you stand in front of the monuments look to your left. You will see Wainwright Hall¹. This building was constructed in 1889 as a barracks for cavalry troops assigned to Fort Riley. Later it became the academic building for the Cavalry School. During World War II, the building was partially destroyed by fire and rebuilt as you see it today.

Proceed down the sidewalk to Sheridan Avenue and cross this street. Sheridan Avenue is named for General Philip Sheridan, a famous cavalry general during and after the Civil War who served as General of the Army from 1883 until 1888. He advocated established of a school to train cavalry officers and enlisted soldiers. Under his leadership Fort Riley was selected to serve as the home of the Cavalry and Light Artillery School.

In crossing the street, you may have noticed a traffic island on your right. Within this island is a granite headstone, which was erected in 1942 as a monument to the officers and men of the 26th Cavalry Regiment to commemorate their sacrifice and heroism in battling the Japanese in the Philippine Islands during the early days of World War II.

The buildings along this street include bachelor officers' quarters in Arnold Hall and quarters for field grade officers (major or above) and senior non-commissioned officers'. The quarters with the white picket fence is known as Custer House. This is one of four buildings surviving from the initial construction of post. In the 1940s, papers were found in this building signed by Lieutenant Colonel George Armstrong Custer and led people to believe he lived there. In the early 1970s, when the building was turned over to the Museum, researchers discovered Custer actually lived in Quarters 21 (which is the second house beyond the intersection of Sheridan Avenue and Forsyth Avenue). The present building was constructed in 1941 after a fire destroyed the original 1858 era dwelling.

Custer House is the last set of officers' quarters dating from the fort's establishment and is largely unchanged from its original design. Today, they are furnished with period furniture from the period between 1880 and 1890, providing a glimpse of Army life over a century ago. The house is open daily between Memorial Day and Labor Day or by appointment for groups through the Fort Riley Public Affairs Office.

In front of the Custer House is the Cavalry Parade Field. Around this area, the original fort was established. From the 1850s until the late 1880s, six sets of officer's quarters faced one another across this expanse. On opposite ends were three sets of barracks. In 1885, the fort's layout was changed to what you see today in order to prepare for the Cavalry and Light Artillery School. Over the next twenty-five years, additional quarters and support buildings were constructed while some of the older post was demolished or destroyed by fire. Consequently, the appearance of the Main Post area remains largely unchanged from about 1910 to 1915.

From the Custer House, continue down the sidewalk to the corner of Sheridan and Forsyth Avenues. At this intersection, you will see the Old Trooper Monument. This statue was erected in the 1960s as a tribute to the United States Cavalry. It is modeled after the drawing "Old Bill", the Cavalry soldier drawn by famous western artist, Fredrick Remington. This sketch is displayed on the Cavalry Museum's Art Gallery. At the foot of the monument is the grave of "Chief", who died in 1968. He was the last Cavalry horse to be carried on Army rolls. He is

¹ The building is named for General Jonathan Wainwright who served as the assistant commandant of the Cavalry School during the 1930s.

interned upright in a special casket constructed by the Post Engineers that allowed him to be buried in this manner.

From the Old Trooper Monument, continue down Sheridan Avenue past Quarters 21 and 19. The west side of Quarters 21 is where George and Libbie Custer actually set-up housekeeping during their stay at Fort Riley in 1866-1867. Between 1891 and the late 1920s the quarters were used as an officers' club. They were converted to officers' quarters following a fire in the 1930s. Quarters 19 served as the home to the Post Veterinarian---a very important position on the Cavalry post.

As you continue down Sheridan Avenue, note a small building across the street to your left. This is the Trolley Station, which was used as baggage storage and waiting area for soldiers and families riding the inter-city trolley between Junction City and Fort Riley from 1901 until 1907. In 1907 the tracks were moved closer to Waters Hall and the line extended out to approximately Riley Place on Huebner Road. In 1914, the line was joined with one coming from Manhattan. During World War I the junction City-Manhattan Trolley did a booming business. After the war, the service declined and in 1934 the line ceased operation. Remnants of the trolley line roadbed may be seen in this area near Waters Hall and along Huebner Road. The Trolley Station was restored in 1989 and made it appear as it did in the early 1900s.

The large building south of the Trolley Station is Polk Hall². Known in its early years as West Riding Hall, this building was completed in 1908 and served until after World War II as one of two indoor riding halls.

As you continue down the sidewalk, the next building (across the street on your left) is Waters Hall, built in 1888 by Moses Waters, the last post sutler at Fort Riley. The sutler provided services and products similar to what the post ex-change and commissary do today. The store served as a gathering place for personnel to shop or visit over a cool drink. From 1897 to 1907 it served as Fort Riley's first Post Exchange (PX) and was then converted to bachelor officers' quarters. In 1930, it became officer housing and today is used as guest housing for soldiers and families staying overnight.

At the intersection, proceed to your left as you turn down Huebner Road toward the Post Cemetery. Huebner was the main highway through post (Huebner Road³), then known as the Gold Belt Highway. As you walk towards a stone fenced enclosed area, notice the red brick buildings on the left. These were constructed in the 1880s and 1930s as quarters for Non-commissioned officers. They are unique because this was the Army's earliest effort at providing housing for married enlisted personnel. Brick Row, which introduced brick as a building material to the post, is a living museum of the style of Army married enlisted housing for the fifty years between 1889 and 1939. In the 1890s, when construction was underway in this area,

² This building was named in honor of General James H. Polk who became the Chief of Tactics at the Ground General School, Fort Riley following World War II.

³ Huebner Road is named in honor of native Kansan, General Clarence Huebner. He served with the 1st Infantry Division during World War I and commanded the Division from August 1943 until January 1945.

the lost grave of Susan Fox----who died in the 1855 cholera epidemic----was discovered. At the time of her death, she was betrothed to John Price, who later became a prominent citizen of Junction City.

Upon arriving at the stone fenced area, climb the steps to the viewing platform. This area was used in the early days of the fort as the hay storage area for Cavalry and artillery horses. In the 1950s, buffalo were brought to Fort Riley and resided in this pen. Today, the area is used as a dog park.

Walking up the hill, you will arrive at the Ogden Monument⁴ erected in the early 1920s. Similar to the one seen earlier in front of the Cavalry Museum, the monument was moved to this location in 1923. The hilltop overlooks the Main Post and provides an interesting view. Through the trees you are able to see the bell tower of the Cavalry Museum, West Riding Hall (Polk Hall), as well as other buildings. The high ground to your rear is the original quarry site of the post and the first Ogden monument.

Beyond the Ogden Monument is the Post Cemetery. In the area nearest the Ogden Monument are mass graves of persons who died in two cholera epidemics, which struck the post in 1855 and 1867. This area is the oldest part of the cemetery. You will also find graves of three Congressional Medal of Honor recipients, Confederate Soldiers imprisoned here in 1862 as well as German and Italian prisoners of war from World War II. The post cemetery is indeed a peaceful setting and provides an opportunity to reflect upon service and sacrifice of Soldiers who have served and lived on Fort Riley.

Heading back up Huebner Road, you will pass Quarters 150 on your left. These quarters were constructed in 1910 and designated for use as housing for non-commissioned officers and later, warrant officers. They were constructed of wood and covered with stucco. This building is the only one on post demonstrating the “craftsmen” architectural style, which includes exposed, sawed rafter ends.

Cross the street and proceed down the sidewalk on your left. This sidewalk follows part of the trolley line. Across the street is Stone Court. Most of these quarters were constructed during the late 1930s and were built for non-commissioned officers and their families. From a historical standpoint, it is unfortunate their constructions required the demolition of Quarters 124. Those quarters were wood dwellings with outbuildings built in 1856 by the post sutler. It was the site of one of Fort Riley’s ghost stories. The “ghost” appeared in the late 1870s and was allegedly a young woman who had drowned herself in a well behind the house. Eventually a catholic priest from Junction City performed an exorcism. As you continue down the sidewalk, notice another set of quarters located across the street. This is Quarters 123 another of the original structures dating back to the founding of the post. This building dates to 1855 and was originally used as the home for the post chaplain. In this building, in early November of that year, court martial testimony was given relating to a doctor abandoning his post during the cholera epidemic of the previous summer. Two of the officers serving on that board were Colonel’s Robert E. Lee and Joseph Johnston.

⁴ Major Edmund Ogden was the quartermaster officer who supervised the early construction of Fort Riley. In August 1855, Ogden died as a result of cholera epidemic. The town of Ogden, located at the east entrance to the fort, is named for him.

Adjacent to Quarters 123 is Scott Place. This area includes three sets of buildings. The first building is Quarters 118, constructed in 1934. Quarters 114 and 110 were built in 1908 and 1910. The architectural style of these quarters resembles English apartment flats. Originally built as quarters for student officers, today they are family quarters for officers. They are still known as the “student flats”. Distinguishing features of these buildings include unique porch railings and front bay windows.

Turn right onto Barry Avenue. This street was named for Chaplain Thomas W. Barry who served as Post Chaplain at Fort Riley in the 1890s and was instrumental in constructing a new chapel. Carr Hall⁵ is located across the street and is headquarters today for the post housing authority and overnight guest quarters. To your right is the Main Post Chapel whose cornerstone was laid on July 4, 1897. The building was dedicated in January 1898. The smaller building to the back is St. Mary’s Chapel. This building was completed in 1861 and was used as the post chapel and schoolhouse. It was also used as a storage building for ordnance during the Civil War. Remodeled in 1896, the building was consecrated in 1938 for use as a Catholic Chapel.

On your left are single family residences. Quarters 2 was completed in 1890 while 4 and 5 were built in 1903 and 1904. These quarters consist of approximately 8000 square feet. Jonathan Wainwright and Terry de La Mesa Allen⁶ lived in these quarters in the 1930s. Colonel Guy V. Henry, who later became the last Chief of Cavalry and Colonel George S. Patton, Jr., lived in Quarters #5 during their assignments to Ft. Riley.

Quarters #1, built in 1888, is home to the commander of Fort Riley. Over the years, officers such as James Forsyth⁷ and Malin Craig⁸ have called this residence home. At this point you are at the intersection of Barry Avenue and Forsyth Avenue. At the opposite end of this street is the Old Trooper Monument you passed earlier during your tour.

Most of the quarters located on Forsyth Avenue were constructed between 1887 and 1894 with the last one built in 1903. These quarters are duplexes with approximately 4,000 to 5,000 square feet on each side. They represent two standard designs of officers’ quarters developed at Fort Riley. Captain George Pond, Quartermaster in charge of construction of the “new” post between 1885 and 1891, oversaw the implementation of these designs. This architectural style greatly influenced later construction at other Army posts in this period. For this reason, Fort Riley’s Main Post area has been designated a historic district.

Through the decades, many Army officers and their families have moved in and out of these quarters. Some of the historical figures who have resided on Forsyth have included Lieutenant Colonel Jonathan Wainwright (17-B Forsyth) and Major H.H. Arnold who was the driving force behind creation of the air force (13 Forsyth).

You are now ready to proceed down the street to the right of the Quarters 1 (as you are facing the structure). This is Godfrey Avenue, named in honor of Colonel Edward Godfrey who commanded the Cavalry and Light Artillery School between 1905 and 1907. To the right is

⁵ This building is named for Colonel Camillo C.C. Carr who commanded the post between 1901 and 1903.

⁶ Terry do la Mesa Allen was commissioned as a cavalry officer upon his graduation from West Point in 1912. During World War II he commanded the 1st Infantry Division during campaigns in North Africa and Italy.

⁷ James Forsyth’s military career began before the Civil War. He was the first commandant of the Cavalry and Light Artillery School and commanded the 7th Cavalry during the Pine Ridge Campaign 1890.

⁸ Malin Craig graduated from West Point in 1898. His forty-year military career included service in the Spanish-American War, Boxer Rebellion in China, the Punitive Expedition and World War I. During the 1920s he served as Chief of Cavalry.

Sturgis Stadium. This field was named for the Sturgis family, which boasted three generations of Army officers⁹. The field was originally used as a training area for the 1936 U.S. Olympic Equestrian Team. In more recent years, it has been turned into a football field where spirited contests are held each November to determine the unit championship. A monument at the corner provides information about the Sturgis family.

At the intersection of Morris Avenue and Godfrey is Tuttle Park. This area is named for Colonel Hiram Tuttle who served at Fort Riley during the 1930s and trained Army officers and horses, which completed in the 1932 and 1936 Olympic Games. The quarters at the corner of Godfrey and Holbrook (86) were completed in 1909.

Turn left on Holbrook and follow the sidewalk towards Huebner Road. As you reach Huebner Road, turn right, you will notice a rock wall and sets of red brick style buildings on your right. These quarters are of the Georgian Revival colonial architectural style. They were constructed in the late 1920s and 1930s to further accommodate officers and their families attending the Cavalry School. To the left you will see Summerall Hall¹⁰. Constructed in 1889, this building originally served as the post hospital until after World War II. Today, the building is the headquarters for Fort Riley behind the Keith L. Ware parade field. At the base of the flagpole is a pair of monuments dedicating the parade field to MG Ware, and across the field is a meditation point dedicated to those who have served.

Continue past the rock wall and Summerall Hall and turn right on Carpenter Avenue. The quarters located on this street are home to company grade officers (Lieutenants and Captains) and warrant officers. These buildings were constructed during the 1930s as part of an Army-wide effort to provide adequate housing for the increasing numbers of married soldiers. The Works Progress Administration (WPA) and the Army funded this construction. You may note the quarters are grouped around a “commons” area, which fosters a sense of community. This is also evidenced as you turn right onto Godfrey Avenue and pass Godfrey Court, which is to your left. Note Quarters 426 and 425 are of limestone, thus indicating their construction occurred during an earlier period.

Continue down Carpenter Avenue, turning right on Godfrey Avenue. Following this street, you will enter a large open area known as the Artillery Parade Field and Schofield Circle. This area was built up between the late 1880s and the first decade of the 20th century for artillery officers and enlisted personnel assigned to the school. The layout of Schofield Circle is interesting; at the top of the hill stands what were originally the commanding officer’s quarters of the Artillery sub-post. The quarters of his subordinate officers extend to form a horseshoe configuration. Beyond Godfrey Avenue (the road built in the 1930s which intersects the parade field) are barracks to the left and right and administrative buildings to the front.

You may want to walk the semi-circle, which, fronts the houses on Schofield. At the top of the incline is Quarters 100, which is similar in design to Quarters 1 located back on Barry Avenue. There is a small artillery park in front of this set of quarters.

Across the artillery parade field are buildings used for classrooms and barracks during the Cavalry School days. Today they are used for as barracks and offices.

⁹ Member of the Sturgis family who served in the Army included Brevet Major General Samuel D. Sturgis during the Civil War; Major General Samuel D. Sturgis II who commanded the 37th Division during World War I and Lieutenant General Samuel D. Sturgis III. The latter member of this family became the Chief, Corps of Engineers before retiring from active duty in 1956. The stadium was named in the family’s honor in 1964.

¹⁰ Named for General Charles Summerall, who was an early commander of the 1st Infantry Division in World War I and later served as Chief of Staff of the Army.

As you reach the intersection of Schofield Circle and Godfrey, walk across the street and down the sidewalk. To your right are four buildings. The first building 400, is Randolph Hall named for Colonel Wallace Randolph who commanded the artillery post from 1892 until 1898. The building was completed in 1907 and converted to officers' quarters in 1926. You might note the small building on the left of Building 400, which is one of the brick garages, built during the 1920s and 1930s to accommodate the growing use of automobiles. The next building 402 was built in 1903 for use as enlisted barracks. Looking across the Artillery Parade Field, you can see "sister" sets of barracks.

Next is Custer Hall (403), named for George Armstrong Custer. This building was completed in 1889 and served as the artillery administration building. Note the parapet, which further distinguishes the building. Next to this is building 404, completed in 1902, which was also designed for use as a barracks.

At this point, you can see four buildings across the street. The street is named Pershing Court. Note there are four buildings along this street. They are buildings 405, 406, 407, and 408. Building 405, built in 1910, was used for a variety of purposes over the years to include Artillery Post PX, NCO Club, library, and post office substation. The building next to this is 406, built in 1909 and used as barracks for the Artillery band. In 1927, the building was converted to a grade school and library. The next two buildings from the corner--407 and 408--were built in 1907 and 1909 respectively. Both were used as barracks. Today, they are used as offices for Public Works.

Proceed across Pershing Court and cross the sidewalk to your right. You will note a building on your left, which is designated as 305. This structure was built in 1889 and used as the steam plant for the post. Underground tubes were used to conduct heat to various buildings on Main Post. This system continued in use until 1913. In later years, the building was used as a restaurant, WAAC mess hall during World War II and pastry shop in the early 1950s. Today the building is used for administrative purposes.

Proceed across the street to Arnold Avenue¹¹ and walk up the street to your right. You will see on your right side the Red Cross Building, built in the early days of World War II. This building was built by the Red Cross and for many years was used as the quarters for its director.

The stone building next to it is Quarters 28, also known as Bacon Hall¹². This building was originally constructed in 1889 for use as a dispensary. Today it is used as VIP guest housing. The next building, Arnold Hall¹³, was built in 1909 and has always been used as quarters for bachelor officers assigned to Fort Riley. The building was renovated in the 1990s. One of the suites was restored as authentically as possible to its original state---to include a claw foot bathtub. Each of the suites includes a working fireplace.

You have completed your walking tour of Main Post and are now across the way from the U.S. Cavalry Museum. We hope you have enjoyed the walk and learned a little more about Historic Fort Riley.

¹¹ Named for General Abraham K. Arnold who commanded Fort Riley from 1895 to 1898.

¹² The building was named for LTC John Bacon who served at Fort Riley with the 7th Cavalry in the 1880s.

¹³ Named for Brigadier General Abraham Arnold who succeeded Colonel James Forsyth as Commandant of the Cavalry and Light Artillery School 1895.

FORT RILEY MUSEUMS

U.S. Cavalry Museum, Bldg. 205
*(Currently closed for renovations. Expected
Reopening is Spring/Summer 2023)*

Monday – Saturday 0900-1630
Sunday Noon-1630

1st Infantry Division Museum, Bldg. 207
*(Currently closed for renovations. Expected
Reopening is Spring/Summer 2023)*

Monday - Saturday 1000-1600
Sunday Noon-1600

Custer House, Quarters 24A
Memorial Day – Labor Day
Monday – Saturday 1000-1600
Sunday 1300-1600
By Appointment – 239-2737

Custer's Cottage
(Gift Shop, located in U.S. Cavalry Museum)
Monday-Friday 1000-1400
Saturday 1100-1500
Sunday Closed