

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name: Hawthorne U.S.O. Building
other names/site number: Hawthorne Community Center

2. Location

street & number 950 E Street not for publication N/A
city or town Hawthorne vicinity N/A
state Nevada code NV county Mineral code 021 zip code 89415

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally X statewide locally. See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Ronald M. Jensen, SHPO
Signature of certifying official/Title

1-6-05
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

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
- removed from the National Register

 other (explain):

[Handwritten Signature]
Signature of Keeper

2/18/05
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: SOCIAL Sub: Civic

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: SOCIAL Sub: Civic

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

roof Composition shingle

walls Synthetic masonry veneer over wood

other _____

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.) See continuation sheets.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Military
Entertainment/Recreation

Period of Significance 1941-1945

Significant Dates 1941

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above) N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder _____

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.) See continuation sheets.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets)

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

Name of repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .69 acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>11</u>	<u>358600</u>	<u>4265880</u>	3	—	—
2	—	—	—	4	—	—

— See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mella Rothwell Harmon
organization State Historic Preservation Office date January 5, 2005
street & number 100 N. Stewart Street telephone 775-684-3447
city or town Carson City state NV zip code 89701

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Mineral County
street & number P.O. Box 1450 telephone 775-945-2446
city or town Hawthorne state NV zip code 89415

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 1

Hawthorne USO Building, Hawthorne, Mineral County, Nevada

7. Description

The Hawthorne USO Building, which opened in January 1942, is simple and unornamented. The 90-foot-by-160-foot building fills two town lots at 950 E Street, Hawthorne's main thoroughfare. The building is a standard USO Type D Federal Recreation Building, laid out in a modified I plan. The center portion of the building, which houses the social hall and stage, is a rectangular, gable-roofed space. Two shallow wings containing the back-stage area extend to each side at the rear of the building. There are no windows on the eastern rear elevation. The front entry, which contains the lobby, has a half-hipped roof that abuts the central social hall. Bi-laterally symmetrical wings with hipped roofs extend on either side of the entry. The northern section contains restrooms, and the southern portion contains offices and the kitchen.

The front elevation contains a row of metal-framed windows on each side of a set of double metal doors. There are two metal-framed windows in each of the front wings. The only other windows in the building are three small ones along the south elevation of the central hall, and two in the south wall of the front wing. Covered wooden doors lead into the social hall just in front of the back-stage extensions.

Two brick chimneys extend above the roof line. One pierces the peak of the gable in the central social hall, and the other is appended to the rear of the north front wing. The roof is covered in composition shingle, and the exterior walls are covered with a green synthetic masonry veneer installed in the 1950s or 1960s. The building was originally sided in white clapboards, which remain within the front and rear gables. The building is devoid of architectural ornamentation or style-defining details.

Integrity

The Hawthorne USO Building has undergone several alterations. The two most obvious are the addition of the exterior synthetic masonry veneer in the 1950s or early 1960s when the building served the City of Hawthorne, and the modification of the entry, which replaced the flat roof with a hipped one. According to Dr. Everhard Smith, history professor at the University of North Carolina, Wilmington, at least two other USO buildings have changed their rooflines because the flat roofs were subject to leaking. Nevada has further concerns with snow loads. Dr. Smith cited the USO building in DeRidder, Louisiana, which was listed in the National Register in 1992 and serves currently as a civic center. The building has a modified roofline and has been clad in vinyl siding (Dr. Everhard Smith, personal communication, July 3, 2004). Notwithstanding the changes to the Hawthorne USO, the building is still clearly recognizable as a Type D federal recreation building. It fully retains integrity of workmanship, location, setting, feeling, and association. Mitigating any loss of integrity is the fact that the building is the sole survivor of its type in Nevada, and a rare survivor nationally. Further, the Hawthorne USO Building continues to serve the community, which was the intention of the federal building program.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 2

Hawthorne USO Building, Hawthorne, Mineral County, Nevada

8. Significance

The Hawthorne USO Building is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the state level of significance under criterion A, for its association with the history of Hawthorne and the West Coast US Naval Ammunition Depot, and with the purpose and activities of the USO in Nevada during World War II.

Hawthorne, Nevada

The town of Hawthorne, Nevada is located approximately 135 miles southeast of Reno, at an elevation of 4,300 feet. Hawthorne is situated in a basin surrounded by the Excelsior and Gillis mountain ranges on the north, east, and south, and the Wassuk Range, with 11,303-foot-high Mount Grant, on the west. Northwest of Hawthorne is 23-mile-long Walker Lake.

In 1880, plans were made for a narrow-gauge railroad to run from Mound House, Nevada to Keeler, California to serve the numerous mining districts along that route. The railroad was called the Carson and Colorado (C & C). The railroad's executives were also involved with the Virginia and Truckee Railroad (V & T), which served the internationally-famous Comstock Lode. By October 1880, H.M. Yerington, director and superintendent of the C & C, had chosen a townsite for a station south of Walker Lake. The townsite was one-mile square, laid out in the manner of Sacramento, California, and named after Yerington's friend William Hawthorne (Carlson 1974:131). Three tents were set up in advance of the railroad's arrival, consisting of a lodging house, a butcher shop, and a general store. The town was expected to boom after the railroad arrived, because it would then be a junction between the rail route and the new wagon road that ran southwest to Bodie, California. The wagon road was owned by the same men who were constructing the C & C and the road grade would be used to serve both purposes (Myrick 1962).

On April 7, 1881, the train tracks reached Hawthorne, 100 miles from the starting point in Mound House. A week later, the first townsite lots were offered for sale and more than 800 people, including Nevada Governor Kinkead, rode the excursion train to attend the auction. In anticipation of this big event, enterprising individuals set up tent saloons with grand names such as the Silver Palace, Bank Exchange, Big Bonanza, and the Field of Gold Cloth. In a three-hour period, 35 lots were auctioned, ranging in price from \$100 to \$195 (Myrick 1962). The Hawthorne Depot was built at the corner of F and Fifth Streets, and once regular train service started, the town began to grow. By mid-May 1881, a post office was established, and by the end of that month a water system was installed, running the extent of every street in town. Thirty houses had been built by the end of the summer and in 1882, the rail tracks were extended

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 3

Hawthorne USO Building, Hawthorne, Mineral County, Nevada

8. Significance

to Candelaria, Nevada. Hawthorne wrested the Esmeralda County seat from Aurora in 1883 and immediately began construction on a brick courthouse (James 1994).¹

In March 1900, the Carson and Colorado Railroad was purchased by Southern Pacific Railroad. Southern Pacific, a standard-gauge line, chose to run their tracks on the east side of Walker Lake, and they established a freight station at Thorne. The last train to Hawthorne ran on August 18, 1905, and the establishment of a rail yard in Mina, southeast of Hawthorne, later that year brought an end to Hawthorne's significance as a railroad trade and distribution center. Hawthorne was further insulted in 1907, when the Esmeralda county seat was moved to Goldfield, which was experiencing a mining boom. Hawthorne would reclaim county-seat status again in February 1911, however, when Mineral County was formed by an act of legislation. The 1880s county courthouse stood ready to resume its duties, but a fire that year destroyed nearly the entire town. Hawthorne's main industry after the railroad left was mining, which declined from 1912 to 1920. Hawthorne's population in 1910 was 471, but it decreased to 244 by 1920 (Hohmann and Ryden 1997).

In 1926, Hawthorne experienced another devastating fire, but a disaster across the country would prove to be Hawthorne's salvation. On June 10, 1926, Lake Denmark Naval Ammunition Depot in New Jersey exploded. Congress and the Department of the Navy decided a safer, more remote location for an ammunition depot must be found. A site outside of Hawthorne was selected due to its remoteness, the availability of federal land, and energetic lobbying on the part of Nevada's Congressional delegation. President Coolidge's Executive Order 4531 set aside 197 square miles (135,000 acres) for the West Coast US Naval Ammunition Depot, and ground-breaking ceremonies took place on July 24, 1928. The site for the facility was chosen because it was centrally located to all major west coast ports, it was geographically isolated with a mountainous perimeter that provided a degree of protection and safety from disaster, and the arid climate was favorable for weapons development and storage. The construction of the Depot had an immediate positive impact on Hawthorne's economy (Hohmann and Ryden 1997).

By 1930, Hawthorne's population had grown to 757, with the Depot contributing 72 military personnel and 90 civilian employees to the total. Improvements to Hawthorne's infrastructure to accommodate the increased population included the upgrading of the water system and the opening of Hawthorne's first movie theater in 1929 (Hohmann and Ryden 1997). The presence of the Depot helped Hawthorne through the Great Depression, but a number of President Roosevelt's New Deal programs were undertaken there to further help ameliorate joblessness. In October 1935, the first Works Progress Administration (WPA)

¹ The Mineral County Courthouse was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on January 29, 1982, and the Aurora Historic District was listed on July 30, 1974.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 4

Hawthorne USO Building, Hawthorne, Mineral County, Nevada

8. Significance, continued

projects were initiated, consisting mostly of road construction and repair. Other projects included courthouse repair and improvement, and curb and sidewalk construction (*Mineral County Independent*, October 23, 1935:1). The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) operated at least three companies in Mineral County. The CCC made a major contribution to the development and construction of the Ammunition Depot (Hohmann and Ryden 1997).

With portents of war late in the 1930s, activity at the Depot increased, as did Hawthorne's population, which had grown to 1,229 by 1940. The Hawthorne Depot was the principle naval ammunition plant on the west coast following the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, creating a need for its expansion. Between 1941 and 1944, the Depot was enlarged to include housing and support facilities for workers and their families. The housing development associated with the Depot was called Babbitt, and by 1944, the combined population of the Depot, Babbitt, and Hawthorne rose to 13,000 (Hohmann and Ryden 1997).

As the principle ammunition plant on the west coast, and as early as 1940, the area was flooded with military and civilian personnel. The town of Hawthorne was not equipped to handle the overflow crowd. Housing and infrastructure could not meet the demand. Pressures such as these were being felt in communities nation-wide that were associated with military installations. Two federal laws were passed to help ease the burdens that expansion of defense installations imposed on local governments. These laws, the Lanham Defense Housing Act of 1940, and the Lanham Community Facilities Act of 1941, were put forward by Texas Congressman, Frederick G. Lanham. The Defense Housing Act provided dwellings near military bases and defense plants, and was most likely the impetus behind the construction of the Babbitt Housing Development. The Community Facilities Act provided assistance with infrastructure needs, such as off-base housing, water supplies, sewage, welfare facilities, and day-care centers for women working in the defense industry (Garraty 1981:459). Federal funds for recreation centers for military personnel were made available, as well, under the Defense Public Works Act (*Mineral County Independent*, October 1, 1941).

By November 1941, Hawthorne was receiving benefits under the Defense Public Works Act in the form of a \$45,000 grant for the USO building, and by February 1942, Hawthorne was receiving aid under the Community Facilities Act, including a sewage treatment plant and expanded hospital facilities (*Mineral County Independent* October 1, 1941, February 25, 1942, and April 8, 1942). Hawthorne's schools also received assistance from the Communities Facilities Act in the form of additions to the high school and the elementary school. Grant applications for these two expansion projects may have been submitted some time late in 1941, but by early 1942, both projects were in need of increased funding levels (*Mineral County Independent* January 14, 1942).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 5

Hawthorne USO Building, Hawthorne, Mineral County, Nevada

8. Significance, continued

Some Hawthorne citizens believed that construction of the USO building was taking away from the much-needed funding for school expansion, but a federal grant to expand the Sixth Street Elementary School² was approved by President Roosevelt on February 16, 1942 in the amount of \$28,504, with grant funds coming through the Defense Public Works Act and the Federal Works Agency (*Mineral County Independent* April 8, 1942). This was an increase of more than \$11,000 over the original amount requested, and it served to appease the concerns of the citizens over the USO building.

Federal funding to compensate Hawthorne for the effects of the Depot continued throughout the war. On August 4, 1943, the *Mineral County Independent* offered a breakdown of funding received in Hawthorne through the Lanham Act. The total was \$383,500 and included the USO building, additions to the hospital, a deep-water well for the water system, a sewage disposal plant, a proposed new grammar school, and additions to the existing grade school. By the fall of 1944, the Mineral County grade-school enrollment exceeded 725. Even with expansions and a new school, there was over-population and split sessions were re-instituted for grades one and two, and the other grades were divided among the three schools (*Mineral County Independent* September 6, 1944). Mineral County schools continued to get federal funding through the Federal Works Agency to support maintenance of facilities throughout the war.

Following World War II, the Depot was responsible for the disposal of thousands of tons of munitions and activity remained fairly constant. Hawthorne voted to incorporate in 1946, as it sought non-war-related income sources. The Depot continued to be the major employer through the Korean Conflict in the early 1950s, but after the cease fire and the release of thousands of defense workers, the need to diversify Hawthorne's economic base became imperative. In 1956, Hawthorne disincorporated. Although its population remained somewhat constant, the population of Babbitt was shrinking. In 1977, the Naval Ammunition Depot was turned over to the Department of the Army and the community of Babbitt was slowly dismantled. Management of the Depot was privatized in 1980, but its role in the local economy had shrunk considerably. Today, Hawthorne remains the Mineral County seat, and although the economy continues to be modest, it is more diversified than at any time in its history, focusing on tourism and mining (Hohmann and Ryden 1997).

² The Sixth Street School was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on October 7, 1999.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 6

Hawthorne USO Building, Hawthorne, Mineral County, Nevada

8. Significance, continued

The U.S.O.

By 1941, the war in Europe had been raging for two years and although many Americans did not want the United States to be dragged into the conflict, the government was preparing for that eventuality. Even before America officially entered the war, following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, President Franklin Roosevelt had addressed the need for organized recreation for the growing U.S. Armed Forces. Roosevelt determined that the recreational requirements of the military would best be served by private organizations. The United Service Organizations (USO) was formed in February 1941, to answer the President's call to coordinate civilian war efforts to ensure that such services were not overlooked or duplicated. Six civilian agencies made up the USO: the Salvation Army; the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA); the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA); National Catholic Community Services; National Travelers Aid; and the National Jewish Welfare Board (<http://www.frontiernet.net/~pendino/USO.htm>).

Although the USO was a civilian organization, it had the support of the federal government and the military. USO facilities were sponsored and funded under the Defense Public Works Act, the Federal Works Agency, and the Works Projects Administration,³ a hold-over from Roosevelt's depression-era New Deal programs. Throughout World War II, the USO was the channel for community participation in the war effort. Between 1940 and 1944, the number of U.S. troops grew from 50,000 to 12 million. USO centers were established near military installations as a "home away from home" for G.I.s. USO facilities opened in such unlikely places as churches, log cabins, museums, castles, barns, beach and yacht clubs, railroad sleeping cars, old mansions, and storefronts. In some communities, buildings were constructed by the federal government specifically to serve the USO's purposes (<http://www.frontiernet.net/~pendino/USO.htm>).

At its World War II peak, the USO had more than 3,000 clubs. USO programs were as varied as the places that housed them. Most aimed to provide off-duty recreation for the mostly male and young service personnel, some catered to women in uniform, and separate USO facilities served the African-American units. USO clubs were many things to many people: a place that provided child care for military wives; a place to dance and meet people; a place to see movies or receive religious counsel; a quiet place to talk or write letters; and a place to go for free coffee and doughnuts. As important as the

³The WPA's name changed from the Works Progress Administration to the Works Projects Administration in 1939 (Morris 1953:349).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 7

Hawthorne USO Building, Hawthorne, Mineral County, Nevada

8. Significance, continued

The Military and the USO in Nevada

USO's home front services were, the USO made history entertaining the troops overseas with its camp shows. From 1941 to 1947, USO camp shows presented 428,521 performances. More than 7,000 entertainers, from glamorous movie stars to unknown vaudevillians, braved the unspeakable horrors of war and deplorable physical conditions to bring cheer and a taste of home to America's military troops. All told, by the end of the war, the USO claimed more than 1.5 million volunteers, serving at home and abroad (<http://www.frontiernet.net/~pendino/USO.htm>).

The USO all but disbanded by 1947, but when the U.S. entered the Korean conflict in 1950, it regrouped and eventually opened 294 clubs worldwide. The camp shows went to Korea and to the Evac hospitals in Japan. By the time the truce was signed in 1953, the need for a full-time USO was realized. In the 1960s, USO productions came into American homes through Bob Hope's Christmas shows, which were televised from Vietnam beginning in 1964. When the draft ended in the 1970s, the need for the USO was questioned. A 1974 report by Department of Defense and other agencies clearly stated that the need for an organization that would ease isolation of the military from civilian influences was in the interest of the nation. Hence, in peace and war, the USO continues to serve U.S. military personnel, both at home and abroad (<http://www.frontiernet.net/~pendino/USO.htm>).

With more than 81 percent of Nevada's land (and vast air space above it) owned or managed by the federal government, it is no surprise that a number of military installations developed or grew in response to the rumblings of war in Europe in the late 1930s. The Navy and the Army Air Corps operated several facilities in the state, and with the rapid influx of servicemen, civilian personnel, and families, the need for USO support was recognized early on. Organizational responsibilities for USO operations were assigned by the regional USO office in San Francisco. In Nevada, Catholic Community Service was put in charge of the USO in Reno, Las Vegas, and Hawthorne, and the YMCA in Tonopah. These "professional units" were managed by trained directors and employed paid staff to carry out activities, although volunteers were vital to all USO units. Volunteer USO units operated in Ely, Carson City, Lovelock, Fallon, and Gabbs. The volunteer units, as the name implies, were managed and operated solely through volunteer labor and in donated facilities. With the exception of the volunteer units, money to run the USO units came from the federal government, corresponding to the need in each community. Additionally, money was raised each year according to quotas recommended by the national USO office. These funds were turned over to the federal government, although a small percentage was retained to assist USO efforts in local communities (Springmeyer 1945).

In southern Nevada, militarization started in June 1940, when the War Department began construction of a small marine auxiliary base at the Boulder City airport. The facility consisted of a hangar, storage tanks,

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 8

Hawthorne USO Building, Hawthorne, Mineral County, Nevada

8. Significance, continued

and a dormitory to house crews servicing military planes. In January 1941, the Army Air Corps signed a lease with the City of Las Vegas for use of the former Western Air Express airport. It was originally touted as a multi-use facility serving both military and commercial flights, but as the Air Corps proceeded to build \$25 million of runway improvements, hangars, barracks, and other facilities, it became clear that the military had other plans for the air field. When the War Department ultimately revealed its plans, it was learned that the former airport would be an air training school, with a million-acre shooting range to train army pilots and gunners for airborne combat. The facility was called the Las Vegas Gunnery School, but today it is known as Nellis Air Force Base. Another air base at Indian Springs, north of Las Vegas, operated during World War II, as did Camp Sibert, which was constructed at Boulder City to protect Boulder Dam (Moehring 1995:32-35).

At its World War II peak, nearly 15,000 military personnel passed through the southern Nevada military bases. The USO, of course, was in great demand and there were several facilities in the region. It ran the USO Travelers Aid, and white servicemen were served at a facility that opened in 1941 and closed in 1946. On Las Vegas's Westside, a separate USO for black soldiers was operated on Jefferson Avenue. For the Boulder City contingents the USO opened Camp Williston in 1943. Camp Williston only functioned for two years (David Millman, Nevada State Museum and Historical Society, Las Vegas, personal communication, December 26, 2001).

A report on the history of the Las Vegas USO club, prepared for the Nevada War History Committee, stated that the Las Vegas USO club was the first one established in Nevada. Run by the National Catholic Community Service, the Las Vegas unit began in October 1941 in the Parish Hall of St. Joan of Arc Catholic Church, as a separate building was being constructed at Fourth and Stewart Streets by the Federal Works Administration. The new facility was dedicated on March 21, 1942, two months after the dedication of Hawthorne's USO building. Las Vegas's USO building received much community backing. R.E. Griffith of the famous Last Frontier Hotel, was a major supporter. He invited the "top gunners" from the Las Vegas Air Field to his hotel each week for dinner, a practice carried out by several other large hotels in town. In addition, servicemen were invited into private homes for dinner during the holidays and other times (Anonymous n.d.[a]).

The Las Vegas USO offered numerous activities including religious services and counseling, indoor and outdoor recreation, educational instruction, and personal services (laundry, food, sewing and mending, showers, etc.). In addition to on-site activities and services, the Las Vegas USO operated the Junior Hostess Corps, a group of young women volunteers aged 16 to 35. The Elks Club and the Office of Civilian Defense provided temporary sleeping accommodations to servicemen at the famous Helldorado Village. More than 675,000 servicemen were served by the Las Vegas USO during World War II

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 9

Hawthorne USO Building, Hawthorne, Mineral County, Nevada

8. Significance, continued

(Anonymous n.d.[a]). Following the war, the Las Vegas USO building was turned over to the city for a recreation center for high school students. It has since been demolished.

Servicemen were not the only ones needing assistance during the war. Women, too, were flocking to Las Vegas to work in war jobs or to be near husbands and brothers in the military, and housing was hard to come by. To ease the problem, the USO set up housekeeping at 209 S. Third Street as the Women's Residence Club. Serving an average of 16 women and girls a night, the house offered dormitory-style sleeping, kitchen privileges, laundry facilities, a player piano, a radio-phonograph that made "letters on record," bookshelves with "every type of fiction by well known writers," a full recreation program, and the 24-hour housemother. At first, the recreational activities at the women's residence served workers at the Basic Magnesium plant, but soon Boulder City established its own USO club to serve Basic Magnesium, as well as the troops at Camp Sibert. Built with donated lumber, the Boulder City club opened in February 1943 (Anonymous n.d.[a]).

In the beginning, the World War II military was racially segregated, and so were USO facilities, where the number of African-American servicemen warranted serving them at all. The Las Vegas area drew black servicemen and war workers at the Basic Magnesium plant, where housing was segregated; whites in Victory Village, and blacks in Carver Park. Until the construction of Carver Park, newly-arrived black war workers, mostly from the deep South, lived in abominable conditions in tents and shacks. The Women's Division of the National Catholic Community Service recognized the need for social service among the black population. At first, the USO operated in a "a small two room shack on G and Van Buren Streets," but the City stepped in and provided an existing house at 311 Jefferson Avenue. Three to four thousand servicemen and workers used the Jefferson Avenue USO Club each month, for relaxation, entertainment, and education (Anonymous n.d.[b]).

From 1942 to 1946, the Army Air Corps operated the Tonopah Army Air Field, northwest of Las Vegas. The base was built for training P-39s, but they converted to B-24s when it was discovered that the P-39s could not perform efficiently at Tonopah's altitude of 6,200 feet. For a town of 1,500, the arrival of 5,000 military and civilian support personnel was a strain on facilities. Air field workers were housed in the Goldfield Hotel, south of Tonopah, and as far away as Bishop, California. Given the limited infrastructure in Tonopah, USO activities at the Tonopah Army Air Base functioned in buildings on-base, under YMCA management. In keeping with racial segregation, there were two separate USOs in Tonopah, one for whites and one for blacks, each managed by a trained director (Springmeyer n.d.). With the exception of two hangars and a severely modified office building, all buildings associated with Tonopah's air field have been moved to other locations or dismantled (Viola Whipperman, Central Nevada Historical Museum, Tonopah, personal communication, December 28, 2001).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 10

Hawthorne USO Building, Hawthorne, Mineral County, Nevada

8. Significance, continued

In 1942, the Civilian Aviation Administration and the Army Air Corps built four small airfields in central Nevada as part of the Western Defense Program to provide landing strips for American aircraft in the event of Japanese attack on West Coast air bases. These air strips were located near Fallon, Winnemucca, Minden, and Lovelock, but their use lasted only a year. In 1943, the Navy took over two 5,200-foot Army-built runways near Fallon. Construction began on barracks, hangars, air traffic control facilities, and target ranges, and on June 10, 1944, Naval Auxiliary Air Station Fallon was commissioned. The purpose of NAAS Fallon was to train, service, and support air groups deploying there for combat training. Training operations at NAAS Fallon peaked the summer of 1945. Housing and recreation were provided on-base, in the form of a housing project, a gymnasium, and a commissary. Following the Japanese surrender of July 1945, NAAS Fallon was placed in "reduced operation status," and by June 1, 1946, the NAAS designation was removed and the base was placed in "caretaker status."

NAAS Fallon apparently was served by a volunteer USO unit, although its location has not been identified. There was a branch of the American Women's Voluntary Services (AWVS) in Fallon, however, which operated in the "Mill End" building that had been built as the Frazzini Furniture Store in the early 1920s. The AWVS held dances, at which sandwiches and snacks were served, and cots were provided upstairs where servicemen could stay a night or two (Jane Pieplow, Churchill County Museum and Archives, personal communication, January 2, 2002). The AWVS was started in 1940 by Alice McLean, who modeled it after a British organization. The AWVS initially trained women to drive ambulances, give first-aid, and set up field kitchens and hospitals in response to the war threat. After America's entry into the war, AWVS trained women in cryptography, mechanics, translation, and other skills. More than 325,000 women volunteered with AWVS and did relief work at armed forces bases in the United States (www.gendergap.com/military).

While awaiting the construction of the Reno Army Air Base in Lemmon Valley, the Army functioned out of offices on Center Street in Reno. Operations moved to the new base in October 1942. The base operated under the Second Air Force to train signal companies, and two months after opening the base was given to the Air Service Command for joint use. The Air Transport Command's domestic division took over the base in July 1943 to train flight crews, and in October 1943, the ATC's Ferrying division used it to train cargo plane crews. Following the war, the Nevada Air National Guard took control of the base, and in 1951, it was renamed Stead Air Force Base (<http://www.renoairport.com/reno-stead>).

There were two USO centers in Reno during World War II. The facility at 50 Sierra Street, in the Elks Club, catered to white servicemen, and the one at 221 Lake Street served blacks. The Elks Club did not have a ballroom, so dances were held at the Century Club and at Tony's El Patio Ball Room. Raymond "Pappy" Smith, of the world-famous Harolds Club, paid for the weekly dances. The "rooms" on Lake

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 11

Hawthorne USO Building, Hawthorne, Mineral County, Nevada

8. Significance, continued

Street catered to black soldiers, many of whom came in from Herlong, California. Some passed through in transit (the facility was near the railroad tracks), and others came in from Lemmon Valley, Tonopah, Hawthorne, and Fallon (Springmeyer n.d.). The AWVS also operated in Reno. They opened a hospitality center at 110 Sierra Street in July 1943, in addition to their clubhouse at 210 Granite Street. The AWVS hospitality center offered a snack bar, writing paper, desks, and books (American Women's Voluntary Services var.).

One of the world's largest military reservations straddles the Utah-Nevada border. Development of the Wendover Air Base began in the late 1930s, following the German Blitzkrieg and the visible destructiveness of enemy air bombing operations. In early 1940, a board headed by the War Department began a search for potential bombing and gunnery ranges. As with the vast lands north of Las Vegas, the barren salt-flats of prehistoric Lake Bonneville showed promise for bomber crew training. Construction of the base began in November 1940 and was completed in 1941. The 306th Bombardment Group, flying B-17 Flying Fortresses, arrived at Wendover in April 1942. In December 1944, the base welcomed the 509th Bombardment Group, flying the B-29 Superfortresses. The 509th's activities at Wendover were under tight security, but the world would learn their secret when in August 1945, the United States dropped atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki from planes stationed at Wendover Air Base (HABS 1997).

The majority of the operational area of Wendover Air Base is located across the Utah state line outside of the town of Wendover. Nevada's counterpart town, West Wendover, sits just across the state line. West Wendover is not mentioned in the materials gathered for the War History Committee, although a letter from the Ely USO representative reported that servicemen from Wendover would come there for Saturday dances (Chapin 1945). The reason Wendover is not included in the War History report could be a lack of response from West Wendover's USO workers, or possibly the base was served by USO facilities across the state line in Utah. Also, since the activities at the Wendover base were top secret, it is likely that any interaction between the servicemen and the local citizenry was discouraged.

Other Nevada towns not directly associated with military installations had USO groups. Elko, Nevada, about 110 miles west of West Wendover, was a major stop on the east-west Southern Pacific Railroad. The local USO operated out of a building near the train station and offered the requisite coffee and doughnuts to traveling servicemen. Carson City and Lovelock also operated volunteer USO units, mostly to serve servicemen passing through. Even tiny Gabbs in west-central Nevada had a USO branch to serve the war production workers working in the strategic minerals industry there. Ely's volunteer USO unit leased rooms in the Hotel Nevada at \$30 per month beginning in 1943. A dance was held every Saturday

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 12

Hawthorne USO Building, Hawthorne, Mineral County, Nevada

8. Significance, continued

night with servicemen coming from Wendover and Tonopah, in addition to those en route. In her report to the War History Committee, Mrs. Chapin reported, "The nicest young ladies in town, eighteen and over, were invited, and it was always supervised. The different women's organizations were asked to serve refreshments at each dance" (Chapin 1945). Most of the year, the dances were held in the basement of the hotel, but during summers it was too hot and they moved to the Elks Club. The rooms at Hotel Nevada were open from 9 A.M. to 9 P.M., and books and magazines were available, as were writing materials, cigarettes and cookies, a piano, a Victrola, and a radio (Chapin 1945).

The day-to-day operation of Nevada's USO units, both sponsored and volunteer, was truly collaborative efforts in the communities. In addition to the donation of time and money by individuals and groups, businesses pitched in to serve the war effort. Companies underwrote events, such as the dances in Reno's El Patio Ball Room, paid for by the owners of Harolds Club. They provided meals and supplies. Taxi companies offered free transportation for USO shows and dances, and in Ely, when the USO stopped paying the rent on the rooms at Hotel Nevada after just a few months of operation, the hotel quietly covered the costs (Chapin 1945). As active as the USO was in Nevada during World War II, it is interesting to note that only two buildings in the state were built specifically for the USO, the Las Vegas unit at Fourth and Stewart Streets, and the Hawthorne USO.

Federal Recreation Buildings

Funding for USO buildings was provided through the National Defense Housing Act of 1940, better known as the Lanham Act. Hawthorne received considerable funding from the Lanham Act over the course of World War II. The Federal Security Agency (FSA) coordinated a vast array of government programs including the Lanham Act. The Lanham Act provided appropriations for both small and large recreation buildings. Plans for the smaller structures were borrowed from other sources, including the military, the Works Progress Administration, and other federal agencies. The larger centers were designed specifically for the USO by the prestigious architecture firm of Ely Jacques Kahn and Robert Allan Jacobs. Also involved in the USO design work was a junior member of the firm, André Remondet. Following the war, Remondet became a prominent architect in Paris and director of the renowned École Nationale des Beaux-Arts (Smith 2004).

Kahn, Jacobs, and Remondet developed plans for three large recreation centers identified in ascending order by size and complexity as Type A, B, and C. Once the plans, which were influenced by the International style, were approved by the FSA, they were sent to the Constructing Quartermaster Department (CQD) of the U.S. Army Quartermaster Corps. The CQD was a pioneer in the development of construction techniques that made extensive use of prefabrication and standardization. The CQD

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 13

Hawthorne USO Building, Hawthorne, Mineral County, Nevada

8. Significance, continued

translated the architects' plans into detailed specifications and blueprints, which resulted in the creation of several other building types. The Type D recreation building was such an off-shoot of the Type A, with a smaller lobby and wings farther back along the auditorium. This modification was likely intended to save space, reduce costs, or for situations where a smaller number of visitors were anticipated (Smith 2004).

Despite standardization of plan, each building had its own set of blueprints and was individually modified to fit the requirement of its site. The CQD subcontracted to the private sector, but assigned a military engineer as construction superintendent. Each contractor was given leeway to interpret the plans, which resulted in a variety of materials, including wood, brick, cinderblock, or any combination of the three. Off-the-shelf components were used for the interiors, including standardized furnishings. Each building was provided a package of furnishings that included table lamps, fans, drapes, Venetian blinds, window shades, blankets and pillows, waste baskets, coffee urns, book cases, clocks, a movie projector, a kitchen range, a refrigerator, a 12-foot soda fountain, a toaster, a juice extractor, a malted milk dispenser—and a fudge warmer. The average cost of a Type D USO building was \$46,320.86, and each was intended to be a substantial long-term asset to its community (Smith 2004).

Only a few federal recreation buildings remain in daily use, making the Hawthorne, Nevada USO rare not only in Nevada, but also nationally. Only one building still houses a USO, a Type A serving the Marines at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. Several USO buildings have been recognized for their historical significance, including the Wilmington, Delaware center, which is part of a historic district. The DeRidder building in Louisiana and the Hattiesburg building are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The Bay City center was designated a Texas Historic Landmark in 1999, and the Hawthorne USO was listed in the Nevada State Register of Historic Places in 2004 (Smith 2004).

Hawthorne's USO Building

Even before the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, there were plans for a USO building in Hawthorne. The small town was beset with servicemen and civilian workers as the winds of war were blowing over Europe. A report prepared for the War History Committee provides the best description of Hawthorne's circumstances at the time:

The wartime needs of Hawthorne, Nevada, were a veritable challenge to this aim. A small and more or less isolated town of 750 inhabitants in 1939 became a seething and polyglot center of 11,000 in 1942. The suddenness of the expansion had left the residents appalled. Civil service workers, laborers of every type, navy and marine personnel poured into the 'one-mile-square community.' Families

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 14

Hawthorne USO Building, Hawthorne, Mineral County, Nevada

8. Significance, continued

were without shelter, boys and girls were lonely, small children were roaming the streets, older children were haunting gambling clubs, and all was congestion and confusion (Anonymous n.d.[c]).

Announcement of a community center to serve the needs of Hawthorne and the influx of wartime workers came on September 30, 1941. The Federal Security Agency had approved the project and Mineral County was instructed to appoint a defense recreation committee to plan a recreation program. The project called for a 90-X-160-foot building on two lots on Hawthorne's main street. The interior plans included a main entrance that led into a lobby/lounge, with a large fireplace, and a large social hall beyond. The social hall served as a dance hall and meeting place and was equipped with a stage and dressing rooms. The south wing of the building contained a reading room, offices, a storeroom, and incidental rooms. In the front of the north wing there was a study, offices, locker rooms, and other facilities. A kitchen was provided so banquets could be served in the building (*Mineral County Independent* October 1, 1941). A week or so later, President Roosevelt approved the defense public works (DPW) project of \$45,000 for the Hawthorne USO building. The army was assigned to construct the building, which was scheduled for completion by Christmas 1941. At first, it was feared that the \$45,000 for the recreation center had come from federal money earmarked for school expansion in Hawthorne, for which there was a dire need, but that turned out to not be the case (*Mineral County Independent* October 15, 1941).

Negotiations were undertaken by the USO regional director in San Francisco to determine which of the six USO units would assume responsibility for the Hawthorne facility. In November, a representative of the YMCA came to town to study the situation (*Mineral County Independent* November 12, 1941). By January 1942, a decision had not yet been made. As the building neared completion, it became clear that interim management would need to be established until a USO sponsor could be designated. It was decided that the local Defense Recreation Committee would assume the responsibilities, with the Works Projects Administration (WPA) providing building supervision and janitorial services (*Mineral County Independent* January 7, 1942).

The formal opening of the Hawthorne USO Facility occurred Saturday, January 31, 1942 with a dance called the President's Ball (*Mineral County Independent* February 4, 1942). It was not until November 1942, however, that it was announced that the women's division of the National Catholic Community Service (NCCS) would take over operations at the Hawthorne USO. Marie Thompson, NCCS regional supervisor announced:

The USO has assumed responsibility for the operation of this club which will serve the community, military and war production workers. Mrs. Julia P. Stowe, of Denver, has been appointed director of the club and this club will be operated

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 15

Hawthorne USO Building, Hawthorne, Mineral County, Nevada

8. Significance, continued

on the same plan as other USO clubs throughout the country. We are happy to serve those in Hawthorne who are making possible the victories of our men overseas. The work of those behind the lines is important to the national victory on which all Americans are intent (*Mineral County Independent* November 25, 1942).

At its peak, the Hawthorne USO had three professional workers and as many as 10,000 visitors per month. The recreation hall offered a wide variety of services. During the morning hours, volunteer teachers ran a preschool program. In the afternoon, there were recreational activities for older children. Beginning at 5 P.M., the facilities were open for the sailors, marines, and civilian workers. Dances, meetings, and monthly birthday parties were held, as were arts-and-crafts and educational classes, physical fitness programs, and a victory garden. Sunday morning breakfasts were served to all military personnel and families. The Naval Ammunition Depot Band performed every Wednesday evening and at the monthly theme dances, which were put on by the junior hostesses (Anonymous n.d.[c]). The junior hostess program was important to the USO's operations. Junior hostesses served coffee and donuts, organized the monthly birthday parties for servicemen, and generally made themselves available to provide assistance and companionship. One Hawthorne junior hostess was honored for her dedication. Miss Eileen Zweibel was crowned "donut queen" November 2, 1943. She was recognized for being "one of the most faithful of all the junior hostesses, always on hand to see that the service men have a good time" (*Mineral County Independent* November 3, 1943).

The large number of servicemen and war workers in Hawthorne created a need for expanded services. The report to the War History Committee mentions the December 1945 opening of a USO recreation hall in Babbitt. It also states, without providing additional information, that in the summer of 1944 "special attention was given to the Negro program in Babbitt" (Anonymous n.d.[c]). The AWVS reported that the USO offered entertainment for African Americans at Babbitt (AWVS var.). A number of blacks from the South came to Hawthorne early in the war as civilian workers at the Ammunition Depot. The community, as with other Nevada communities, did not welcome its newly-arrived African American residents. USO activities would have provided an important social outlet for black servicemen, civilian workers, and families.

Over the course of the war, the Hawthorne USO saw much action, including dances, receptions, banquets, awards ceremonies, music, movies, and dramatic performances, boxing matches, meetings of various groups and organizations. The building was used by servicemen, civilian war production workers, infants and toddlers, school children, the Extension Department of the University of Nevada, the Red Cross, the Junior Commandos, the Council of Churches, and many others. The facility served the community as much as it served the military, and nearly every aspect of Hawthorne society passed through its doors from

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8, 9 Page 16

Hawthorne USO Building, Hawthorne, Mineral County, Nevada

8. Significance, continued

1942 through 1945. Following the war the building reverted to the county (and subsequently to the city between 1946 and 1956) to be used as a community and recreation center, a role it continues to play today. Throughout the war years, the Hawthorne USO fulfilled the mission of the organization, to be a "home away from home" for U.S. servicemen and war workers. The Hawthorne USO building was constructed expressly for that purpose; one of only two built in Nevada, and the only one to remain. The Hawthorne USO is an important symbol of the historic role of the military in the small town, and Hawthorne's role in the nation's war effort.

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 9 Page 17

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 9 Page 18

Hawthorne USO Building, Hawthorne, Mineral County, Nevada

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 10 Page 19

Hawthorne USO Building, Hawthorne, Mineral County, Nevada

10. Geographical Data

Boundary Description

The National Register boundaries of the Hawthorne USO Building include the .69-acre parcel identified as Assessor's Parcel Number 01-035-01, Mineral County, Nevada, located in Section 27, T.8 N, R.30E, MDM.

Boundary Justification

Resource boundaries include all land commonly associated with the lot identified as Mineral County, Nevada APN. 01-035-01.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section Photographs Page 20

Hawthorne USO Building, Hawthorne, Mineral County, Nevada

Photographs

Photograph 1

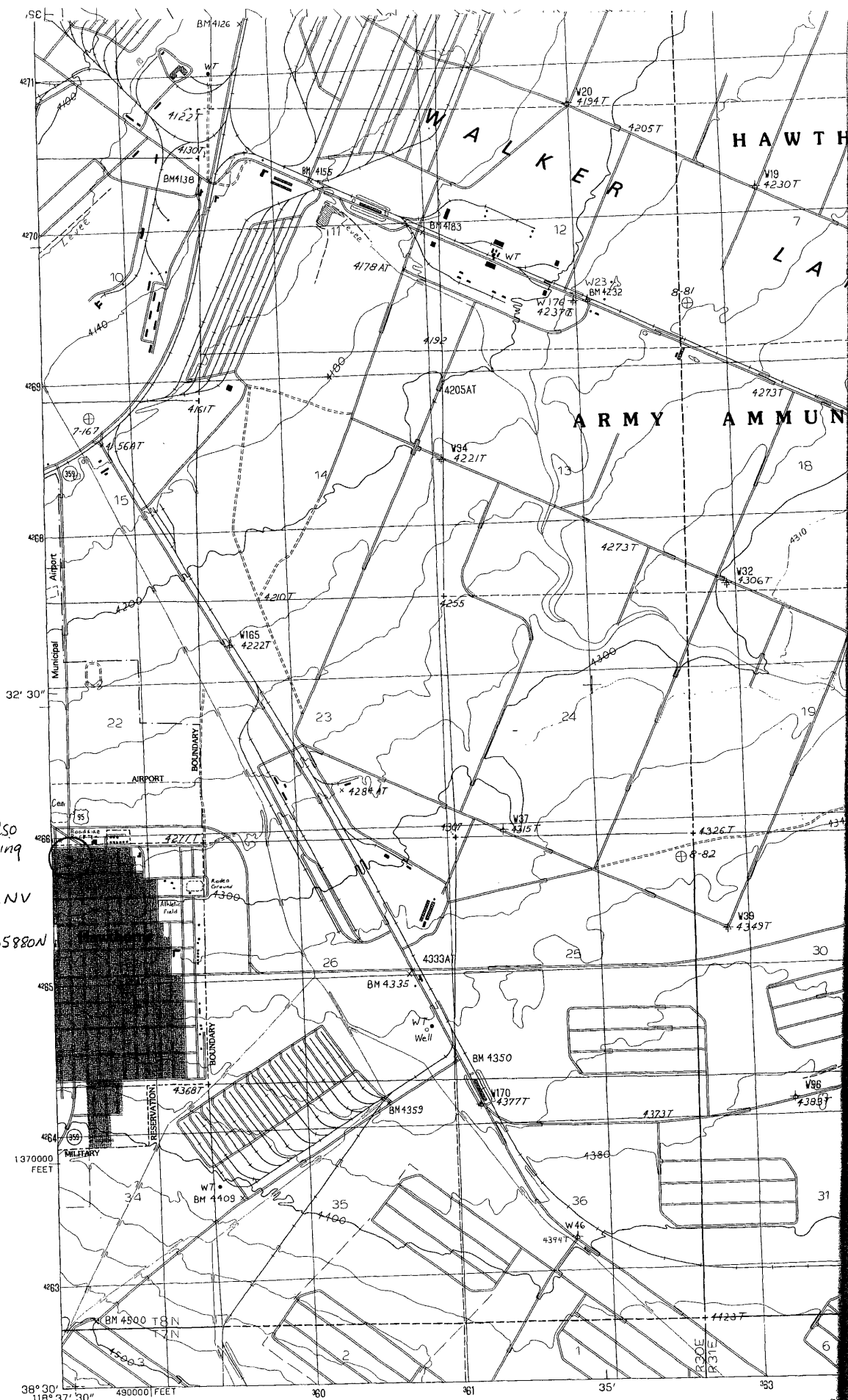
Property Name: Hawthorne USO Building
Property Location: Hawthorne, Mineral County, Nevada
Photographer: Unknown
Date: ca. 1942-1945
Location of Negative: Mineral County Independent-News
Hawthorne, Nevada
Description: Front elevation, facing northeast

Photograph 2

Property Name: Hawthorne USO Building
Property Location: Hawthorne, Mineral County, Nevada
Photographer: Mella Rothwell Harmon
Date: April 25, 2002
Location of Negative: Nevada State Historic Preservation Office
100 N. Stewart Street
Carson City, Nevada
Description: Front elevation, facing northeast

Photograph 3

Property Name: Hawthorne USO Building
Property Location: Hawthorne, Mineral County, Nevada
Photographer: Mella Rothwell Harmon
Date: April 25, 2002
Location of Negative: Nevada State Historic Preservation Office
100 N. Stewart Street
Carson City, Nevada
Description: Rear elevation, facing southwest



Hawthorne USO Building
 Hawthorne,
 Mineral Co., NV
 Zone II
 358600E, 4265880N

PRODUCED BY THE UNITED STATES GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
 CONTROL BY USGS, NOS/NOAA
 COMPILED FROM AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN 1982
 FIELD CHECKED 1984 MAP EDITED 1987
 PROJECTION TRANSVERSE MERCATOR
 GRID: 1000-METER UNIVERSAL TRANSVERSE MERCATOR ZONE II
 10000-FOOT STATE GRID TICKS NEVADA, WEST ZONE
 UTM GRID DECLINATION 0°58' WEST
 1987 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION 15°30' EAST
 VERTICAL DATUM NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929
 HORIZONTAL DATUM 1927 NORTH AMERICAN DATUM
 To place on the predicted North American Datum of 1983,
 move the projection lines as shown by dashed corner ticks

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CONTOUR
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