

Quonset Hut Facts

Quonset huts, those ubiquitous arched metal storage buildings that you can still find in use today, were named for the town of Quonset, Rhode Island, the location of the U.S. Naval facility where the huts were constructed during World War II. Using the semicylindrical British Nissen hut as a model, Quonset hut creators modified the Nissen design with wooden lining, insulation, and tongue and groove wooden flooring. The Seabee Museum and Memorial Park in Davisville, Rhode Island, houses a Quonset huts display to honor both the original Quonset huts factory in Davisville, Rhode Island and the historical connection between the Seabees and Quonset huts.

The beauty of Quonset huts lay in their durability and mobility in the field. The military needed a structure that could be easily and quickly assembled and disassembled for transport to different battlefield locations, sometimes on a daily basis. Quonset huts successfully addressed the need for lightweight and movable storage and housing and gradually evolved into structures that could be used as bakeries, showers, latrines, dental offices, and isolation wards. However, the initial Quonset huts design presented problems with its expanded uses and was subsequently recast from a sixteen feet by thirty six feet sized building with wall curve beginning flush with the floor to a structure with sidewalls and multiple interior designs. After the war ended, the military sold its surplus Quonset huts to the public for one thousand dollars per unit. Universities purchased them for student housing, and some returning soldiers even purchased them for their own personal housing.

The Quonset huts of today are so versatile that they are perfect for machinery or grain storage, backyard workshops, or even airplane hangars. How about turning a Quonset hut into a guest cottage. The lack of beams and trusses in the Quonset hut design equals 100 percent useable space, and the huts can be expanded to any length simply by adding additional sidewall panels. They can also be customized with features such as skylights, insulation, wiring, and colors to match your home decor. With their corrugated steel construction, Quonset huts are amazingly strong; in fact, their rounded arch design is one of the strongest structures in architecture. Quonset huts can withstand anything Mother Nature can throw at them. Calling on a few friends to help, you can have your Quonset hut kit assembled in just a few days. After laying your foundation (on a graded and level surface), simply both the steel panels together and your Quonset hut is complete. Adding a durable and attractive storage or workshop space to your property could not be any easier.

About the Author

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