

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received FEB 9 1987

date entered FEB 2 1987

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Davidson Hall

and/or common Northwestern Military and Naval Academy

2. Location

street & number 550 South Shore Drive not for publication

city, town Lake Geneva vicinity of

state WI code 55 county Walworth code 127

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> n.a.	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Board of Directors of the Northwestern Naval and Military Academy
c/o Mr. Donnell M. McGough, Treasurer

street & number 550 South Shore Drive

city, town Lake Geneva vicinity of state WI 53147

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Walworth County Courthouse

street & number P.O. Box 1001

city, town Elkhorn state WI 53121

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places
title Geneva Lake Intensive Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 8-85 federal state county local

depository for survey records State Historical Society of Wisconsin

city, town Madison state WI 53706

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Davidson Hall, the principal building of the Northwestern Military and Naval Academy, has, since its construction in 1915, been a prominent visual and educational landmark on the Lake Geneva shoreline. The Hall is a monumentally scaled Neo-Classical Revival school building, more than four hundred feet in length, containing all the classrooms, living quarters and indoor recreational facilities that the Academy provides for its one hundred seventy-nine students. The Hall is located in the center of forty-three acres of well-landscaped grounds having nearly one thousand feet of Lake Geneva southern shoreline. The grounds slope back some two thousand feet from the shoreline to a height of one hundred twenty-five feet at the southern boundary of the property on South Shore Drive. In this space, the grounds change in character from the wide, expansive lawns of the parade ground between the shoreline and the school to mature hardwood stands between the school and South Shore Drive. The surrounding neighborhood primarily consists of residential subdivisions created out of the acreage of the older estates which once bordered the Academy. The Academy grounds also include a one-story apartment building for married faculty and a late Georgian Revival house for the headmaster and his family. Neither are considered significant to the nomination.

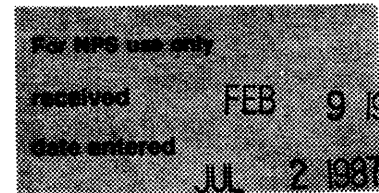
Davidson Hall is designed in a plain, almost severe Neo-Classical Revival style which a local historian, in describing "the great white building", termed "impressive and dignified."¹ The plan of the building follows Neo-Classical and especially Palladian precedents, being composed of a large, porticoed rectangular central block continued with long rectangular wings extended horizontally east and west, each wing terminated by a porticoed pavillion. This five-part scheme was built in stages, with the central block, west wing and western pavillion completed by late 1915, the east wing by 1916-1917, and the eastern pavillion by 1918-1920. The principal facades face north and south, are symmetrical in design, and are identical with each other excepting that the slope of the land through the site meant utilizing an exposed full basement story on the east, west and north facing facades. For the same reason, it was also necessary to lengthen the runs of the three exterior staircases on the north, or lake-facing, facade of the building. Construction is of reinforced concrete over steel frames throughout, emphasizing the importance that was placed on the creation of a fire-proof building. All exterior walls are faced in Hydrostone, an extremely hard plaster applied on metal lath over the reinforced concrete walls in a manner duplicating the look of coursed, smooth-faced ashlar granite.

The north and south facades of the fifty-foot wide central block contain the main entrances of Davidson Hall. Each facade is two stories tall and has corners terminated by two-story tall Tuscan Order pilasters. The capitals of these pilasters support a full entablature which acts as a cornice for the entire building. Above the entablature is a lower attic story having a flat roof with north-facing skylights surrounding a centrally placed hip roof which is located over the rotunda space below. Both floors of these facades are five bays wide with the first floor having two flat-arched, six-over-one light windows on either side of the double entrance doors. The doors have a single light transom above and a simple stone surround surmounted by an entablature having a pulvinated freize, the whole supported by carved stone consoles. The second floor has

(continued)

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Davidson Hall, Lake Geneva

Continuation sheet Walworth County, Wisconsin Item number 7

Page 1

five flat-arched, six-over-one light windows. Dominating this facade is a colossal portico having a flight of granite steps fifty feet wide leading up to eight Hydrostone-faced reinforced concrete Tuscan Order columns. The portico is six columns wide with the end columns doubled. The capitals of these columns support the same entablature which acts as the cornice of the main building, and the name "Davidson Hall" is placed in bronze letters in the middle of the frieze of the entablature. Above the entablature is a blank, pedimented attic story with a stone plaque displaying the Academy seal carved in relief and placed in the center.

Extending one hundred thirty feet east and west from the center block are two, ten-bay-wide two-story wings. Each bay of these wings is defined vertically by two-story-tall Tuscan Order pilasters and contains two flat-arched, six-over-one light windows. The capitals of these pilasters support the entablature which acts as the building cornice. The roofs of both wings are flat with a gable roof clerestory which admits light below to the two-story hall running the length of the roofs.

Terminating each wing is a two-story pavillion, each surmounted by a flat-roof attic story. The north and south facades of these pavillions contain the secondary entrances to the building and are identical in treatment to the central block with the following minor exceptions: they are three bays wide instead of five, the colossal portico dominating these facades is four columns wide instead of six, and the end columns are not doubled. The original attic story above these porticos had a shallow-pitched pediment attached to it and supported by the portico below, but these were all removed at a later date. The eastern pavillion is forty feet by one hundred twenty feet and is considerably longer than the western pavillion. The east-facing facade of the eastern pavillion is treated in an identical manner to the facades of the east and west wings, being two stories high and pilastered for its entire length.

Located just to the northwest of the original building and attached to it by a short, L-plan wing extended from the west facade of the western pavillion, is the Herrick Alumni Gymnasium. Built in 1959, the gymnasium is a large rectangular block having centrally placed salients projecting from all four of the principal facades. The building rises two stories above a full basement story and terminates in a flat roof with a short parapet topped with concrete coping. The north, south, and west facing facades have only minimal window openings save for the basement story, and are faced in a coursed, quarry-faced ashlar stone over reinforced concrete walls and steel frames. The building is essentially astylistic in design except for the east facade, the only facade that directly faces the older Davidson Hall. This facade was designed in conscious imitation of Davidson Hall and is the only facade with a significant amount of window openings which, in this case, light the main gym space inside. The windows are made of translucent glass block and are grouped in five, two-story bays, each bay set between smooth, plain two-story-tall stone pilasters. The whole group is then surmounted by a cut stone entablature topped by a coursed, rock-faced ashlar stone parapet. Various service rooms including the heating plant which serves the whole building, are located in the basement story of the gymnasium. The gymnasium building occupies the site of the original one-story-tall powerplant which, built in 1916-1917, was all that was completed of a projected dining hall/power plant wing.

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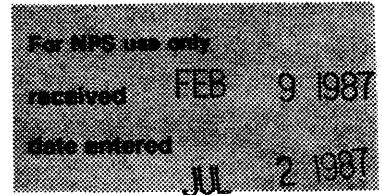
**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Davidson Hall, Lake Geneva

Continuation sheet Walworth County, Wisconsin Item number 7

Page 2



The interior of Davidson Hall is in keeping with the unadorned design of the exterior and was planned to serve both the functional and the ceremonial needs of the Academy. The main entrances are located under the north and south porticos of the central block. A short passage leads from each entrance to the fifty-foot square, two-story-tall rotunda at the intersection of the north/south and east/west main axes of the building. The four corners of this space are canted, and a large carved stone fireplace mantel-piece decorates each first-floor corner. Cannon motifs, surmounted by an eagle, flank the fireplace openings, and the inscriptions "Co A" (east wing) or "Co B" (west wing) are carved above the openings and serve to designate the cadet company assigned to each wing. The ceiling of the rotunda is made up of deeply carved rectangular panels created by the intersection of the concrete-clad structural steel members of the building's frame. Molded concrete consoles are placed at the intersections where the roof members meet with the walls of the rotunda.

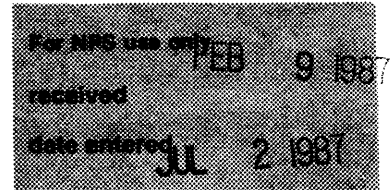
Extending east and west from the rotunda are two great hallways, each one hundred thirty feet long, twenty-eight feet wide, and two stories tall. The vast enclosed court formed by these halls and the rotunda was designed to be the hub of the daily life and activities of the Academy. The court serves as an indoor parade ground where the students drill in inclement weather and it is where the ceremonial events of Academy life occur. The first floor rooms which open onto the two hallways consist of the Academy administrative offices, unmarried-faculty apartments and a small student chapel. Wide stairways, located at the far ends of both hallways, rise to a balcony which completely encircles the hallways and the rotunda. All the individual living quarters of the students open onto this balcony. Light and air is admitted to each of the hallways by means of clerestory windows set into the sides of two roof galleries above, one of which extends the full length of each hallway.

The court space, aside from the already mentioned elements in the rotunda, is essentially undecorated. The space is distinguished by its size and the repetition of elements. Such decoration as is present is limited to various portraits, trophies, and works of art donated by graduating classes over the years. Architecturally, the most significant of these gifts are the mural paintings which extend across thirty-five-foot panels placed above the second floor stairheads at the east and west ends of the hallways. Painted by the Chicago mural artist Louis Grell and donated by the classes of 1939 and 1940, the murals depict scenes from the early history of Lake Geneva. Otherwise, the court is largely unornamented and spartan in appearance, and is in almost totally original condition. The only major change is that the first floor of the east wing hallways, which in 1916 was originally open to the basement below, was floored over in 1968. During most of the period between 1916 and 1968, the cadet gymnasium occupied the open basement portion of this wing. After it was floored over in 1968, the resulting east hallway space was utilized for the Ray Memorial Chapel. This alteration had the effect of giving the court the appearance it was originally intended to have.

(continued)

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Davidson Hall, Lake Geneva

Continuation sheet Walworth County, Wisconsin Item number 7

Page 3

The Academy classrooms are in the third floor of the central block and in the eastern and western pavillions of Davidson Hall. Aside from the enclosed court space, none of the interior rooms have, or retain, architectural distinction. Not only were they designed with function and utility in mind, but also, the rooms have been the subjects of frequent modifications over the years as the Academy's needs have dictated.

¹Jenkins, Paul B., The Book of Lake Geneva, Chicago, 1922, page 192.

*Due to its late date of construction, the 1959 gymnasium has been considered a non-contributing element of the building.

The nomination includes:

ONE Contributing Building.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) assoc

1915-1920 (construction),¹ 1959 (addition)² with significant person -
Specific dates 1915-1936 (period of **Builder/Architect** /Marshall and Fox³ military
 significance)
Statement of Significance (in one paragraph) science and education.

Davidson Hall, the principal building of the Northwestern Military and Naval Academy, is locally significant as one of the grandest non-residential buildings constructed prior to World War II in the famous resort area of Lake Geneva. The Hall has been a prominent visual landmark on the Lake Geneva shoreline since the beginning of its construction in 1915. It is significant architecturally for its dignified design and for being one of the few identified Wisconsin works of the prominent Chicago architectural firm of Marshall and Fox, "one of the leading firms in Chicago in the early part of the century."⁴ Davidson Hall is also significant for its associations with its builder, Col. Royal P. Davidson, the headmaster of the Academy from 1912 until his death in 1943. Davidson, a respected educator, is best known today for his role as a pioneer in the field of mechanized warfare. Utilizing the help of the students of the Academy, Davidson⁵ is credited with having designed and built the first practical American armored car⁵ and with organizing and building the first mechanized and armored unit anywhere in the world.⁶

Architecture

Northwestern Military Academy, a private boys preparatory school, was founded in 1888 by Col. Harlan P. Davidson (1838-1913) who located the Academy on fourteen acres in the then semi-rural north Chicago suburb of Highland Park, Illinois. The first building of the new Academy was the converted Highland Park Inn which burned to the ground six weeks after the Academy opened. Undaunted, Davidson rented space in other Highland Park buildings as temporary quarters and began construction of a new building which was ready for occupancy in the Fall of 1889. Due to its innovative educational programs and the sound management of Davidson and his assistant and only son, Royal P. Davidson, enrollment expanded and the Academy prospered.

Typical of the Academy's programs was an annual spring week-long encampment at some picturesque site in Illinois, Michigan, or Wisconsin during which the entire student body and the teachers lived and studied in tents in proper military fashion. One of these encampments, in 1898, was held at Williams Bay on the north shore of Lake Geneva just across the lake from the future home of the Academy. In 1898, however, the needs of the Academy were being met adequately by the expanding campus of buildings that was being erected at Highland Park. This situation began to change as two separate problems developed which served to reveal limitations inherent in the Highland Park site. The first problem arose from the establishment of a naval program in 1904, designed to supplement the Academy's existing army-oriented military program. At that time, no other military secondary school in the country provided true naval training for its students. In order to take advantage of this situation the Academy ordered three fully rigged oar and sail-powered naval cutters (similar in size and design to an ocean liner lifeboat) which were delivered at the spring encampment of 1904 held in St. Joseph, Michigan. This, in turn, led to the establishment of a summer naval session in 1905; but it soon became clear that the lack of direct access to a safe body of water at the

(continued)

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Approximately 2.5 acres.

Quadrangle name Walworth, WI

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	6	3	7	4	7	6	0	4	7	1	1	5	8	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Timothy F. Heggland, private consultant for the owners

organization

date July 20, 1986

street & number 212 Highland Avenue

telephone (608) 238-3010

city or town Madison

state WI 53705

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title

date 1/27/87

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Beth Grosvenor
Keeper of the National Register

date 7/2/87

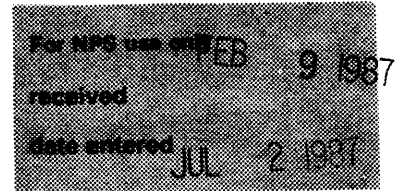
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Davidson Hall, Lake Geneva,
Continuation sheet Walworth County, Wisconsin Item number 8

Page 1

Highland Park site was a serious drawback to the full implementation of the new program. The second and more serious problem was the inexorable growth of the city of Chicago and the resulting accelerated growth in the neighboring suburbs including Highland Park in the years after the Academy's founding. Col. Davidson, who placed great stress on the importance of having a healthy physical and moral environment in which to conduct the Academy's activities, later wrote of Highland Park that it had "been so rapidly built up that it does not (now) offer all the natural advantages so desirable for a boys school."⁷ Consequently a search began for a new site for the Academy.

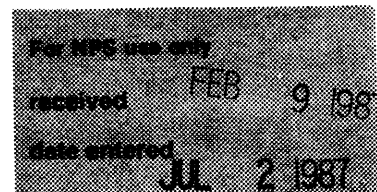
In 1908, the spring encampment was held again at Lake Geneva, this time at Kaye's Park, a well-known summer resort founded by Arthur Kaye (1831-1893) in 1871 on the south shore of the lake. Consisting of over one hundred acres of beautifully landscaped park with 3700 feet of shore frontage, hotel buildings, numerous outbuildings and the Kaye family's own estate, Kaye's Park had been a local institution for thirty years but had been closed to the public since 1901. In 1908 the Kaye family offered the use of the park and its buildings to the Academy for its spring encampment. The great success of this event and the need to find a suitable site for the Academy's naval program convinced Davidson to enter into an agreement with the Kaye family to use Kaye's Park as the spring and fall home of the Academy. The hotel buildings were utilized for classes, dining, and teachers' quarters, while the students lived in their tents until the onset of cold weather necessitated removal to the Highland Park campus for the winter session. This divided school year worked well enough in practice but was only intended to be a transitional measure. In 1910 the Academy began a study of school-building construction in the United States and abroad. By 1911 active work towards acquisition of a portion of the Lake Geneva site was begun, preceded by submission of a bill to the Wisconsin Legislature asking for the creation of a "Dry" zone around Kaye's Park which would ban all saloons within five miles of the future home of the Academy. The subsequent passage of this bill was followed by the purchase of fifty-one acres of Kaye's Park from the Kaye family later in 1911 and the changing of the name of the school to the Northwestern Military and Naval Academy. The results of the 1910 building study were then used to form the core of a new building program and the well-known Chicago architectural firm of Marshall and Fox was given the commission of designing the new home of the Academy.

The firm of Marshall and Fox had been organized in Chicago in 1905 by its two principals: Benjamin H. Marshall (1874-1945) and Charles E. Fox (1870-1926). Charles E. Fox was born in Reading, Pennsylvania, educated at M.I.T. and came to Chicago in 1891 as a draftsman for the firm of Holabird and Root. Fox stayed with this firm until 1905 by which time he was the firm's superintendent of construction. Benjamin H. Marshall was born and educated in Chicago. He entered the office of the architect Henry R. Wilson in 1893 and, in 1895, at the age of 21, he was made the junior partner in the new firm of Wilson and Marshall. This firm continued in existence until 1902, their one identified Wisconsin design being Flowerside Inn, a large shingle-style house at 64 North Shore Drive (extant) in Lake Geneva.⁸ In 1902 Marshall started his own practice and was joined by Fox in 1905. Together they established a large and successful practice which was responsible for many large and important commissions. Their professional

(continued)

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Davidson Hall, Lake Geneva,

Continuation sheet Walworth County, Wisconsin Item number 8

Page 2

relationship lasted until 1924 when the firm was dissolved. The firm designed a wide variety of building types, ranging from residences to hospitals and large commercial buildings. The firm was best known, however, for the large number of hotels, theatres and apartment buildings it produced. Although the firm designed buildings all over the country, the vast majority were built in and around Chicago and constitute a substantial legacy of well-designed and well-constructed buildings executed in a variety of styles. Many of these buildings were not only well-known when built, but have become prominent Chicago landmarks. A list of the firm's best known Chicago commissions includes the following: the Blackstone Hotel, 1910, awarded the A.I.A. Medal of Honor for that year; Federal Life Insurance Building, 1912; Blackstone Theatre, 1913; Morrison Hotel, 1915; South Shore Country Club, 1916; Drake Hotel, 1919; Edgewater Beach Hotel, 1921 (non-extant); Steger Building, Standard Oil Building, Burlington Office Building, 1921; and the Sheridan Trust and Savings Bank, 1924. In addition, the firm was a pioneer in the design and construction of large, high-rise apartment buildings including those at 199, 999, and 1900 Lakeshore Drive and 1550 North State Street.

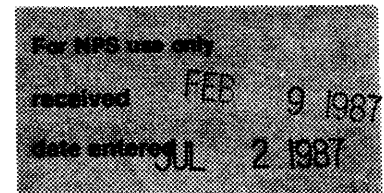
Marshall and Fox's completed design for the new Northwestern was ready in time for inclusion in the Academy's 1911 catalogue. In 1912 the Board of the Academy authorized the sale of \$250,000 in bonds for the construction of the new building, but construction did not start until August 31, 1914 when excavations for the foundation were begun. Progress was slow until the second disastrous fire in the Academy's history destroyed the main building of the Highland Park campus on May 1, 1915, whereupon construction of the new building was pushed in earnest. The central block, west wing, and west pavillion were completed by the spring of 1916 with the east wing and physical plant following by 1918 and the eastern pavillion by 1920. The completed building was named "Davidson Hall" after the recently deceased Col. Harlan P. Davidson and represented his belief that a single building containing all aspects of Academy life including the superintendent's and other teachers' living quarters would create a more home-like atmosphere than the more typical collegiate campus of buildings found elsewhere.

The relatively unaltered exterior of the original portion of Davidson Hall is a fine example of the restrained use of the Neo-Classical Revival style used here to good effect to achieve both dignity and a spartan simplicity appropriate to the military background of the school. The only other known building designed by Marshall and Fox in Wisconsin is the home office building of the Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Co. in Milwaukee located at 720 East Wisconsin Avenue which the noted architectural historian Richard W. E. Perrin considers to be "among Milwaukee's most distinguished landmarks in the category of commercial buildings." This eight-story-tall granite-clad office building is superbly designed in a more elaborate version of the same Neo-Classical Revival style the firm was employing for Northwestern Academy which was being designed at the same time.

(continued)

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Davidson Hall, Lake Geneva,

Continuation sheet Walworth County, Wisconsin Item number 8

Page 3

Association With Significant Person - Military Science & Education

Col. Royal P. Davidson (1870-1943), the only son of the Academy's founder and first superintendent, Col. Harlan Page Davidson, was the guiding force behind the construction of Davidson Hall and the man most responsible for Northwestern's progressive and innovative reputation. Davidson was one of Northwestern's first students and a member of its first graduating class in 1889. He subsequently attended the University of Wisconsin and graduated with a degree in mechanical engineering. After graduation, Davidson returned to Highland Park, Illinois where he joined his father as an instructor at the Academy. He was soon promoted to the position of Commandant of Cadets.

As Commandant, Davidson initiated a series of innovative extra-curricular activities designed to stimulate his students and to help establish a favorable reputation for the fledgling institution. Among the most well-known of these was his creation of the Academy Bicycle Corps in 1896. The creation of the Corps resulted from a combination of Davidson's belief in the importance of strenuous outdoor activity as a valuable part of student life and his interests in experiments then being conducted by the French and the English militaries on the use of bicycles as a means of transport for soldiers. The Corps consisted of ten to twelve specially trained cadets who often undertook twenty-five to sixty-five mile bicycle excursions carrying full military kits containing tents, rifles, food, and personal possessions. The Corps had its finest hour in the summer of 1897 when Davidson and his students bicycled to Washington D.C. to deliver a message to the Secretary of War. This well-publicized trip was undertaken to promote esprit de corps among the students and to serve as a serious practical demonstration of the utility of bicycles for military purposes. It was a resounding success on both counts.

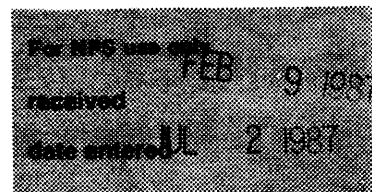
In 1898, Davidson began the first of a long series of experiments with motorized military vehicles, experiments which have since earned him recognition as one of the earliest pioneers in this field. Davidson's experience with the Bicycle Corps had shown him that new modes of soldier transport were feasible and probable in the future. He also recognized that the newly developed automobile offered greater mobility and speed than anything else then available. Consequently, he ordered a \$1500.00 three-wheeled gasoline-powered automobile carriage from the Peoria Rubber and Motor Vehicle Manufacturing Co. in Peoria, Illinois. He and the Academy cadets outfitted it with a Colt machine gun donated by the War Department, and they fabricated a steel bullet-proof shield to protect the riders. The resulting vehicle was hailed by the Chicago Sunday Times-Herald as being "the first vehicle of its kind ever built".¹⁰ For the next few months, Davidson conducted an extensive series of road tests designed to win acceptance for, and to improve, the new vehicle. On July 20, 1899 Davidson and four cadets, amidst much fanfare, embarked on a drive to Washington D.C. Unfortunately, the vehicle could not withstand the primitive road conditions, and the trip ended in failure in Indiana.

Undiscouraged, Davidson and his cadets returned to the Academy's manual training department and constructed two four-wheeled steam-powered gun carriages, both armed and

(continued)

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Davidson Hall, Lake Geneva,

Continuation sheet Walworth County, Wisconsin Item number 8

Page 4

armored like their predecessor. In June of 1901, Davidson and his cadets again attempted the thousand-mile trip to Washington D.C. This time they were successful, arriving at the Capital to be greeted by hundreds of senators, congressmen and other interested observers. This demonstration convinced Davidson that the concept of a mobile armored corps was realistic, and thus, he was disappointed when the War Department failed to implement any programs of its own toward this end. However, his professional and patriotic interest in the creation of an American armored corps, coupled with the great enthusiasm of his students, convinced Davidson to persevere in his efforts. In 1905, Davidson formed the Academy Automobile Battery consisting of the Academy's three armored cars, the first of which had been modified by mounting a search light for military signaling. This constituted "the most complete automobile battery in existence"¹¹ at the time.

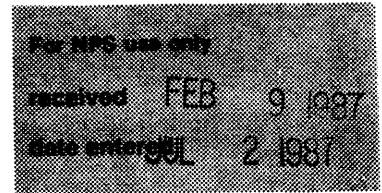
Over the next few years, as automobiles became more sophisticated, Davidson was able to conceive of and produce more elaborate and powerful machines serving a wider variety of functions. In 1909, after extensive research, the Academy purchased a four-cylinder Cadillac "30" for experimentation purposes. Like its predecessors, it was mounted with a Colt machine gun and searchlights. The success of this automobile, enhanced by its sturdy construction, led the Academy to order two more similarly equipped Cadillacs in 1910. Using these two new additions, the Academy designed a more sophisticated vehicle by mounting them with machine guns capable of vertical fire for use as "balloon destroyers". These were "the first or all anti-aircraft guns"¹² mounted on a mobile carriage. Together with the Academy's first Cadillac "30", these vehicles made up the first mobile anti-aircraft battery ever fielded. In June of 1910, the "Balloon Destroyers" were entered in the 1910 Glidden Tour, a major endurance contest covering 2850 miles from Cincinnati to Dallas and back to Chicago via Omaha. Of the thirty-eight cars (most having professional drivers) entered in the tour, only nine finished. Davidson's two "Balloon Destroyers" were among those nine. Greatly encouraged by this success, Davidson purchased two new Cadillac "30's" in 1911. He and his cadets equipped these vehicles for wireless radio work, each automobile featuring a forty-five-foot tall telescopic mast designed and built by the Academy and mounted on the vehicle's running board. In detailing these accomplishments, the 1911 Academy catalogue justified the many extra hours expended by Col. Davidson and numerous cadets by noting that "the present age is a mechanical one, and the experience the students get in this automobile work not only develops mechanical ability, but initiative, a quality the present-day boy sadly lacks."¹³ In July of 1911, the "Balloon Crew" and the "Signal Crew", consisting of Col. Davidson and fifteen students, made a three-thousand-mile-long journey to Washington D.C., New York, West Point and Annapolis to publicize to America's military establishment the latest developments in motorized military vehicles.

In 1912, Davidson succeeded his father as Superintendent of Northwestern. Soon, he was deeply involved in the ongoing plans for the establishment of the Academy's naval program and the Academy's move to Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. However, he still found time to continue the development of the armored vehicles he had done so much to champion. Thus, in 1915, while the new Academy was being constructed at Lake Geneva, Davidson began his last and culminating series of automobile designs. He purchased five new

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Davidson Hall, Lake Geneva,
Continuation sheet Walworth County, Wisconsin Item number 8

Page 5

eight-cylinder Cadillac chassis and had the following special bodies constructed:
(1) an officer's reconnaissance car consisting of a seven-passenger touring car body equipped with maps, a distaphone for recording road descriptions, and suitable armament; (2) a radio car, including a telescopic mast and a specially constructed generator for radio transmitting and receiving, pulling a trailer which could be converted into an officer's field headquarters; (3) a military field kitchen which housed a coffee boiler and general kitchen equipment, including a special Delco generator to operate an electric cooker; (4) a military hospital and ambulance car equipped with stretchers, surgical instruments, x-ray equipment, and a tent which could be used as an emergency hospital; and (5) the most complete and well-armored car then in existence, equipped with a Colt machine gun in an enclosed fixed turret.

On June 9, 1915, these five machines and three of the earlier ones undertook a journey from Chicago to San Francisco to visit the Panama Pacific International Exposition. This trip received substantial newspaper coverage and crowds of people turned out to see the Corps as it travelled across the country. On July 15, after forty-one days, the caravan arrived in San Francisco, having averaged more than one hundred miles a day, and on one day, travelling one hundred and eighty-seven miles. The San Francisco Chronicle praised Davidson and his cadets for "demonstrating the efficiency of the modern motor car as a war caravan".¹⁴ Davidson himself believed that the trip had proven many of the claims which he and Northwestern had made over the years regarding the suitability of the automobile for war work and the efficacy of motorized vehicles in general.

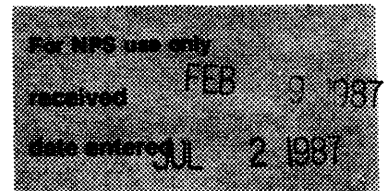
Although Davidson continued his automobile experiments in the following years, the trip of 1915 marked the peak of his active involvement. America's entrance into World War I, and the needs of the new Academy at Lake Geneva consumed more and more of his time. And, feeling that he had made his point (a point made largely at his own expense), he was content to let others carry on the increasingly expensive work of convincing the nation of the inevitability of motorized warfare and of the need for national preparedness. In 1971, one writer made the following assessment of Davidson's military work: "Davidson was not the only American who sought a national protective force utilizing autos...but he was the first and most consistent in trying to show the way. His expedition of 1915 enlightened the American people on the possibilities of armored cars...but for more than two decades, his preaching went unheeded by men of high rank who might have done well to listen."¹⁵

While Davidson is best known today for his work with military vehicles, he was also well-known in his own day as a respected educator. He was a member of the North Central Association of Private Schools and was President of that organization in 1914. From 1919 to 1921, he was Secretary-Treasurer of the Association of Military Colleges and Schools of the United States, and was President of that organization in 1925. His greatest work as an educator, however, occurred over the nearly 50 years and several generations of young men that he influenced as Commandant and later, Superintendent of Northwestern. Under his guidance, Northwestern became a model military academy,

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet Davidson Hall, Lake Geneva,
Walworth County, Wisconsin Item number 8

Page 6

educating many students who later became successful in all walks of life, including the celebrated movie and theater actor, Spencer Tracy. In 1941, in order to ensure the continuation of Northwestern after his death, Davidson and his wife deeded the Academy to the Episcopal Dioceses of Chicago who continue to operate the school to this day.

Of all the vehicles designed and built under his supervision, the only survivor is one of the two steam-powered armored cars which was built at the Academy in 1900 and subsequently made the trip to Washington D.C. in 1901. In 1949, the Academy gave this car, nicknamed "the battle wagon", to the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago. All of the early buildings of the Academy in Highland Park have long been demolished. The only building still extant which is associated with Davidson and his work is Davidson Hall at Lake Geneva. This building was constructed during the period when Davidson's military work was culminating and, in many ways, was made possible by the reputation won for the Academy by Davidson and this work.

Davidson died in 1943 and was buried on the grounds of the Academy. His real monument, however, is the Academy itself, which will celebrate its one-hundredth anniversary in 1988.

¹Northwestern Military and Naval Academy. The Log Book. 1915-1920.

²Plaque inside the building.

³Northwestern Military and Naval Academy. Catalogues. 1914; 1915.

⁴Withey, Henry F. and Withey, Elsie Rathburn. Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased). Los Angeles: Hennessey and Ingalls, 1970.

⁵Nelson, Al P. "America's 'Lost' Panzers: The Vision and Struggle of Col. Royal Davidson." Appleton Post-Crescent, September 20, 1970.

⁶Northwestern Military and Naval Academy. Catalogue. 1911.

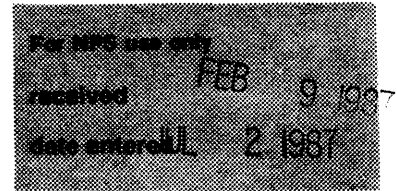
⁷Northwestern Military and Naval Academy. Catalogue. 1911.

⁸Butler, Patricia and Crawford, Sharon. Geneva Lake Area Intensive Survey: An Architectural/Historical Report. The Intensive Survey recently completed for the Lake Geneva Area indicates only one other extant building in the area of the same size and design quality built before World War II. This is the Yerkes Observatory on the opposite side of the Lake, designed by Henry Ives Cobb in 1896 for a much different purpose than Davidson Hall. The only other military academy now operating in Wisconsin is St. Johns Military Academy (NRHP) located in Delafield, Wisconsin which is equal in history and quality of design with Northwestern but which conducts its activities in a campus of smaller buildings of differing periods and design rather than in one large building. Other educational buildings in the Lake Geneva area were built on a smaller scale than Davidson Hall unless modified with later additions and reflect the small population they were intended to serve.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Davidson Hall, Lake Geneva,

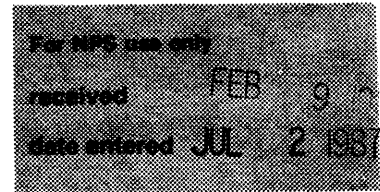
Continuation sheet Walworth County, Wisconsin Item number 8

Page 7

- ⁹Perrin, Richard W. E. Milwaukee Landmarks. Milwaukee: Milwaukee Public Museum, 1968, revised 1979.
- ¹⁰The Chicago Sunday Times-Herald, April 8, 1899.
- ¹¹Northwestern Naval and Military Academy. Catalogue. 1907.
- ¹²Northwestern Naval and Military Academy. The Log Book. 1943.
- ¹³Northwestern Naval and Military Academy. Catalogue. 1911.
- ¹⁴The San Francisco Chronicle, July 15, 1915.
- ¹⁵The Burlington Standard Press, December 9, 1971.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



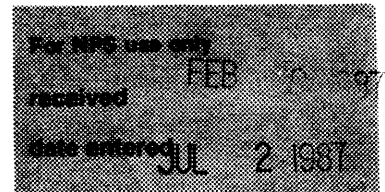
Davidson Hall, Lake Geneva,
Continuation sheet Walworth County, Wisconsin Item number 9

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet Davidson Hall, Lake Geneva,
Walworth County, Wisconsin Item number 9

Page 2

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10. Geographical Data (Verbal boundary description and justification);

The boundaries of the nominated property consist of a line drawn ten feet outside the perimeter of the building.** The property is a parcel of land located in the Northeast fractional $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 18, T1N R17E of Walworth County, Wisconsin, described as follows, to wit: Commencing at the East $\frac{1}{4}$ Section corner of said Section 18; thence West along the East-west $\frac{1}{4}$ section line 570.73 feet to the place of beginning: thence N3°-51'W 484.41 feet; thence N4°-20'W 148.98 feet; thence N6°-11'W 158.58 feet; thence N13°-50'E 166.19 feet; thence N18°-20'E 153.34 feet; thence N7°-39'E 106.92 feet; thence N3°-23'W 115 feet more or less to a point; thence West 142 feet; thence N1°-16'W 607 feet more or less to the shore of Geneva Lake; thence Southwesterly along the shore 1055 feet more or less to the centerline of Shadow Road; thence South along the center line of said road 1665 feet more or less to the East-west $\frac{1}{4}$ Section line of said Section 18; thence East along the $\frac{1}{4}$ Section line 1100.27 feet more or less to the place of beginning, containing 43 acres more or less.

** The acreage of the nominated property, including the non-contributing gymnasium is approximately 2.5 acres. The remainder of this description is for the entire Academy campus which includes approximately 43 acres but is not included in this nomination. The larger boundary is given to assist in identifying the general physical location of the school and Davidson Hall.