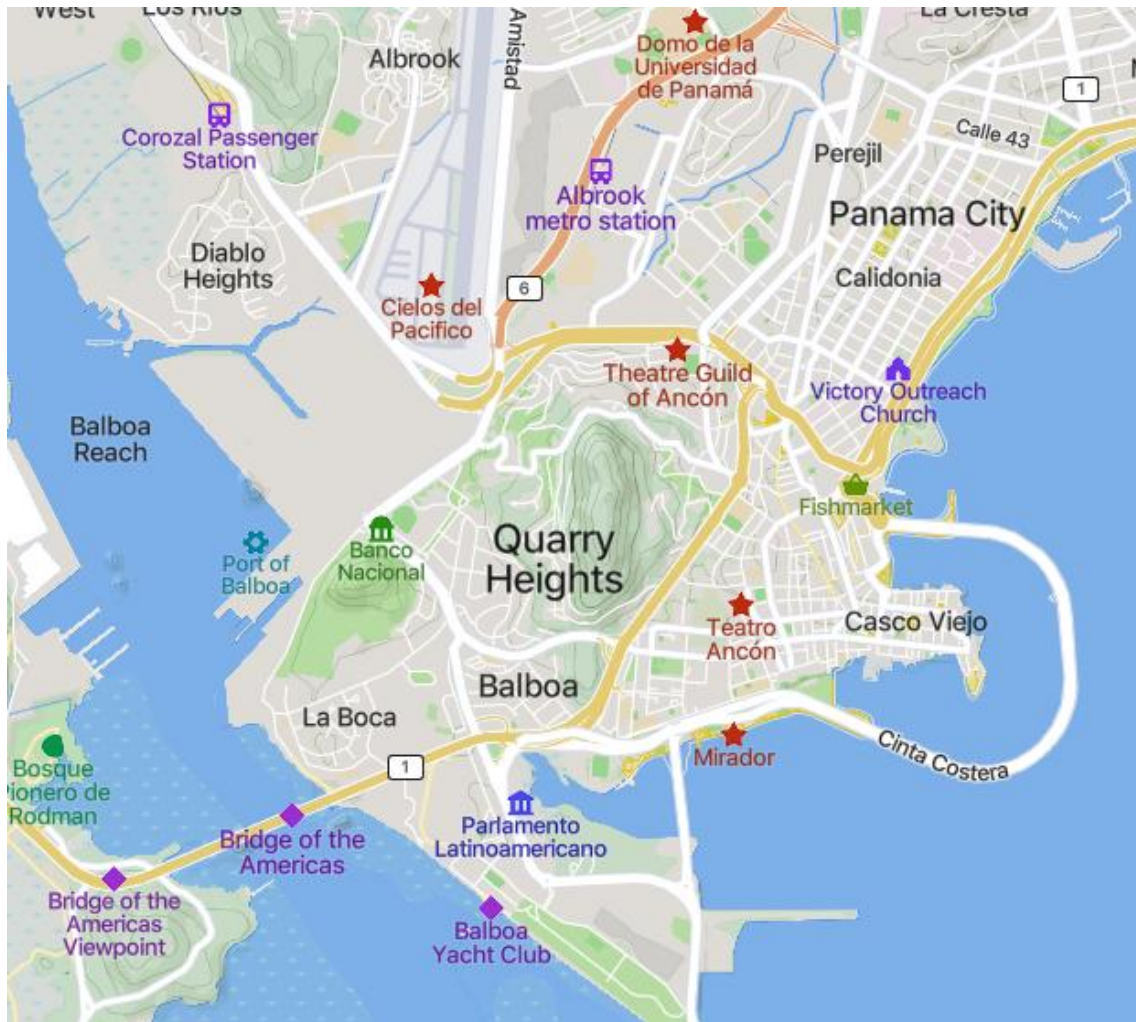


## PANAMA IN WORLD WAR 2

### QUARRY HEIGHTS

What was to become the Quarry Heights Military Reservation was established on the western side of Ancón Hill (aka Mount Ancón or, to locals, *Cerro Ancón*), adjacent to Balboa (the “capital” of the Canal Zone) and looming over Panama City, from 1903, accommodating the first US troops – a party of US Marines protecting the railroad and US Government property.<sup>1</sup> Rising 654 feet (199 meters) above sea level, Ancón Hill is a prominent feature at the Pacific end of the Canal (and is now includes a nature reserve, with a huge Panamanian flag at its peak, visible from throughout the city).



<sup>1</sup> For a full history of Quarry Heights, see [http://william\\_h\\_ormsbee.tripod.com/gh\\_legacy\\_report.htm](http://william_h_ormsbee.tripod.com/gh_legacy_report.htm)

The area owed its name to the Isthmian Canal Commission (which oversaw Canal construction) quarrying rock from 1909 for use in the construction of the Pedro Miguel and Miraflores locks. Called "Quarry Heights" by locals (*Altos de la Cantera*), the quarry closed after just five years and Canal officials transferred the area to the US Army for use as a command post. Before being closed on 31 October 1914, the Ancón quarry had produced 3,245,000 cubic yards (nearly 2.5 million cubic metres) of rock.

Original plans in 1913 had been for barracks and housing for the US Marines, but before this installation was begun the Marines had been dispatched to Mexico<sup>2</sup> and the project was abandoned in early 1914. 1,400 US Marines, "*who arrived during the insurrection of 1903, charged with keeping the railroad open to traffic and protecting the property of the United States Government*", had been accommodated at the site.<sup>3</sup>

By early 1915, the site had been selected as the location for the headquarters of the newly organised US Army Forces in the Canal Zone. Two terraces created during the use of *Cerro Ancón* as a quarry, would be used as the "*site of the military high command in Panama*" from 1915.<sup>4</sup>

Proximity to The Panama Canal headquarters building at the foot of the hill, the company towns of Balboa and Ancón, as well as Panama City, made the location perfect for the Army command. However, as the site was seen as being very small, it was assumed the Quarry Heights headquarters would only be temporary, and a more expansive site would be selected in the future.

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<sup>2</sup> For use in the capture and garrisoning of Veracruz. See <https://www.history.navy.mil/browse-by-topic/wars-conflicts-and-operations/early-20th-century-conflicts/veracruz-1914.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.laestrella.com.pa/panama/nacional/quarry-heights-historia-urbana-militar-HLLE460430>

<sup>4</sup> *The Quarry Heights Military Reservation in the Republic of Panama*, a report prepared by the US Army Corps of Engineers, 1996.



Quarry Heights in 1918

As Quarry Heights was considered a temporary post, the buildings that were built were also of temporary character. A report prepared by the US Corps of Engineers in 1996 indicated that, although it was not certain, many of the buildings initially constructed at this site resembled those that were located in construction-era townships such as Empire and Culebra – which were abandoned after the completion of the Canal – which were dismantled, moved and rebuilt for use in this military post. Indeed, the Governor's house was relocated in this way, moving from Culebra to Balboa, at the foot of *Cerro Ancón*. Property records also indicate that three four-family sets of Non-Commissioned Officers' quarters were moved to Quarry Heights from the town of Empire in September 1920. The larger homes of the higher-ranking Canal officials would naturally have become quarters for the higher-ranking officers of the Army.<sup>5</sup> Sources do say that *"the frame quarters originally built at the construction camps of Empire and Culebra for 'run of the job' housing for higher grade construction officials and officers of the early 'Guard' forces were knocked down and moved to Quarry Heights"*.<sup>6</sup>

By the mid-1930s, however, all the relocated buildings except for those in Quarry Heights and the official residence of the administrator of the Panama Canal Commission – the former official residence of the Governor – had been demolished and replaced with modern buildings.<sup>7</sup>

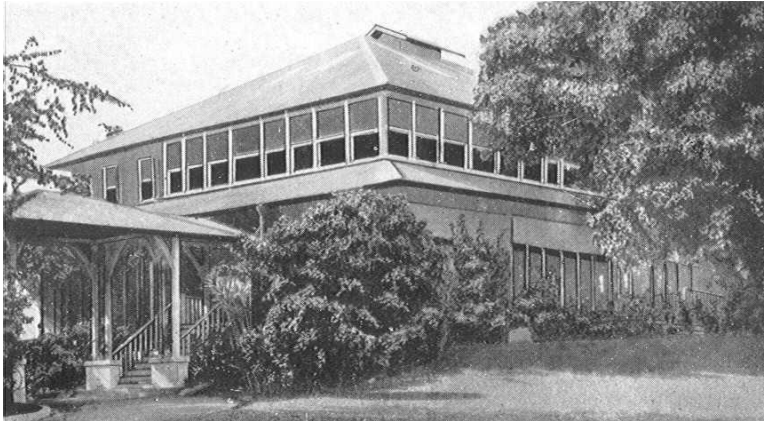
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<sup>5</sup> <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA319357.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA319357.pdf>

The 1996 Corps of Engineers report on Quarry Heights contains much detail about the establishing and construction of the post, especially in the early days.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.laestrella.com.pa/panama/nacional/quarry-heights-historia-urbana-militar-HLLE460430>



*Commanding General's house  
at Quarry Heights in 1918*

A consolidated command called United States Troops, Panama Canal Zone, had been put into place on 6 January 1915, as part of the Eastern Department (i.e. the Army command responsible for the east coast of the Continental US). Initially located at Ancón, the headquarters were moved to Quarry Heights in 1916. On 1 July 1917, the separate Panama Canal Department of the US Army<sup>8</sup> was established as the Army command for the Canal Zone.<sup>9</sup>

Formally established as a military installation on 22 December 1919<sup>10</sup>, the headquarters post possessed a commanding 360-degree view encompassing the Pacific approach to the Canal entrance. However, until 1920, Quarry Heights was also used for a variety of other roles.

As World War 1 had demonstrated the importance of the Canal, the Panama Canal Commission transferred an additional 100 acres (40.5 hectares) to the Quarry Heights Military Reservation to complete construction of the headquarters site.

During the six-year period ending in 1920, the Army upgraded Quarry Heights to make it suitable for use as the headquarters of the ranking US military commander in Panama. During that time, the Commanding General and his staff operated from an Isthmian Canal Commission building (later used as the US District Court House) in adjacent Ancón town site. In April 1920, the command headquarters of the new

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<sup>8</sup> "Department" was a soon to be obsolete name for an Army command, but retained for use in the case of Panama, Puerto Rico and Hawaii.

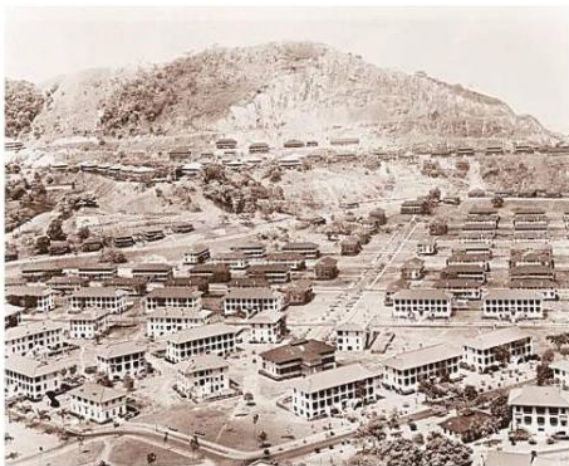
<sup>9</sup> <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA319357.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> Executive Order No. 3202.

Panama Canal Department was moved from Ancón to Quarry Heights.<sup>11</sup> Expansion in 1921<sup>12</sup> added the summit of Ancón Hill to the military reservation, thus providing a commanding view of the town of Balboa and the Canal from the Pacific terminus up to the Miraflores Locks several miles inland.<sup>13</sup>

Hence, on 1 April 1920, the Commanding General established his headquarters at Quarry Heights<sup>14</sup>, which retained the role for over 75 years. During that time, it served as the site of headquarters for –

- Commander (aka Commanding General), US Army Panama Canal Department 1920-41;
- Commander, US Army Caribbean Defense Command 1941-47;
- Commander-in-Chief, US Caribbean Command 1947-63; and
- Commander-in-Chief, US Southern Command 1963-1998.<sup>15</sup>



*Quarry Heights viewed c.1921*

Among the earliest military units assigned to Quarry Heights was Military Police Company, Company A. Organised in May 1918, it was redesignated in July 1921 as Headquarters, Military Police Company and considered as Special Troops of the Panama Canal Division.<sup>16</sup> Military Police units would continue to be assigned to the post, right up until the 1980s.

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<sup>11</sup> [http://william\\_h\\_ormsbee.tripod.com/qh\\_history\\_p01.htm/contact\\_who.htm](http://william_h_ormsbee.tripod.com/qh_history_p01.htm/contact_who.htm)

<sup>12</sup> Executive Order No. 3386 of 21 January 1921.

<sup>13</sup> <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA319357.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/combat-studies-institute/csi-books/OrderofBattle1.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> [http://william\\_h\\_ormsbee.tripod.com/qh\\_legacy\\_report.htm](http://william_h_ormsbee.tripod.com/qh_legacy_report.htm)

<sup>16</sup> Organised in 1921 and active until 1932 as the operational unit of Army troops in the Canal Zone (excluding Coast Artillery Corps).

The Headquarters, Panama Coast Artillery Defenses transferred from Fort Amador to Quarry Heights.

Until 2 March 1931, the Post of Quarry Heights was apart from Headquarters, Panama Canal Department. They were then consolidated until 26 January 1938, when the Post of Quarry Heights was re-established, and the Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, Post of Quarry Heights, was established.<sup>17</sup>



*Quarry Heights in the 1930s*

Until 1932, the Panama Canal Division, comprising various regiments, was the major ground force for the defence of the Canal Zone. It was organised in June 1921, and activated with its headquarters at Quarry Heights on 3 July, but in 1932 the Army inactivated the division, keeping its Tables of Organization on file until 1938 should the need arise to reactivate it. It never did, and the unit was formally disbanded that year. In any event, the division headquarters had been moved on a permanent change of station to Fort Amador in October 1921.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA319357.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> On 7 May 1931, Major General Preston Brown, the Department commander, recommended to the War Department that the Panama Canal Division and Panama Coast Artillery District be discontinued, and be replaced by two “groups”, which would form integrated commands combining the units of the inactivated division and the existing coast artillery harbour defence headquarters. These two commands would be responsible for the defence of the Atlantic and Pacific areas. This recommended reorganisation was tested during department manoeuvres in early 1932, then approved by the War Department on 17 March 1932. The reorganisation was made permanent on 15 April 1932. <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/combat-studies-institute/csi-books/OrderofBattle1.pdf>

Troop strength at Quarry Heights continued to grow throughout the 1930s - from 37 officers and 205 enlisted men in December 1934, to 31 officers and 442 enlisted men by December 1939. Construction expanded with the increase in troop numbers.<sup>19</sup>



*Photographic copy of photograph from Panama Birdseye presented to The Panama Canal by Major General Sturgis in 1938. It shows an aerial view of Ancón Hill and Quarry Heights.*

In existence from 1941 to 1947, the Caribbean Defense Command (CDC) was tasked with protecting the Panama Canal, the Canal Zone, and all its access points, as well as defending the region from Axis aggression and setting up a series of US bases throughout the Caribbean from which to project US military power after World War 2. Combining the Panama Canal and Puerto Rico Departments, its headquarters were at Quarry Heights. The CDC was initially set up as a purely Army organisation, with coordination with Navy operations being by "mutual cooperation", and with a separate command, the Caribbean Air Force (the air forces also coming under the Army at the time) established for air defence about the same time.<sup>20</sup> However, the CDC was to become the forerunner of similar theatre-wide commands elsewhere.<sup>21</sup>

The CDC was activated on 8 May 1941, and General Orders No. 8, issued 29 May 1941, defined the Command as consisting of the "islands in or bordering the *Caribbean Sea*,

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<sup>19</sup> <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA319357.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA319357.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> In the wake of the Pearl Harbor attack, President Roosevelt placed the Army in charge of the Panama sector, and the Navy in charge of the more distant Caribbean Coastal Frontier on, 12 December. The Commanding General of the Panama Canal Department, and the CDC, General Andrews thus became commander of both the Army and Navy on 18 December 1941.

*the Guianas, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador and the countries of Central America (except Mexico)".* The same announcement created three sectors to be known as the Trinidad Sector, the Puerto Rican Sector, and the Panama Sector.

Quarry Heights also housed one of five Army signal detachments (the others being in San Francisco, Texas, Hawaii and the Philippines) providing radio intercepts.<sup>22</sup>



On 31 October 1947, the CDC was formally renamed the United States Caribbean Command, and was reorganised with new goals and responsibilities, having Army, Navy, and US Air Force (USAF) components.<sup>23</sup> On 15 November 1947, the Panama Canal Department became the US Army Caribbean. Both the Caribbean Command and US Army Caribbean continued to have their headquarters at Quarry Heights, at least until the Army command transferred to Amador.<sup>24</sup>

However, the eventual successor to the wartime CDC, following the Caribbean Command<sup>25</sup>, would be US Southern Command, which was established in 1963.

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<sup>22</sup> In January 1939, all six detachments were consolidated into the 2<sup>nd</sup> Signal Service Battalion.  
<https://www.nsa.gov/about/cryptologic-heritage/center-cryptologic-history/pearl-harbor-review/sis/>

<sup>23</sup> The USAF having become a separate body from the Army in 1947.

<sup>24</sup> Caribbean Command was initially tasked with responsibilities over the waterways and access points to the Panama Canal as well as all military forces throughout the region. However, its area of responsibility (AOR) was steadily reduced so that, by 1963, it did not have any actual role in the Caribbean at all.

<sup>25</sup> Caribbean Command was initially tasked with responsibilities over the waterways and access points to the Panama Canal as well as all military forces throughout the region. However, its area of responsibility (AOR) was steadily reduced so that, by 1963, it did not have any actual role in the Caribbean at all.

For its early existence, US Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) was also headquartered in the former CDC headquarters at Quarry Heights, and only moved to Miami in 1997 in anticipation of the handover of the Panama Canal and Canal Zone back to Panama at the end of 1999.<sup>26</sup> The Army component of Southern Command was the United States Army Forces Southern Command, later the United States Army South (USARSO).<sup>27</sup>



*Officers' Quarters on Parkinson Lane, Quarry Heights*

In March 1940, plans were approved for a bombproof, reinforced concrete structure *“for use in case of emergency and vital to the security of important data”*, and this command post structure, the Joint Operations Tunnel, 200 feet (61 metres) under Ancón Hill, was completed in January 1942 at a cost of \$400,000.<sup>28</sup> The entrance was cut into the solid rock face of the old Ancón Quarry, and the tunnel was built using reinforced concrete. It featured a 269-feet by 52-feet (82 x 15.8 meters) main building and a 302-feet by 7½-feet (92 x 2.3 meters) tunnel. The facility was later used as a secure intelligence, communications, and joint operations command post centre for the unified command until 1997.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> <https://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3672&context=etd>

<sup>27</sup> <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA319357.pdf>

<sup>28</sup> It continued in use postwar, as command headquarters, including for US Southern Command through to 1998 [http://william\\_h\\_ormsbee.tripod.com/gh\\_legacy\\_report.htm](http://william_h_ormsbee.tripod.com/gh_legacy_report.htm) and <https://ufdc.ufl.edu/AA00022175/00001/pageturner#page/35>

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.abovetopsecret.com/forum/thread110919/pg1>

## EL TÚNEL DEL CERRO ÁNCON



*A 2018 photograph of the tunnel interior*

By 1940, troops at Quarry Heights, as in other posts, were housed in two-story wooden barracks with normal capacity of 25 to 100 men. A fresh construction programme had been approved, as part of the general expansion and improvement of Canal Zone defences, but work did not start until Autumn 1940. This included additional barracks for the housing of ground troops at Quarry Heights.

Perhaps slightly incongruously, Quarry Heights was also home to one of the Girl Scouts “Little Houses”.<sup>30</sup>



*Front entrance to the underground control centre and (on the right) in 2010*



*Lt General Matthew Ridgeway was Commander of US Caribbean Command 1948-49 (he would go on to replace MacArthur as commander of UN forces during the Korean War) with Vice-Admiral Carranza of the Argentinian Navy at Quarry Heights in 1948.*

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<sup>30</sup> Both Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts were present in the Canal Zone. However, as with much else in the Zone, the Boy Scouts had to have a “colored” equivalent. Numbers of scouts understandably reduced during the war, after most families were evacuated after Pearl Harbor. Incidentally, a street where I live in Panama City is named for Baden-Powell.



*Quarry Heights in 1949*



*Entrance to Quarry Heights in the 1980s*



*The guard house entrance when the location of Southern Command headquarters*

In 1963, the Military Reservation boundaries were extended "*to include contiguous areas retained under Canal Zone licenses and an area along Morgan Avenue adjacent to the reservation, which was required for additional military housing.*" By 1966, seven units of new housing had been constructed along the narrower terrace above the main shelf. At that time, the post contained 50 sets of officer quarters and 33 sets of enlisted quarters.<sup>31</sup>

The Joint Intelligence, Communications, and Operations Secure Command centre for the Unified Command (of Southern Command) remained based at Quarry Heights until 1997.

Following the signing of the Torrijos-Carter treaties in 1977, and from their entry into force on 1 October 1979, the boundaries of the Quarry Heights Military Reserve changed. The area closest to the *Avenida de los Mártires*<sup>32</sup>, which had functioned as a yard for military police vehicles, was transferred to Panama, as well as the top of the hill, where the repetition towers of the radio and television network of the Southern Command were located. The old military police vehicle yard became the area where *Mi Pueblito* was built in the mid-1990s.<sup>33</sup> Two units of housing in Quarry Heights were also transferred to the Republic of Panama on 1 October 1979.<sup>34</sup>

At the time of Operation *Just Cause*, the US invasion in 1989, while the Canal Zone itself had gone, the Canal was still under US administration, with the US Southern Command based at Quarry Heights charged with its security. Its mission at the time, in general terms, was to oversee US military programs and activities in Central and South America<sup>35</sup>, including the defence of the Canal. With the increasing tensions, Southern

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<sup>31</sup> <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA319357.pdf>

<sup>32</sup> Formerly the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Avenue. It was renamed to commemorate the Panamanians killed in clashes in 1964.

<sup>33</sup> *Mi Pueblito* is an attraction containing a sample of the settlements of the main ethnic groups of Panama: <https://turismo.mupa.gob.pa/complexo-turistico-mi-pueblito/>

<sup>34</sup> <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA319357.pdf>

<sup>35</sup> In the lead up to Operation *Just Cause*, the headquarters also had to deal with Operation *Golden Pheasant* in Honduras, with light infantry being sent there to deter a possible invasion by the Sandinista government in Nicaragua.

Command set up crisis action teams which generally operated out of “the Tunnel”, the secure command post inside Ancón Hill.<sup>36</sup>



<sup>36</sup> [https://www.history.army.mil/html/books/just\\_cause/CMH\\_55-1-1\\_Just\\_%20Cause\\_opt.pdf](https://www.history.army.mil/html/books/just_cause/CMH_55-1-1_Just_%20Cause_opt.pdf)

<sup>37</sup> [https://www.history.army.mil/html/books/just\\_cause/CMH\\_55-1-1\\_Just\\_%20Cause\\_opt.pdf](https://www.history.army.mil/html/books/just_cause/CMH_55-1-1_Just_%20Cause_opt.pdf)

Quarry Heights itself was also the target of Panamanian protests, such on 9 January 1988, when hundreds of protestors gathered near an entrance, and were dispersed by military police from Fort Clayton.<sup>38</sup>

The *Comandancia*, the Panama Defense Forces (PDF) headquarters compound was nearby, in south-east Panama City, just 500 yards (457 metres) down the hill from Quarry Heights.<sup>39</sup> It would be a prime target during the operation. Quarry Heights was also important, in the sense that it had to be protected from countermeasures.<sup>40</sup>



*In 1980, this was Robert M Montague Hall, named after the commander of Caribbean Command who had overseen its construction, but died in 1958, just four weeks before the dedication of the building*



During the 1990s, the Southern Command headquarters at Quarry Heights consisted of a Command Group and Headquarters staff. The Command Group was composed of the

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<sup>38</sup> The 9 January is *Día de los Mártires* (Day of the Martyrs) and, as now, commemorates riots in 1964 when at least 22 students (and four US soldiers) were killed.

<sup>39</sup> Following an abortive coup on 3 October 1989, just weeks before the invasion, US troops at Quarry Heights could see rebel soldiers stacking arms and putting their hands above their heads.

<sup>40</sup> [https://www.history.army.mil/html/books/just\\_cause/CMH\\_55-1-1\\_Just\\_%20Cause\\_opt.pdf](https://www.history.army.mil/html/books/just_cause/CMH_55-1-1_Just_%20Cause_opt.pdf)

Commander-in-Chief, his Deputy and Chief of Staff, and selected staff offices that reported directly to them. The Headquarters Staff consisted of six Joint Directorates, ten Special Staff offices, and a Washington Field Office. A detachment from the US Army South's garrison command (the Quarry Heights Detachment) was stationed at Quarry Heights. The Joint Manpower Program for fiscal year 1992 showed there to be 328 officers, 179 enlisted troops, and 198 civilians, giving a total of 705 individuals; of which 153 officers, 103 enlisted and 198 civilians (a total of 454 personnel) were provided by the Army component (US Army South). Quarry Heights included a housing area for upper-echelon officers.

In 1996, in the knowledge that it would be difficult to study the US military structures designed and built specifically for the region after the final US withdrawal in December 1999, the US Corps of Engineers set out to create a lasting record of historic buildings that was necessary for an accurate and complete history of the US armed services in Panama. The Quarry Heights Military Reservation, said to be noted for its architectural significance, was among the first military properties in Panama documented according to the standards of the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS).<sup>41</sup> One such document concentrated on Quarry Heights Bldg. 23, a field-grade officer's quarters.

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<sup>41</sup> <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/hh/>

The HABS documentation of Quarry Heights was part of a five-site study that represents the first detailed architectural record of US military structures in the former Canal Zone. The Quarry Heights report is at <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA319357.pdf>

*The Quarry Heights Military Reservation in the Republic of Panama (Historical Documentation of the Installation and Bldg. 23)* by Susan I Enscoe, Mira D Metzinger, and Julie L Webster (USACERL Technical Manuscript 97/15, US Army Corps of Engineers Construction Engineering Research Laboratories, November 1996).



the Interoceanic Region Authority (ARI)<sup>43</sup>, and the US Army South Commander General. The plans at the time of the handover were for the 66.7 acre (27 hectares) site to be converted into a "sumptuous" diplomatic village, which will house the Foreign Ministry, consulates and embassies of different countries.<sup>44</sup> At the time of the handover, statistics from the Southern Command put the total value of property and equipment at \$150.7 million, of which \$19 million related to housing infrastructure alone.<sup>45</sup>



*Still from a video of the closing ceremony at Quarry Heights*



An entrance to the US Army underground HQ bunker, Quarry Heights; now in the nature reserve on Cerro Anton in Panama City (my photo in 2021) – slowly being overtaken by the jungle, as you can tell from the earlier 2004 photo below

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<sup>43</sup> ARI was created in 1993 to dispose of former US property transferred to Panama following the 1977 treaties. During its 12 years of existence (it was replaced by the Administrative Unit of Reverted Assets or UABR, part of the Ministry of Economy and Finance) it received over 137,000 hectares (338,000 acres) and 13,868 properties including homes, buildings and facilities.

<sup>44</sup> <https://www.panamaamerica.com.pa/nacion/panama-asume-control-de-quarry-heights-74987>

This did not happen, and only Nicaragua opened an embassy there – and this is now at another location in Panama City.

<sup>45</sup> <https://www.panamaamerica.com.pa/nacion/quarry-heights-ya-es-de-panama-74961>

The site was said to include 33 buildings to be handed over, of which eight buildings are four-family apartments and the rest were single-family homes. There was also a restaurant with capacity for 210 people; a post office; barbershop; a 14-room hotel; as well as the underground storage tunnel and a community club.



Still in use is a bunker, inside the hill of *Cerro Ancón*, and reportedly designed to withstand alleged nuclear attacks. It had become the headquarters of the National Security Council, which is an office attached to the Ministry of the Presidency of the Republic of Panama.<sup>46</sup>

One government agency that remains based at Quarry heights is ANCON, the National Association for the Preservation of Nature (*Asociación Nacional para la Conservación de la Naturaleza*), formerly in Building 153 (the Chalet) and now in a new, purpose-built building.

From at least 2003, the possibility of building a cable car and tourist facilities from the top of *Cerro Ancón* were put forward on several occasions – most recently in 2020 – signs against the project remained prominent in 2025.

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<sup>46</sup> In 1999, plans were announced for the tunnel, or part of it, to be used as a communications centre and National Intelligence Center as part of the Strategic Plan of National Security developed by the Panamanian government and announced in December 1999.

[https://www.members.tripod.com/william\\_h\\_ormsbee/qh\\_pan\\_p01.htm](https://www.members.tripod.com/william_h_ormsbee/qh_pan_p01.htm)

In 2010, the administration of President Martinelli announced plans to "return the tunnel installations to an operating condition, to take advantage of the security provided and protecting the lives of the highest figures of the government".

<https://playacommunity.com/panama-articles/coronado-community/3389-presidency-will-fix-quarry-heights-tunnel-buy-bomb-response-robots.html>

One of the arguments against the cable car is that *Cerro Ancón* is a protected area and nature reserve of the District of Panama.<sup>47</sup> Article 3 of this Agreement provided that *"hunting, logging, burning, gathering and destruction of natural resources, as well as any other activity that threatens the proper use of the nature reserve, in accordance with the provisions of Article 2 of this Municipal Decree, is prohibited"*. It was declared a National Historical Heritage Site by Executive Decree<sup>48</sup> in 2003, on the occasion of the celebration of the Centennial of the Republic. In addition, Law No. 21 of 2 July 1997 assigned *Cerro Ancón* the category of urban green area.<sup>49</sup>



*Built on the upper section of Quarry Heights in 1935, this building (aka "the Chalet") later housed headquarters command*



*Part of Mi Pueblito, on the former Military Police area and vehicle park*

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<sup>47</sup> Municipal Agreement No. 157 of July 31, 2001.

<sup>48</sup> Executive Decree No. 104 of October 22, 2003.

<sup>49</sup> <https://burica.wordpress.com/tag/quarry-heights/>



*1968 photo of the barracks which housed Military Police and other enlisted personnel assigned to Quarry Heights. Part of the post that transferred to Panama in 1979, and was later as the site of Mi Pueblito*

Ray Todd

Panamá City

Republic of Panamá

28 January 2025