

Title:

The Building of the Pentagon

Word Count:

398

Summary:

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Keywords:

Article Body:

The Pentagon was completed in 16 months. It was built on a swamp and on the area of the old Washington airport. Trucks hauled some 5.5 million cubic yards (4.2 million cubic meters) of junk and soil and dumped it in the marshes. The building's foundation rests on 41,492 concrete piles.

The purchase of land cost \$2.25 million (in 1943 dollars). The building itself cost c. \$50 million, or \$83 million with outside facilities. The Pentagon stands on 29 acres (=c. 120,000 sq.m.).

The center court alone occupies 5 acres (c. 20,000 sq.m.). The heating and refrigeration plant and the sewage structure sprawl on 1 acre each (c. 4,000 sq.m.). Fifty miles (=80 kilometers) of access highways were especially constructed, replete with 21 overpasses and bridges. The parking space is spread over 67 acres (c. 270,000 sq.m.) and can accommodate up to 8,800 vehicles.

Each wall of the Pentagon is more than 920 feet long (=300 meters). It is almost 78 feet high (or a little short of 25 meters). It should have been higher but the planners wanted to preserve the view of the neighboring Arlington National Cemetery. There are almost 18 miles (c. 29 kilometers) of corridors in the building, 131 stairways, 19 escalators, 13 elevators, 672 fire hose cabinets, 284 rest rooms (toilettes), 691 drinking fountains, 4200 electric clocks with sockets for another 2800, 16,250 light fixtures (250 bulbs are replaced daily), 7,754 windows, and 7 acres of glass - or c. 29,000 sq.m.

More than 23,000 people work in the Pentagon. It contains a heliport, huge

restaurant and shopping mall, and bus and taxi terminals. The Pentagon has its own metro (subway) station.

This masterpiece of engineering was designed by George Edwin Bergstrom. Despite its gargantuan size, the distance between every two points in the complex never requires more than a 7 minutes walk. Plans to convert the Pentagon to a hospital after the second world war were abandoned with the outbreak of the Cold War.

The September 11 attack demolished 400,000 sq. feet of space and damaged another 1.6 million. To recover them would cost \$700 million. About 1000 tons of limestone in 3700 separate pieces were quarried in Indiana to overhaul the facade. More than a 1000 laborers worked in three shifts for almost nine months until the facade was remade. Restoration will be completed in Spring 2003.

The State Department says that "a condolence book, a Presidential photo, and handmade sympathy cards written by children were included in a bronze box that was sealed into the limestone facade of the newly rebuilt section of the Pentagon. The capsule is not intended to be opened."