

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**FEB 28 1994**

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

**NATIONAL  
REGISTER**

=====

1. Name of Property

=====

historic name Healdton Armory

other names/site number Healdton National Guard Armory

=====

2. Location

=====

street & number Fourth and Franklin Streets not for publication N/A  
city or town Healdton vicinity N/A  
state Oklahoma code OK county Carter code 019  
zip code 73042

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Blake Wade  
Signature of certifying official

February 22, 1994  
Date

Oklahoma Historical Society, SHPO  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

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

Edson H. Beall 4/7/94  
~~Entered in the~~  
~~National Register~~

for Signature of Keeper

Date  
of Action

=====  
5. Classification  
=====

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property (Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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

=====  
6. Function or Use  
=====

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: DEFENSE Sub: arms storage  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: DEFENSE Sub: arms storage  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

=====  
7. Description  
=====

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER/Works Progress Administration  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE  
roof ASPHALT  
walls BRICK  
\_\_\_\_\_  
other \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

=====

8. Statement of Significance

=====

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

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

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

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

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

ECONOMIC

MILITARY

ARCHITECTURE

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance 1935 - 1936

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates 1936

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



=====  
10. Geographical Data  
=====

Acreage of Property Less than one (1) acre

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	14	639350	3788900	3	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____
	<u>N/A</u> See continuation sheet.					

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

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

=====  
11. Form Prepared By  
=====

name/title Dianna Everett, Research Associate  
organization State Historic Preservation Office date March 1, 1993  
street & number 621 N. Robinson, Suite 375 telephone (405)521-6249  
city or town Oklahoma City state OK zip code 73102

=====  
Additional Documentation  
=====

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

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

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

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

=====  
Property Owner  
=====

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

name State of Oklahoma/Oklahoma Military Department  
street & number 3501 Military Circle Northeast telephone 405-425-8000  
city or town Oklahoma City state OK zip code 73111



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

RECEIVED

FEB 28 1994

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 9

NATIONAL  
REGISTER  
Healdton Armory  
name of property  
Carter, Oklahoma  
county and State

SUMMARY:

The Healdton Armory (Healdton National Guard Armory) is a self-contained, horizontal, one-story building measuring 140 feet by 125 feet and constructed of red brick with cast concrete detailing. A local project of the Works Progress Administration in Oklahoma, it was constructed in 1935-1936. The armory property is located at Fourth and Franklin Streets. The surrounding area is commercial. The armory's main entrance faces north. The floor plan is typical of WPA-built armories, in that the building comprises two distinct sections: A south section, with barrel roof, contains the drill area, while a flat-roofed north section comprises offices, supply and arms rooms, and a garage area. The building exhibits decorative brickwork and cast concrete detailing, all exemplifying WPA architecture and construction philosophy in Oklahoma. Though the massing is strongly horizontal, several architectural details give the building a vertical emphasis: the upwardly projecting, stepped entrance bay; corner and central pilasters topped with pediment-shaped concrete caps; and narrow, vertical steel-framed multiple-light windows in all facades. Other decorative elements include cast concrete window sills, diamond- and rectangular-shaped insets in the pilasters, an elaborate main entry door surround consisting of a concrete segmental arch recessed under a stepped concrete panel, flanked by wing walls, and a water table on the north and east facades. All but four of the steel-framed windows are original, as is a single interior overhead vehicle door and most office doors. Exterior alterations include the replacement, in 1988-1991, of all original wood exterior overhead vehicle doors with steel doors, and the replacement of the original main entry wood doors with a single steel door. Interior alterations have generally retained the original floor plan while dividing some rooms by adding wood-framed walls. The Healdton Armory is one of two extant WPA structures in this small community. The Healdton Armory retains appropriate integrity of location, setting, design, materials, and workmanship to enable it to exemplify WPA-type military architecture in Oklahoma.

EXTERIOR DESCRIPTION:

The Healdton National Guard Armory is a self-contained, horizontal, one-story building constructed of red brick with cast concrete detailing. The building measures 140 feet north-to-south and 125 feet east-to-west. A local project of the Works Progress Administration in Oklahoma, it was constructed in 1935-1936 of red brick manufactured in McAlester, Oklahoma, at the state penitentiary. The armory property is located at Franklin and Fourth Streets (it is bordered by Fourth on the west, by Franklin on the north, by an alley on the south, and by a commercial building on the east. The surrounding area is heavily commercial. The armory's main entrance faces north.

As with many WPA armories in Oklahoma, the building is designed to have two principal facades that each give pedestrian and/or vehicular access to a

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 10

Healdton Armory  
name of property  
Carter, Oklahoma  
county and State

street. The Healdton Armory has two principal facades: the main entry, on the north, accesses Franklin Street, and a vehicular entry accesses Fourth Street. These walls are characterized by outwardly projecting pilasters and wing walls that enframe window/door bays. The north facade's main focus is an elaborate door surround consisting of markedly stepped and castellated parapet buttressed by massive piers and wing walls that enframe the segmental-arched entry. The west facade is divided by shallow pilasters into two parts, one being the administrative section, characterized by its fenestration--tall, vertical metal-framed windows and vehicle doors--and the drill hall section, characterized by barrel roof and towering pilasters. Cast-concrete detailing is an important visual aspect of the primary facades. The secondary facades, on south and east, are much less elaborate, though the administrative section (north side) of the east facade is characterized by fenestration similar to its counterpart on the west.

The roofline of the Healdton Armory is indicates that the building comprises two distinct sections: A south section, with barrel roof, comprises the drill area, while a flat-roofed one-story north section comprises offices, supply and arms rooms, and garage. (Historically and presently) the drill hall roof is covered with roll roofing, and the south section is covered tar and gravel. The roofline of the Healdton Armory gives the building a fortress-like aspect. The north roofline exhibits a uniformly horizontal cast concrete parapet. On the east and west, the arc of the barrel roof, over the south section, contrasts with the horizontal line of the north section. At the four corners of the drill hall, shallow pilasters buttress the walls and rise to become "towers." On the south (drill hall), the roofline is horizontal, with a "step" at each corner.

Each facade exhibits regular openings that indicate the dual nature of the building and the functions of interior spaces. All but four of the steel-framed windows are original. Glazing patterns include combinations of two or three lights set in four, five, or six rows (4/2/4/2, 3/6/3, 3/6/6, 6/6/3, 6/3/6/3, usually with one or two sets of vertical center-pivot windows and a bottom row that opens in hopper fashion). The NORTH facade consists in four bays: Slightly off-center is the pedimented, stepped, upwardly projecting entry bay, with its segmental-arched portal and new steel door with single light. Flanking the entry bay are two bays enframed by pilasters; each bay contains a pair of 3/6/3/3 row windows flanked by a 4/4/2 window. A narrow four-light casement window lies close to the inside pilaster on each side of the entry bay. The westernmost bay contains a single 4/4/2 window that illuminates the garage area. On the WEST side, the northernmost bay contains four steel (new) overhead vehicle doors, while the southernmost bay contains a central steel (new) overhead vehicle door flanked by a triplet of 6/3/6/3 windows on the south and, on the north, by two 6/3/6/3 windows and a 3/6/3 transom atop an original wood pedestrian door. All of the original wood

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 11

Healdton Armory  
name of property  
Carter, Oklahoma  
county and State

overhead doors were replaced with steel doors in the 1980s.<sup>1</sup> Openings in the SOUTH facade illuminate the drill hall. At the extreme east end is a 6/6/3 window, and west of this, two pairs of 6/3/6/3 windows are placed on each side two permanently blocked pedestrian entries that are topped with 3/6/3 transoms. On the EAST, the facade is irregularly pierced; in the administrative (north) section, there is a pair of two original 3/6/3/3 windows and a triplet of window openings that has been partially closed up with concrete blocks, leaving space for an aluminum-framed, single-hung sash window in each opening. Slightly south of these three, in the drill hall (south) section there is a fourth window that has been closed up, with an aluminum frame window added. There is also an original small, two-foot-square ventilation window close to the ground in the center of the drill hall section. On all sides of the building, numerous lights are painted.

Though the massing is strongly horizontal, several architectural details influenced by Art Deco style give the building a vertical emphasis: the stepped parapet marking the main entry; pediment-shaped, concrete-capped pilasters decorated with cast-concrete diamond-shaped and rectangular insets; tall, massive wing walls faced with cast-concrete blocks, at the main entry; and narrow, vertical steel-framed multiple-light windows in all facades. Original metal downspouts are in place on the south, east, and west facades.

Cast concrete decorative elements are another feature of the building: These consist of the parapet coping on north and west sides, all pilaster pediment-shaped caps, all window sills, "incisions" that look like gunports in the upwardly projecting "towers" that enframe the drill hall, the cast-concrete-block water table that forms the foundation of the north wall, the stepped panel and arch in the north entrance door surround, and vertical shafts of cast-concrete blocks on the corners of the pilasters and at the building's northwest and northeast corners. An eight-step concrete porch leads to the main entrance.

A window-type air conditioner has been installed in one north side window and in one east side window. On the north wall near the northwest corner of the building is a cornerstone marking the construction as a 1936 WPA project, and over the main entry is affixed a new diamond-shaped red and gold metal sign bearing the "Thunderbird" symbol of the 45th Infantry Division. A communications antenna and an original flagpole rise from the roof above the north entrance. A new steel flagpole rises from a brick planter outside the north entrance. On the west, a gasoline pump sits near the driveway, and a wooden sign at curbside identifies the building as a National Guard Armory.

INTERIOR DESCRIPTION/ALTERATIONS:

The Healdton Armory exhibits a rectangular plan that was standard for WPA armories. The building is divided into two functional sections, a drill hall

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 12

Healdton Armory  
name of property  
Carter, Oklahoma  
county and State

area on the north, and an administrative/garage section on the south. In general, the original floor plan has been maintained. In the administrative/garage section, rooms lie on either side of a north-south center hallway. A four-bay garage occupies the west half of the north section. The west wing's original concrete ceiling is still visible in the garage. On one side of the garage area is an original small office area which was originally divided by a brick wall. This wall was removed in the 1980s in order to make the space more useable. This smaller office was enlarged in the 1980s by building two concrete-block walls out into the garage area, but the original brick walls were not altered in the process. On the other side of the garage is a small original tool room. On the east side of the central hallway, the original walls remain. The space is still divided into a former locker room (now subdivided by wood-frame walls into three offices), a shower/latrine, and a supply room (with original arms vault). All interior walls are brick; the central hallway and office walls have been "furred out" and paneled, and drop ceilings have been added in the offices and in the hallway.<sup>2</sup> In the brick wall between the garage area and the drill hall is an original wood-panel overhead vehicle door. In the central hallway, original double wood-panel pedestrian doors open into the drill hall.

The 86' by 125' drill hall retains much of its original interior. The ceiling was and is a high barrel vault with exposed steel roofing panels and exposed steel truss system. Flanked by pilasters resembling those on the exterior, a now-enclosed stage (now a dining room) rises in the east wall. On each side of the stage are steps and original wood doors leading to dressing rooms, and at the far south end of the stage is a set of steps and an original wood door leading down into the underground rifle range, still accessible but now condemned. An original wood-block floor was removed in the 1950s and was replaced with a hardwood basketball floor, which is still in excellent condition. A room with wood-framed walls was been constructed against the inside (north) wall of the drill room in the 1980s.<sup>3</sup>

Except for the replacement of deteriorated wood exterior doors in the 1980s, the blocking up of four windows on the east side, and interior remodeling, the Healdton Armory is essentially unaltered from its original appearance. It retains sufficient integrity of location, setting, design, materials, and workmanship to enable it to convey its past identity and its architectural significance.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section   7   Page  13 

Healdton Armory  
name of property  
Carter, Oklahoma  
county and State

ENDNOTES

1. Sgt. Robert Treadwell, Det. 1, 1345 Transportation Company, interview by Dianna Everett, Healdton, Oklahoma, February 19, 1993.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 14

Healdton Armory  
name of property  
Carter, Oklahoma  
county and State

SUMMARY:

The Healdton Armory (Healdton National Guard Armory) is significant within the economic context of Works Progress Administration projects in Healdton, Oklahoma, 1935-1936, within the military context of national defense requirements of the Oklahoma National Guard's local unit in the era between the two world wars, and within the architectural context of WPA building style and methodology locally and in Oklahoma. The armory was constructed between 1935 and 1936 by local men who were qualified for work relief under WPA guidelines. The project brought \$40,000 into the economy of Healdton, Oklahoma, by employing an average of forty-six previously unemployed, unskilled workers for more than sixteen months. The armory also filled a longstanding military need for an adequate, secure drill hall and arms storage building for Company B, 120th Quartermaster Regiment, 45th Infantry Division of the Oklahoma National Guard, which had previously had no permanent armory. The Healdton Armory is significant architecturally as an excellent, intact example of WPA architecture. The materials, brick manufactured in Oklahoma by convict labor, and workmanship, evident in masonry and cast concrete detailing, reflect both the goals of the WPA Building Program in Oklahoma and the practical considerations of using unskilled labor to construct large public buildings. The armory is one of two WPA structures remaining in Healdton, and it is the town's only example of military-style architecture. As it is essentially intact, the Healdton Armory is able to convey appropriate feeling and association within these three contexts.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE:

Oklahoma suffered severely during the initial years of the Great Depression, 1929-1933, but here, in a predominantly rural state, where in 1930, 65.7 percent of the population lived in rural areas, and twenty-seven of the state's seventy-seven counties had no "urban" areas, or towns of more than 2,500 persons, drought, general agricultural failure from 1932 through 1938, and a downturn in the petroleum industry exacerbated the general economic depression. Rural communities, towns, and cities, which functioned as agricultural or petroleum service centers, consequently foundered.

Oklahoma's state and local governments were unable to provide much help for citizens, whether urban or rural. Limited relief offered by counties did not alleviate the suffering, nor did meager annual appropriations by the state legislature. No public funding was available to maintain the existing infrastructure, and private charity failed to create or to support relief initiatives. The Federal Emergency Relief Administration, established in May of 1934 by the Roosevelt administration, provided some direct relief, in terms of food, clothing, and small stipends, but until the inception of the Works Progress Administration in 1935 only a few Oklahomans received adequate assistance. The urban unemployed and displaced farm families combined to

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 15

Healdton Armory  
name of property  
Carter, Oklahoma  
county and State

create a situation in which 33 percent of all Oklahoma families were on the direct relief rolls by the time that Roosevelt created the WPA by executive order in May, 1935. By July 1935, there were 127,416 jobless men certified in Oklahoma.<sup>1</sup>

The inauguration of the Works Progress Administration in 1935 stands as one of the benchmarks of Franklin D. Roosevelt's "New Deal" for the United States. Administered nationally by Harry Hopkins, the program was designed to assist in lifting the nation from the depths of severe economic depression. Make-work projects provided work-relief for literally millions of individual citizens whose lives had been devastated by the near-collapse of the American economy. The infusion of cash into work-relief projects all over the state made a significant economic impact on hundreds of communities. During the seven-and-one-half-year life of the WPA, more than \$10.75 billion were expended, of which Oklahoma received more than \$185 million for projects ranging from school lunch programs, flood control, and archeological excavations, to major construction projects such as armories, highways, bridges, schools, stadiums, and museums.<sup>2</sup>

Localities competed for WPA funds from the outset. Chambers of Commerce and planning committees drew up specifications to meet three major criteria established by the administration: 1) projects must meet a well-defined community need; 2) each project must be sponsored by a public body, such as a city or county government or school district, which was required to provide from 10 to 25 percent of the project cost in cash and/or materials; and 3) 90 percent of those hired must be unemployed employable workers who were carried on the relief rolls. Compensation was to be based on 130 hours of work for \$21 (later \$23) per month for unskilled labor.<sup>3</sup> In June of 1935 Oklahoma WPA Director (Gen.) William S. Key estimated that there were already "70,000 employable unemployed" ready to work on his agency's projects throughout the state; by November of that year, 67,973 people were at work for the WPA, and by January of 1936, WPA rolls reached an all-time high of 94,281.<sup>4</sup>

Armory construction was the first major thrust of the WPA Building Program in Oklahoma. By mid-1937, 126 armories had been constructed throughout the United States, and 51 of these projects were located in Oklahoma. When the WPA ended its program in 1943, 54 armories had been built and 53 others "reconstructed" in the state. The new construction had infused \$3.5 million into local economies.<sup>5</sup>

Carter County, in southern Oklahoma, was an agricultural and petroleum production region. The town of Healdton had been established in 1882 by Charles Healdton, a local farmer. Agriculture dominated the local economy for the first three decades, but in 1913 a massive oil field was discovered in the

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 16

Healdton Armory  
name of property  
Carter, Oklahoma  
county and State

western part of Carter County. Thereafter, Healdton functioned as a major oilfield service center for the Healdton Field. By 1930 the town boasted a population of 7,512. During the early 1930s a severe drought hampered agricultural production, and a drop in the market price of oil compounded the problems associated with a generally depressed economy.<sup>6</sup> By September of 1934, 3,783 families, or 38.3 percent of the Carter County population were on direct relief. The WPA made a difference in Carter County, Oklahoma. By September of 1935, the number of families on relief had been reduced to 2,383, or 25.3 percent of the county population. In Healdton, Oklahoma, by November of 1935, all available unemployed workers in town were on work relief, and by September of 1936, 1,169 persons in Carter County were employed by the WPA.<sup>7</sup>

By mid-summer of 1935 Carter County municipalities had submitted numerous proposed WPA projects. The Healdton city government submitted three, one of which was an armory. Public support for the armory included local civic and patriotic organizations: in September of 1935, the American Legion donated two lots, and the Lions Club donated three lots, on Franklin Street. The city commission subsequently deeded the property to the state. Thus, the sponsor's share of the cost of the armory was provided in land.<sup>8</sup>

Groundbreaking for the Healdton Armory took place in late October 1935, and construction proceeded through the rest of the year and through 1936.<sup>9</sup> Local purchases of materials added to the project's importance for the local economy. Due to labor shortages, materials shortages, and weather-related shutdowns, a short project expanded into a long one. In January of 1936, WPA administrator Gen. William S. Key ordered project supervisors to rearrange the work schedule from one eight-hour shift to two six-hour shifts per day. This would accomplish two purposes: it would employ more workers, a bona-fide WPA goal, and it would bring the project back onto its original schedule. At this time, forty-six men were employed on the site.<sup>10</sup> The first event held in the still unfinished facility came on December 10, 1936, when the local high school held a fundraiser for the school band.<sup>11</sup> Finally completed in mid-December, the Armory was dedicated on December 18, 1936. On that day, Healdton celebrated with an open house, banquet, and band concert. General Key, state WPA director, and other state and local dignitaries participated in the dedication, and the program concluded with a dance, for which music was provided by "the W. P. A. orchestra."<sup>12</sup>

WPA projects in 1935-1937 propped up the sagging rural economy of Carter County. By the end of 1937, estimated WPA expenditures in Healdton totalled more than \$138,000 on projects ranging from a \$11,197 community building, \$15,000 in school buildings, \$56,000 for sewer and waterworks improvements, and \$7,260 for underpasses. The WPA's cost on the armory project was \$40,000, with the city contributing the land.<sup>13</sup> In human terms, thousands of person-hours of labor went into the armory's construction. Most significantly, a monthly average of forty-six men were employed on the project. These figures testify



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 17

Healdton Armory  
name of property  
Carter, Oklahoma  
county and State

to the labor-intensive nature of WPA projects, which were designed to provide as much work as possible for those on relief rolls. Most of the hours were consumed in hand labor--hod carrying, bricklaying, concrete-pouring, and in installing a wood-block floor in the 80' by 140' drill room (more than 200,000 pine blocks were cut, primed, set in asphalt, sanded, oiled, and polished, in sections). A concrete floor would have sufficed, but ample time and labor were available to create what the Healdton Herald called "an artistic arrangement of the flooring."<sup>14</sup>

Upon completion, the Healdton Armory became the home of Company B, 1st Battery, 120th Quartermaster Regiment, 45th Infantry Division, Oklahoma National Guard.<sup>15</sup> Reorganized under the National Defense Act of 1920, the Guard was an integral part of United States military preparedness. Since 1920, approximately five-sixths of America's military strength lay with "citizen soldiers"--National Guard divisions and Reserve divisions in nine corps areas across the nation. Each corps area had one Regular Army division, two National Guard Divisions, and three Reserve divisions. Oklahoma, along with New Mexico, Arizona, and Colorado, formed one division of National Guard within the Eighth Corps. Despite inadequate training facilities, the Oklahoma National Guard provided service during various natural disasters and civil disturbances in the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>16</sup> Because the Guard paid its members a monthly fee, which they spent locally to feed and clothe their families, Oklahoma communities actively competed to secure local Guard units during these years. In Healdton, the local unit had been established in 1924 as a Motor Transport Company, but in 1936 it had been changed over to the Quartermaster Regiment. In 1937 the unit included two officers and forty-six enlisted men.<sup>17</sup>

The National Guard received only one-tenth of the War Department's budget in the interwar years, and equipment was surplus from World War I. Many units needed permanent training, drilling, and storage facilities, as Guard members were required to meet 48 drills per year. Units without permanent armories usually rented space in warehouses that often lacked proper security. Four hundred new armories created by the cooperative effort of the federal and local governments helped correct this serious deficiency.<sup>18</sup>

The new Healdton Armory provided permanent housing for the unit. The new facility was more than adequate for the detachment's needs. The building was divided into areas serving specific functions. The entire south section housed the drill hall, comprising the stage and the drill floor. The front, or north, section, housed the arms vault, supply room, classroom, offices, storage rooms, locker room, and garage. Underground, on the east side, beneath the stage, is a rifle range. Thus the building provided for virtually every training need, except for field training exercises.

Due in large measure to the WPA armory-building program, the 45th Infantry Division was able to achieve a level of military efficiency and readiness that

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 18

Healdton Armory  
name of property  
Carter, Oklahoma  
county and State

prepared it to be among the first four National Guard divisions federalized in late 1940 by President Roosevelt. After the United States entered World War II, the 45th saw action in North Africa, Sicily, and Italy.<sup>19</sup>

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE:

The Healdton Armory exemplifies WPA military architecture in Oklahoma. In the mid-1930s two armory plans were developed by Major Bryan W. Nolen, an Oklahoma City architect and National Guard officer selected in 1935 to serve on the staff of WPA administrator Gen. William S. Key. Nolen's exterior design indicates the building's functions. He planned for every armory to have a drill hall section, usually having a high ceiling and either a barrel or a flat roof, and also a flat-roofed, single-story extension (office, garage, and arms storage section) on one or both sides, the number depending on the number of guard units (one, two, or four) to be housed in the building.<sup>20</sup> Design was flexible, allowing for the orientation of the building to various avenues of egress or size of property. The WPA preferred to use locally purchased building materials, and therefore armories were constructed of native stone, usually quarried locally, or brick, manufactured within the state, as was the case with the Healdton Armory.

WPA architectural philosophy prohibited the use of ornate features, intricate design, and elaborate trim; therefore, WPA armories tend to be straightforwardly utilitarian. They have a strong horizontal massing, a fortresslike quality, which is often relieved only by vertical and stylized Art Deco detailing or by virtue of being a provincial interpretation of a romantic high style, such as Tudor.<sup>21</sup> The massive pilasters topped by cast-concrete, pediment-shaped caps, the cast-concrete blocks forming the corners of the main facade, and the stepped parapet and stepped panel over the entrance, are vertical touches that lighten the otherwise somber appearance of the Healdton Armory. The overall appearance and detailing reflect the skills of designers and supervisors and the minimal funding for design and materials, as well as the use of unskilled and skilled labor. The WPA armories, as exemplified by the Healdton facility, may not be architectural masterpieces, but they served the WPA's purpose--to make work, and to provide secure space for national defense units. WPA armories exemplify the New Deal's practical determination to "do something--and do something now." As David Baird notes in his survey of WPA structures of Oklahoma, WPA buildings are "the architecture of the poor," "mute reminders of the emotional distress and physical pain many Oklahomans suffered during the 1930s and of the enlightened relief effort by the federal government that alleviated much of the suffering."<sup>22</sup> The armory is one of two WPA structures remaining in Healdton, and it is the town's only example of military-style architecture. In type, style, scale, materials, and workmanship, WPA armories, of which the Healdton Armory is a fine example, are unique when compared to the rest of the built environment, both in Healdton and across the state.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 19

Healdton Armory  
name of property  
Carter, Oklahoma  
county and State

ENDNOTES

1. C. Roger Lambert, "Dust, Farmers, and the Federal Government," Hard Times in Oklahoma: The Depression Years, ed. K. E. Hendrickson, Jr. (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, 1983), 71-72, 78-79, 81; W. David Baird, "Final Report: WPA Structures Thematic Survey (Phase III)," Stillwater, Okla: Oklahoma State University, 1987), 5; Guthrie (Oklahoma) Daily Leader, July 9, 1935.
2. Baird, "Final Report," 10; "Final Report of the Oklahoma Work Projects Administration, February 27, 1943," Archives of the Work Projects Administration and Predecessors, 1933-1943. Series One: The Final State Reports, 1943 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives, 1987), 1; "Building Construction Report, February, 1943," *ibid.*, 5-6; Daily Oklahoman, March 12, 1943.
3. "Questions and Answers on the WPA [brochure]," (Washington, D.C.: Work Projects Administration, December 1, 1939), Vertical File, Oklahoma Historical Society; Baird, "Final Report," 11; Kingfisher (Oklahoma) Times, July 9, 1936.
4. Guthrie (Oklahoma) Daily Leader, June 23, 1935; *ibid.*, November 13, 1935; Daily Oklahoman, September 12, 1937.
5. "Accomplishments: Works Progress Administration for Oklahoma, July 1, 1935-March 1, 1937," (Oklahoma City: Works Progress Administration, 1937), 38; "Building Construction Report," 5-6.
6. John W. Morris, "The Smaller Towns," Cities of Oklahoma, ed. John W. Morris (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, 1979), 11, 16; Indian Territory and Carter County, Oklahoma, Pioneers (Dallas: Taylor Publishing Company, 1983), 16-17, 26, 226, 628-630, 680; Kenny Franks, "Oklahoma Oil," Drill Bits, Picks, and Shovels: A History of Mineral Resources in Oklahoma, ed. John W. Morris (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, 1982), 33, 42-43.
7. Daily Oklahoman, September 29, 1935; Daily Oklahoman, September 12, 1937.
8. Healdton Herald, September 5, 1935.
9. *Ibid.*, November 7, 1935.
10. *Ibid.*, September 17, 1936; *ibid.*, October 1, 1936; *ibid.*, October 8, 1936; WPA Project No. 153, "Index to Reference Cards for Work Projects Administration Project Files, 1935-1942," (Washington, D.C.: WPA, c. 1942), Micro T-935, reel 54.
10. Healdton Herald, December 10, 1936.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 20

Healdton Armory  
name of property  
Carter, Oklahoma  
county and State

11. Ibid., December 10, 1936.
12. Ibid., December 17, 1936; *ibid.*, 24 December 1936.
13. "Index to Reference Cards for WPA Projects."
14. Ibid.; Healdton Herald, October 8, 1936.
15. "Accomplishments," 44; Historical Annual: National Guard of the State of Oklahoma, 1938 (Baton Rouge, La.: Army and Navy Publishing Company, 1938), 303, 316.
16. Guy Nelson, Thunderbirds: A History of the 45th Infantry Division (Oklahoma City: 45th Infantry Division Association, 1970), 6-9; Kenny Franks, Citizen Soldiers: Oklahoma's National Guard (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1984), 38, 40, 49.
17. Historical Annual, 303, 316; Healdton Herald, August 8, 1935; *ibid.*, July 30, 1936.
18. Nelson, Thunderbirds, 6-9; Franks, Citizen Soldiers, 38, 40.
19. Nelson, Thunderbirds, 12.
20. "Accomplishments," 38, 40; Historical Annual, 18.
21. Final Report on the WPA Program, 1935-43 (Washington, D.C.: G. P. O., c. 1943), 52; Baird, "Final Report," 15, 21, 23.
22. Ibid., 17; *ibid.*, 2.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section   9   Page  21 

Healdton Armory  
name of property  
Carter, Oklahoma  
county and State

BIBLIOGRAPHY

"Accomplishments: Works Progress Administration for Oklahoma, July 1, 1935-March 1, 1937." Oklahoma City: Works Progress Administration, 1937.

Baird, W. David. "Final Report: WPA Structures Thematic Survey (Phase III)." Stillwater: Oklahoma State University, 1987.

Healdton Herald, July 28, 1935-March 8, 1937.

"Index to Reference Cards for Work Projects Administration Project Files, 1935-1942." Washington, D.C.: WPA, c. 1942. Micro T-935, Reel 54.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 10 Page 22

Healdton Armory  
name of property  
Carter, Oklahoma  
county and State

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

Lots 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12 of Block 49, Original Healdton City, Carter County, a property measuring approximately 160 feet north-south and 150 feet east-west.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:

These are the boundaries of the property as legally recorded in Book 117, page 517, Deed Records, Carter County.