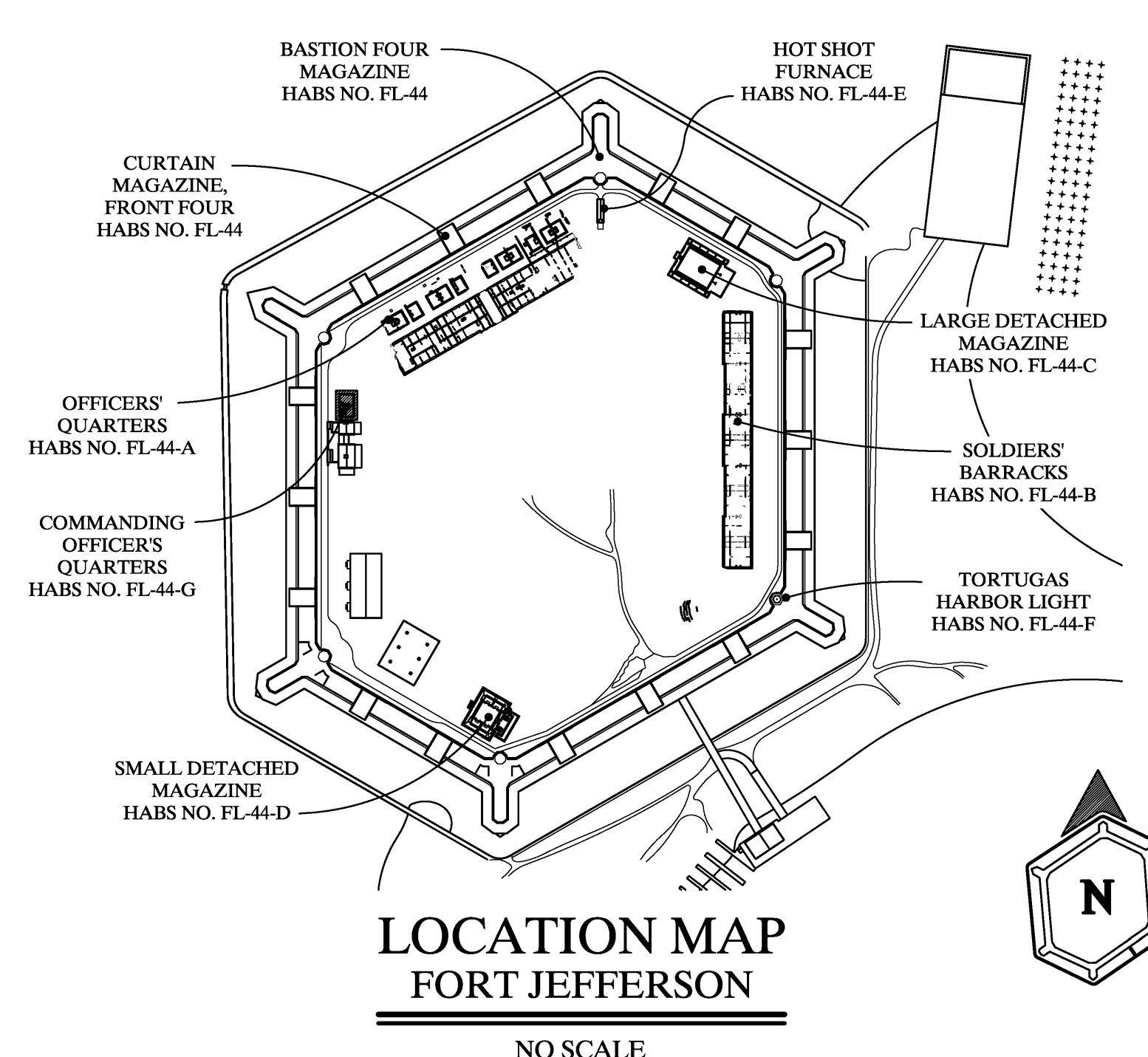


COMMANDING OFFICER'S QUARTERS



The building used as quarters at various times for the Commanding Officers and the Engineers was actually one of three buildings intended as a detached kitchen. The initial plan for Fort Jefferson's construction was to erect temporary wood frame buildings to house the senior members of the corps, including the superintending engineer. However, rather than waste time and effort, it was decided to proceed with the plans for the detached brick kitchens to be used as quarters until separate quarters buildings could be erected. Work began on three detached kitchens as part of the initial phase of construction in 1847, two of which were completed by summer 1848 with the third near completion. They were used as quarters until 1861, when a section of the still incomplete Officers' Quarters was made available. The engineers were moved numerous times, prompting Superintending Engineer Captain Simpson to comment that the principal employees of the engineering department deserved "treatment as a gentleman, and not to be stowed or crammed in anywhere, as under workmen, day laborers, or prisoners." The issue was eventually put before the Secretary of War, who determined that the engineers were entitled to a "proper allowance of quarters" for their exclusive use. While guaranteeing them space, they still had to be relegated largely to the detached kitchens.



Located in the northwest area of the parade ground, the Engineers' Quarters was built as a two-story brick building measuring approximately 20' x 31' and divided into two units of equal portions, each measuring approximately 15' in width. The party wall that divided the Quarters included a central chimney block, with a fireplace in each unit. No improvements were made to the Engineers' Quarters after the turn of the twentieth century. Now in ruinous condition, the building currently rises just above the granite sills of the second story windows. Still visible are bits of the interior plaster walls, remnants of joist pockets, window openings with granite sills and segmental brick arches, and brick fireplace surrounds.

Documentation of the Commanding Officer's Quarters was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), Heritage Documentation Programs (HDP) of the National Park Service (Catherine C. Lavoie, Chief, HABS; Richard O'Connor, Chief, HDP) in Winter 2016. The project was undertaken by HABS in cooperation with Dry Tortugas National Park (Glenn Simpson, Park Manager; Kelly Clark, Cultural Resources Specialist) and Lord Aeck Sargent (Rob Yallop, Senior Associate; Kelly Gawinek, Project Architect). The HABS documentation of the Fort Jefferson Parade Ground Structures was funded with a grant from the HTR Foundation. Field recording and measured drawings were completed by Paul Davidson and Daniel De Sousa, HABS Architects. The large-format photography was undertaken by Todd Croteau, HAER Architect.