

**CURIOUS
FACTS
ABOUT
THE
PENTAGON**

Josephine Ripley

One of Washington's most unusual government buildings is seldom visited by tourists.

Yet there is probably no building in the capital about which there is more curiosity. "Where is the Pentagon?" visitors ask.

They stare incredulously and go their way, elsewhere. Perhaps that is because its dimensions are so formidable.

Everyone has heard the story of the messenger boy who disappeared within the building shortly after its completion, and emerged several years later a general.

The Pentagon has no street address—to avoid having five perhaps. It is located in the District of Columbia, yet it is across the Potomac in Virginia. Well, anyway, in a finger of land known as the District of Columbia which extends into Virginia.

It has parking lots for some 8,400 cars, but many prefer taking a bus into the heart of the building to hoofing it from one of the parking areas.

The Pentagon is a maze of corridors within, and cloverleaf highways without. Miss a turn and you may find yourself back across the river in the District again. I speak from experience, having taken the turn to "north parking" instead of "south parking." This carried me beyond the Pentagon and eventually to the Lincoln Memorial Bridge, after which I started all over again.

The five-floor building has 17½ miles of corridors. (Which may explain why tourists are satisfied just to look.) It is so designed, architects say, that the maximum walking distance between any two points is only 1,800 feet—only a six-minute walk. That is, if you know the way.

According to Lt. Col. C. V. Glines (who offers up some startling statistics on the Pentagon in the U.S. Lady ma-

gazine) 30,000 daytime employees, military and civilian, work there.

It is an office building for the military, but it contains also: two banks, a post office, telegraph office, airline and railroad ticket offices, a drug store, ladies' and men's apparel stores, bookstore, bakery, florist, barber shop, laundry and dry cleaner, an optometrist, a candy shop, jewelry store, shoe repair shop, and a uniform store.

Buses and taxis tunnel under the building. Two commercial bus companies operate some 900 trips in and out of the terminal daily.

People arrive at the Pentagon from all directions these days—by land, sea, and air. Helicopters drop passengers almost any time of day. Several hundred people commute by boat. The "Air Force navy" operates a regular schedule from Bolling Air Force base across the Potomac to the Pentagon boat dock.

The pudgy, five-sided building has many nicknames, such as the "Puzzle Palace," "The House of Confusion," "The Cement Sanitorium," "The Big Hanger."

It has three times the floor space of the Empire State Building, covers 34 acres of ground, and is surrounded by

200 acres of lawns, flower beds, and terraces.

It has two restaurants, six cafeterias, nine beverage bars, and, in the summer, an outside snack shop in the courtyard.

Colonel Glines estimates that all employees eat at least one meal in the Pentagon. Some 60,000 pounds of food is served daily—all of which makes the world's largest office building also the world's largest food service organization.

Patrons of the restaurants are said to consume 3,800 quarts of milk a day, 7,000 soft drinks, 35,000 cups of coffee, and eat 5,000 sandwiches.

Church services are held daily, Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Jewish.

The Pentagon has been so constructed with innumerable stairways and ramps that the entire building could be emptied in one hour if necessary.

Often quoted statistics include the fact that: 10 tons of waste paper are collected each day and sold for an annual income of nearly \$100,000 for the government; 85,000 light fixtures of all types burn out about 900 bulbs a day; 40,000 telephones handle the 275,000 calls made each working day, with more than

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small sub-groupings within the barrio headed by neighborhood or "situational" leaders as basic units for the introduction and acceptance of change.

8. The motives to which one can appeal for acceptance of desired changes are not yet apparent. Certainly the motive for increased profits may not be very operative. Considerations of prestige and status are important. Community pride is at a low level while family pride is high. Keeping up with the Cruzes is a commonly expressed motive. However, it is not immediately apparent how this incentive could be utilized.

9. The role of music is not clear. Tagalog songs are used at fiestas, serenades and weddings. Members of the younger generation who want to appear "modern" sing popular songs in English. There are considerations which lead one to support the utilization of both kinds of music. It simply is not clear which kind, if either, would facilitate social change.

10. The *balagtasan* or debate in verse is very popular. The barrio people have great respect for well polished rhe-

toric. A rehearsal of reasons for acceptance of certain innovation such as wells or fruit trees would possibly raise considerable discussion. But whether action would follow remains to be discovered. Dis-course has many functions other than purveying facts. Actually, most facts are now conveyed in an informal person-to-person manner. The villagers have simply not yet learned to look beyond the barrio lieutenant and gossip (*Chismis*) for information.

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160,000 miles of cable strung through the building.

The Pentagon, even if off the beaten tourist track, is well worth a visit. The concourse, with its shops, is a veritable main street. The courtyard at this time of year is festooned with azaleas, wild crab apple blooms, and dogwood.

There is an art collection in the mail corridor. Just ask for a map at one of the information desks and find your own way around, or if you are traveling in a group, ask for an especially conducted tour.

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