

United States Department of the Interior  
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## National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form

This form is used for documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (National Register Bulletin 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information. For additional space, use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

☒ New Submission ☐ Amended Submission

### A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Historic Resources of Camp George West, Golden, Colorado

### B. Associated Historic Contexts

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

The Military Establishment at Camp George West: 1903-1945

### C. Form Prepared by

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### D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

  
Signature and title of certifying official

December 15, 1992  
Date

State Historic Preservation Officer  
State or Federal agency and bureau

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

  
Signature of the Keeper

2/11/93  
Date of Action

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**E. Statement of Historic Contexts**

**The Military Establishment at Camp George West:  
1903-1945**

In 1859, two years before the Colorado Territory was established, a group of citizens within the borders of what would become the state of Colorado unofficially created the Jefferson Territory and passed an act to authorize the formation of military companies. Congress established the Colorado Territory in 1861 and Territorial Governor William Gilpin formed military companies which evolved into the First Colorado Volunteers, soldiers who would serve in the Civil War and respond to calls to deal with Indian unrest. Strife between Native Americans and new settlers led to the designation of the governor as commander in chief of the state militia and the appointment of an adjutant general to lead the troops. After Colorado became a state in 1876, several companies of militia were established. On 8 February 1879, the Legislature passed an Act which recognized the militia, henceforth to be known as the Colorado National Guard. While during the nineteenth century most of the activity of Colorado National Guard focused on unrest among Native American groups, the beginning of the twentieth century marked an era in which the National Guard was employed in numerous disputes between labor and management factions in the state.

In 1903, the Colorado National Guard established its only permanent training facility three miles east of Golden at a site that became known as the State Rifle Range. As it developed, the post, designated Camp George West in 1934, became the primary storage and supply facility for local units and the location of the Guard's summer encampments from 1906 through 1944. During the nationwide economic depression of the 1930s, the post was the site of numerous public works projects which greatly expanded its facilities and responsibilities. The historic architecture resulting from these periods of development represents a unique collection of native

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stone and wood buildings reflecting the many functions of the post as they expanded over time. Included among the historic resources are buildings representing the earliest period of development, which are significant for their application of unquarried stone construction and Bungalow and Rustic style design elements. The post contains one of the largest single collections of WPA sponsored buildings in Colorado. The WPA buildings were designed by Colorado National Guard architect George Merchant to utilize stone quarried on the post in construction projects which required the intensive application of labor. During World War II, temporary buildings were erected at Camp George West following standard plans which conserved labor and materials. Today, Camp George West is utilized as a multipurpose facility which houses the functions of several other state government agencies while maintaining storage, maintenance, and classroom training activities of the Colorado National Guard.

**Early Development of the  
State Rifle Range, 1903-1916**

During the late nineteenth century, the strength of the National Guard fluctuated primarily in response to demands for its presence to deal with Indian unrest. The early twentieth century marked the beginning of a turbulent time for the Colorado National Guard, which would result in its further expansion and organization. Writing in 1935, Major John H. Nankivell noted that:

Strike and riot duty, the bug-bear of all National Guardsmen and a curse to the State of Colorado in particular, was to claim much of the attention (and time) of the state's military forces during the five and a half year period from March, 1899, to August, 1904.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>John H. Nankivell, *History of the Military Organizations of the State of Colorado, 1860-1935* (Denver: W. H. Kistler Stationery Co., 1935), 156.

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Hundreds of Colorado National Guard troops were ordered into various mining areas of the state during the 1899-1904 period to deal with strikes, labor unrest, and civil disturbances.<sup>2</sup> Colorado coal miners had helped to organize the United Mine Workers in 1889-90 and state hardrock miners had participated in forming the Western Federation of Miners in 1893. Conflict arose as a result of growing union strength and militancy and company intransigence.

In March 1903, Governor James Peabody dispatched three hundred Guardsmen to protect smelters and reduction works in Colorado City and to escort non-union workers to their jobs. Nearly, one thousand troops were sent to the Cripple Creek area of Teller County in September 1903 and remained until the following March. About four hundred cavalry troops were ordered to Telluride in November 1903 to help the local sheriff enforce the law, while three hundred troops were stationed in the Trinidad area from March to June 1904 to suppress a rebellion of coal miners. Through use of the National Guard and with the support by the state courts, businesses had broken the influence of mine workers' unions by

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<sup>2</sup>An overview of the role of the Colorado National Guard in dealing with labor unrest in the mining sector will be provided here. The issue has been treated extensively elsewhere: George G. Suggs, Jr., **Colorado's War on Militant Unionism: James H. Peabody and the Western Federation of Miners** (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972); George S. McGovern and Leonard F. Guttridge, **The Great Coalfield War** (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin and Co., 1972); and U. S. Congress, Senate, **Industrial Relations: Final Report and Testimony Submitted to Congress by the Commission on Industrial Relations**, 64th Congress, 1st. sess., 1916.

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1905-06.<sup>3</sup>

While specific issues such as wages and hours were involved in such disputes, the common theme throughout the period was company recognition of unions as collective bargaining agents for workers. As was the case nationally, organized labor in Colorado viewed the National Guard as a tool of big business. In Colorado, "interested companies in each case directly financed the use of the National Guard by cashing certificates of indebtedness issued by the state." Aware of public perceptions, National Guard leaders "recognized that this antagonism hurt their chances to be part of the efficient national military force, [and] wanted to see special constabularies formed to deal with industrial strife, thus relieving the Guard of the onus."<sup>4</sup>

In confronting these situations of unrest, the Colorado National Guard had to simultaneously deal with such on-going tasks as training, recruitment, and supplies. In the first training camp in several years, a three-day camp of instruction was held for a portion of the Guard in Boulder in July and August 1901. The troops camped west of the university overlooking Boulder Creek and participated in a parade through the city. In September and October of 1902, limited numbers of Colorado Guardsmen were sent to Fort Riley, Kansas, for training maneuvers. A lack of funds prevented more Coloradans attending.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Carl Abbott, Stephen J. Leonard, and David McComb, *Colorado: A History of the Centennial State* (Boulder, Colo.: Colorado Associated University Press, 1982), 139, 147, 149.

<sup>4</sup>Abbott, et al, 144 and 155; and John K. Mahon, *History of the Militia and the National Guard* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1983), 150-51.

<sup>5</sup>Nankivell, 156-8.

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Writing in November 1901, Captain Evans E. Winters, Inspector of Small Arms Practice for the Colorado Guard, reported that only a handful of Colorado Guard units had participated in rifle practice during the year. He cited such factors as more stringent regulations for conducting practice, the relatively small number of men who had completed a required course on sighting, position, and aiming, and the lack of adequate rifle range facilities, particularly in the Denver area. In discussing the latter issue, Winters noted the extreme range of current rifle ammunition and concluded that the problem of finding suitable locations for rifle practice would become more difficult as agricultural and residential land uses expanded in outlying areas of the metropolitan area. Winters proposed the following:

It is, therefore, recommended that steps be taken to secure lands for a permanent state range at such a point as may be determined by a military board. Such range would necessarily have to be some distance from the more thickly populated settlements, and, while its accessibility should be considered, it should be so situated as to guarantee immunity from injunctions against its use. It should also have a desirable camp site, and the question of drainage, sanitary conditions, water supply, etc., should be fully considered in making the selection.<sup>6</sup>

Captain Winters noted that the ranges used by some Denver area Guard units at Aurora and Sullivan (southeast of Denver) were unsuitable due to topography. The range offered to the state by the Carlsbad company near Barr Lake was deemed not practicable due to inadequate transportation facilities. The state apparently felt some pressure from the U. S. Army to establish a rifle range for training purposes. Adjutant General Bulkeley Wells noted in 1907

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<sup>6</sup>State Adjutant General, Biennial Report of the Adjutant General, 1901-1902 (Denver: Smith-Brooks Printing Co., 1902), 119, 122.

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that: "The War Department for the past two years has been particularly insistent upon the devotion of much time and funds to rifle practice, rating proficiency in the use of the rifle at 8.5 points out of a possible 10, taken to represent the efficiency of a soldier."<sup>7</sup>

A site three miles east of Golden near South Table mountain was selected for use as a State Rifle Range. According to the 1934 Biennial Report of the Adjutant General, it was George West, Adjutant General from 1887-89 and editor and publisher of the Colorado Transcript in Golden, "who first recommended the site to the State authorities."<sup>8</sup> The property near Golden was desirable for a number of reasons: proximity to Denver and the largest concentration of population in the state, thus facilitating training access; existence of an operating target range in the same area; access by a principal road and by a standard gauge interurban trolley line; location under the jurisdiction of a county government with no city within three miles; and the absence of dense residential development nearby.

The first parcel of land for a State Rifle Range near Golden was acquired in 1903 by the State Adjutant General from Moses Wyman. The total purchase price was four thousand dollars, with the final payment of \$2,667 made during 1905-06.<sup>9</sup> The transaction involved

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<sup>7</sup>Office of Adjutant General, Biennial Report of the Adjutant General, 1905-07 (Denver: Smith-Brooks Printing Co., 1907).

<sup>8</sup>State Adjutant General, Biennial Report of the Adjutant General, 1934 (Denver: State Adjutant General, 1934).

<sup>9</sup>Jefferson County Clerk and Recorder, General Records, Book 151, Page 540, recorded 14 December 1906, and Biennial Report of the Adjutant General, 1905-06 (Denver: Smith-Brooks Printing Co., 1907), 8.

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75.38 acres near South Table Mountain east of Golden, Colorado. The parcel included land on both sides of South Golden Road but excluded the hundred-foot right of way of the Denver, Lakewood, and Golden Railroad. This parcel was adjoined on the east by a narrow strip of land owned by the Denver Rifle Club Association.

The state military wasted little time in making use of its new property. A rifle range was established and regular courses in rifle and pistol practice were offered. Adjutant General Sherman M. Bell reported in 1904 that "many of the organizations took advantage and some remarkable scores were made" in rifle practice that year, but time spent on dealing with strikes and labor unrest had prevented the concentration on rifle practice that he had intended.<sup>10</sup>

Various medals and trophies were established by the Adjutant General to "encourage proficiency in the use of the rifle, carbine, and pistol." In October 1905 and August 1906, rifle and pistol competitions were held at the Rifle Range. Rifle target shooting at two hundred, three hundred, and six hundred yards took place in 1905 and at two hundred and six hundred yards in 1906. Military historian John Nankivell stated that the facility near Golden was the only rifle range in the state for many years and was used by "regulars, national guardsmen, and rifle clubs for ordinary marksmanship practice and periodical matches."<sup>11</sup>

The first training encampment of the Colorado National Guard at the Rifle Range and the first held anywhere since 1901 was held at the

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<sup>10</sup>State Adjutant General, Biennial Report of the Adjutant General, 1903-04 (Denver: Smith-Brooks Printing Co., 1904),

<sup>11</sup>State Adjutant General, Biennial Report of the Adjutant General, 1905-07 (Denver: Smith-Brooks Printing Co., 1907), 14, 30; Nankivell, History of the Military Organizations, 356, 409;

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installation from 7 July through 31 August 1906, with forty officers and 350 enlisted men attending. Training was undertaken under supervision of regular Army instructors. A camp of instruction for members of National Guard Signal Corps units was staged at the Rifle Range in July 1907. A 1909 publication on Fort Logan, southwest of Denver, shows regular Army troops volley firing at what appears to be the State Rifle Range; no concrete firing lines are in evidence in the photograph. The "Rifle Range" was listed as a stop on a 1905 timetable of the interurban railroad and a 1909 article described the Rifle Range as one of five "principal sources of passenger traffic" on the line.<sup>12</sup>

Colorado National Guard troops attended training under regular Army instructors during August 1908 at Camp Emmett Crawford in Pole Mountain, Wyoming. In an effort to expand the available training area at the Rifle Range, the National Guard acquired a 14.77 acre strip of land adjoining the existing facility on the northwest side late in 1908. Florence R. and Jonas M. Johnson, Jr., received \$738.37 for the parcel. The existing firing lines are located on this piece of land, which brought the total area of the facility to 90.15 acres.<sup>13</sup>

The first building of significant size and the oldest extant building on the Rifle Range was erected in the southern part of the camp as an officers' clubhouse and residence for the caretaker of

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<sup>12</sup>State Adjutant General, *Biennial Report of the Adjutant General, 1905-07* (Denver: Smith-Brooks Printing Co., 1907), 14, 30; Nankivell, *History of the Military Organizations*, 356, 409; *Views of Fort Logan, Colorado* (Denver: William Bevington, 1909); *Electric Railway Journal* 34(2 October 1909):513; and Denver, Lakewood, and Golden Railroad Collection, Colorado Historical Society, Denver, Colorado.

<sup>13</sup>Jefferson County Clerk, General Records, Book 162, Page 11, recorded 13 November 1908.

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the Rifle Range in 1911-12. The \$3,000 building (Building Number 67)<sup>14</sup> was constructed so that the officers of the Colorado National Guard could "live comfortably and pleasantly while annually attending the shooting practice of the guard at the rifle range." Originally, the building was designed only for use during the summer months when the Rifle Range was in use. Heating was not provided, although fireplaces were included to supply heat on occasional cold days during training season. By the early 1930s, however, the building had been converted to a residence for the caretaker and his family and the front part of the building was utilized as the camp office and headquarters.

The officer's clubhouse/caretaker's residence was designed by Albert Bryan, a draftsman and architect in the employ of the State Adjutant General. Bryan had been a draftsman with the Denver Iron and Wire Works from 1901-03 and an independent architect before working for the state military in 1911-12. The building was constructed in the Bungalow style, using unsplit native stone found in a nearby creek. The Bungalow style was one of the most popular styles for residential architecture during the early twentieth century in America. The stylistic influence was evident in the building's low-pitched, gabled roof with overhanging eaves, exposed rafters, and exposed king-post truss in the front gable end. The full-width porch of the building was inset under the roof gable and was supported by battered stone piers. Stone porch and stair walls had bands of concrete trim. The design of the officers' clubhouse/caretaker's residence set a precedent for future construction which would employ the stone found in creeks and gulches on or near the post, as well as stone quarried from post lands on South Table Mountain.<sup>15</sup>

During a ten-day camp of instruction at the Rifle Range in

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<sup>14</sup>Buildings referred to by Building Number are still extant.

<sup>15</sup>Denver Republican, 12 November 1911, 6.

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September 1911, discussions were held by Captain W. Goff Caples (Camp Inspector-Instructor of the Corps of Engineers), Dr. Victor G. Alderson (President of the Colorado School of Mines in Golden), and Captain Joseph C. Taylor (Colorado National Guard). The result of the meetings was a decision to award credits toward graduation from the School of Mines to persons completing a course of military instruction including training at the Rifle Range. Later, plans for an armory and dormitory in Golden to house a company of engineers attending the Colorado School of Mines in Golden were developed.<sup>16</sup> The four-story, cobblestone armory, designed by Albert Bryan, was constructed in 1912-13 at 1301 Arapahoe Street in Golden and contained a drill hall, dormitory, mess, parlors, and library. The Armory (5JF180) was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1978.<sup>17</sup>

The Colorado National Guard and the School of Mines had a close relationship due to student participation in the Guard. The Guard felt it benefitted from this relationship by providing military training to college students who would make good officer material if the need arose. Company A, the only engineering corps west of the Mississippi, was one of only two units composed of technical personnel in the country. About twenty percent of Company A was made up of School of Mines students during the early years. When recruiting for a new unit, Battery B, 158th Artillery began in 1923, the entire membership of the School of Mines Kappa Sigma

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<sup>16</sup>John H. Nankivell, comp., "History of the 115th Regiment of Engineers (1st Battalion Colorado Engineers), 1909-1919" (N.p., n.d.), 1; Georgina Brown, *The Shining Mountains* (Gunnison, Colo.: B&B Printers, 1976), 137-38; and Lorraine Wagenbach and Jo Ann E. Thistlewood, *Golden: The 19th Century* (Littleton, Colo.: Harbinger House, 1987), 34.

<sup>17</sup>Brown, 137-138; Wagenbach and Thistlewood, 34; and Dan Galbraith, "History of the Armory," manuscript on file at the Colorado Historical Society, Denver, Colo.

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fraternity enlisted, with their service earnings going toward the construction of a new fraternity house. Part of the fraternity brothers' obligation was to report once a week to the Rifle Range.<sup>18</sup>

The years 1913-14 constituted a busy period for the Colorado National Guard. Coal fields throughout the state were embroiled in a bitter dispute over mine owner recognition of labor unions. In September 1913, the United Mine Workers struck mines in the southern coalfields in Las Animas and Huerfano counties; fighting between striking miners and mine guards followed. In October, Governor Elias Ammons sent Adjutant General John Chase to the area with two regiments of infantry and three troops of cavalry. A six month standoff finally ended in April 1914, when a National Guard detachment fired on the tent colony at Ludlow, killing five strikers and one boy. An ensuing fire resulted in the deaths of two women and eleven children. The "Ludlow Massacre" triggered ten days of open warfare between the National Guard and more than one thousand armed strikers. Order was restored only when regular Army troops were sent to the area.<sup>19</sup>

The findings of a three-officer commission of the Colorado National Guard that investigated the Guard's actions at Ludlow recommended that several officers and enlisted men face court martial. After the report was leaked to the press, court martials were held during the summer of 1914 in Building 67, the officers' clubhouse/caretaker's residence at the State Rifle Range. The tribunals acquitted the defendants of all charges.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>Galbraith.

<sup>19</sup>Abbott, 151.

<sup>20</sup>George S. McGovern and Leonard F. Guttridge, *The Great Coalfield War* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1972), 284-87.

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The years just prior to World War I were important in the development of the State Rifle Range. When Secretary of War Lindley M. Garrison and Army General Leonard Wood visited the Denver area in August 1913, their trip to the Rifle Range included a reception at the officers' clubhouse/caretaker's residence and lunch in the large mess hall.<sup>21</sup> The chief aim of local military and civic leaders was to convince Garrison not to abolish Fort Logan, an army post southwest of Denver founded in 1887. They also wanted to "point out to him what a splendid location [the Rifle Range] has been selected for a mobilization point for this district in the event of war."<sup>22</sup> The selection of the Rifle Range as a mobilization point was accompanied by \$5,000 from the War Department for construction of a fireproof ammunition and weapons storehouse at the facility. A spokesman for the Adjutant General explained that "we have been after this storage house for years, and now that we have the money, work of construction will begin immediately."<sup>23</sup>

This structure, Building 52, was completed west of the officers' clubhouse/caretaker's residence during the 1913-14 period and included a concrete loading platform and a stub siding built by the Denver and Inter-Mountain Railroad, facilitating loading and unloading of supplies and equipment. The warehouse was a large rectangular structure constructed of coursed, split and unsplit fieldstone. The gabled roof of the building had overhanging eaves

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<sup>21</sup>No longer extant, the large mess hall was apparently a frame building built on the north side of South Golden Road across from the Officers Clubhouse.

<sup>22</sup>Colorado National Guard Bulletin, 18 August 1913 and 3 September 1913.

<sup>23</sup>John Chase Manuscript Collection, Scrapbooks, Denver Public Library, Western History Department, Denver, Colorado.

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and large, exposed beams. Multi-light windows had heavy, roughly quarried stone window sills and lintels. The interior of the building was composed of two levels to accommodate storage and had a freight elevator to facilitate access to the upper level.

In September 1913, a five-day camp of instruction for all branches of the Colorado National Guard was held at the Rifle Range, with regular Army officers and sergeants conducting training. Artillery units fired rounds at an unseen target 2,300 yards distant. A "mimic war" between units divided into Red and Brown armies was staged, involving maneuvers and tactics and utilizing the surrounding countryside. Crowds of spectators came from Denver by trolley and automobile to watch the spectacle but left somewhat disappointed by modern warfare tactics. The **Rocky Mountain News** complained:

During the entire afternoon scarcely a soldier was seen. Creeping along in twos and threes with their mud-colored khaki uniforms blending into the landscape, firing smokeless powder and taking advantage of every rock and bush for concealment, they offered little enough that was spectacular.<sup>24</sup>

By mid-1914, more storage space was being planned for the Rifle Range, including a second storehouse and gun shed to the west of the original one. The **Colorado National Guard Bulletin** for 15 June 1914 reported that "Captains Dahlene and Taylor have been prospecting the hills south of the Rifle Range and to their surprise found abundant stone for the new building. About 400 perch of stone have already been hauled for the new building."<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>Rocky Mountain News, 22 September 1913, 3.

<sup>25</sup>Colorado National Guard Bulletin, 15 June 1914. A perch of stone is equivalent to 24.75 cubic feet. Four-hundred perch would equal 9,900 cubic feet and would fill a cube slightly larger than twenty-one feet on each side.

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The building (Building 55) was completed in 1914 and the old Colorado National Guard armory at 26th and Curtis streets in Denver was abandoned. The concrete loading platform outside Building 52, the first warehouse, also was extended seventy-five feet westward, permitting the unloading of ten railroad cars at one time.<sup>26</sup>

Both warehouses carried out the rustic theme initiated by the clubhouse/caretaker's residence (Building 67), utilizing the native fieldstone construction. The stones which composed the warehouses were gathered on nearby land and laid in courses, with larger stones being utilized to simulate quoins at the corners of the buildings. The overall character of the warehouses was vernacular, with design elements repeated from Building 67, including gabled roofs with overhanging eaves, concrete foundations, stone chimneys, and multi-light windows. The second warehouse was slightly larger than the first and was distinguished by circular windows in the upper gable ends and concrete window sills and lintels. The interior of the second building was also divided into two levels and had a freight elevator. The construction of these large permanent buildings indicated that the Rifle Range had become not only a site for rifle practice, but the storage center for state and federal property to be utilized by Guard units and a site for mobilization in time of war.<sup>27</sup>

One of the reasons for expanding storage at the Rifle Range was that the Army required each state National Guard to maintain equipment to supply its minimum authorized strength, a number that was always greater than the number of Guardsmen actually enrolled. Writing in 1916, Adjutant General John Chase reported that the new storage system at the Rifle Range had worked well during the last

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid.; and Chase Collection, Scrapbooks.

<sup>27</sup>Bulletin of the National Guard of Colorado, 18 August 1913.

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coal strike. With most of the supplies housed at the Rifle Range, empty railcars were moved over the standard gauge line to the storehouse siding, supplies were loaded, and the cars returned to Denver to meet assembled troops. Steel plates were placed between the storehouse dock and railcars to facilitate the loading process. "Because of the success of the plan of handling the equipment," Chase argued, "the military department has felt constrained to spend a considerable amount of money at the Rifle Range in developing the storage facilities." The water supply at the installation had also been expanded during 1915, so that more than one hundred thousand gallons could be pumped into the system daily.<sup>28</sup>

As the Rifle Range developed, so too did the surrounding area, as subdivision platting activity moved outward from Denver and Golden to the suburban periphery. Richard Heights, on the north side of South Golden Road just east of the Rifle Range, was platted in 1909, while Pleasant View to the south was platted in 1908. William Abraham Bell attempted to develop the Bell Estates subdivision east of the camp. Bell was a native of England, who had long been active in the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad. The ultimately unsuccessful development featured two stone and wood entry gates on South Golden Road and Wideacre Road linked by a long horseshoe-shaped drive lined by trees to the north.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>Pueblo Colorado Chieftain, 2 January 1916, in Chase Collection, Scrapbooks.

<sup>29</sup>Legal Titles of Subdivisions in Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Denver, Jefferson Counties (Denver: Design Engineering Division, n.d.); Lee Scamehorn, A Calendar of Papers of William Abraham Bell, 1841-1921 (Denver: Colorado Historical Society, 1970), iii; and Lynn Yehle to James E. Miller, letter, 18 December 1991.

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**Mexican Border Service and World War I  
at the State Rifle Range: 1916-1918**

Francisco "Pancho" Villa's March 1916 raid on Columbus, New Mexico, illustrated the political instability of Mexico and the vulnerability of United States communities near the international border. In May, President Woodrow Wilson called the National Guard units of Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona to federal service. On 16 June 1916, the National Guards of the remaining states, including Colorado, were mobilized for service on the Mexican border. At this date, the Colorado Guard was in the 15th Division of the Army. Military historian John Mahon concludes that Wilson apparently "issued his call primarily to test the capability of the Guard to mobilize as part of the national military force."<sup>30</sup>

In Colorado, the Rifle Range served as the mobilization point for National Guard units heading south. Colorado's quota of troops for the operation was two battalions of infantry, one squadron of cavalry, two battalions of field artillery, two companies of engineers, one field hospital, and one signal company. While all units included in the call had assembled at the Rifle Range by mid-July, the Colorado detachment did not depart for the Mexican border until mid-October. In the interim, the troops were housed in tents north of South Golden Road and south of Lena Gulch at the Rifle Range and trained intensively in target practice, marching, and tactical exercises. The long period in camp was not unexpected, for Adjutant General Harry P. Gamble remarked at the time of activation: "After they are sixty days in camp we can whip them into fine condition for service. Give us that length of time and we can find out what we have got and just what the government can expect of us." On 16 October 1916, the Colorado contingent of twenty-three officers and 513 enlisted men boarded regular railroad

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<sup>30</sup>John K. Mahon, *History of the Militia and the National Guard* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1983), 151.

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passenger cars at the Rifle Range bound for Camp Douglas, Arizona.<sup>31</sup>

As with other National Guard troops assigned to border service, the Coloradans camped on the U. S. side and fought "nothing but heat, insects, and boredom." Participating Guardsmen did gain valuable training and experience, while state Guard staffs benefitted from direct experience at mobilization.<sup>32</sup>

Mobilization during the conflict had been facilitated by the westward extension of the Denver and Inter-mountain Railroad siding at the Rifle Range. Grading and construction was performed by state military crews. The purpose of this was twofold: to serve the recently built storehouse (Building 55) for loading and unloading of stores and equipment and to provide an additional source of water for the camp. For the latter task, a water tank car would be brought from Denver and parked at the far western end of the siding. An underground pipe extended northward from this point, where water discharged from the car could flow by gravity to company billeting areas on the other side of South Golden Road.<sup>33</sup>

Colorado National Guard troops participating in the Mexican border operation returned to Fort D. A. Russell, Wyoming, on 3 April 1917. As United States involvement in World War I appeared imminent,

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<sup>31</sup>Nankivell, 202, 206 and Denver Post, 19 June 1916.

<sup>32</sup>Mahon, 152.

<sup>33</sup>Colorado State Military Auditor to Traffic Manager, Denver and Inter-Mountain Railroad, letter, 11 June 1919, in Colorado, Department of Military Affairs, Facilities Management, records pertaining to Camp George West and Mark E. Conway, retired colonel and former commander Camp George West, interview, 23 January 1992, Lakewood, Colorado.

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these troops were retained in federal service. Following the American declaration of war against Germany on 7 April 1917, the Colorado Guardsmen were sent to Fort Logan and assigned to protect public utilities in and around Denver. Colorado Governor Julius C. Gunter mobilized all state guard units not yet in federal service into camps of instruction on 7 July 1917. One such camp was located at the Rifle Range, where the troops were equipped and underwent intensive training. These state troops were drafted into federal service on 5 August 1917.<sup>34</sup> The Colorado National Guard supplied a total of 3,345 men for induction into federal service for World War I. Two-thirds of the Colorado troops served with the 40th Division, while the artillery was attached to the First Corps and engineers to Sixth Corps.<sup>35</sup>

It was during the World War I period that the Denver and Inter-Mountain Railroad waiting station (Building 116) was constructed. Located on the south side of the camp just west of the main entrance, the 1917 station provided shelter to passengers waiting for the trolleys to Golden or Denver. The station imitated the Bungalow design of the 1911 officers' clubhouse/caretaker's residence (Building 67) and employed the same unsplit fieldstone construction and gabled roof with exposed truss system. The widely overhanging eaves sheltered waiting passengers, as did the open waiting area inside the building.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>Nankivell, **Military Organizations**, 410 and Colorado, State Adjutant General, **Biennial Report, 1917-18** (Denver: Smith-Brooks Printing Co., 1918), 4.

<sup>35</sup>Colorado, Division of National Guard, **Master Plan**.

<sup>36</sup>Colorado, Division of National Guard, **Master Plan** (Denver: Division of National Guard, c. 1965). The 1957 Record of Real Property does not list a year of construction for this building. Historic photographs show the station in place by 1929. Ken Forrest of the Colorado Railway Historical Society believes the

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As the existing National Guard units were brought into federal service for World War I and left the state, new units were created and called to state service for protecting public utilities and strategic points around the state. Dams, reservoirs, the Capitol, the Rifle Range, Denver's Armory, and the railroad route through the Royal Gorge were guarded against sabotage or attack. Companies A, B, and C of the 3rd Regiment and Companies A and B of the 1st Separate Battalion contained an average of nine officers and 283 enlisted men throughout the war. The latter two companies were designated as "colored" units, primarily recruited from the black community of Denver.<sup>37</sup>

In addition to its purchased lands, the National Guard also utilized Section 36, Township 3 South, Range 70 West, lying to the north of the existing facility. The section, transferred from the public domain in 1876 by State Grant when Colorado entered the Union, was owned by the state and used by the National Guard under a lease arrangement. On 6 April 1919, the lease with the State Board of Land Commissioners was renewed for five years at \$64.80 per year. The National Guard subleased a portion of the section as pasture at \$64.80 per year.

A number of improvements were made to Section 36 by the National Guard before they formally purchased the section in 1920. In 1918, a survey and plat map of land and improvements owned or leased by the National Guard in the Rifle Range area was undertaken by C. L. Chatfield of the Army Corps of Engineers. Four rifle pits, a frame target shed constructed in 1916, and a portion of the telephone lines leading to the pits were then located in Section 36, with the

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World War I date is reasonable and pointed out that the financial difficulties of the railroad would have made its construction before 1909 unlikely. Interview, 22 January 1992, Golden, Colorado.

<sup>37</sup>State Adjutant General, Biennial Report, 1917-18, 64.

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remainder of improvements located to the south on land owned by the National Guard. A portion of Section 36 was also subleased as an alfalfa field for livestock grazing.<sup>38</sup>

**Reorganization and Expansion of  
the State Rifle Range: 1919-1932**

The State Rifle Range greatly expanded in terms of area and facilities during the 1920s. Following World War I, the National Guard and its congressional supporters had successfully resisted military reorganization proposals that would have reduced the role of the Guard in favor of some form of universal military training.

**Land Acquisitions**

The 1920s saw more than a sevenfold increase in the land area of the State Rifle Range. A narrow strip of land adjoining the east side of the facility was purchased from the Denver Rifle Club Association for fifteen hundred dollars in June 1920. The 5.03 acre addition brought the total area of the Rifle Range to 95.18 acres.<sup>39</sup> The greatest increase in the size of the installation

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<sup>38</sup>C. L. Chatfield to Adjutant General, State of Colorado, letter, 17 April 1918, in Colorado Department of Military Affairs, Facilities Management, records pertaining to Camp George West. No copy of this map could be found in the files of the Colorado Department of Military Affairs, the Colorado State Archives, or the Omaha Regional Office, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers. Mark E. Conway, retired colonel, Colorado National Guard, remembered it as a "gorgeous, detailed map" and last recalled seeing it in the late 1960s.

<sup>39</sup>Jefferson County Clerk and Recorder, General Records, Book 224, Page 186, recorded 23 August 1920.

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occurred in August 1920, when all of Section 36, Township 3 South, Range 70 West, lying just north of the existing lands, was acquired. State Adjutant General Spangler noted that this section had been controlled by the National Guard for "many years" under a lease and explained the reasons for its purchase:

This section, being State school land, was at all times subject to sale, and as parcels of the section became strongly in demand for agricultural purposes, and the further fact that the sale of the section to outsiders would make the owned military property valueless for a Rifle Range, the Military Board authorized the purchase.<sup>40</sup>

As state land, Section 36 was acquired by the National Guard from the State Board of Land Commissioners for \$11,800. The total area of the State Rifle Range following this addition was 735.18 acres.<sup>41</sup>

The final land acquisition of the 1920s occurred in March 1924, when a tract of land adjoining the post on the east was purchased from Fred A. Stone for \$3,094.00.<sup>42</sup> The parcel, which included a sliver of land on the south side of South Golden Road, consisted of 15.47 acres. The 750.65 total acres resulting from this transaction represented the maximum extent of the State Rifle Range. Despite the expansion, State Adjutant General Paul P. Newlon recommended in late 1924 that more land be purchased near

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<sup>40</sup>State Adjutant General, Biennial Report, 1919-20., 17.

<sup>41</sup>Jefferson County Clerk and Recorder, General Records, Book 224, Page 187, recorded 23 August 1920.

<sup>42</sup>Jefferson County Clerk and Recorder, General Records, Book 256, Page 174, recorded 8 April 1924.

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the Rifle Range to provide room for more camp sites and for an artillery range.<sup>43</sup> The 1924 boundaries remained in effect until 1938, when the first reduction in the facility's land area occurred.

**New Buildings**

The number of buildings on the State Rifle Range grew considerably during the 1920s.<sup>44</sup> In April 1919, according to State Adjutant General William A. Spangler, the Rifle Range "was in a state of disrepair, no repairs or improvements having been made for several years." During the next two years, the two-hundred, six-hundred, and one-thousand-yard firing pits and the telephone system were repaired, a heating plant was built for showers, and a pistol range was constructed. A garage costing \$1,500 was constructed in the latter part of 1919 and a small bore range was constructed in late 1920. By the end of 1920, improvements at the Rifle Range had an estimated total value of \$31,494.85. Most buildings were clustered near South Golden Road, with firing lines and targets located to the north. The estimated value of improvements in Section 36 was \$4,260, consisting of skirmish pits, a target shed, a fence, the one-thousand-yard pit, and part of the telephone line in the southwest quarter and the six-hundred and eight-hundred-yard pits, trenches, and part of the telephone line in the south half of the southeast quarter.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>State Adjutant General, *Biennial Report, 1923-1924* (Denver: Clark Quick, 1924), 26.

<sup>44</sup>No maps of the camp in the 1920s could be located; a reduced version of a 1941 map is included and may be helpful in following the discussion of the installation's development.

<sup>45</sup>State Adjutant General, *Biennial Report, 1919-20* (Denver: Smith-Brooks Printing Co., 1920), 10, 16-19 and State Adjutant General to the State Land Board, letter, 7 July 1920, in Colorado

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During the early 1920s, a five-year construction program for the State Rifle Range was developed and "a systematic schedule of progressive work established to make the State Rifle Range one of the most complete and up to date ranges in existence."<sup>46</sup> Based on buildings actually constructed during the 1920s, the plan was aimed at providing additional storage space for supplies and equipment and upgrading the troop facilities for annual summer encampments.

By the end of 1922, the estimated value of State Rifle Range buildings had more than doubled to \$62,625. A number of buildings had been added during 1922 in the southern part of the camp below South Golden Road. Six wagon sheds (later designated as Buildings 57 to 62) were built in a row west and south of the existing storehouses. The one-story frame wagon sheds were long (30' X 140') rectangular buildings of a vernacular design, with gabled roofs with overhanging eaves and exposed rafters. The side elevations had a series of sliding garage doors facilitating storage of wagons. Until the mid-1930s, the National Guard relied heavily on horses and wagons to transport equipment and supplies. In 1935, the military undertook a modernization program to convert to mechanized vehicles and the wagon sheds were modified for storage.

Just east of the initial storehouse (Building 52), a filling station (Building 51) was constructed. The filling station was designed with Bungalow influences similar to the officers' clubhouse/caretaker's residence (Building 67) and the railroad waiting station. The 1922 filling station was a one-story, coursed, unsplit fieldstone building with a gabled roof with exposed truss system supported by battered stone piers. A short

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Department of Military Affairs, Facilities Management, records pertaining to Camp George West.

<sup>46</sup>State Adjutant General, Biennial Report, 1923-1924, 13.

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distance to the southwest, a garage and motor repair shop was built. A steel water tank (Structure 63), fifty-feet tall, with a twenty-thousand-gallon capacity, was erected between the motor repair shop and the first wagon shed to the west.

During the latter part of 1924, the Rifle Range firing points were in the midst of being "overhauled and reconstructed." The firing lines in question were apparently those still present on the western edge of the installation. The target butt for the range as configured for today's firing lines is visible in 1920s photographs of the installation.<sup>47</sup>

The post added eight frame and brick buildings between 1923 and 1926. Building 35, a frame storage building, was built in 1923 on the north side of South Golden Road northeast of the main entrance. This vernacular frame building with drop wood and pressed metal siding had a gabled roof and exposed rafters typical of other storage/utility buildings on the post.

Four frame buildings related to munitions storage were constructed in 1925 on the north side of camp about seven hundred feet north of the main entrance. These included three small magazines, of which one, Building 34 remains. This very small frame (now stuccoed) building was of vernacular design with a gabled roof, exposed rafters, six-light windows, and gabled roof vent. Building 33, a larger small arms and ammunition storage building, echoed the vernacular design of the storage/utility building of the post in its frame construction, gabled roof with exposed rafters, sliding garage doors, and six-light windows. A frame blacksmith shop on the extreme southern boundary of the camp near the wagon sheds was also built in 1925.

Two brick bath and latrine facilities were located next to each other on the northwest side of camp. In 1926, another bathhouse/latrine was erected north of the mess area in the eastern

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<sup>47</sup>Ibid.

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part of camp (Building 37). One of the few brick structures from the period of the post's historic development, Building 37 was a modest vernacular structure with gabled roof. Writing in late 1926, the State Adjutant General acknowledged that the state and federal governments had been "quite liberal" in providing funds for improving facilities at the State Rifle Range for summer encampments."<sup>48</sup>

Some of the last buildings constructed at Camp George West during the 1920s marked a return to the use of native stone in camp architecture. Twelve mess halls were built in 1927 in an east-west row on the north side of camp just north of South Golden Road. The mess halls were built primarily as kitchens for food preparation with a small area for dining. During summer encampments, companies pitched tents in columns north of each mess hall. Rather than having the mess centralized in a large building, the halls were small, one-story rectangular buildings with central entrances on gable ends and a series of evenly spaced, six-light windows on side elevations. The gable roofed buildings were composed of native fieldstone to window sill level and horizontal tongue-in-groove siding to eaves. The design of the mess halls was based on a standard plan provided by the Quartermaster at Fort Sam Houston and adapted for Camp George West.

Two structures associated with the camp's water system were erected in 1927. A fifty-foot, 22,000-gallon steel water tank was installed north of south Golden Road near the bath/latrine buildings. In 1937, this tank was moved to the south side of the camp adjacent to the original tank; in the 1960s, it was disassembled for scrap. A pump house (Building 84) for the camp's shallow well was also constructed.

A February 1930 feature story in the *Denver Post* profiled the Rifle Range warehouses:

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<sup>48</sup>State Adjutant General, *Biennial Report, 1925-26* (Denver: Clark Quick, 1926), 15.

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Imagine a huge department store, stocked with nearly 2 million dollars worth of "merchandise," but devoted exclusively to articles of equipment for soldiers of all branches, and you have the institution housed in several dull red buildings at the range. Every conceivable object used by an army, from tanks and trucks to needles and socks, is to be found on the shelves there in the warehouses and gun sheds.

As the chief supply center for the Colorado National Guard, equipment and supplies were shipped from the Rifle Range to Guard units throughout the state. Material was kept on hand to replace worn or lost equipment and to supply units in the event of a state or national emergency. The operation was then under the direction of National Guard Quartermaster Alphonse P. Ardourel and chief caretaker Frank Ardourel.<sup>49</sup>

Further improvements were made to the post facilities during the early 1930s. The 1930-31 period saw federal funding of an officers' mess hall at a cost of three thousand dollars (Building 43). The fieldstone hall reflected the design of earlier rustic buildings through its gabled roof and prominent full-width porch with battered stone piers. An additional wagon shed cost two thousand dollars, and a commissary was erected for three thousand dollars. State funds were used to build a \$1,500 hospital, as well as to repair and stucco a building, repair the canteen, surface roads and walkways, and to grade the parade ground.<sup>50</sup>

An additional twenty-five thousand dollar improvement plan for the Rifle Range was announced in October 1931. The initial project was the drilling of a deep well in the eastern portion of the post, under a \$5,960 contract with Stearns-Roger Company of Denver. An

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<sup>49</sup>Denver Post, 9 February 1930.

<sup>50</sup>Denver Post, 13 October 1931.

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additional fourteen thousand dollars in new construction requested included a recreation building, a headquarters building, a horse shed, and a horse corral. National Guard Quartermaster Alphonse P. Ardourel opined that "when the program is completed, the rifle range will be one of the best National Guard fields in the country."<sup>51</sup>

**Activities**

In 1923, the first summer training encampment since before World War I was held at the State Rifle Range for members of the Colorado National Guard. For the remainder of the 1920s, encampments were held annually, generally in June, and featured regular Army training instructors. While Guardsmen trained year-round by units in local armories, the annual encampments permitted specialized instruction, as well as large-group exercises in maneuvers and tactics.

In August 1924, a variety of groups attending summer training at Fort Logan, southwest of Denver, were transported to the State Rifle Range. Included were attendees of the Citizens' Military Training Camps (CMTC), engineers in the Reserve Officers Training Corps, and the 103rd Division of the Organized Reserves. Participants were at the Rifle Range for several days and took part in a sham battle and received training from regular Army instructors in rifle, pistol, and machine gun marksmanship. General of the Armies John J. Pershing visited the Rifle Range on 22 August 1924, inspected the progress of participants, and addressed the group, as well as several thousand spectators.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>Ibid.

<sup>52</sup>Military Training Camps Association of the United States, *Let's Go*, vol. III, *The Sketching Board, The Cactus* (Chicago: Military Training Camps Association of the United States, 1924), 39, 50. A photograph on page 52 of this publication shows trainees shooting from the type of firing line still extant at the post.

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During the 1920s, fewer incidents of labor unrest required intervention by the National Guard. The Guard was mobilized in the following instances: Pueblo steel mill strike (December 1919-January 1920); Frederick and Boulder County coalfield strike (June 1922); and the coalfield strike in many areas of the state led by the Industrial Workers of the World (October 1927).<sup>53</sup>

When civil disorder accompanied a strike against the Denver City Tramway Company in August 1920, the Colorado National Guard was so far under strength that it was ineffective. The Governor requested and received the assistance of regular U. S. Army troops. The Fort Collins Courier, reporting the resignation of Adjutant General William A. Spangler and the appointment of Patrick A. Hamrock as his replacement, observed in February 1921 that "for the past year the guard is said to have practically ceased to exist except on 'paper.' Recently all but four companies were disbanded."<sup>54</sup>

A major disaster struck Pueblo in June 1921, when the Arkansas River flooded. The flood cost approximately one hundred lives and nineteen million dollars in property damage, and placed the business section of the city under twelve feet of water. The National Guard was mobilized to control looting and vandalism and to implement sanitary measures in the stricken city.<sup>55</sup>

In October 1929, units of the Guard were activated to help quell a

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<sup>53</sup>Nankivell, Military Organizations.

<sup>54</sup>Fort Collins Courier, 18 February 1921.

<sup>55</sup>Carl Ubbelohde, Maxine Benson, and Duane A. Smith, A Colorado History, revised centennial ed. (Boulder: Pruett Publishing Co., 1976), 254-55.

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riot at the State Penitentiary at Canon City. The National Guard detachment at Canon City, a howitzer company, was ill-equipped to deal with this type of task and units from other locations were dispatched. In the wake of the incident, preparations were made to deal with future prison disorders. Colonel P. J. Hamrock was appointed a special deputy warden at the prison, detailed maps of the prison and buildings were prepared, and more appropriate weapons and equipment were shipped to the Canon City Guard unit. On two occasions in 1930, eastern plains Guard units were mobilized in assisting law enforcement agencies apprehend bank robbers from Kansas and Nebraska.<sup>56</sup>

In 1932, when remnants of the Bonus Army that had marched on Washington needed assistance in Denver, Quartermaster Alphonse Ardourel sent truckloads of supplies and tents from the Rifle Range to West Alameda Avenue and South Federal Boulevard. The colorful Ardourel defied federal threats to court martial him for his actions and was named Adjutant General of the Colorado National Guard in the late 1930s.<sup>57</sup>

**The New Deal Era and Preparation  
for War at Camp George West: 1932-1941**

On 1 May 1934, the State Rifle Range was renamed Camp George West by State Adjutant General Neil W. Kimball, George West's grandson. In addition to his prominent role in the founding of Golden and its first newspaper, West served as the State Adjutant General from 1887 to 1889. During West's tenure in office, a Ute Indian

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<sup>56</sup>Denver Post, 9 February 1930 and State Adjutant General, Biennial Report, 1929-30 (Denver: State Adjutant General, 1930), 16.

<sup>57</sup>Rocky Mountain News, 24 October 1952.

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rebellion on the Western Slope was suppressed, armories were established at Denver, Colorado Springs, and Leadville, and a signal corps was created. In renaming the facility, Kimball cited George West's service as State Adjutant General, his career as a newspaperman, and his recommending the site as a state rifle range.<sup>58</sup>

**Depression Era Public Relief Projects**

During the nationwide economic crisis of the 1930s, public agencies scrambled to set up programs which would provide relief through employment on public works projects. Established military installations benefitted from these programs as the unemployed were put to work in building and upgrading government facilities around the state. The public works relief programs of the Depression years were a boon to Camp George West, as new buildings were constructed on the post, old buildings renovated, and basic utilities and roadways improved. The number of new buildings erected on the post represents one of the largest concentrations of Depression era public works projects undertaken in the state.

A number of relief agencies participated in projects at Camp George West, including the State Relief Organization, Civil Works Administration, the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, and the Works Progress Administration (later known as the Works Projects Administration). The goals of these improvements were to upgrade and improve the accommodations at the post for annual summer training encampments, improve administrative facilities, and expand the recreational opportunities for personnel. Available records are incomplete and conflicting in some cases as to which relief agency was responsible for construction of a particular

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<sup>58</sup>State Adjutant General, Biennial Report, 1933-34 (Denver: State Adjutant General, 1934); Colorado Transcript, 22 November 1906; and Golden Globe Industrial Edition, 23 May 1893.

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building.<sup>59</sup>

**Civil Works Administration**

The construction of a pedestrian tunnel (Structure Number 50) was the only project identified by National Guard records as constructed by the short-lived Civil Works Administration (CWA) at the post. The CWA was a New Deal agency created in late 1933 that utilized direct federal administration of funds for public works projects. The goal of the CWA was to stimulate the economy and provide unemployment relief during 1933-34. Nearly all of CWA funds were earmarked for workers' wages and local agencies had to provide any necessary materials and equipment. When the CWA was abolished in April 1934, most of its functions were assumed by the existing Federal Emergency Relief Administration.<sup>60</sup>

The pedestrian tunnel linked the north and south portions of the camp and was probably the first relief agency project undertaken. Completed in 1934, the tunnel passed under both the Denver and Inter-Mountain Railroad tracks and South Golden Road and permitted troops to move from one side of the camp to the other without confronting rail or vehicular traffic. The tunnel was of concrete construction and was ornamented with stone entrances with pillars. Construction, which was hampered by water infiltration, proceeded

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<sup>59</sup>The Record of Real Property of the Colorado National Guard contains information on a relief agency builder that is at variance with the agency's dates of operation and the stated date of construction of the building. The relevant Adjutant General's **Biennial Report** and newspaper articles were used to resolve ambiguities in the most logical manner.

<sup>60</sup>James F. Wickens, **Colorado in the Great Depression** (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1979), 80-81.

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from both ends and met in the middle.<sup>61</sup>

**Federal Emergency Relief Administration**

President Franklin D. Roosevelt created the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) by executive order in May 1933. FERA provided indirect federal relief assistance through state relief organizations that matched one dollar of federal funds with three dollars of state and local money. Colorado was in the first group of seven states to receive FERA aid. Colorado's unemployment had peaked in April 1933, with a quarter of the population requiring some kind of financial assistance. While economic conditions in Colorado were bad, they were bleaker in adjoining states, and unemployed migrants were thus drawn to Colorado. The Transient Division of FERA assumed responsibility for providing assistance to such individuals in summer 1933 and established welfare camps through state relief organizations at locations throughout the state. The Colorado State Relief Organization operated a transient camp at Camp George West beginning in August 1934.<sup>62</sup>

The Camp George West transient camp housed from two hundred to five hundred homeless men. The men came from a variety of backgrounds and were billeted in mess halls on the north side of the camp. The transient workers reportedly worked for "twenty-one meals and \$1 a week." During 1934, transient camp workers repaired and renovated all buildings on the post, rebuilt the water and sewage disposal systems, and rebuilt fences. Transient workers built an attractive stone pillar and woven-wire fence along both sides of South Golden

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<sup>61</sup>Colorado, Office of the Adjutant General, Record of Real Property of the Colorado National Guard, corrected to 1 July 1957 (Denver: Office of the Adjutant General, 1957), 107-08 and Elena Ardourel Thomas, interview by Thomas H. Simmons, Arvada, Colorado, 3 February 1992.

<sup>62</sup>Wickens, 60.

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Road to replace an existing wood post and wire fence. In addition, local relief committees provided labor for the renovation of National Guard armories throughout the state.<sup>63</sup>

The first building erected by relief workers was a modern laundry (Building Number 53), completed in 1934. The laundry was constructed of dark basaltic stone quarried on post lands on South Table Mountain. In design, the building carried out the architectural theme of the post's storage and maintenance buildings, through its vernacular masonry composition with gabled roof, overhanging eaves and exposed rafters, and concrete window sills and lintels. The laundry was the first building at Camp George West designed by George H. Merchant.

George Harry Merchant, Jr., was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1892, and came with his parents to Gilpin County, Colorado, around the turn of the century. Merchant served in the Mexican Border Service and in World War II with the 115th Engineers. He attended schools in the east and received a degree in structural engineering. Merchant was a partner in Hayes and Merchant of Denver and was involved in construction of the Continental Oil Building, the Norman Apartments, and two of the original hangars at Denver Municipal Airport. As an engineer for the Colorado National Guard, Merchant drew plans for most of the buildings constructed on post with public works relief funds. He was also involved in armory construction and renovation throughout the state. He retired from the Guard in 1957 after more than twenty years of service and died in 1981.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup>State Adjutant General, Biennial Report, 1933-34 (Denver: State Adjutant General, 1934) and Office of the Adjutant General, Record of Real Property of the Colorado National Guard, corrected to 1 July 1957 (Denver: Office of the Adjutant General, 1957).

<sup>64</sup>Bonnie Cashion, daughter-in-law of George Harry Merchant, Jr., Rollinsville, Colorado, telephone interview by Thomas H. Simmons, 22 May 1992 and Bonnie Cashion, Rollinsville, Colorado,

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The most unusual construction project undertaken during the Depression years was the completion of an outdoor amphitheater on the slopes of South Table Mountain during 1934-35. According to Raleigh Royall, former National Guard Captain who participated in the project, the amphitheater idea was conceived by State Adjutant General Neil W. Kimball and proceeded "in spite of doubts among his subordinates about the value of the project." Colonel (then Lieutenant) Mark E. Conway, who supervised the transient camp for the National Guard, characterized the amphitheater as a "make work" project that was "hardly used at all" after its completion.<sup>65</sup>

The amphitheater (Structure Number 41) was the first substantial structure built in the northern section of the post. Previous construction in the vicinity had included such items as the target butt (c. 1924) and two frame target sheds built in 1916. Plans for the amphitheater were drawn by Lieutenant Frank J. Ardourel of the Colorado National Guard, who also supervised construction. Located in a draw on the south slope of the mesa, the 2,500-seat amphitheater was composed of an inverted horseshoe-shaped seating area bounded by buttressed stone walls, a stone projection booth, and a raised stage with dressing rooms below. Concrete slab seating rested atop stone bases. Construction materials included locally quarried stone, hauled by mule-drawn rock boats from the top of the mesa, and concrete. A pedestrian footbridge, of native stone masonry similar to the pedestrian tunnel, linked the amphitheater to a parking area to the southwest. The amphitheater

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personal files.

<sup>65</sup>Forum Associates, Inc., Draft Historical Review: Solar Energy Research Institute, Golden, Colorado Reservation (Denver: Forum Associates, Inc., 30 April 1987), 8-9 and Mark E. Conway, retired Colonel, Colorado National Guard and former commander of Camp George West, Lakewood, Colorado, interview by Thomas H. Simmons, 23 January 1992.

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was formally dedicated on 5 May 1935.<sup>66</sup>

The amphitheater was the first in a series of projects completed during the 1930s to expand the recreational facilities of the post. Movies were shown nightly at the amphitheater and the citizens of the local community of Pleasant View were invited to attend. Unfortunately, the site of the amphitheater was the home of a large number of rattlesnakes. During the showing of films, snake alerts were called and projection would be halted until the area was cleared of intruders. Although filmgoers began to attend the movies armed with flashlights, pistols, and forked sticks, the snake infestation made amphitheater offerings less attractive. After a short period of use, the structure was abandoned.<sup>67</sup>

#### Works Progress Administration

The FERA program was phased out in 1935 and replaced by the Works Progress Administration (WPA). In some cases projects begun under FERA were completed by the WPA workers. Created in July 1935, the Works Progress Administration provided public works jobs to relieve unemployment during the latter part of the 1930s. Each project required a local sponsoring agency, which contributed a portion of the total cost. As was the case with earlier programs, the WPA used its funds primarily on wages, rather than on materials or equipment. In selecting which projects to fund, WPA administrators looked at such factors as the number and skills of eligible relief workers, local desires as to kind of projects, and usefulness of the project. Adjutant General Neil W. Kimball, writing in early

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<sup>66</sup>Denver Post, 21 March 1935; Writers Program, Work Projects Administration, *The WPA Guide to 1930s Colorado*, 283; and Frank and Ed Ardourel clipping collection, Lakewood, Colorado, "Formal Dedication of Colorado Amphitheater, Camp George West, May 5, 1935: Program."

<sup>67</sup>Elena Ardourel Thomas interview; Mark E. Conway interview.

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1937, estimated that the assistance provided by the Works Progress Administration at Camp George West and other facilities around the state advanced the progress of the Colorado National Guard by "fully five years."<sup>68</sup>

The Works Progress Administration was responsible for most of the new buildings and structures erected at Camp George West from 1935 to the beginning of World War II. Most of the new buildings, which continued to be wholly or partially of stone construction, were located on the north side of South Golden Road in the southern part of the post. The designs primarily represented Bungalow and Rustic styles, as well as English Cottage elements popular during the 1930s. Many of the buildings had complex plans which required skilled stone masonry and large amounts of labor. Common features included varied rooflines, groups of windows with shared sill courses, raised concrete foundations, and wall projections. Stone obtained at the South Table Mountain quarry was utilized in construction of the new buildings.

Seventeen new mess halls were built, bringing the total at the installation to twenty-nine. The mess halls were similar in design to those erected in 1926. The Quartermaster, Fort Sam Houston, supplied a basic plan, which was modified by George Merchant for Camp George West. The new mess halls were built with roughly split stone quarried from South Table Mountain. A 1941 WPA project built furnishings for the mess halls, including thirty cook tables, 350 mess tables, and 720 mess benches.<sup>69</sup>

Recreational facilities increased with the construction of an

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<sup>68</sup>The WPA Worker, March 1937, 4.

<sup>69</sup>Rocky Mountain News, 23 April 1941; State Adjutant General, Biennial Report, 1939-40 (Denver: State Adjutant General, 1940); and Biennial Report, 1941-42 (Denver: State Adjutant General, 1942).

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outdoor swimming pool (Structure 49) on the northeast side of the camp, on the north side of Lena Gulch. The 50 X 90-foot concrete pool was used during summer encampments, as were tennis courts and a baseball field nearby. The construction of a recreation hall (Building 48) in 1937 brought the construction of leisure time facilities to its conclusion. The Bungalow style building with fieldstone walls featured a gabled entrance bay flanked by wrap around porches with stone pillar supports and multi-light windows with cast cement sills. A large stone fireplace ornamented the interior of the hall.

Between 1937 and 1940, a number of major projects added to the residential, administrative, recreational, and maintenance facilities at Camp George West. George H. Merchant was the architect for all of the buildings, which were designed to utilize a maximum amount of manpower. A portion of the post facing South Golden Road on the north began to take on the appearance of a campus quadrangle or town square as significant administrative buildings were erected around an open landscaped area. In 1937, the focal point of the installation, a new headquarters (Building 45), was constructed. The building's complex design employed split basaltic stone walls with engaged stone pillars. Varied roof forms, a segmental arched entrance topped by a pediment, and multi-light casement windows were included in the design to increase the labor needed for construction. Across the quadrangle, a thirty-four bed infirmary (Building 47) constructed in 1938 also featured a complex plan with central bay flanked by gabled wings. Roughly split, basaltic stone formed the walls of the building. A projecting, gabled entrance bay with stucco and half-timbering had a segmental arched entrance. A 1940 guard house (Building 83) was constructed on the west side of the quadrangle utilizing split basaltic stone, a hipped roof and a central projecting entrance with stone arch and stepped parapet with concrete coping and engaged pilasters.

Four new officers' residential units (Buildings 68 through 71) were added in a row along South Golden Road east of the original officers' clubhouse/caretaker's residence. The residences were erected employing the same maximum utilization of labor as the

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buildings of the administrative area. The residences were designed by Merchant and included masonry walls of split stone, complex rooflines, clipped gables, groups of narrow windows, and wall buttresses. The buildings displayed Bungalow and English Cottage influences in their stone construction, groups of narrow windows, and projecting bays. Aerial photographs indicate that the dwellings were constructed in the latter half of the 1930s.

Another WPA project involved improvements to the landing field for liaison planes at Camp George West. The grass landing strip was oriented from northwest to southeast in the area northwest of Building 48. Nearly twenty-eight thousand dollars was spent at the post by the WPA in 1937 as part of a statewide airport improvement program. The unpredictability of winds at the site finally led to its closure in the late 1950s and its presence is no longer visible on aerial photographs of the installation.<sup>70</sup>

WPA workers also built a filling station (Building 66), a commissary building, and a vehicle storage building. The largest building constructed on post, the 1941 vehicle storage structure (Building 82), was composed of structural steel supports and metal siding. The large 66 X 220-foot structural steel and corrugated iron building had a low gabled roof and large, multi-light shop windows, and multiple garage doors. The commissary, located at the southeast corner of South Golden Road and McIntyre Street, was a half stone-half frame building similar in design to the mess halls. The building was razed when the new Colorado State Patrol building for the Golden Troop was built in the early 1980s.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>70</sup>WPA Worker, April 1937, 17 and Mark and Martha Bennetts, Golden, Colorado, interview by Thomas H. Simmons, 12 February 1992.

<sup>71</sup>Denver Post, 15 November 1940 and Darrell E. Penner, former Captain, Colorado State Patrol, Arvada, Colorado, telephone interview by Thomas H. Simmons, 11 June 1992,.

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More than four hundred concrete tent pads were constructed by the WPA during the mid-1930s to early 1940s. The concrete tent pads (or floors) replaced wooden ones which had been used since the 1920s. The largest ones were located in company rows behind each mess hall; pads for officers were poured between the mess halls and South Golden Road. Following World War II and the cessation of summer encampments at Camp George West, the tent pads were used as parking areas for vehicles and storage pads for equipment and supplies. Over the years, whole areas of tent pads were removed for new construction and dumped in ravines in the southeast quarter of Section 36 to the north. The few that remain today are found mainly in the area used by the Department of Corrections, behind Building 25 and adjacent to Buildings 96 and 97.<sup>72</sup>

A number of more minor construction tasks were undertaken during the period by the WPA, including: an addition to the officers mess hall (Building 43); an addition tying Buildings 53 and 54 together; moving a water tank and tower from the north to the south sides of camp; and building one stone and four stucco garages (Buildings 73, 74, 76, 77, and 81) associated with the permanent officers' quarters.<sup>73</sup>

Supporting the WPA projects discussed above and numerous other projects around the region was the WPA's South Table Mountain Rock Quarry at Camp George West in the north half of the northwest quarter of Section 36. The sponsoring agency for the project was

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<sup>72</sup>Colorado National Guard, "Camp George West, State Rifle Range, Jefferson County, Colorado," map, corrected 30 October 1941 and Mark and Martha Bennetts, Golden, Colorado, interview by Thomas H. Simmons, 12 February 1992.

<sup>73</sup>Denver Post, 15 November 1940 and Colorado National Guard, "Camp George West, State Rifle Range, Jefferson County, Colorado," map, 12 January 1937 and corrected 30 October 1941 and 9 March 1949.

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the Improvements and Parks Department of the City and County of Denver, which was permitted by the state to remove rock from the site without charge. George E. Cranmer, manager of the Denver agency, viewed the rock at the site as excellent road ballast, which was capable of producing an extremely tough road surface. Cranmer remarked: "The quarry project was started as a means of providing employment for idle men during the depression years, but it has grown into a very worthwhile business."<sup>74</sup>

Located on the north side of South Table Mountain, the quarry employed 350 WPA workers who removed basaltic trap rock. The WPA erected a stone-faced "cave" for holding dynamite, a small building for storing blasting caps, and a road to the quarry area along the western edge of Section 36. In May 1936, Denver bought and installed a crushing machine for producing crushed stone for roadway surfacing. The crushed stone was mixed with oil and loam from the mesa top to produce roadmix. By July 1937, nearly two hundred drivers of trucks were involved in hauling the materials from the quarry to various projects around the region. At that date the drivers were organized into two shifts of five hours each, with each driver completing at least two round trips between quarry and project, in order "to rush Denver projects to completion."<sup>75</sup>

Stone from the South Table Mountain quarry was used for numerous projects around the Denver region. In addition to buildings and other construction at Camp George West, the stone was used for rip-rapping the banks of the South Platte River and Cherry Creek, for various improvements in Denver city parks, and a number of buildings at the Denver Zoo. The crushed rock was used in the

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<sup>74</sup>Denver Post, 19 September 1937.

<sup>75</sup>Denver Post, 6 May 1936; Rocky Mountain News, 2 July 1936; WPA Worker, June 1937; and Works Progress Administration, "Index of Projects of the Works Progress Administration" (N.p., n.d), 4.

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construction of West Alameda Parkway over the hogback to Morrison. During 1936-37, more than 81,000 tons of subgrade surfacing and nearly 26,000 tons of oil mat were applied to the 10.2 miles of roadway.<sup>76</sup>

The year 1939 brought several developments that affected WPA operations. Early in the year, Congress decreed that no future WPA spending could be used for national defense purposes, thus limiting the types of acceptable WPA projects. In July, the name of the agency was changed from Works Progress Administration to Works Projects Administration. The start of World War II in Europe in September 1939 brought a new national defense focus to the WPA program. Reversing the decision taken earlier in the year, improving and upgrading defense installations became the top priority of the agency, including special vocational training for defense work.<sup>77</sup>

In 1940, an ammunition igloo (Structure 88) was erected in the northern sector of the post, to the east of the amphitheater and some distance from the developed portions of the camp. The igloo was typical for the period, having a concrete arch with earth covering. A stone facade with stepped parapet with concrete coping utilized basaltic stone rubblework.

As war preparations stimulated the national economy the number of workers on WPA rolls fell throughout the 1939-41 period. In Colorado, the number of WPA workers dropped from approximately twenty thousand in mid-1939, to six thousand in late 1941, and numbered just 1,700 in December 1942, when the remaining workers

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<sup>76</sup>U. S. Works Progress Administration, Work Program: Colorado Works Progress Administration (N.p., 1937); Works Progress Administration, "Index of Projects of the Works Progress Administration;" and Denver Post, 6 May 1936.

<sup>77</sup>Wickens, 300, 302.

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were cut and the program terminated. Ongoing WPA projects were assumed by War Public Works which had been created in 1942.<sup>78</sup>

By the early 1940s, Camp George West could look back on a decade of substantial improvements aimed at bolstering its role as a summer encampment training center for the Colorado National Guard. By October 1941, the east-west row of mess halls had been extended across nearly the entire width of the southern portion of the post. Concrete tent pads extended north behind each mess hall in company rows and separate tent pads for officers had been constructed south of the mess halls. New permanent residential facilities stood in a row east of the original officers' clubhouse/caretaker's residence. The administrative center of the post included a headquarters, infirmary, and guard house, which faced a landscaped quadrangle. The basic water and sewer systems at the post had been revamped, and the camp was connected to the Golden municipal water supply. Recreational facilities at the installation included an amphitheater, outdoor swimming pool, tennis courts, and recreation building. Landscaping undertaken at the post included tree planting, a rock garden near the swimming pool, rip-rapping of streams, and surfacing of streets and walkways.

Writing in late 1938, State Adjutant General Alphonse P. Ardourel made a brief assessment of the WPA construction program at Camp George West, noting that it had provided jobs for men who would otherwise have been on direct relief and that it had produced badly needed improvements for the post. The program was a bargain for the state military. Ardourel reported that the state had expended just \$23,205 on the projects, and in return had received \$413,148 in appropriations from the federal government.<sup>79</sup>

Land Area

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<sup>78</sup>Wickens, 304.

<sup>79</sup>State Adjutant General, Biennial Report, 1937-38 (Denver: State Adjutant General, 1938), 7-8.

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By the 1930s, the Colorado National Guard recognized that improvements in technology limited the future usefulness of the Camp George West site, given its small size and lack of potential for expansion. The 1933-34 Biennial Report of the State Adjutant General advocated that the state acquire a large piece of land "for field maneuvers and for both rifle, artillery and aerial gunnery and bombing practice." Camp George West, given its relatively small size and difficulty of expansion due to topography and surrounding land uses, was becoming inadequate even for rifle practice given the more powerful, high velocity ammunition being utilized. The 1931-32 report lamented the necessity of spending five hundred dollars a year to lease land for artillery practice and urged purchase of a permanent target range. During the 1930s, the National Guard leased Green Mountain to the south from the Hayden family for use as an artillery impact area for rounds fired from Camp George West. A tract of land on the west side of Highway 93 was also used as an artillery range, with gun positions just north of Golden.<sup>80</sup>

The first reduction in the physical size of Camp George West took place during the late 1930s. In May 1938, eighty acres in the extreme northwest corner of the camp (consisting of the north half of the northwest quarter of Section 36, Township 3 South, Range 70 West) was conveyed to the City and County of Denver for \$928.46 in cash and \$3,399.54 in labor and materials used in making road improvements at the camp. This parcel included the rock quarry that the Denver Improvements and Parks Department had operated

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<sup>80</sup>State Adjutant General, Biennial Report, 1933-34 (Denver: State Adjutant General, 1934); Biennial Report, 1931-32 (Denver: State Adjutant General, 1932); and Mark E. Conway, retired Colonel, Colorado National Guard and former commander of Camp George West, Lakewood, Colorado, interview by Thomas H. Simmons, 23 January 1992.

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since the middle 1930s.<sup>81</sup>

**Activities**

The annual summer encampments at Camp George West continued during the 1930s. The 1932 gathering, designated as "Ricochet Encampment," was documented in a lengthy photographic publication produced by the Out West Photo Service for the National Guard. The summers of 1938 and 1939 were the last occasions on which the Colorado National Guard held training encampments at Camp George West.<sup>82</sup> In August 1938, troops also participated in war games at Pole Mountain, Wyoming. The daily routine of the training encampment in 1938 was described by the Rocky Mountain News. Upon arrival at the post, men were assigned to quarters, with six men to each tent. Setting up their tent (most likely on one of the newly-constructed concrete tent pads), the Guardsmen would then unpack and stuff their mattresses with straw. During the camp, reveille sounded at 5:45 a.m., followed by breakfast at 7:00 a.m.

The bulk of the day during an encampment would be filled with "drills, exercises, demonstrations, schools, and inspections" appropriate to each unit's area of specialization. Rifle companies, for example, would practice scouting, patrolling, and attack and defense maneuvers, while machine gun companies would engage in battery and combat firing, camouflage techniques, and defense against chemical attack. Members of the tank corps would practice driving their vehicles over the post's terrain, while signal corps troops would establish a message center and practice field communications. The diet for the training camp included such

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<sup>81</sup>Jefferson County Clerk and Recorder, General Records, Book 407, Page 86, recorded 26 May 1938.

<sup>82</sup>The Colorado State Guard (or Colorado Defense Force), the group formed after activation of the Colorado National Guard in World War II, did train at Camp George West in 1943 and 1944.

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items as "chicken, fresh eggs, jam, baked salmon, cheese, fresh tomatoes, lettuce, creamed potatoes, fresh onions, and radishes."<sup>83</sup> Entertainment was scheduled each evening from seven to nine, including movies in the amphitheater, boxing and wrestling matches, and stage shows. The Denver and Inter-Mountain Railroad continued to provide good access to the camp, and troops with passes good until midnight could take the interurban to Lakeside or Elitch's amusement parks.<sup>84</sup>

The Colorado State Patrol, created by legislative act as the Colorado State Highway Courtesy Patrol in 1935, began its association with Camp George West in that year. In September 1935, the initial complement of the Patrol, consisting of the chief, four captains, and thirty-nine troopers trained for six weeks at Camp George West. Frank and Ed Ardourel, who lived at Camp George West during the 1930s, recall state patrolmen training on motorcycles in the southern portion of the post. The patrol stayed in tents during the training period and then took up assigned stations throughout the state.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>83</sup>Rocky Mountain News, 2 August 1938.

<sup>84</sup>Rocky Mountain News, 2 August 1938; Frank and Ed Ardourel, Lakewood, Colorado, interview by Thomas H. Simmons, 10 February 1992; Elena Ardourel Thomas, Arvada, Colorado, interview by Thomas H. Simmons, 3 February 1992; and Mark E. Conway, retired Colonel, Colorado National Guard and former commander of Camp George West, Lakewood, Colorado, interview by Thomas H. Simmons, 23 January 1992; and Rocky Mountain News, 21 April 1985.

<sup>85</sup>Colorado State Planning Division, Colorado Year Book, 1962-1964 (Denver: Colorado State Planning Division, 1964), 662 and Frank and Ed Ardourel, Lakewood, Colorado, interview by Thomas H. Simmons, 10 February 1992.

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During late June through late August 1937, units of the Colorado National Guard were mobilized to battle an unusual enemy: grasshoppers. Farmers already suffering from drought conditions were hit with destruction of crops by plagues of grasshoppers in areas of eastern and southern Colorado. Governor Teller Ammons declared an emergency in late June and ordered Adjutant General Alphonse P. Ardourel to provide assistance. Twenty officers and 384 enlisted men were activated and placed at the disposal of Sam C. McConnell, a Colorado Springs based extension service entomologist of the Colorado College of Agricultural and Mechanical Arts. Sawdust from an abandoned sawmill west of Colorado Springs was mixed with poisoned bran and hauled by a fleet of 117 trucks to affected areas in the eastern plains counties of Cheyenne, Kiowa, Kit Carson, and Lincoln. Tons of the mixture were spread in fields in an effort to stop the advance of the destructive insects.<sup>86</sup>

In January 1940, Colorado Senator Edwin C. Johnson queried the Secretary of War on the feasibility of converting Camp George West to year-round use. Senator Johnson wanted to determine if the War Department would provide the sponsor's funding for a Work Progress Administration project for such a purpose. Secretary of War Harry H. Woodring, in a reply drafted by the National Guard Bureau, described the camp from a national perspective:

In common with forty-five other camps used exclusively for the National Guard, Camp George West has been built for summer use only. The troops sleep in tents; buildings are provided only for kitchens, mess halls, and bathhouses, and for minimum administrative requirements. There are no barracks or other indoor sleeping quarters. Heat is not provided in any of these camps.

Secretary Woodring concluded that the cost of providing barracks

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<sup>86</sup>Colorado National Guard, National Guard of the State of Colorado, Pictorial Review, 1939 (Atlanta, Georgia: Army-Navy Publishers, 1939), 142 and Denver Post, 29 June 1937.

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and winter heating made the funding of such a conversion impracticable.<sup>87</sup>

Faced with a deteriorating international situation, President Franklin D. Roosevelt ordered a portion of the National Guard into federal service on 16 September 1940. The entire 45th Division was covered in the call and included Guardsmen from Colorado, as well as the neighboring states of Arizona, New Mexico, and Oklahoma. The division was selected because it was assumed that the induction of troops from this region "would cause the least disruption to the nation's economy." National Guard historian John K. Mahon states that the Guard was the "principal military defense system of the nation" during the 1930s and, in the 1940-41 period, "provided the principal organized body of men for national defense."<sup>88</sup>

In 1941, the State Adjutant General leased a portion of Camp George West property to the Golden Gun Club. The land was in the western portion of the camp just east of the foot of the rifle range firing lines. The private club erected a clubhouse (Building 104) and skeet range. The clubhouse was a rather unique structure, with walls composed of hand-formed concrete blocks with hand-set decorative stones on each block. The gun club's occupancy was short-lived. In 1948, the State Attorney General determined that the Adjutant General was not authorized to execute such a lease and the gun club facilities were purchased by the state for five

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<sup>87</sup>Senator Edwin C. Johnson to Secretary of War Harry H. Woodring, letter, 22 January 1940 and National Guard Bureau, memoranda, 6 February and 9 February 1940, in the Camp George West file, Jefferson County Historical Society, Evergreen, Colorado.

<sup>88</sup>Mahon, 178, 180, and 194.

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hundred dollars.<sup>89</sup>

World War II at Camp  
George West: 1942-1945

During World War II, much of Camp George West was leased to the federal government for military training purposes. In October 1942, the state agreed to lease designated buildings and portions of the camp to the federal government for one dollar a year. The state military maintained a presence on the southern portion of the facility, retaining control of several buildings in which a caretaker and other employees were stationed and property of the Colorado Defense Force was stored.<sup>90</sup>

From November 1942 to December 1943, the 757th Military Police Battalion was stationed at Camp George West. The 757th was organized and activated at Camp Ripley, Minnesota in July 1942. For most of the battalion's period at Camp George West, Lt. Col. Foster R. Kilbourne was the commanding officer. The military role for such an MP battalion included dealing with military disturbances and misbehavior, guarding plants and other facilities, guarding enemy prisoners of war, and, in a war zone, following the

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<sup>89</sup>H. Lawrence Hinkley, Attorney General's office, to Irving O. Schaefer, Adjutant General, letter, 26 January 1948, and Irving O. Schaefer, Adjutant General, to C. E. Davison, Secretary, Golden Gun Club, letter, 19 March 1948, in the files of the Department of Military Affairs, Facilities Management, records pertaining to Camp George West.

<sup>90</sup>State Adjutant General, Biennial Report, 1941-42 (Denver: State Adjutant General, 1942), 10.

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army into occupied territory to govern it.<sup>91</sup>

The battalion underwent extensive training while at Camp George West. The troops participated in rifle practice, hand-to-hand combat training, marching drill, field communication, and tank operation. One of the more unique types of training offered was "canine warfare," in which approximately one hundred large dogs of various breeds were trained for such tasks as disarming attackers and accompanying sentries for protecting defense facilities and guarding enemy prisoners. After three to six months of preliminary training at Camp Robinson, Nebraska, the dogs were brought to Camp George West for "graduate" training. The dogs were housed in wood and wire runs on the south side of the installation near the wagon sheds.<sup>92</sup>

A small group of German prisoners of war briefly stayed at Camp George West. Thirty-two prisoners arrived in early November 1943 and were housed at the east end of camp in mess halls around which a stockade was built. Lt. Col. Kilbourne had requested the prisoner labor to perform street improvements and other repairs around the installation. Their stay was short, for the 757th Military Police Battalion abandoned Camp George West the next month. The unit was transferred to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, when larger training facilities owned by the Army were completed,

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<sup>91</sup>Denver Post, 19 October 1942; Rocky Mountain News, 5 December 1943; 757th Military Police Battalion, 757th Military Police Battalion, Camp George West, Golden, Colorado (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Army and Navy Publishing Co. of Louisiana, 1943), 10; and Rocky Mountain News, 16 October 1943.

<sup>92</sup>Rocky Mountain News, 17 July 1943 and 5 September 1943; Denver Post, 8 April 1943; and Jefferson County Republican, 21 January 1943. The dog runs are no longer extant.

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thus permitting the concentration of training activities.<sup>93</sup>

During the Army's tenure at Camp George West, a number of new buildings and other improvements were undertaken. The following buildings were all constructed on the north side of South Golden Road in 1943: a five hundred-seat, two-story theater/chapel (Building 100); four orderly rooms (two on each side near the mess halls, of which Buildings 96 and 97 are extant); and a gatehouse (Building 102). The theater was typical of similar World War II era temporary buildings, having a rectangular plan with gabled roof, overhanging eaves, and frame and gypsum board walls. The walls were covered with asbestos shingles after the war and are now stuccoed. The orderly rooms were also of a standard temporary design, composed of gypsum board with a waterproof covering. Four existing mess halls had frame additions built onto their north ends. The new portion served as a mess hall, while the older part was converted to a kitchen. A fire station/firemen's quarters was built along the southern boundary of the camp in the same year. A sewage treatment plant for the camp, situated in the north-central portion of the camp, was installed. The plant of the Imhoff variety replaced an earlier septic field. In the postwar period, Camp George West did not generate sufficient sewage to justify keeping the plant operating; the plant was abandoned and removed when the post was hooked into the Pleasant View system.<sup>94</sup>

Training camps of eight days duration were conducted at Camp George West during the summers of 1943 and 1944 for the Colorado State

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<sup>93</sup>Jefferson County Republican, 4 November 1943; Rocky Mountain News, 5 December 1943 and 11 January 1944.

<sup>94</sup>Al Bennett, Colorado Department of Corrections, Golden, Colorado, interview by Thomas H. Simmons, 27 March 1992 and Mark E. Conway, retired Colonel and former commander Camp George West, Lakewood, Colorado, interview by Thomas H. Simmons, 23 January 1992.

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Guard or Colorado Defense Force. This was the organization created when existing Colorado National Guard units were inducted into federal service. Thirty-seven states had created such forces by the end of June 1941 to deal with the threat of internal sabotage of military facilities, public works, and defense industries. The units were generally equipped with weapons borrowed from private citizens.<sup>95</sup>

More than twenty-four hundred members of the Colorado National Guard were inducted into federal service in 1940, serving with the 45th Division. Most were members of the 157th Infantry and the 168th Field Artillery Regiment. Most Colorado Guardsmen contributed more than five years of service during World War II. The 45th Division participated in the June 1943 invasion of Sicily and sustained a total of 4,080 killed and 16,913 wounded during the course of the war.<sup>96</sup>

Post World War II at Camp  
George West: 1946-Present

In the period following World War II, Camp George West became primarily a supply and repair facility for the Colorado National Guard. The relatively small size of the installation, encroaching residential and commercial development, and larger military equipment precluded a field training role for the post.

In the immediate aftermath of the war, the utilization of Camp George West became an issue between returning veterans and the

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<sup>95</sup>State Adjutant General, Biennial Report, 1944 (Denver: State Adjutant General, 1944) and Mahon, 186.

<sup>96</sup>Colorado, Division of National Guard, Master Plan and Mahon, 188 and 190-91.

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state military establishment. Veterans in need of housing saw the buildings at military installations around the state as possible emergency accommodations. The military vigorously resisted this proposal, raising legal and logistical problems with the concept. Adjutant General Frazier Arnold called a plan to partition buildings at Camp George West into quarters for families "a hairbrained [sic] scheme--a childish demand without substance or basis ... that would destroy the state's only permanent military installation."<sup>97</sup>

A number of National Guard buildings were added at Camp George West in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Among the 1949 structures were a large cinderblock ordnance shop in the northeast part of camp and a warehouse at the western end of the post south of South Golden Road. A small hangar and a quonset hut were installed west of the recreation building to support the activities at the landing field. A large vehicle storage building was constructed behind the mess hall area in 1953 in the northwestern area of the installation. Later National Guard construction included a warehouse (1971) and organizational maintenance facility (1973), both built in the tent pad area north of the western mess halls, and an armory (discussed below) built in 1969 in the eastern portion of the installation.<sup>98</sup>

A number of buildings used by the National Guard were demolished or altered during the postwar era. Several small frame buildings along the southern edge of Camp George West were razed in the 1950s, when the existing Public Service Company of Colorado high voltage transmission line was upgraded. These buildings included two storage sheds, a blacksmith/paint shop, an oil shed, and the fire station. Other buildings demolished in the postwar era

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<sup>97</sup>Rocky Mountain News, 16 December 1945.

<sup>98</sup>Colorado, Office of the Adjutant General, Record of Real Property of the Colorado National Guard, corrected to 1 July 1957 (Denver: Office of the Adjutant General, 1957).

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included four of the bathhouse/latrines, the westernmost wagon shed, the westernmost mess hall, the two orderly rooms on the east side of camp, and the hangar and quonset hut associated with the landing field. In 1950, the lower portion of the amphitheater stage was converted to an ammunition storage facility. A new facility for ammunition and hazardous materials storage was constructed in the late 1960s-early 1970s just southeast of the stage area, which has collapsed.<sup>99</sup>

The City and County of Denver continued to operate the rock quarry in the northwest quarter of Section 36 until the late 1940s. A private firm, Phelps-Wunderlich and James Company, was listed as operator of the quarry in the 1949 Annual Report of the Colorado Bureau of Mines.<sup>100</sup> A skeet and target range of the Table Mountain Gun Club was later established at the bottom of the quarry. Residential and recreational development in the lowlands to the north eventually led to its abandonment.

The Denver and Inter-Mountain Railroad, facing growing competition from the automobile and an increased preference for buses for mass transit, ceased passenger service to Golden in June 1950. In mid-March 1953, freight service west of the Denver Federal Center was terminated and the line was abandoned. The track and other equipment were removed shortly thereafter and the grade is no longer visible through the camp. For the first time since its

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<sup>99</sup>This discussion is based on an examination of the maps and aerial photographs cited in the Bibliography, as well as the Record of Real Property of the Colorado National Guard.

<sup>100</sup>Colorado State Bureau of Mines, Annual Report (Denver: Bradford-Robinson Printing Co., 1936-49.

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inception, the Camp George West site was without rail service.<sup>101</sup>

As the post-war period progressed, state government began placing tenants other than the National Guard at Camp George West. The Colorado State Patrol used mess halls in the eastern portion of the post beginning in the 1940s. The buildings were used by the Patrol as classrooms for in-service and recruit training. Beginning in the early 1960s, the Golden Troop of the Patrol was housed in Building 83. A new building was constructed for the Golden Troop in the early 1980s on the south side of camp at the southeast corner of South Golden Road and McIntyre Street. A commissary building was demolished to clear the site for construction.<sup>102</sup>

In May 1969, a large brick building in the eastern portion of the post was dedicated as part National Guard Armory and part Colorado Law Enforcement Training Academy (CLETA). Ten mess halls at the eastern end of the row were demolished in the process. CLETA provided training for law enforcement recruit training, advanced in-service training, and specialized training on narcotics and fingerprinting. The facility served the needs of the State Patrol as well as local agencies without their own police academies. A large, roughly triangular automobile pursuit-training course was constructed on top of South Table Mountain in Section 36 in the

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<sup>101</sup>Jefferson County Clerk and Recorder, General Records, Book 821, Page 419, recorded 28 August 1953 and William C. Jones, et al, *Mile-High Trolleys*, 2nd ed. (Boulder, Colorado: Pruett Press, 1975), 61-2.

<sup>102</sup>Darrell E. Penner, retired Captain, Colorado State Patrol, Arvada, Colorado, telephone interview by Thomas H. Simmons, 11 June 1992.

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late 1960s-early 1970s.<sup>103</sup>

In the early 1960s, the state's Civil Defense emergency headquarters was located at Camp George West. During the same period, the pedestrian underpass (Structure 50) was sealed at one end and converted to a fallout shelter, complete with steel doors, ventilation, and emergency supplies and equipment. When the Armory/CLETA building was completed in 1969, the Division of Disaster Emergency Services (DODES) was housed in its basement.<sup>104</sup>

The 1970s saw the creation of the Colorado Correctional Center at Golden, a minimum security prison facility utilizing existing Camp George West buildings in the west-central portion of the camp. Nine mess halls (Buildings 17 through 25) were converted to dormitories for inmates, while one (Building 26) was remodeled as a laundry. The most common architectural alterations included covering original wooden siding and modification of doors and windows. The orderly rooms (Buildings 96 and 97) were converted to a library and an administration building, respectively. The latter building was extensively remodeled and enlarged. A new building was constructed as a food preparation center and dining hall. The entire area of the corrections compound was surrounded by a chain link security fence.<sup>105</sup>

In 1973, the Colorado State Forest Service established offices, shops, and a tree nursery on Camp George West Property in the

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<sup>103</sup>Denver Post, 14 May 1969 and 19 May 1969 and Jefferson County Mapping Department, aerial photographs, 1968 and 1976.

<sup>104</sup>Mark and Martha Bennetts, Golden, Colorado, interview by Thomas H. Simmons, 12 February 1992.

<sup>105</sup>Al Bennett, Department of Corrections, Golden, Colorado, interview by Thomas H. Simmons, 27 March 1992.

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extreme southwest corner of Section 36. The facility, accessible off Quaker Street, is a service center for the surrounding region. The extreme northeast corner of Section 36 is currently leased to the Jefferson County Open Space Department.<sup>106</sup>

In 1981, nearly half of Section 36 was given to the federal government for solar energy research purposes. Since acquiring the land, the Department of Energy has constructed a large Field Test Laboratory Building just inside the southern boundary of Section 36, along with a number of support buildings to the west. The earthen rifle target butt, contaminated with high levels of lead from decades of marksmanship practice, was trucked away during the construction process. In March 1992, construction began on a Solar Energy Research Laboratory east of the first building. Access to the DOE facility is by means of Denver West Parkway, a new, paved road which follows the southern boundary of Section 36. This road and the new buildings form a barrier between extant historic resources in Section 36 (the amphitheater, footbridge, ammunition igloo, and quarry structures) and resources in Section 1 to the south.

Land Area

The physical size of Camp George West remained relatively stable during the postwar period until the early 1980s. Two minor changes to the boundary of the installation occurred during the 1950s. In August 1953, the one-hundred-foot right of way of the Denver and Inter-Mountain Railroad through the camp was sold to the state for ten dollars. The 2.8 acre parcel increased the total acreage of the facility to 673.45 acres. In 1958, an isolated piece of the camp lying south of South Golden Road was sold to Dean E. and Paul H. Norris for three hundred dollars. The tiny (0.425 acre) parcel became part of a mobile home park. Camp George West's total

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<sup>106</sup>Charles Dennis, Colorado State Forest Service, Golden, Colorado, telephone interview by Thomas H Simmons, 16 June 1992 and Jefferson County.

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acreage dropped to 673.025 acres as a result of this transaction.<sup>107</sup>

The size of Camp George West was nearly halved in 1981 when the state conveyed three hundred acres without compensation to the federal government "for solar energy research and development." The transaction involved two contiguous parcels comprising part of the eastern and southern area of Section 36, Township 3 South, Range 70 West. The removal of this irregularly shaped parcel from the camp resulted in Camp George West cut into three discontinuous pieces. A number of states competed for selection as the site of the solar energy research facility and the free land was part of Colorado's successful package. This transfer dropped the total area of the camp to its present 373.025 acres.<sup>108</sup>

The Camp George West site has undergone extensive change since the initial creation of the State Rifle Range in 1903. The area of the reservation has seen dramatic changes, from 75 acres in 1903, to its maximum extent of 750.65 acres (which existed between 1924 and 1938), and to its present size of 373 acres, following the 1981 cession to the federal government. The southern end is now substantially built up, as a result of expansion programs in the 1920s and 1930s. Postwar construction has introduced new, larger buildings with different construction materials into the historic milieu. The wholly National Guard occupancy of the post has given way to a multiplicity of state agencies. The land sales to the City and County of Denver in 1938 of eighty acres and the transfer of three hundred acres to the Department of Energy in 1981 have completely removed half of the historic area of the post from state control.

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<sup>107</sup>Jefferson County Clerk and Recorder, General Records, Book 1121, Page 385, recorded 27 May 1958.

<sup>108</sup>Jefferson County Clerk and Recorder, General Records, Reception Numbers 82000628 and 82000629, recorded 5 January 1982.

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F. ASSOCIATED PROPERTY TYPES

I. Name of Property Type: Military Buildings and Structures of  
Camp George West, Golden, Colorado

Subtypes: Administrative and General Support Buildings; Equipment  
and Supply Storage Facilities; Residences, Cantonment Structures,  
and Troop Support Buildings; Recreational Facilities; Water Storage  
and Distribution Structures; Transportation Related Facilities;  
Fence and Gate Structures; Quarry Facilities.

Historic Context: The Military Establishment at Camp George West,  
1903-1945

II. Description

The military-related resources of Camp George West, Golden, Colorado, were built during the period of the post's historic development, 1903-1945. The resources were constructed to create a permanent facility for the Colorado National Guard for such uses as a rifle range, equipment and supply storage site, and training facility for annual summer encampments. Subtypes among these resources are: administrative and general support buildings, including a headquarters, guardhouse, and medical facilities; storage facilities, including warehouses, vehicle storage buildings, and ammunition supply facilities; residential and support buildings, including dwellings, a tent encampment, mess halls, latrines, bath house, and garages; recreational facilities, including a recreation hall, swimming pool, amphitheater, and clubhouse; firing range; water storage and distribution structures including pump houses, reservoir, and water tower; transportation facilities, including a railroad station, bridges, pedestrian underpass, and garages; fences and gate structures; and quarry facilities.

The physical characteristics of the buildings erected at Camp

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George West were determined by the themes set by the early architecture of the post and the materials and manpower available at the time the buildings were erected. All of the resources related to the property type are expected to be located within the historic boundaries of the post. It is anticipated that the majority of resources will be located along South Golden Road in the most concentrated area of development for the installation.

The first permanent building erected on the post, designed by architect Albert Bryan in 1911, utilized native stone construction with Bungalow style elements, including a gabled roof, overhanging eaves with exposed rafters, and multi-light windows. These elements influenced subsequent buildings and resulted in the creation of a unique architectural environment. Buildings erected during the 1910s and 1920s repeated Bungalow and Rustic elements of Bryan's work. During the 1930s, a quarry operated as a part of public works programs supplied materials and public relief agencies supplied manpower for buildings. George H. Merchant, architect for the buildings constructed during this period, followed the original architectural theme of utilizing native stone for the post's buildings, and created facilities which employed Bungalow and Rustic influences in their design. The buildings of this era were designed with numerous narrow windows, wall buttresses, and complex rooflines in order to utilize as much labor as possible, thereby giving work to unemployed men. The built environment of the post grew substantially during the 1930s as a result of these public works projects. During World War II, a small number of temporary buildings were erected following standard plans provided by the Quartermaster Corps. To conserve materials and time, these temporary buildings were simple frame structures similar to thousands of others built on military installations across the country.

**Subtype: Administrative and General Support Buildings**

This category includes the buildings erected for the efficient administration and operation of the camp and formed the nucleus of the facility. The first permanent building erected on the post, Building 67, was originally intended as a clubhouse and caretaker's

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residence, but a portion of the dwelling soon began to be utilized as the post headquarters. In the 1930s, increases in construction funds provided by public works programs resulted in the development of a central administrative and support area with a separate headquarters building. During this period, architect George H. Merchant designed a group of substantial stone buildings situated along an open quadrangle area which served as the administrative center of the post. These buildings, which included a headquarters building, a latrine, a guardhouse, and an infirmary, were erected utilizing the basaltic rock obtained from the post's quarry on South Table Mountain, thereby tying them to the earlier stone buildings of the post. Like other buildings erected during the period, these were designed to employ a maximum amount of manpower, and included complex and varied roof systems, many multi-light windows, and wall buttresses and projections. During World War II, when the Military Police Battalion occupied the post, orderly rooms were constructed following standard temporary designs. These small buildings were of frame construction covered with gypsum board.

Subtype: Equipment and Supply Storage Facilities

Storage facilities were among the first permanent buildings erected at Camp George West and reflected the post's growing importance to the National Guard. As the installation became the central supply and storage facility for state troops, the role of the quartermaster necessitated the construction of large warehouses which held every conceivable item. The early twentieth century warehouses of the post were substantial buildings composed of stone gathered from the reservation lands and designed in a Rustic style with gabled roofs with overhanging eaves and minimal exterior ornamentation. The warehouses constructed established a storage area of the post in the southwest quadrant. A series of wagon sheds built in 1922 were vernacular frame buildings of rectangular plan with gabled roofs, overhanging eaves, and exposed rafters. Changes in automotive technology resulted in the mechanization of the National Guard and the construction of a large vehicle storage building in 1941. This building differed from earlier storage facilities in that it was composed of structural steel and had huge

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multi-light shop windows. A number of munitions storage facilities were erected to fulfill the post's mission as a state rifle range. These included two small magazines and a large ammunition igloo which isolated from the rest of the post development in the northeast quadrant slightly southeast of the amphitheater.

Subtype: Residences, Cantonment Structures, and Troop Support Buildings

The permanent residences erected at Camp George West included some of the more architecturally complex buildings on the post. Building 67, designed by architect Albert Bryan and erected in 1911, served as an officers' clubhouse and residence for the caretaker of the range and quickly became the early administrative center of the post. Constructed in the Bungalow style, the building was composed of native fieldstone, with a gabled roof with overhanging eaves and exposed rafters, multi-light windows, and had a gabled porch with exposed truss system. As part of public works programs during the mid-1930s and early 1940s, four additional officer's residences were built in a row east of the original officers' clubhouse/caretaker's residence, facing South Golden Road. The residences were composed of basaltic stone obtained from the post's quarries on South Table Mountain and were designed by architect George Merchant to employ a maximum amount of labor. The designs featured Bungalow and English Cottage elements, and were one-story buildings with open entry porches, groups of narrow multi-light windows, concrete foundations, complex roofs, and multiple wall projections and bays. The houses had large landscaped yards and tree plantings, as well as small frame garages.

During summer encampments, troops were housed in tents erected in a tent encampment area on wooden and later concrete tent pads. The tent pads were lined up in columns behind mess halls built in an east-west row north of South Golden Road. Twenty-nine mess halls were constructed from the mid-1920s through 1941 to provide kitchens for food preparation and small dining areas. The gable roofed buildings were composed of native stone (fieldstone during

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the 1920s and quarried basaltic stone during the 1930s and 1940s) to window sill level and horizontal board siding to eaves. The design of the mess halls was based on a standard plan provided by the Quartermaster at Fort Sam Houston and adapted for Camp George West.

Other buildings erected for the convenience of personnel at the post included a bathhouse, latrines, and a laundry building. The bathhouse and latrines were erected in the northwest quadrant of the camp and were unusual because of their brick construction. The laundry was a small basaltic stone building erected in the southwest quadrant.

**Subtype: Recreational Facilities**

Until the 1930s, there were no recreational facilities at Camp George West aside from the officers' clubhouse/caretaker's residence. The 1930s saw a substantial upgrading of the installation that included the construction of several recreational amenities. The facilities were built as part of the public works relief programs undertaken at the post and expanded the leisure time activities of the post. Included were an outdoor stone and concrete amphitheater on the southern side of South Table Mountain, an outdoor concrete swimming pool, and a Bungalow style recreation hall. During World War II, a frame two-story theater/chapel was built in 1943 near the administration building based upon a standard design for temporary buildings.

**Subtype: Firing Range**

Camp George West was originally established as the site of the State Rifle Range, indicating its importance as a training facility for rifle practice. Four firing lines were built for rifle target practice on the western edge of the post, firing northward into a target butt located in Section 36. The circa 1924 firing lines were narrow concrete structures approximately 340 feet in length, oriented in an east-west direction.

**Subtype: Water Storage and Distribution Structures**

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Provision of an adequate water supply, particularly for the annual summer encampments, was a problem that was not fully addressed until the post was connected to the City of Golden's system in 1941. Several structures were constructed to store and distribute water to the post: an elevated water storage tank; an underground concrete reservoir; and frame pump houses for wells.

Subtype: Transportation Related Facilities

The presence of Lena Gulch and dry washes cutting across the camp necessitated the construction of a number of bridges: two Rustic stone bridges across Lena Gulch; a reinforced concrete bridge across an unnamed tributary of Lena Gulch; and a stone pedestrian bridge across a gully near the amphitheater. A stone and concrete pedestrian underpass, beneath South Golden Road and the Denver and Inter-Mountain Railroad tracks, was constructed in 1934 to link the north and south portions of the installation.

The Denver and Inter-Mountain Railroad was a 13.1-mile interurban standard gauge system linking Denver and Golden, passing Camp George West along the south side of South Golden Road. A railroad waiting station to accommodate passengers waiting for the trolleys was built in 1917. The railroad station carried out the architectural theme set by the officers' clubhouse/caretaker's residence in its fieldstone construction, with gabled roof, overhanging eaves, exposed truss system, and stone pier supports.

Although the National Guard initially relied heavily on horses and wagons for transportation of equipment and supplies, by the early 1920s, motorized vehicles were increasingly important to the military. In 1922, the first gas station was erected at the post, in the southwest quadrant near the storage area. The gas station was similar in style to the railroad station, having fieldstone walls, a gabled roof, and an exposed truss system. By 1937, when the second gas station was erected, the National Guard was fully mechanized. The 1937 building reflected the public works era architecture designed by George H. Merchant in its basaltic stone walls, cast stone sill course, and small pediment over the entrance.

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**Subtype: Fence and Gate Structures**

Stone was also used in the construction of Rustic style ceremonial entrance gates for the camp on both sides of South Golden Road. A stone fencepost and wire fence along both sides of South Golden Road was erected as part of a transient camp project during the 1930s. A small frame gate house was built during World War II. Low stone walls were constructed in association with roads in the northern portion of the post during the 1930s.

**Subtype: Quarry Facilities**

The quarry, located in the extreme northwest corner of Section 36, was opened in 1935 by the City and County of Denver, Department of Improvements and Parks. Stone products from the quarry went to various projects around the Denver region, as well as for building stone, rip-rap, and crushed roadmix at Camp George West. Quarry buildings included a vernacular stone quarry building and magazine for dynamite storage.

**III. Significance**

The military-related buildings and structures of Camp George West, Golden, Colorado, are significant under criterion A in the areas of military and social history, and under criterion C in the area of architecture. All of the resources are associated with the development of Camp George West during the years 1903-1945.

The Camp George West resources are significant under criterion A in the area of military history for their association with the historic functions and activities of the Colorado National Guard. The site was initially acquired as a rifle range by the National Guard in 1903. Subsequent land acquisitions and building construction over the years developed the post into a storage site for supplies and equipment, a mobilization point, and an encampment facility for annual summer training. Camp George West played an important support role in such Guard activities as strike and riot duty, natural disaster assistance, mobilization for Mexican border

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service and World War I, and military training. In addition, the post was a training site during World War II for military police.

A large number of resources at Camp George West constructed during the 1933-42 period are also significant under criterion A in the area of social history for their association with New Deal era public works construction programs. Such programs as the Civil Works Administration, the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, and the Work Progress Administration provided funding for construction of buildings and structures at the post during the Depression era. A camp for transient workers was established at the camp during the mid-1930s and was employed in projects such as the construction of the amphitheater. Over half of the historic resources at the post were built during this period. The various projects employed hundreds of men and helped relieve area unemployment in Colorado.

A few resources are also significant under criterion A for their association with historic events or development. The railroad waiting station is significant under criterion A in the area of transportation for its association with the Denver and Inter-Mountain Railroad and may be the only Denver and Inter-Mountain railroad station still in its original location.

The Camp George West resources are also significant under criterion C, for their architecture, because they represent a unique group of Colorado National Guard buildings which embody a variety of functions and reflect the design elements, building materials, and craftsmanship which evolved at the post during the period of its historic significance. The earliest buildings on the installation are notable for their native, unquarried stone composition and Bungalow influenced design elements. On the post is one of the largest collections of WPA sponsored buildings in the state. The buildings were designed by George H. Merchant to harmonize with earlier structures and to utilize the basaltic stone quarried on the post in labor-intensive construction projects. The historic resources also include World War II temporary buildings which reflect standard plans and economies of labor and materials. As a group, the Camp George West resources are architecturally

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significant as representative of the expanding role of the Colorado National Guard, the development of military technology, and the changing lifestyle of the Guardsman during the early twentieth century as translated into local building materials and influenced by popular architectural styles of the period.

**IV. Registration Requirements**

Under criterion A, the property type must have been constructed during the period of the post's historic significance, 1903-1945. The resource must be an example of one of the identified subtypes. The resource should have demonstrable association with the military development of Camp George West and must have been erected on lands historically associated with the post. Integrity of materials, location, scale, workmanship, stylistic details, and construction technique are important for these resources. The reuse and adaptation of buildings for current use by the military is considered an aspect of the post's history. Therefore, buildings altered within the historic period to fulfill functions other than the original intended use will be considered to maintain historic associations and integrity and be contributing elements of a district if the scale, workmanship, and construction techniques are still apparent. However, only those buildings which also maintain integrity of design, materials, and location would be considered eligible as individual resources. It is expected that resources falling under the property type Equipment and Supply Storage Facilities may have been altered to a greater extent than other property types due to their pragmatic function. If these resources maintain their scale, construction techniques, and workmanship, they will still be considered to possess integrity as long as alterations occurred during the historic period.

Under criterion C, an individual example of the property type must maintain original scale, proportions, materials, workmanship, stylistic details, location, and construction techniques in order to be individually eligible. Additions must be non-intrusive and of similar scale to the original building. Individual examples of a property type will be considered eligible under criterion C only

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if they are significant or unique representatives of a style, design, or method of construction. Examples of the property type may contribute to a district significant under criterion C if the original scale, design, and a preponderance of original materials is extant. Thus, buildings with nonhistoric siding may contribute to a district eligible under criterion C if the original siding still exists under the newer siding. It is expected that common alterations such as the replacement of doors and window lights will not make a building noncontributing as long as its original design, stylistic elements, scale, and workmanship are apparent.

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**G. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

Camp George West is a Colorado Army National Guard installation located in central Jefferson County, Colorado, approximately three miles east of Golden and ten miles west of downtown Denver. The facility is situated in an unincorporated area of the county known as Pleasant View, with the City of Golden to the west and the City of Lakewood lying across Interstate 70 to the east. The post is located in Section 36, Township 3 South, Range 70 West, and Section 1, Township 4 South, Range 70 West, Sixth Principal Meridian, unincorporated Jefferson County, Colorado. U.S. Geological Survey map coverage is provided by the "Golden, Colorado" and "Morrison, Colorado" topographic quadrangles, both at a scale of 1:24,000, dated 1965 and photorevised 1980. The geographic area addressed by this multiple property documentation form includes all lands ever included in the boundaries of Camp George West.

The geographic setting and location of the Camp George West site has strongly influenced its development and architecture. The site is located at the edge of the foothills of the Rocky Mountains and encompasses part of South Table Mountain. North and South Table Mountains, 6,551 and 6,225 feet, respectively, are basaltic plateaus created by volcanic eruptions, between which Clear Creek flows. Lena Gulch and unnamed tributaries flow from west to east through the southern part of the facility and dry washes extend down the sides of South Table Mountain and join Lena Gulch. Elevations vary from approximately 6,225 feet in the north of the installation on top of South Table Mountain to about 5,740 feet along Lena Gulch. The sides of the mountain drop sharply and then the land gradually slopes southward toward Lena Gulch. Southward from Lena Gulch the land rises somewhat to an elevation of roughly 5,780 feet along the southern boundary of the camp. The steep sides of South Table Mountain provided a natural backdrop for target practice and the top of the mountain was quarried for stone used in street surfacing, construction of many Camp George West buildings, and other projects. The relatively flat part of the camp lying south of the plateau was used for training and as a

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parade ground, while the extreme southern portion along both sides of South Golden Road was the setting for most of the facility's buildings.<sup>109</sup>

The Pleasant View area, which lies mainly to the west and south of Camp George West, is an older residential area. More recent suburban residential and office development lies to the north and east. A profusion of intersecting roadways pass near or through the installation. Interstate 70 passes close to the southwest corner of the camp on a southwest-northeast axis. West Colfax Avenue (U. S. 40) and West 6th Avenue (U. S. 6) follow alignments south of the facility. South Golden Road cuts through the southern section of the camp on an east-west route.

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<sup>109</sup>Writers' Program, Works Projects Administration, *The WPA Guide to 1930s Colorado* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1987), 283.

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**H. SUMMARY OF IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION METHODS**

This Multiple Property Documentation Form covering "Historic Resources of Camp George West, Golden, Colorado," is based on a 1992 historic resources survey of the installation. Both projects were commissioned by the City of Golden, Colorado, in accordance with a Memorandum of Agreement among the Department of the Army, the National Park Service Rocky Mountain Region, the Colorado Historical Society, and the City, dated 11 September 1991. The interagency agreement was created as part of the Department of Defense's "Legacy Resource Management Program," created by the Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 1991 (P.L. 101-511), which focuses on inventorying and protecting natural and cultural resources and increasing public understanding of resource stewardship on Department of Defense facilities.

In accordance with the specifications of the Memorandum of Agreement, the scope of work for the project included identifying and recording all historic resources on state lands historically or currently associated with Camp George West. A potential National Register historic district within the installation which had previously been identified by Colorado Historical Society representatives was examined and the contributing/noncontributing status of all resources surveyed was evaluated. In addition, individually eligible resources were identified. A Multiple Property Nomination Form and a National Register Nomination form (excluding resources currently owned by the Solar Energy Research Institute) were completed for historic resources identified as part of the survey process. Information resulting from a survey of prehistoric and historic archaeological resources within the post conducted by the Interagency Archaeological Services Department of the National Park Service was included in the nomination.

The survey was conducted by Front Range Research Associates, Inc., Denver, Colorado, as consultants to the City of Golden, under a contract dated 2 December 1991. R. Laurie Simmons and Thomas H. Simmons conducted the historic resource survey and prepared the information in this form. Roger Whitacre and Thomas Simmons

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provided photography for the project. Charles L. Hearn City of Golden Department of Planning and Community Development, supervised the project. Captain Benjamin Bishop represented the Colorado National Guard and facilitated interaction between that group and other agencies. Barbara Norgren and Holly Wilson, Colorado Historical Society, reviewed project products and represented the Colorado State Historic Preservation Office. Gregory Kendrick, National Park Service Rocky Mountain Region, was project representative for that agency and reviewed project products and coordinated the project for the Department of the Army.

A file search of previously recorded resources within the project area was undertaken at the Colorado Historical Society Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation on 13 December 1991. The file search indicated one previously surveyed historic resource in Section 36, Township 3 South, Range 70 West. Two previous survey efforts, concentrating on the northern part of the post, had been undertaken following Department of Energy ownership of a portion of that area. Professor Sarah M. Nelson surveyed 325 acres of Section 36 in 1980. Features recorded during this survey included the amphitheater, footbridge, and ammunition igloo. Forum Associates, Inc., re-examined these resources in 1987 and briefly discussed the general history of the camp.<sup>110</sup> No listings appeared on the file search for Section 1, Township 4 South, Range 70 West, where most of the Camp George West buildings are located. No comprehensive survey of the southern part of the installation had previously been undertaken. On 18 May 1987, the Colorado State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) determined that the entire Camp George West complex was potentially eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

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<sup>110</sup>Sarah M. Nelson, *Historic and Prehistoric Resources, South Table Mountain, Golden, Colorado* (Denver: Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, 1980) and Forum Associates, Inc., *Draft Historical Review: Solar Energy Research Institute, Golden, Colorado Reservation* (Denver: Forum Associates, Inc., 30 April 1987).

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Before the start of survey field work, a reconnaissance survey of the vicinity of Camp George West was conducted to determine the extent and number of potentially associated resources. Sergeant Robert Williams, Colorado National Guard, Facilities Management office, provided a current list of buildings associated with the post and their years of construction. In addition, Sergeant Williams prepared an annotated map of the post which identified historic buildings on the site. Subsequently, an initial list of buildings to be surveyed was compiled.

Intensive level field survey for the project was conducted in January through March 1992 to document building exteriors. Building interiors were examined for significant features in June 1992. The field work included the examination of buildings listed for design elements, building materials, building condition, location, plan, setting, and alterations. The boundaries of the potential National Register historic districts were examined, as well as the contributing/noncontributing status of each resource within the districts. The location of each resource was verified on the base map.

The intensive survey of historic resources identified, recorded, and evaluated seventy-five historic resources, including fifty-seven buildings, fifteen structures, and three objects, and covered approximately 670 acres of land. Individual descriptions and evaluations of each of the resources were completed on Colorado Historical Society Historic Building Inventory forms. The results of the survey were compiled in a final survey report entitled "Historic Resources Survey of Camp George West, Colorado."

Base maps of the project area were prepared through updating existing maps of the site. One map, focusing on the southern portion of the post, utilized a 1986 map created by the Colorado Department of Military Affairs, while the other used a map of the entire installation produced by the Colorado Division of Public Works in May 1970. Both were updated through reference to 1991 aerial photography from the Jefferson County Mapping Department. The resulting updated maps were used to identify surveyed resources, the boundaries of potential National Register of

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Historic Places districts, the contributing/noncontributing status of resources within such districts, and individually eligible resources. The 1970 Division of Public Works map was also modified to show historic boundary changes experienced by the post.

No comprehensive history of Camp George West existed previous to this project. The preparation of the historic context "The Military Establishment at Camp George West, 1903-1945" was the result of the examination of government publications, manuscript collections, newspapers, interviews, published histories, photographs, reports, maps and survey documents. The context covers the period of historic development of the area by the military, from the initial acquisition of the land by the National Guard through World War II. The property type is divided into subtypes according to functions, creating eight subtypes.

The standards of integrity were based on National Register standards for assessing integrity. Integrity requirements were based on the examination of all extant resources, as well as information derived from historical research, including archival materials, published histories, photographs, interviews, and survey data. An effort was made to compare the resources of Camp George West to those of other military installations of the state, as well as to other sites of public works projects and other concentrations of native stone buildings in the state.

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