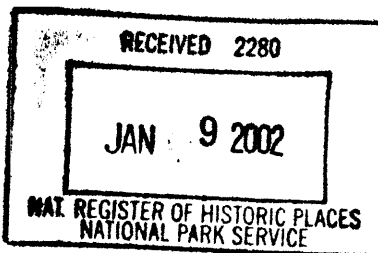


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name: Montana State Arsenal, Armory and Drill Hall

other name/site number: Montana National Guard Headquarters, State Area Command, Armory/24LC0785

2. Location

street & number: 1100 North Main

not for publication: n/a
vicinity: n/a

city/town: Helena

state: Montana code: MT county: Lewis & Clark code: 049 zip code: 59601

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally.

Mark F. Saunders / SHPO
Signature of certifying official/Title

12/27/2001
Date

Montana State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency or bureau

(See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
 see continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register
 see continuation sheet
- determined not eligible for the National Register
 see continuation sheet
- removed from the National Register
 see continuation sheet
- other (explain): _____

Edson H. Beall
Signature of the Keeper
Date of Action *2/14/02*

Name of Property

County and State

5. Classification

<p>Ownership of Property: Public</p> <p>Category of Property: Building</p> <p>Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: n/a</p> <p>Name of related multiple property listing: n/a</p>	<p>Number of Resources within Property</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 20px;">Contributing</td> <td>Noncontributing</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 20px;"><u>1</u></td> <td><u>0</u> building(s)</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 20px;"><u>0</u></td> <td><u>0</u> sites</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 20px;"><u>0</u></td> <td><u>0</u> structures</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 20px;"><u>0</u></td> <td><u>0</u> objects</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 20px;"><u>1</u></td> <td><u>0</u> TOTAL</td> </tr> </table>	Contributing	Noncontributing	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> building(s)	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> TOTAL
Contributing	Noncontributing												
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> building(s)												
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites												
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures												
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects												
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> TOTAL												

6. Function or Use

<p>Historic Functions: DEFENSE/arms storage GOVERNMENT/municipal building</p>	<p>Current Functions: DEFENSE/arms storage GOVERNMENT/municipal building</p>
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7. Description

<p>Architectural Classification MODERN MOVEMENT/Moderne</p>	<p>Materials: foundation: CONCRETE; METAL/steel walls: CONCRETE; METAL/steel roof: CONCRETE; METAL/steel other: WOOD</p>
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Narrative Description

SETTING

The Montana State Arsenal, Armory and Drill Hall is a two-story concrete and steel building designed by Helena architect Norman DeKay and constructed between 1940 and 1942. The building has served as command headquarters for the Montana National Guard since it was constructed. The Montana State Arsenal, Armory and Drill Hall (informally referred to as the Armory) reflects the long history and importance of the Montana National Guard's state and federal missions and its presence in the state capital of Helena.

The Armory is located at 1100 North Main Street, a prominent corner on primary commercial routes in Helena, Montana. The building lies at the northwest corner of the junction of Lyndale Avenue (US Highway 12) and Main Street, which extends south into Helena's historic district. Carroll College, established in 1880, lies one third of a mile to the west, across open fields.

The Armory is recognized as a landmark within the city of Helena. At the time construction was completed in 1942, the Armory was the only building on this city block. Lying south of the YMCA building, with its adjoining sports park, and southwest of historic Memorial Park, the Armory's front entrance faces southeast. A concrete walk leads from the front entrance of the building to the sidewalks that parallel Main Street and Lyndale Ave. Formal landscaping consists of an expanse of lawn on either side of the front walkway, with a few lawn trees and foundation plantings. West of the front walk, three ornamental flowering crab trees line Lyndale Ave. and define the edge of the lawn. Just past this row of trees, a driveway exits from Lyndale Ave. and leads to a large paved parking area at the rear of the building. A large Douglas fir is located on the lawn adjacent to the southwest elevation of the building. Another, smaller parking area is located on the northeast side of the building—accessed via Main Street. This parking area is partially screened from the street by three large spruce trees and a variety of shrubs. Low foundation plantings (mostly arborvitae) are located along both sides of the front (southeast) elevation. A large grouping of communications antennae sits at the back of the building and is not permanent.

(see continuation sheet)

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The Armory is one of three standing late Art Deco/early Moderne buildings constructed by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in Helena during the early 1940s. The other two include the Helena Middle School and the Federal Bureau of Investigation's District headquarters. The Armory is an outstanding example of the pragmatic architecture built to serve public needs during the Depression Era.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The Armory is a seven-bay building, constructed in the early Art Moderne style typical of many WPA projects. The lot on which the building is constructed slopes downward from the southeast to the northwest, a factor that influenced the original design of the building—the front and side elevations have two levels above ground; from the rear (north) elevation three above-ground levels are exposed. Plans specified two stories of above ground offices, with a large drill floor on the ground level. A full basement and sub-basement originally functioned as vehicle and supply storage and a weapons range, but have been converted to office space. The building has a flat roof. Originally painted a uniform white, the Armory has been recently repainted, with a more dramatic, yet compatible color scheme of white for the main body with blue, black and gray highlighting the architectural details. The overall form, massive and asymmetrically blocky, is typical of depression-era architecture found elsewhere in the United States, but not so commonly found within Montana. The following description of the Armory was prepared for the Governor and the 27th State Legislature

Monolithic concrete. 148 feet wide, 153 deep. Two Stories. Full basement. Partial sub-basement. The basement and sub-basement will have capacity for 70 trucks with large storage space for United States Army Supplies. Also a rifle range. The first floor will have a drill hall 73 feet wide and 102 feet long surrounded on three sides with required locker and storage rooms, office, club rooms and custodian's quarters. The second floor will contain offices for the Adjutant General, United States Purchasing and Disbursing Officer, Army Officers and instructors, and a lecture room. The building is fireproof and earthquake resistive. It faces the intersection of Main Street and Lyndale Avenue with a drill area at the rear. It is planned to serve the United States Army as well as the National Guard.¹

Exterior:

The Montana State Arsenal, Armory and Drill Hall is a two story, seven-bay poured concrete and steel building with symmetrical fenestration. The flat roof features a short parapet wall all the way around the building, and a concrete, capped interior chimney near the northwest. A water table surrounds the building. A raised, arched roof covers the interior drill hall. Flanking bays are stepped back from the central entry, and a flagpole flying the National and State flags stands in the immediate foreground. Decorative bands, set off by narrow concrete recessed beads and now painted a contrasting color, circle the building directly above the second-story windows and the top of the parapet wall.

The south (front) elevation contains a recessed central entry dominated by four pilasters that frame the entry doors and continue just beyond the roofline. The squared pilasters are topped with a stepped Moderne motif. Three broad steps with iron handrails lead to the entrance, and are flanked by projecting knee walls with columnar lights. The east concrete knee wall contains a marble plaque with the date of 1942 - the year the State Arsenal was completed. The west concrete

¹ Montana Armory Board, "Report to Montana's 27th Legislature and the Governor," (n.d.) Montana Historical Society Archives; MC 35, Box 176, File 1

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knee wall contains a brass plaque inscribed with "Public Improvement Work Projects Administration 1941 1942." A handicapped ramp installed during the modern era bisects the center of the stairway. Three sets of double doors, each featuring a six-light transom, provide the primary entrance to the building. Each door at the front entrance contains 10 lights and brass hardware. Three recessed panels, one above each door opening, separate the first and second story of the building. Above the entryway is wrought iron signage stating the function of the building, *HEADQUARTERS MONTANA NATIONAL GUARD*. One wood-frame, 16-by-16-light, double casement window with a 16-light fixed transom is located above each set of doors at the second story level.

There are three bays, stepped back from each other, on either side of the entry, and each contains wood frame, 12-by-12 light double casements. There is a fixed, 12-light transom above each window. Decorative recessed serrated ribbed panels separate the windows between the first and second stories. The bays located on either side of the central bay each contain three windows at both the first and second story levels. The middle flanking bays contain one window at each level, and the end bays contain two windows at each level. On the east side, the middle bay's east wall contains a small window at the first story level.

The east elevation consists of two bays – the southern bay features architectural details similar to those on the façade, including the decorative recessed panels set between the 12-by-12-light double casement windows. The windows display fixed, 12-light transoms above. There are eight openings across the first story of the bay, each containing a window except at the center and the third opening from the south. The central opening contains a modern overhead garage door that leads to the drill hall in the interior of the building. This modern door covers the original wooden, paneled door beneath. The other contains original double doors, each with 10 lights and brass hardware. Each of the nine window openings at the second story contains 12-by-12 light casements, except over the double doors, where large, 16-by-16 double casements, with a fixed 16-light transom, are set lower than the other windows and open to the interior stairwell. Five transoms on the east elevation have been modified to accommodate air conditioners. The north bay of the east elevation contains no fenestration. Due to the slope of the property on the north side, the basement level of the building is revealed and projects eastward from the rest of the building.

The west elevation contains five, 12 x 12 light, double casements with a fixed, 12-light transom above, at both the first and second story levels. One window opening on the first level has been in-filled. A decorative, saw-toothed panel, identical to those on the south (front) elevation, separates the windows between the first and second stories. In 1989, a two-story stair tower was constructed at the north end of the west elevation. Fenestration on the tower is limited to a single, metal door at the basement level. Decorative bands, similar to those at the roof level of the original building are located above the second story and at the water table level.

The north (rear) elevation contains three above ground levels. The first level projects from the rest of the building and features a flat roof topped with ventilation and heating machinery. A modern, narrow, flat roofed overhang runs nearly the length of the elevation, and is enclosed at the east end and off center to the west. A single modern metal door provides entrance to the basement level at the east enclosure. Modern double doors are located in the enclosed segment off center to the west. The overhang covers the original basement extension, and two in-filled window openings on its east side. The west end of the elevation features a modern ramp area, from which pedestrians can enter the building through metal double doors at both the basement and sub-basement levels. Six decorative square columns support the ramp's roof structure, and feature reversed chamfers on each corner. The first and second stories feature six original 10 x 6 light windows, spaced across both the second and third levels of the building.

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Interior:

The interior of the Montana State Arsenal, Armory and Drill Hall has been modified over the years to meet health and safety requirements and the changing needs of the Montana National Guard. Integrity of materials, workmanship and design has been severely compromised on all four levels of the interior. Nevertheless, many unique historic interior architectural features remain.

The ground level consists of 14,577 square feet. The entrance, with its original entry doors and hardware, leads into a public foyer with a recessed ceiling. The foyer leads directly into the drill hall/gymnasium that has been little modified since completion in 1942. The drill hall measures 102 X 73 feet and was built to:

make possible practically any indoor operation required of a drill hall. If necessary, even automobiles and trucks can be driven onto the floor. One of the outstanding features of the armory is the heavy wood block floor in the drill hall. The floor, which is virtually composed of two by fours set on end in contrasting design. Construction experts point out that the laying of this floor was particularly skillful and intricate piece of work. The blocks were laid with mastic without the use of nails and had to be fitted perfectly into place.²

Each of the floor's 2 x 4 blocks is 18 inches in length. The ceiling of the drill hall is supported by several steel beam, bow arch trusses. From these trusses, modern lighting hangs to illuminate the hall. An exterior entrance leads from the east-end of the drill hall to Main Street. This entrance was designed to allow vehicle access into the drill hall and it retains the original paneled overhead garage door. The Montana National Guard currently uses the drill hall for military formations, ceremonies, community events, and basketball games. The remainder of the ground level consists of offices for the Montana National Guard that have been modified over the years with contemporary suspended ceilings, fluorescent office lighting, modern doors and office partitions.

The second level consists of 7,266 square feet and is comprised of contemporary offices for the Montana National Guard. Suspended ceilings with fluorescent lights are found throughout the second level. Three unique historic features on the second level are the exterior, wireglass hipshaped skylights. These contain an interior lower, wood frame, 9 light, fixed window. The interior windows for the skylights were added during the modern era to increase energy efficiency.

The basement level includes 24,752 square feet and has been modified to accommodate office space, a mailroom, a supply room, and storage areas to meet the mission of the Montana National Guard today. Formerly, the basement level was used for vehicle and equipment storage, and included an indoor rifle range. Today, only the supply/arms room retains the use and appearance from the historic period. The supply/arms room is a windowless, concrete walled room with a vaulted door constructed by the Mosler Safe Company.

The sub-basement level consists of 10,236 square feet and was initially designed for vehicle storage. This level has been renovated to accommodate offices for the State of Montana Disaster and Emergency Services and the dispatcher for the Montana Highway Patrol. The original vehicle ramp leading into this former garage area has been modified into a presentation/conference room.

² *The Helena Independent*, Saturday, August 1, 1942

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Integrity

The Montana State Arsenal, Armory and Drill Hall is an excellent example of early Art Moderne architecture. The exterior appearance retains a high degree of integrity of setting, location, workmanship, materials and design. The interior of the building, on the other hand, retains some unique architectural details such as the main entrance foyer, the drill hall, the second floor skylights and the arms/supply room in the second level basement. The interior generally lacks integrity and does not contribute to the overall historic significance of the building. However, some amount of integrity would be restored by reversal of later partitioning and lowered ceilings.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria: A and C

Areas of Significance: MILITARY;ARCHITECTURE

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): n/a

Period(s) of Significance: 1942-1951

Significant Person(s): n/a

Significant Dates: 1942, 1947

Cultural Affiliation: n/a

Architect/Builder: Norman DeKay, Architect
Works Progress Administration, Builder**Narrative Statement of Significance****Summary**

The Montana State Arsenal, Armory and Drill Hall is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, at the state level under Criterion A for its association with the activities of the Montana National Guard, as well as the Works Progress Administration in Helena. The building is also eligible for listing on the National Register at the State level under Criterion C. Designed by Helena architect Norman DeKay, it is an excellent example of early Art Moderne architecture as executed in a public works building. The building retains excellent integrity of setting, location, materials, workmanship and design.

The Armory has served as State Headquarters for the Montana National Guard since its construction in 1942. The first Helena National Guard Armory had been constructed in 1890 but was destroyed in the October 1935 earthquake. Following the earthquake, Helena guardsmen conducted drills in the basement of the Montana State Capitol. The Regular Army conducted an inspection of Montana National Guard facilities in 1938 and found them to be totally inadequate for drill purposes or equipment storage. The State Legislature created the Montana Armory Board in 1939 to sell bonds to raise money for a new armory in Helena and six other National Guard units located around the state. In 1941, construction on the Helena Armory began with money raised by the Montana Armory board, Federal and State appropriations and through labor managed by the Works Progress Administration (WPA).

The Montana National Guard was officially designated March 10, 1885 by the Territorial legislature with General C. W. Turner serving as Adjutant General under Governor Preston Leslie.³ The Montana National Guard is Montana's only recognized State Militia, with the Governor serving as Commander in Chief. Historically and today, the Montana National Guard serves during peacetime and may be activated into federal service by the President in time of war or national emergency. Soldiers of the Montana National Guard have directly served the citizens of Montana on active duty beginning with Butte riots in 1894, the forest fires of 1910, the Butte Miners strike in 1914 and numerous state activations for forest fires, floods and strikes throughout the 20th century. Today, Montana National Guard soldiers are called to active federal service throughout the world for peacekeeping missions and Operations Other Than War in Hungary, Bosnia and Kuwait. Those Montana National Guard units activated for state or federal service have typically deployed from Helena, Montana's capital city, and State Headquarters for the Montana National Guard. The Montana State Arsenal, Armory and Drill Hall reflects the strong presence and history of the National Guard in Montana, and serves as a proud symbol of the Montana National Guard.⁴

³ Richard Lacey, *Montana Militia: A History of Montana's Volunteer Forces, 1867-1976*, (Dillon, MT: Dillon Tribune Examiner Press, 1976), p. 19.

⁴ Orlan Svingen, ed. *Montana National Guard History Project*, unpublished draft, (Pullman, WA: Washington State University, April 9, 1999).

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History of the Montana's Citizen Volunteers (1867-1887)

The first call for a volunteer armed force in Montana came in 1867 following conflict with Indian tribes led by Sioux warrior, Red Cloud. Indian attacks of miners and settlers enroute to Virginia City, Montana Territory, via the Bozeman Trail threatened settlers across the Gallatin valley. Acting territorial governor, Thomas Francis Meagher, requested that Regular Army troops protect settlers, but this was denied. Meagher then requested permission to raise a militia from General Sherman, who approved a temporary force. The first citizen soldiers of the Montana Territorial Militia built forts and fought the Sioux, with the assistance of Crow Indians who allied with the US Government.⁵

The second call for a Montana citizen militia came in July 1877 during the Nez Perce War. Hostilities had erupted between the U.S. Army and the non-treaty bands of Nez Perce Indians at the battles of Whitebird and Clearwater in Idaho. Believing their fight was only with the soldiers in Idaho, the Nez Perce sought a peaceful escape to Canada through Montana Territory. With approximately 800 men, women and children, and nearly 2000 horses, they traveled along the Lolo Pass, engaging the U.S. 7th Cavalry and Montana volunteers in battles at the Big Hole, Camas Meadows, Fort Claggett and other skirmishes. Finally, surrounded by U.S. troops at the Bear Paw Mountains less than 40 miles south of Canada, Chief Joseph surrendered in October. During the Nez Perce War, 442 citizen volunteers served with the Regular Army; the U.S. War Department recognized their service in 1881.⁶

Early History of the Montana National Guard (1887 – 1918)

Efforts to establish a military resumed and in 1885, the Montana Territorial Legislature passed House Bill No. 20 authorizing a National Guard. Organized as the First Montana Infantry, its first unit was located in Virginia City. By 1888, Montana's National Guard was commanded by the Governor, consisted of nine companies and was headquartered in Helena. Its first annual encampment was a three-day event at the Helena fairgrounds, beginning on August 21, 1888.

In 1889, the Territory achieved statehood and soon a fierce battle waged over which community to designate as the state capital. The heavyweight contenders were mining smelter town, Anaconda, and the bustling, wealthy community of Helena. After an embittered election in November 1894, Helena prevailed, becoming the influential seat of state government.⁷ During and following this period, a myriad of events occurred nationally, regionally, and locally that resulted in the state militia being permanently headquartered in Helena.

Each time the Montana National Guard mustered into state or federal service, soldiers journeyed to Helena to form-up as a unified element. The Legislature authorized the building of an armory, located on the corner of Euclid and Wilson in Helena, which was completed and ready for occupancy by 1890. By 1892 the Montana Guard had ten infantry companies, two cavalry troops and one artillery battery. Company C Infantry, Cavalry Troop A, and the artillery battery were located in Helena. The other companies were placed in: Great Falls – Company A; Butte – Companies B, F, and G; Anaconda – Company K; Dillon – Company E; Bozeman – Company H; and Virginia City – Company D.⁸

⁵ Lacey, p. 11.

⁶ Lacey, p. 18.

⁷ For an in-depth discussion of the run-off between Helena and Anaconda, see Michael P. Malone, Richard B. Roeder, and William L. Lang, *Montana: A History of Two Centuries*, University of Washington Press: Seattle, pp. 211-214.

⁸ Lacey, p. 36.

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That same year, through land and money donations from local citizens, the Regular Army established Fort Benjamin Harrison, west of Helena. The fort was built during the final years of the Indian wars, in response to the growing tensions instigated by the growing interest in the Ghost Dance movement that culminated with the massacre of the Sioux Indians at Wounded Knee, South Dakota (1890 – 1891). On September 25, 1895, 150 soldiers from Companies B and E, 22nd Infantry Regiment, and a hospital corps detachment arrived in Helena, from Fort Assiniboine (near Havre, Montana). The fort further established Helena as the state military headquarters. Renamed William Henry Harrison, the fort was abandoned in 1913; the U.S. Public Health Service acquired it in 1919 for a hospital facility.

First Battalion, First Montana Infantry Regiment was first placed on ‘State Active Duty’ on July 4, 1894 to quell riots in the mining city of Butte. This call-up made a deep impression, leading the 1894 Legislature to approve funding for annual encampments at old Fort Ellis, near Bozeman, during the summers of 1895 and 1896.⁹ In 1898, following America’s Declaration of War against Spain, Montana raised volunteers for one infantry regiment and one cavalry squadron. On May 2, Montana mustered the First Montana Volunteer Infantry Regiment with 50 officers and 1,019 enlisted men; other Montana citizen soldiers filled out the 3rd U.S. Volunteer Cavalry Regiment. Hostilities ended on Aug. 12 and the 3rd U.S. Volunteer Cavalry Regiment troopers were mustered out of service on Sept. 8, 1898, without seeing action.

However, when the First Montana Volunteer Infantry returned to Helena for encampment near the Broadwater Hotel at “Camp Robert B. Smith,” they were again mustered into federal service in response to the Philippine Insurrection. Departing on May 25, 1898, they rounded-out the Third Brigade Independent Division, Philippine Islands Expeditionary Forces and fought in the battles of Caloccan, Malolos and numerous smaller engagements. Of the original enrollment of enlisted men, 277 were discharged for sickness and other causes, 21 were killed in battle, 13 died from disease, one drowned and 121 were wounded in battle. The regiment returned in October 1899 with 676 of its original members.

In 1901, the First Montana Infantry was redesignated as the 2nd Montana Infantry Regiment, taking two years to complete regimental organization. By this time, Fort Ellis had deteriorated to the point that it was no longer usable; in 1906, summer encampment was held at Camp Tacoma, Washington. That same year and again in 1908, the Dick Militia Act was amended to improve equipment, armaments, organization and annual encampments. Further, recognizing the National Guard as a Federal force and a reserve of the Regular Army in times of national emergency, the federal government required that units hold drills 24 times a year and submit to annual Regular Army inspections. This enhanced the National Guard’s standing as a professional force. Taking this to heart, Montana’s Guard resumed encampments at Fort Harrison near Helena in 1911 and 1912, forever abandoning plans for future use of Fort Ellis.¹⁰

Montana Governor Samuel V. Stewart called the 2nd Montana Infantry to State Active Duty in the summer of 1910 to fight wild land fires, a service for which Montana’s soldiers would muster many times throughout the 20th century. They were called again in 1914, to manage the Butte Miners Strike. Entering Butte on Sept. 2, the troops occupied the town, implemented martial law, and restored order without firing a single shot. With the last soldiers leaving on Nov. 12, there was no disorder in the mining city throughout their presence.

⁹ Lacey, p. 23.

¹⁰ Lacey, p. 36.

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Montana's National Guard was next called to Federal Service on July 1, 1916, in response to a threat of war from Mexico's Poncho Villa. Following Villa's attack at Columbus, New Mexico in March of 1916, when he killed 17 American citizens, President Woodrow Wilson ordered 6,000 Regular Army soldiers to pursue him into Mexico. On May 5, 1916, Villa's command attacked Glenn Springs and Boquillas, Texas, driving President Wilson to order 5,000 National Guardsmen from Texas, New Mexico and Arizona to guard the U.S.- Mexican border from further incursions. One month later, on June 18, Wilson ordered additional National Guardsmen from across the country to safeguard the Mexican border. Assembling at Fort Harrison to recruit new soldiers and train for deployment, the 2nd Montana Infantry departed from Helena on July 2, arriving in Douglas, Arizona, on July 6, 1916. Their mission was to protect the Calumet and Phelps Dodge smelters. The Calumet belonged to Montana Copper King, W. A. Clark.¹¹ Three months of encampment, military training and guarding, the Montanans departed on October 11 for Helena and Fort Harrison, to muster out of service two weeks later. Their respite from federal service, however, was short lived.

Prior to declaring war on Germany, President Wilson called selected National Guard units, including the 2nd Montana Infantry, into service on March 25, 1917. Companies began arriving at Fort Harrison for swearing in on April 7, and the regiment was re-designated as the 163rd Infantry Regiment of the 41st Division. Nicknamed the "Sunset Division" for their distinctive shoulder insignia, the 41st Division consisted of Guard units from Idaho, Montana, Washington and Wyoming. Once in France, the 41st was re-designated as a replacement division with its soldiers reassigned to the 1st, 26th, 32nd, and 42nd Divisions. While Montana's 163rd Infantry Regiment never fought as a cohesive unit, its soldiers participated in some of the heaviest fighting of the war. Casualties included 116 killed and over 308 wounded.¹² As Montana's Guardsmen mustered out of service, the Montana National Guard found itself in a condition similar to that at the end of the Spanish-American War.

Rebuilding the Montana National Guard (1919 – 1940)

After World War I, the Montana National Guard had no enlisted personnel on the rolls and all the equipment had been used for the war effort.¹³ To bolster the National Guard, the National Defense Act of 1920 determined that it was a component of the Regular Army; the Federal Government provided wages and equipment and the Regular Army furnished instructors. Each state was required to fund and maintain armories, drill-halls and equipment storage. The 163rd Infantry Regiment began organizing companies and established its regimental headquarters in Helena. Summer encampments were held at Fort Missoula in 1922 and at Fort Lewis, Washington in 1923, until summer encampments resumed at Fort Harrison in 1924 after the state purchased 600 additional training acres. In 1925, Fort Harrison expanded facilities, assigning each company a brick kitchen "mess" for encampments.

¹¹ Lacey, p. 40.

¹² Lacey, p. 46.

¹³ Lacey, p. 57.

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Construction of the Montana Arsenal, Armory, and Drill Hall

In October 1935, the original Helena armory, built in 1890 and home for Regimental Headquarters Company, was destroyed in an earthquake. Headquarters Company immediately began patrolling the streets of Helena and guarding military equipment and supplies. The destruction of the State Arsenal forced Helena Guardsmen to drill in the basement of the State Capitol; other Montana Guard units also suffered from inadequate drill halls and equipment storage facilities.¹⁴ To solve this problem, the 1939 Montana Legislature established the Montana Armory Board to sell bonds for funds to construct armories and drill halls in Helena, Bozeman, Billings, Harlowton, Poplar, Kalispell and Glasgow. Built in the early 1940s by the Works Progress Administration (WPA), these facilities were financed through the sale of Armory Board bonds and through state and federal appropriations.

Norman DeKay, the only architect working in Helena at the time, was hired to design the building.¹⁵ Construction on the State Arsenal, Drill Hall and Armory in Helena cost \$273,704 and was completed in 1942.¹⁶ The Headquarters element moved in that fall, performing administrative duties in the near empty building while the 163rd Infantry Regiment continued service in the war.¹⁷ Activities in the Arsenal included: unit formations, drill and ceremony, equipment training, arms maintenance, physical fitness and community events in the gymnasium and drill hall, small arms training and firing in the basement firing range, supply functions in the basement vaulted arms room, and administration functions and classroom training throughout the office areas.

The Montana National Guard in World War II (1940 – 1945)

World War II erupted in 1939 and while the U.S. was officially neutral, National Guards nationwide prepared for war. In September 1940, the 163rd Infantry Regiment entered federal service for one year of training to prepare for possible U.S. entry in the war. On September 21 and 22, 1940, the 163rd Infantry Regiment departed from Helena for Camp Murray, to become again part of the 41st Division. After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the 41st Division deployed to the Olympic Peninsula to halt the expected Japanese invasion of the American homeland. When this invasion did not materialize, the division embarked for Port Moresby, New Guinea in the last days of September 1942 to reinforce Australian troops in the Pacific Theatre of Operations (PTO). Victorious in the Buna-Sanananda campaign, the first decisive victory over the Japanese in World War II,¹⁸ the 41st Division also participated in the island-hopping campaigns at Aitape, Arare, Biak and the Philippine Islands. Following the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the division was preparing to invade the Japanese mainland when the emperor surrendered on August 19, 1945. Inactivated and shipped back to the United States on January 1, 1946, the 163rd Infantry Regiment, with only 20% of its soldiers being from Montana, returned home five years after they had been activated.¹⁹

¹⁴ Svingen.

¹⁵ In 1934, DeKay designed Helena High School on Rodney Street. The school is constructed of concrete, and features clean lines, symmetry, and massing similar to the armory building. Between 1937 and 1938, he teamed with Missoula architect Roscoe C. Hugenin and designed the Renaissance Revival style Pharmacy and Chemistry Building as well as the addition to the Natural Science Building, both on The University of Montana - Missoula Campus.

¹⁶ *Helena Independent*, Saturday, August 1, 1942.

¹⁷ *Montana National Guard Annual*, 1940

¹⁸ Lacey, p. 72

¹⁹ Lacey, p. 79.

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Rebuilding the Montana National Guard (1945-1951)

Again, the end of war created a situation reminiscent of the Spanish-American War and World War I. Soldiers called to federal service for the war were discharged and were no longer carried on the National Guard rolls. Rebuilding the Montana National Guard began in spring, 1947, when the 163rd Regimental Combat Team formed. At this time the Montana Air National Guard also stood up, with the 186th Fighter Squadron located at the Great Falls airport. General Spencer H. Mitchell, the Adjutant General commanded both the Army and Air National Guard from the Montana Arsenal, Armory, and Drill Hall. Although Guard units across the country were called into federal service for the Korean War, 1950-1953, the Montana Army National Guard was not activated.

However, the newly created Montana Air National Guard mobilized in April, 1950 for service. Deploying first for Georgia and then California, the Squadron was split and its members reassigned to other units. Some Montana airmen ultimately did serve in Korea while others served at Air Force bases in Montana, Ohio and Iceland. Members of the 186th Fighter Squadron, Montana Air National Guard, returned home January 1, 1953.²⁰

Since its 1942 opening, the Montana State Arsenal, Armory and Drill Hall in Helena has served as the headquarters for the Montana National Guard. The Montana National Guard has reorganized to effectively meet its state and federal mission several times since it was re-established in 1947. Today, the Montana National Guard in Helena employs more than 250 full-time personnel, as well as 630 part-time citizen soldiers, and its annual, \$41.7 million operating budget helps to sustain the healthy economy of the city. The State of Montana assumed ownership of the Arsenal, Armory and Drill Hall in 1953, but currently it is still occupied by the Montana National Guard. The Montana State Arsenal, Armory and Drill Hall stands as a proud symbol of both the history of the National Guard in Montana, and of its long association with the State of Montana.

The Works Progress Administration

Established by executive order in May 1935, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) was a federal agency created to provide paying jobs for unemployed workers through various make-works projects. Laborers used for these projects had lost their jobs during the Great Depression, a worldwide economic slump that began in 1929. The WPA was part of the New Deal For America, President Franklin D. Roosevelt's program of economic recovery during the depression. Renamed the Work Projects Administration in 1939, its projects involved mostly construction projects, such as highways, bridges, parks, airport runways, public swimming pools, and county fairgrounds, schools, museums, stadiums and National Guard armories.²¹

²⁰ Lacey, p. 84.

²¹ 1 William W. Bremer, "Works Progress Administration," Discovery Channel School, original content provided by World Book Online, <http://www.discoveryschool.com/homeworkhelp/worldbook/atozhistory/w/610140.html>, 12/20/2000; Diana Everett, "Historic National Guard Armories: A Brief, Illustrated Review of the Past Two Centuries," U.S. Department of Defense, National Guard Bureau, Historical services Division, n.d., p. 33.

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Armory construction was an important aspect for the New Deal make-work program in many states, and was further supported by the War Department, which anticipated an outbreak of war. The armory-building program would result in additional trained citizen soldiers; the nation's military strength had fallen to a scant 130,000 Regular Army and 190,000 National Guard men. In Montana, seven armories were authorized.

The WPA was the major agency in the armory building program, and was charged with building smaller, one unit armories, meant to be designed by local architects and built by unskilled labor. The infusion of cash into WPA projects across the country made an economic impact on hundreds of communities, who competed for the funds. To qualify for a WPA project, cities had to meet three criteria: 1) projects had to meet a well-defined community need; 2) projects had to be sponsored by a public body, which had to provide 10 – 25 percent of the cost in cash and/or materials; and 3) 90 percent of the laborers had to be unemployed employable workers who were on the relief rolls. Compensation, \$24 a month, was based on 130 work hours per month. For the Helena Armory, the WPA contributed labor, design ideas and federal monies.²²

Before the WPA was disbanded in 1943, it had provided employment for about 8.5 million people on 1.4 million individual projects, expending more than \$11 billion. In its 7 1/2 years, the WPA remodeled more than 500 existing armories and facilitated the construction of 400 more. Many are now under the control of local communities and have been adapted for civic uses such as basketball games, community dances, banquet halls, public auditoriums - the intended uses for armories constructed under the New Deal.²³

Architectural Significance

Following the 1935 earthquake that destroyed the original armory in Helena, it was clear that a new building was required. The 1939 state legislature established the Armory Board to sponsor the seven Montana armory projects; its five members sold bonds to finance their 10-25 percent. Construction began on the Helena Armory in 1940 and was completed in 1942.²⁴ The result was the headquarters building, a typical WPA, early Moderne style building.

In keeping with the philosophy of the New Deal, publicly financed armories were no longer elegant, elaborate, expensive masterpieces. Utilizing local architects, often with a committee of Guard commanders, new armories followed New Deal tendencies toward simplified decoration in architectural style; combining characteristics from both Art Deco and Art Moderne styles to create a distinctive-looking structure. Elements of the Moderne style included massive, blocky buildings with minimal decoration, such as buttresses, rounded corners, strong horizontal massing, multiple horizontal banding in rows or lines. Characteristics of Art Deco included vertical elements of geometric ornamentation, tall and narrow casement windows, strong vertical stone buttresses projecting upward, and gabled and/or set back walls.²⁵ The Armory in Helena has more of a Moderne design – concrete construction with its horizontal massing emphasized by decorative bands, yet it contains elements of the earlier Art Deco design in its detailing – recessed bays, vertical fluting of the pilasters, and zigzag squares applied to the walls under the windows.

²² Everett, pp. 34-35.

²³ Everett, pp. 33, 39-40.

²⁴ Lacey; p. 58.

²⁵ Everett, pp. 37-39.

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The Montana Arsenal, Armory, and Drill Hall is significant as an outstanding example of the medium-sized armories constructed under the auspices of the Works Progress Administration. Its sleek, simplified Moderne design with Art Deco elements is not only typical of WPA armories around the country, but one of the best examples of the style in Montana. Indeed it is one of only seven WPA armories constructed in the state. Only the armories in Bozeman and Kalispell reflect similar design and continue to be used for their original purposes.

Located on a prominent corner of the main transportation routes through town, the Armory is flanked by city recreational parks, the private Catholic school - Carroll College, the historic downtown and city center, and historic residential sections. While the massive, blocky, early Moderne design, typical of WPA buildings is rare in Montana, there are two other structures in Helena that were also built by the WPA during the same time period: the Helena Middle School and the FBI Regional Headquarters. They too are wonderful representations from that time period.

The Montana State Arsenal, Armory and Drill Hall is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, at the state level under Criterion A for its association with the activities of the Montana National Guard, as well as the Works Progress Administration. The building is also eligible for listing on the National Register at the State level under Criterion C. Designed by Helena architect Norman DeKay, it is an excellent example of Moderne architecture as executed in a public works building. The building retains excellent integrity of setting, location, materials, workmanship and design.

9. Major Bibliographic References

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository:
Montana Army National Guard

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property: approximately 9.96 acres

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	12	420800	5161040
B	12	421060	5160870
C	12	421020	5160820
D	12	420720	5160820

Legal Location (Township, Range & Section(s)): Township 10 North, Range 3 West, SE ¼ NE ¼ NW ¼ Section 30

Verbal Boundary Description

The property is bounded to the south by Lyndale Avenue, to the west by Main Street, to the east by the Burlington Northern Railroad right of way, and to the north by the fence line between the armory and the YMCA property. See attached topographic map.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries are drawn to include the property historically associated with the building and which evoke its integrity of setting, location, feeling, and association.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Sgt. First Class C. Milo McLeod, Capt. Lori Hampa - Chamberlin
organization: Montana Army National Guard date: December 2001
street & number: 1100 North Main telephone: (406) 841 3007
city or town: Helena state: MT zip code: 59601

Property Owner

name/title: State of Montana, Department of Military Affairs, Montana National Guard
street & number: 1100 North Main telephone: (406) 841 3009
city or town: Helena state: MT zip code: 59601

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Orthophotoquad Detail

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