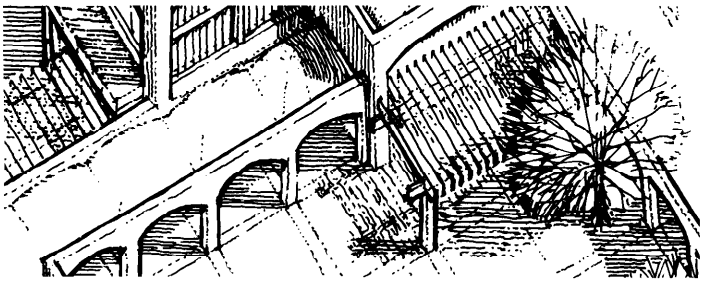

6 – 8

Community Activity Centers for Remote Sites and Small Populations

a. Introduction

Community Activity Centers for remote sites and small populations must solve special problems under constrained conditions. The CAC is a consolidated facility accommodating morale support activities and other morale, welfare and recreation programs, designed to provide a real center for post community life. The prototypical CAC programs and plans presented here are designed to serve isolated sites with military strengths of 250 or less.

This section includes a discussion of the planning considerations basic to the design of Community Activity Centers for small remote installations. It presents the design concept and organizational issues for such CAC's in terms of a facility designed for a hypothetical overseas post. It provides basic building programs and plans for CAC's for installations of three military strength ranges; 1 - 25, 26 - 100, and 101 - 250. These are suggested designs, for adaptation to local construction, climate and site conditions at each individual installation.

b. Planning Considerations

(1) Center of Community. Community Activity Centers for small remote sites must be planned to create a good community for the local military population. Since these sites are typically located in isolated and foreign environments, community services and leisure time activities for the installation population are not generally available in the surrounding area. The troops tend to spend most of their time within the confines of the installation. Thus development of a sense of community through provision of a self-sufficient program of community activities and services, and of a place to be for nonmission activities, is particularly important.

The Community Activity Center should integrate the full range of functions that comprise community activities and services for the installation. All nonmission activities are eligible for accommodation in the facility, morale support activities, post-exchange outlets, chapel, all grades club, and any other morale, welfare and recreation activity which exists on the installation. This integration may involve sharing of the same space, such as having chapel services and US0 shows in a gymnasium, or designing well related spaces for the different functions within the same building.

(2) Responsive to Local Factors. The Community Activity Center designed for each installation should respond to the needs of the site. Only those functions which are locally appropriate, and not accommodated elsewhere, should be included. The basic programs and plans presented in this section may be modified (added to or subtracted from) depending on the local needs.

The architectural design of the CAC should be developed to suit local climatic, site conditions and construction methods.

(3) Issues of Remote Sites. Certain key factors pertain to small remote overseas sites which directly affect CAC planning:

- Isolation, often in foreign environments, makes it necessary for the post community services to be self-sufficient.
- Extremely limited land availability and difficult terrain, as is common at many of these sites, require facilities to be designed compactly to meet unusual site conditions. Little space may be available for construction, or for outdoor activities.
- In some areas, inclement weather forces the troops indoors much of the time for their leisure activities.
- The missions of these installations vary widely, including intelligence, weather, signal, tactical, missile sites, etc. The confinement and pressure that results from many of these mission activities intensifies the need for a leisure time release.
- The foreign environment, and rapid troop rotation in and out of many of these stations, prevents building of local roots. This places demands on the community activities for programs which new-comers can easily join and participate in, and which quickly provide a supportive sense of community.
- There are generally no families at these installations for the CAC to accommodate.
- No morale support activities staff are available, typically, to operate the remote-site CAC and its programs. They are run by military personnel on detail, or on a part-time basis, with little or no specialized training. Thus the center must be designed for easy operation and primarily self-directed activities.

(4) Additional Emphases for Continental U.S. There are many small installations within the U.S. which need CAC's. The designs presented here should be modified to reflect those factors which make this context different for each post and its population. Such modifications should depend on local decisions as to what is appropriate. Significant differentiating factors include:

- Some community services may be available off-post, and the context is culturally familiar. Therefore, the CAC may not need to provide as comprehensive and self-contained a community program.
- Families with children will normally be found at these installations. Since they will use the facilities, the designs must accommodate their different program demands.
- Civilian employee populations often work at these installations, sometimes outnumbering the military. If they are eligible to use the Community Activity Center, it must be designed to meet their needs as well.
- Criteria for handicapped accessibility must be met in CAC design, for the possible use of civilian and family populations.

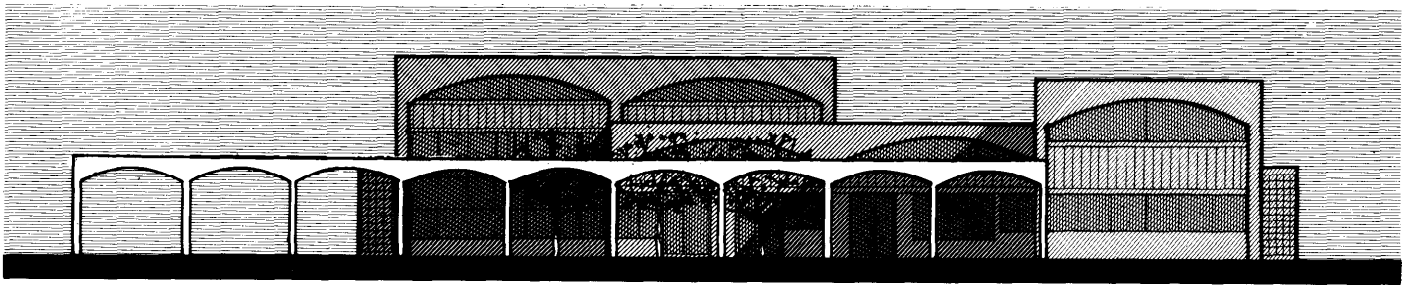

Figure 6 - 43 Fort Remote: Community Activity Center-Elevation

c. Design Concepts

The Community Activity Center designs for remote sites and small populations serve installations of three ranges of military strength; 1 - 25, 26 - 100, and 101 - 250. Basic programs and plans, for each of these three ranges, are presented in section d, below. However, the general design concepts for these three different sizes and configurations of facility are the same. They include similar functions and components, and reflect the same organizational principles. The designs are all intended to be developed to fit local climate, site conditions, and local labor and construction methods. They can be built with metal building systems.

The general design concepts for these CAC's are presented in this section through discussion of an illustrative application at Fort Remote, a hypothetical isolated site in the Eastern Mediterranean theatre. The plan is based on the basic CAC design for a military strength of 26 - 100. The building is designed to be built in indigenous architectural style, with local labor and construction (see figures 6 - 42 through 6 - 45).

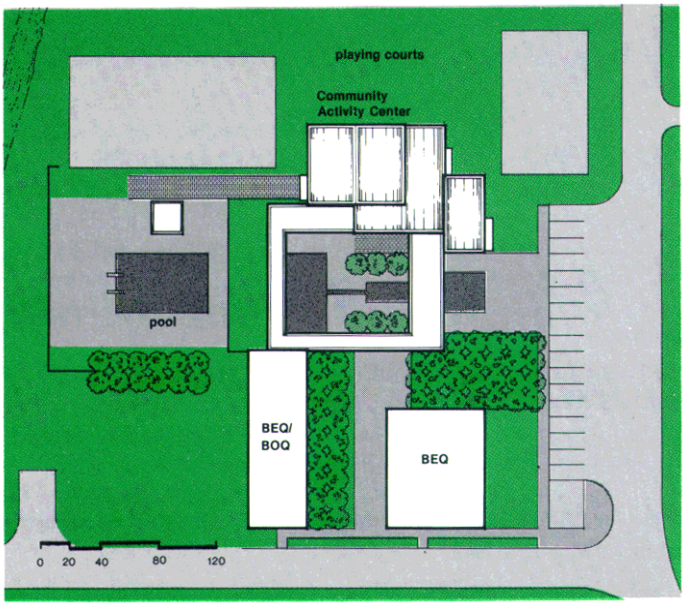

Figure 6 – 42 Fort Remote: Community Activity Center-Site Plan

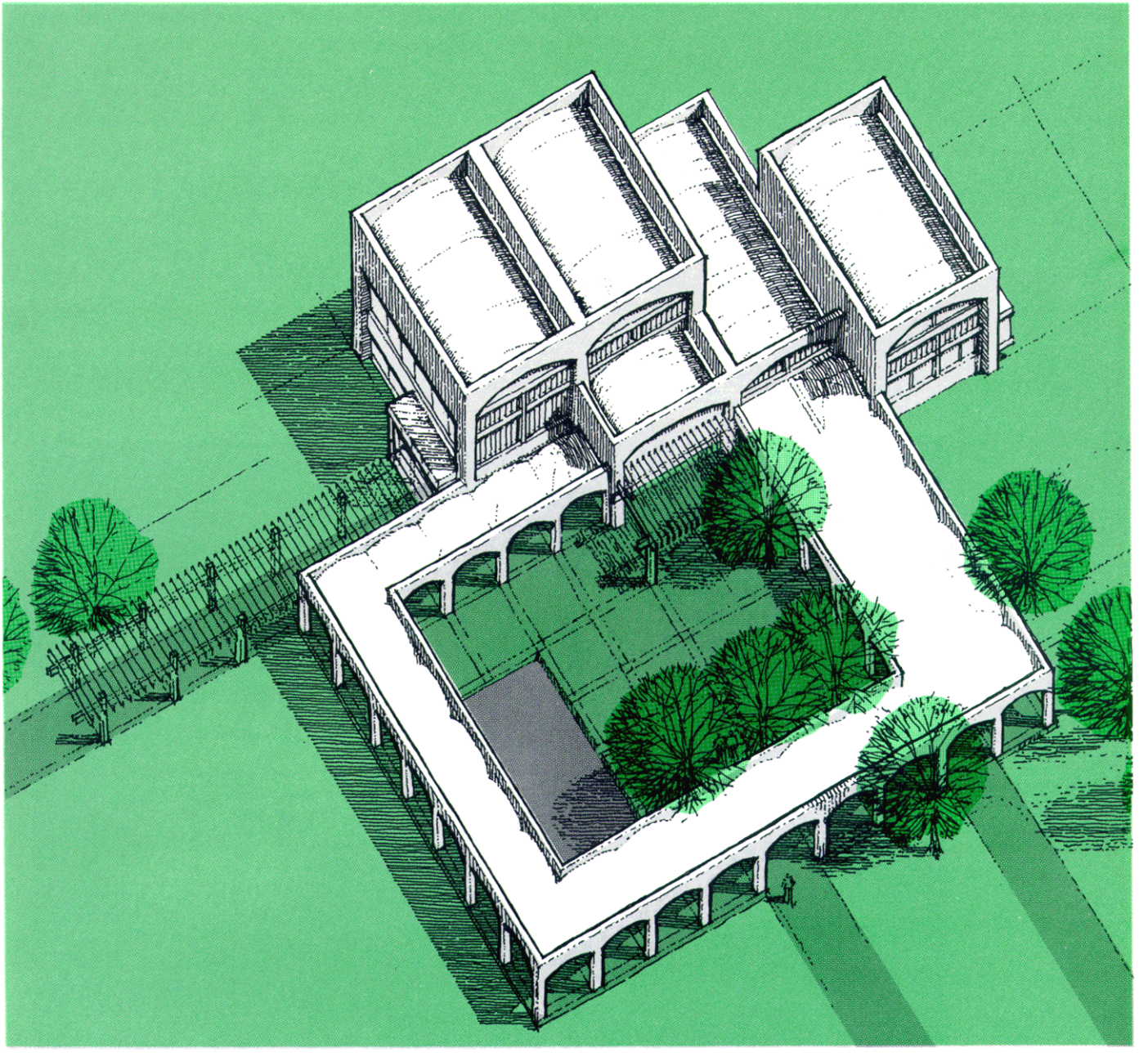

Figure 6 - 44 Fort Remote: Community Activity Center-Isometric View

(1) Functions. The following functions are accommodated in the Fort Remote Community Activity Center. A space program is found in table 6 - 11, together with the basic design for this midsize facility.

- Social Activities - lounging, snacks, television, card and table games.
- Games - ping pong, pool.
- Physical fitness - exercise, weights, shooting baskets and other multipurpose room athletic games.
- Large group events - movies, music performances, touring shows, chapel services, unit parties, classes. In a multipurpose room sized to hold the whole installation population, if necessary.
- Reading/quiet activities - paperback books and book kits, study, videotape and music cassettes, clubs and small meetings.
- Crafts - general crafts, light woodworking, repair, crafts kits.
- Music - instrument check-out, practice, jam sessions, performances.

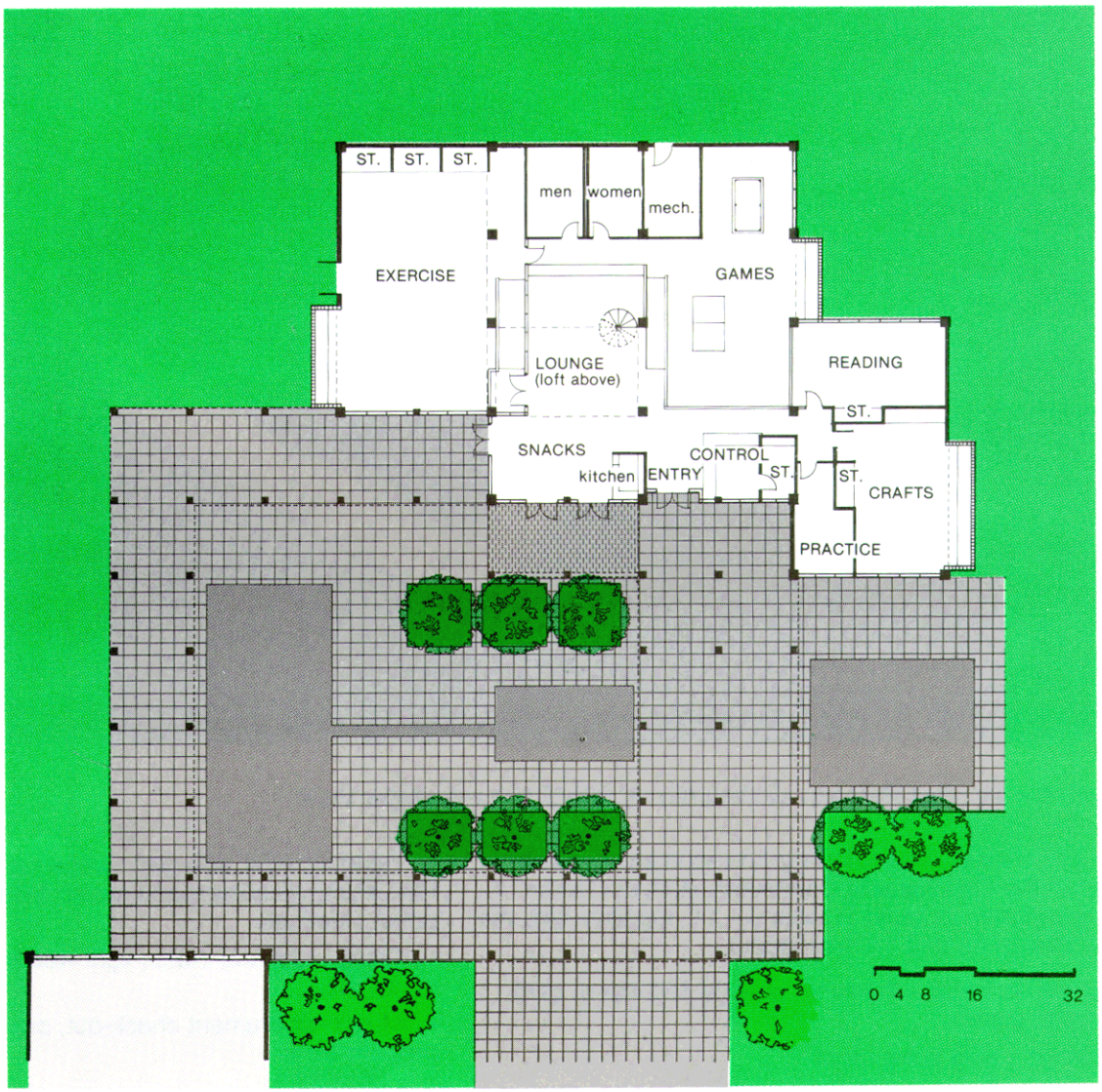

Figure 6 – 45 Fort Remote: Community Activity Center-Main Floor Plan

(2) Organizational Principles. Key organizational principles reflected in the design are valid for all the CAC's for remote sites and small populations:

(a) Modular Design. The facility is designed on a standard five-foot modular grid, which allows for construction either by indigenous methods or by a metal building system. The modular design also permits easy removal of part of a basic plan at the time of site adaptation, and easy addition of other modular components for different or additional functions.

(b) The Heart. The heart of the CAC is the lounge (see figure 6 - 45). It is central to the facility, very near and immediately accessible from the main entrance. It represents the easiest introduction to activities for newcomers - casual. unprogrammed, drop-in recreation. The lounge is next to and overlaps with the snack space. It overlooks the games area and exercise/multipurpose room, and has a view toward the more specialized quiet reading, crafts, and music practice spaces.

(c) Acoustic Zones. The CAC is divided into three separate sound zones:

1) the sound isolated block, including quiet reading, crafts, and music practice spaces, each of which is isolated from each other and from the rest of the facility; 2) the athletic area, including exercise/multipurpose gym and support spaces, separated by glazed walls from the rest of the center; and 3) the open zone, including all the remaining spaces, entrance, lounge, snacks, games, which are a continuous open space for ease of interaction and exposure.

(d) Visual Openness. Only one part of the facility is enclosed, the mechanical/maintenance/toilet/storage block. All the rest is visually open and accessible, either as continuous open space or with maximum glazing for views where acoustic separation is required. Ramped level changes provide overlooks to enhance this visibility, as between the lounge/snack area and the games and exercise spaces (see figure 6 - 45). These connections are important for attraction and ease of movement between activities, and for combined functioning of spaces for events like unit parties.

(e) Control. The central control desk, at the main entrance, permits supervision of the entire CAC by one staff person. The open design of the center allows this position to overlook the entrance, games room, lounge, snack area, reading room, exercise/multipurpose space, and the entrance to the crafts areas and music practice rooms.

(f) Access Outdoors. The snack bar is placed in the front of the building, opening out onto an eating terrace. In this way, an activity with a diverse appeal is visible from the outside and from the entry direction, and connects the CAC to post life. The exercise room has direct access to the outside, near the playing courts and swimming pool.

(g) Post Orientation. The Community Activity Center is sited in the center of the installation, reinforcing its focal role in the community. It is next to the troop mess hall and post exchange, with easy access from all functional areas. The main entrance of the CAC faces the other post buildings directly, no one needs to go around the building to get in.

Table 6 - 10 Military Strength 1 - 25: Basic CAC Space Program

Function-Space	Area (Gross Square Feet)	
Social Activities		1,270
Games	650	
Lounge	420	
Snack Bar	200	
Arts and Crafts		260
General Crafts	260	
Supply	(in control)	
Music		150
Practice Room **(1)**	150	
Instrument Checkout	(in control)	
Library		170
Reading Room	170	
Physical Fitness		910
Exercise/Multipurpose	830	
Storage	80	
General Support		550
Control and Storage	120	
Toilets	220	
Circulation	210	
Mechanical	90*	
	Total	3,310

*Not included in totals

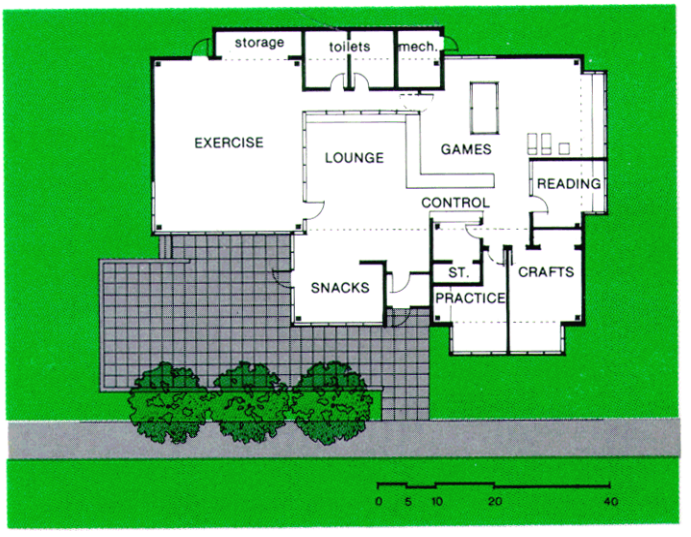

Figure 6-46 Basic Plan- Military Strength 1-25

d. Basic Programs and Plans

This section presents basic building programs and plans for Community Activity Centers for three different sizes of small installations. They are designed to serve remote sites outside the continental United States, and small installations in CONUS. These are suggested programs and plans, which may be modified by local judgements to fit installation conditions. The architecture and construction may vary from site to site as locally appropriate. The plans are designed to serve the higher population end of each of the indicated military strength ranges. However, they are adaptable to modular additions or subtractions as needed, some examples of which are shown as variants on the largest size center.

(1) Military Strength 1 - 25. This smallest of Community Activity Centers is a compact version designed for a very limited population of about 25. The space program is shown in table 6 - 10. The design (see figures 6 - 46 and 6 - 47) reflects the organizational principles discussed in the previous section, Design Concepts. The spaces are smaller and more integrated than in the mid-size example. The lounge and snack bar/vending machine area are one continuous space, separated by a low partition and built-in seating from the games area. The reading room, crafts space and music practice room open directly off this open area. The exercise/multipurpose room is sized to accommodate the entire installation population when necessary, and is faced with large glazed walls to the lounge and the eating terrace, with direct access out toward the playing fields.

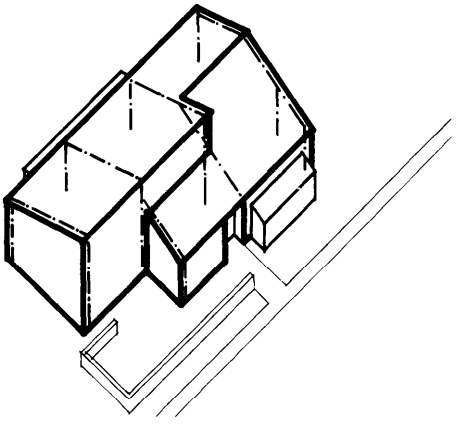

Figure 6 - 47 Isometric View

(2) Military Strength 26 - 100. This midsize Community Activity Center for small remote sites has been directly discussed in section c, Design Concepts. The space program is found in table 6 - 11 and the basic plan in figure 6 - 48. The isometric view in figure 6 - 49 contrasts a metal building system construction with the indigenous construction illustrated in figure 6 - 44. Although all the function-areas are larger in this plan than in the smallest CAC, the overall organization and relationships between the spaces are similar. The larger spaces permit changes in level between functional areas, connected by ramps, for improved views and interrelationships. The loft over the lounge is for additional lounge space which overlooks the multipurpose room, games area and snack bar.

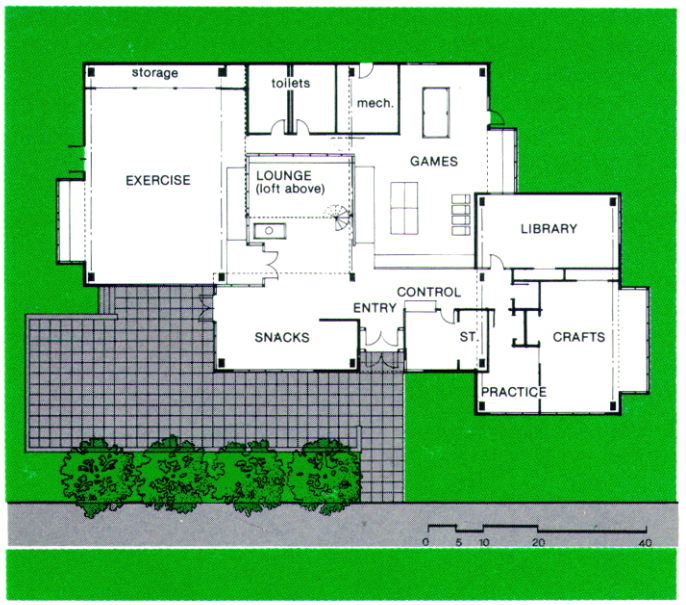

Figure 6-48 Basic Plan- Military Strength 26-100

Table 6 - 11 Military Strength 26 - 100: Basic CAC Space Program

Function-Space	Area (Gross Square Feet)	
Social Activities		1,720
Games	870	
Lounge	450	
Snack Bar	400	
Arts and Crafts		600
General Crafts	600	
Supply	(in control)	
Music		150
Practice Room (1)	150	
Instrument Checkout	(in control)	
Library		330
Reading Room	330	
Physical Fitness		1,320
Exercise/Multipurpose	1,200	
Storage	120	
General Support		810
Control	120	
General Storage	70	
Toilets	220	
Circulation	400	
Mechanical	160*	
	Total	4,930

*Not included in totals.

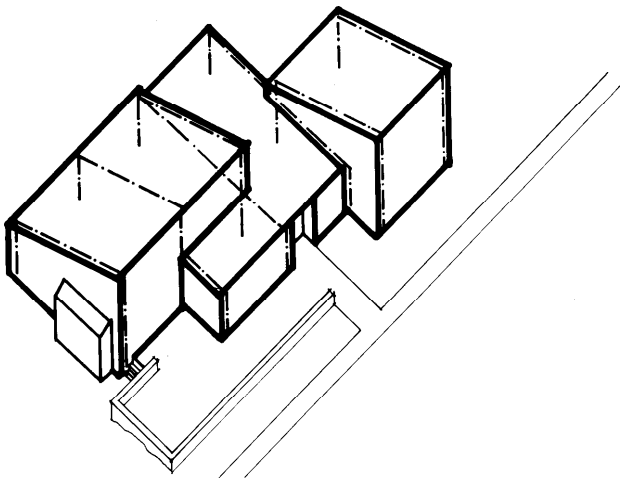

Figure 6 - 49 Isometric View

Table 6 - 12 Military Strength 101 - 250: Basic CAC Space Program

Function-Space	Area (Gross Square Feet)	
Social Activities		2,640
Games	1,320	
Lounge	570	
Snack Bar	750	
Arts and Crafts		1,000
General Crafts	1,000	
Supply	(in control)	
Music		300
Practice Rooms (2)	300	
Instrument Checkout	(in control)	
Library		420
Reading Room	420	
Physical Fitness		3,030
Exercise/Fitness	350	
Gymnasium/Multipurpose	2,540	
Storage	140	
General Support		1,330
Control	110	
General Storage	140	
Toilets/Lockers/Showers	580	
Circulation	500	
Mechanical	180*	
	Total	8,720

*Not included in totals.

(3) Military Strength 101 - 250. This is the largest of these small Community Activity Centers. The space program is shown in table 6 - 12, the design in figures 6 - 50 and 6 - 51. The design and organizational principles discussed in the previous section, Design Concepts, also apply to this center. This larger CAC differs from the midsize example. The multipurpose/exercise room is enlarged to a small gymnasium, with lockers and showers adjacent, and a small exercise room is added. The snack bar has a food preparation kitchen and service area, instead of vending machines. The games and crafts spaces are significantly larger, and two music practice rooms are provided. As in the mid-size plan, there is a loft over the lounge, potentially permitting additional lounge space overlooking the snack area and gymnasium, or space for such functions as a projection booth or dark room.

Variants on the large basic CAC plan can be achieved by addition of functional modules that match the modular system of the plan. Several connection points are readily available for good access from the heart of the CAC, as illustrated in the examples in figures 6 - 52 through 6 - 55. These examples show the addition of a small post exchange outlet and auto repair shop, an all grades club, a bowling alley, and an ACS office and child care center. All of these are compatible with the basic CAC program, depending on local need. The last is appropriate to consider in the continental U.S. where families are to be served by the Community Activity Center complex.

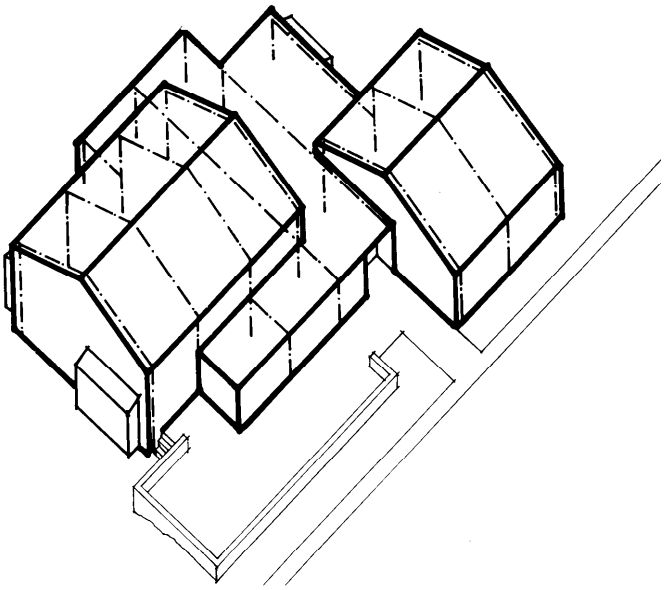

Figure 6 - 51 Isometric View

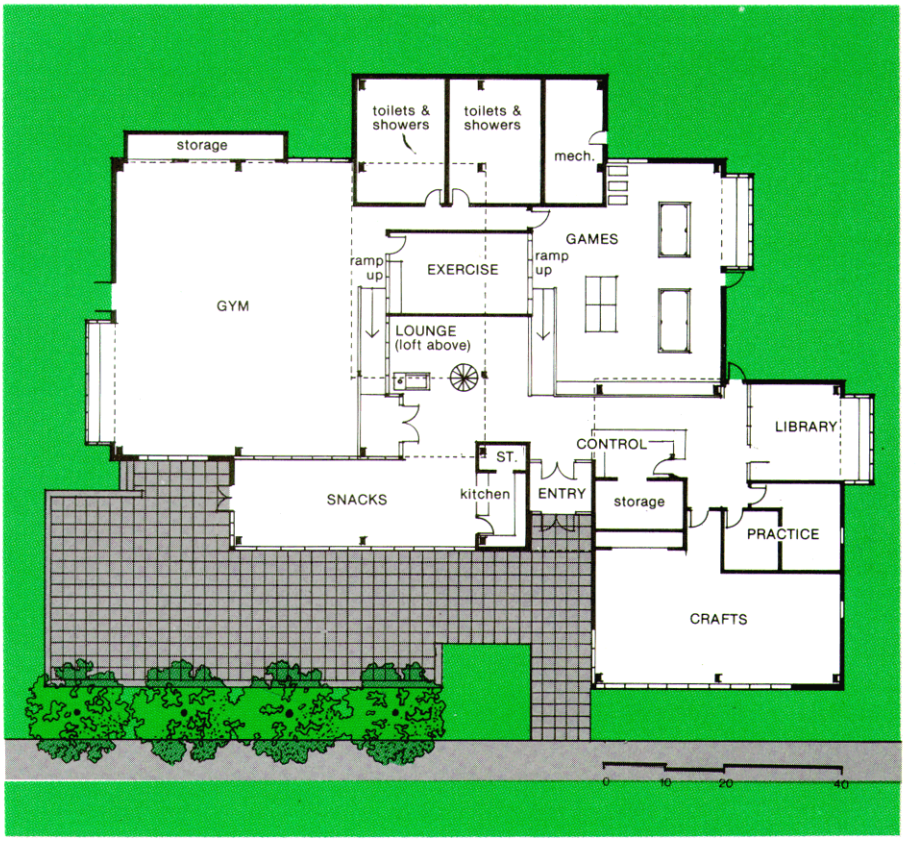

Figure 6-50 Basic Plan- Military Strength 101-250

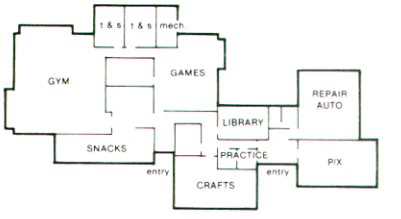

Figure 6 – 52
CAC Variant with Post Exchange and Auto Repair

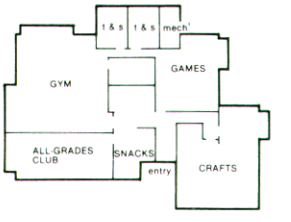

Figure 6 – 53
CAC Variant with All-Grades Club

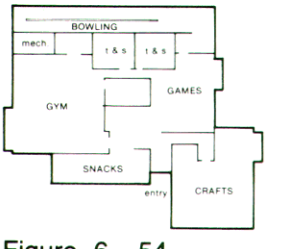

Figure 6 – 54
CAC Variant with Bowling

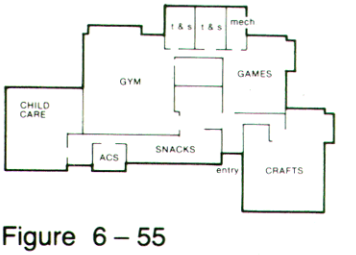

Figure 6 – 55
CAC Variant with ACS and Child Care