

THE ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE

RECORD OF COMMUNICATION RECEIVED

**From:** Headquarters Eighth Corps Area, Fort Sam Houston, Texas  
**Dated:** June 23, 1941  
**To:** CG, Eighth Corps Area, Fort Sam Houston  
**Rec'd A. G. O.** June 27, 1941  
**Subject:** Report of Investigation by Board of Officers, Eighth Corps Area, of Proposed Camp Site in Pando, Colorado, Area.

1. Pursuant to Special Orders No. 139, Headquarters Eighth Corps Area, dated June 13, 1941, the undersigned Board of Officers investigated the suitability of a location at Pando, Colorado for a camp site for ski troops and mountain warfare training in accordance with War Department letter, AG 601.1 (5-8-41)MC-D, dated May 12, 1941, Subject: "Plans for Increased Housing for the Army--West Yellowstone, Montana area, and Pando, Colorado, area".

2. In connection with its investigation of the Pando cantonment site the Board made reference to an engineering survey conducted by the Constructing Quartermaster, 8th Construction Zone, Fort Sam Houston, Texas. A report of this survey entitled, "Reconnaissance Survey and Study for Triangular Division Camp Site Near Pando, Colorado, June 7, 1941", by R. J. Tipton, Consulting Engineer, Denver, Colorado, was forwarded in five copies to the Quartermaster General by letter, Headquarters 8th Construction Zone, dated June 12, 1941. Since only one copy of this report was furnished this Headquarters, none are available to forward with this Board report to the War Department. In addition to this report of survey, the Board gathered information from local inhabitants in the Pando area, from an officer of the U. S. Forestry Service and from an actual reconnaissance of the Pando area. The Board also gathered information wherever available as to other locations in the mountainous regions of this Corps Area that might afford suitable locations to meet the requirements of the cantonment site in question. Chamber of Commerce officials in various towns and officials of several railroads operating in the New Mexico--Arizona--Colorado area were interviewed.

3. The Board found as a result of its investigation that the Pando, Colorado, area is suitable for the particular type of cantonment site required by the War Department directive. It is the opinion of the Board, based on information gathered from all available sources that the Pando, Colorado, area meets the War Department's requirements more fully than any other location in this Corps Area. The Board learned of other areas where snow conditions are sufficient to meet the War Department's requirements, but in every case these locations were so inaccessible as to be entirely unsuitable for a cantonment site for a large body of troops.

4. The Engineer's survey referred to above, by Mr. R. J. Tipton, is an excellent report on the Pando area. This report should be referred to for a detailed description of the cantonment site and vicinity. A briefer outline of the characteristics of the location follows:

a. Location -- The area lies west of the continental divide near Tennessee Pass. The railroad station of Pando is the center of the area and marks the location of the cantonment site. National forest land, stretching in all directions from this cantonment site location, and in an extent that is almost unlimited for practical purposes, is available for maneuvers. Pando is on the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad about 18 miles northwest of Leadville, Colorado. It is 146 miles from Colorado Springs and 128 miles from Denver by highway, and 214 miles from Colorado Springs and 243 miles from Denver by rail.

b. Snow Conditions -- Mr. John B. Leighou, Forestry Supervisor, Glenwood Springs, Colorado, met the Board at the cantonment site. He has had 30 years experience in the mountainous regions of Colorado. He stated that the Pando area received a heavier annual snowfall than any other large area in Colorado, and that it was the only area of heavy snowfall which contained a cantonment location which was accessible by highway and railroad. Snow begins in the Pando area with fair regularity about the 1st of October and lasts until about the 1st of June. The past year was said to have been a year of light snowfall, but it was reported that the snow in the vicinity of the proposed cantonment site at Pando had melted about one month prior to the visit of the Board on the 18th of June. The higher regions of the mountains which surround the proposed cantonment site were still covered with snow at the time the Board visited the site. Snow at these higher elevations was said to last all summer.

c. Topography -- The cantonment site, proper, is a level valley, rather restricted in size, but considered sufficiently large for the cantonment of a Triangular Division. This valley is entirely surrounded by mountains, rising in some cases to more than 14,000 feet. The elevation of the cantonment site is about 9,500 feet. The fact that the cantonment site is in a natural bowl formed by the mountains which surround it is considered quite important. This region frequently has strong winds during the winter months. The proposed cantonment site is well sheltered from these winds. This will add materially to the habitability of the site. The terrain on the south and western sides of the cantonment site is extremely rough and rocky, that on the north and eastern sides of the cantonment site is less rugged and the mountains have more rounded summits and more gently sloping sides. The mountainous area around the cantonment site has been logged-off in past years and contains large cleared areas suitable for ski courses. The Eagle River, a small stream only a few feet wide, runs through the cantonment site and joins Homestake Creek a few miles down the slope from the cantonment site. A gravelly soil covers the cantonment site. The course of the Eagle River at present meanders through the portion of the cantonment which will be used as the building site. It is proposed that the course of this river be rectified so as to conserve building space and to afford a proper drainage for the cantonment site. If this is done, it is believed that the area

will be well drained at all times. The rectification of this stream, as proposed, is contained in Mr. R. J. Tipton's survey report, and the cost is estimated at \$85,000. The Board believes that this work is necessary.

d. Utilities and Transportation -- It is believed that water is available in sufficient quantity for up to 20,000 strength. The cantonment site area abounds in springs and streams flowing from the mountain sides. In addition to Eagle River, Homestake Creek will provide a large amount of water the year-round. Homestake Creek is within 2 miles of the Northwestern end of the cantonment site.

The Denver and Rio Grande Railroad runs through the cantonment site. It skirts the foot of the mountain to the south and west of the cantonment area, and it is so located as not to utilize any of the space which will be required for cantonments. The railroad grade is approximately on a level with the northwestern end of the cantonment site. The cost of building necessary spurs should be very little. U. S. Highway No. 24 runs through the cantonment site. This highway is kept open by the State Highway Department throughout the winter. The Board concurs in the report of the Engineer survey that this road should be relocated so as to skirt the edge of the cantonment site and conserve building space. According to reports locally, the Highway Department has already planned relocating this road so as to come into the cantonment area by way of a route to the south now utilized by the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad. This relocation will shorten the road considerably. The cost of moving this road is estimated in the Engineer's survey as \$157,500. A 110,000 volt-power line traverses the cantonment site. The northwestern path of this power line should be relocated to avoid interference with construction. This cost is estimated in the survey as \$13,250. Gas is not available. However, coal is available in the vicinity, and the Board believes that it should be used for fuel.

e. Training Area -- On the cantonment site proper, and in the valleys between the mountains surrounding the cantonment site, there are many gentle slopes considered suitable for elementary ski training. There are possibilities of developing ski courses of all degrees of difficulty throughout the area. With the exception of a few homesteads, the area in all directions from the cantonment site is included in National forests. From a practical standpoint the available maneuver and training area is almost unlimited. Several ranges suitable for the employment of mountain artillery can be developed. The development of small arms ranges presents no problem.

f. Social Outlet -- The principle disadvantage of the Pando location is its lack of social outlet. The town of Leadville, about 18 miles distant, is the closest community. Leadville has a population of 4,774. It is a mining town and affords little recreation conducive to the morale of a command. The morals of Leadville are said to be on a rather low plane. This presents an additional difficulty. On account of the size of the town, however, it is believed that the character of Leadville might be changed through strict control by military authorities and co-operation of local and state police. It is believed that this co-operation can be obtained.

In regard to health projects, the Colorado State Health Officer has promised to devote every effort toward gaining the co-operation of the people of Leadville and Glenwood Springs in establishing suitable health units.

The Board believes that a solution of the problem of providing an adequate social outlet for the cantonment is possible through arrangements with the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad for special furlough trains periodically to Denver and Colorado Springs. It is probable that the type of men that will be selected, or who will volunteer for this specialized training will not require as much recreation of the kind afforded by large population centers, as the average soldier. The area is excellent for hunting and fishing, and these sports will provide important recreational outlets.

Housing of noncommissioned officers' families presents an additional problem. It is believed that the town of Leadville is unsuitable and inadequate for any of these families, and that a housing project, either in Leadville, or close to the cantonment site should be established. A suitable area for this housing exists in the valley of Homestake Creek, a few miles from the cantonment site. The area is level, close to the water and power supply, and only a short distance from the railroad. It is believed that a housing project in this location would add materially to the morale of the command.

g. Land Acquisition -- The area of the cantonment site consists of about 1,100 acres. Except for a very few scattered homesteads and some railroad property, this is the only acreage which is privately owned, all the rest of the acreage in the area being under Government ownership. It is reported that this 1,100 acre tract is at present up for sale by its owner to another party for \$7,500. It is believed that it could be acquired by the Government for \$10,000 by purchase, or at not to exceed \$1,000 per year for lease price. It is believed that the Government could obtain the cantonment site and all homesteads in the maneuver area in fee for not to exceed \$20,000. There is some acreage along the railroad right-of-way adjacent to the proposed cantonment site which is owned by the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad Company, and is used in connection with an ice storage and shipping establishment operated by the railroad. It is believed that all of this acreage not actually being used in this connection can be obtained from the railroad at a nominal cost on a rental basis. Part of this acreage is occupied by railroad spurs and is suitable for the location of warehouses and other service command installations.

h. Camp Construction -- The importance of beginning construction at an early date cannot be over emphasized. Local inhabitants advised that all underground utility construction should be completed early in October. All concrete construction, also should be completed by this time. They are of the opinion that if this is done, that the construction of buildings and inside work on utilities can continue fairly well throughout the winter. It should be remembered, however, that after October any type of construction will meet with frequent delays imposed by weather conditions.

In the Engineer's survey report, above referred to, a construction camp, estimated to cost \$600,000, is considered essential. The Board is of the opinion that this construction camp can be dispensed with in order to save time and cost. The Board is of the opinion that work trains rented from railroad companies might be utilized to house workmen, at least until sufficient cantonment buildings were completed to accommodate these workmen. There are at present a number of sidings available, and these can be extended with temporary spurs, sufficient to hold a large number of cars for housing workmen.

5. The Board submits the following recommendations:

a. That, a cantonment for mountain and winter warfare training for a Triangular Division, (total population not to exceed 20,000) be located in the Pando, Colorado, area.

b. That, if it is proposed to have this cantonment established by the spring of 1942, construction should begin, if practicable, about July 1st.

c. That, a housing project for the families of noncommissioned officers be included in the plans for cantonment construction, and be located in the vicinity of the proposed cantonment site, or adjacent to the town of Leadville.

1 Inclosure - Views of Camp Site and Map  
of Pando, Colorado, Area.

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