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## State arsenal site has ancient background

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# Photouring Florida

By HAMPTON DUNN



## STATE ARSENAL SITE HAS ANCIENT BACKGROUND

By HAMPTON DUNN

ST. AUGUSTINE --- Brass of Florida's National Guard plan military activity from executive offices in St. Francis Barracks here, a site steeped in history in this Ancient City.

In 1577, Franciscan monks constructed a crude church, monastery and convent at this spot. This became the fountainhead of the far-flung mission system established by the Franciscans in the Southeast during the centuries following. Some of the friars' cells still exist.

When the British occupied St. Augustine, they took over the chapel of the convent and converted it into barracks for their soldiers. This occurred in the period, 1763 to 1783.

Fire swept the area in the 1790s, but remnants of the old cells were used as a jail during Florida's territorial days. The U.S. Army erected its arsenal here in 1820 and it was a busy place during the Civil War. The structure served well until 1915 when fire gutted the building. It was immediately restored and looks today much as the original building.

St. Francis Barracks, located at 108 Marine St. near St. Augustine's famed "oldest house", is a two-column yellow stucco building with a shallow balconied court topped with a flat ballustrade.

