

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

1. Name of Property

historic name Marlow Armory

other names/site number Marlow National Guard Armory

2. Location

street & number 702 West Main Street not for publication N/A  
city or town Marlow vicinity N/A  
state Oklahoma code OK county Stephens code 137  
zip code 73055

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 February 22, 1994  
Signature of certifying official 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:

<u>  /  </u> entered in the National Register <u>      </u> See continuation sheet.	<u>Edson H. Beall</u> Entered in the	<u>4/7/94</u>
<u>      </u> determined eligible for the National Register <u>      </u> See continuation sheet.	National Register	_____
<u>      </u> determined not eligible for the National Register	_____	_____
<u>      </u> removed from the National Register	_____	_____
<u>      </u> other (explain): _____	_____	_____

\_\_\_\_\_  
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

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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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 - 1937  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates 1937  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

=====  
8. Statement of Significance (Continued)  
=====

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Nolen, Bryan W., Supervising Architect  
Works Progress Administration, Builder

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

=====  
9. Major Bibliographical References  
=====

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Location of Additional Data

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository: N/A

=====  
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	<u>14</u>	<u>594980</u>	<u>3834200</u>	3	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>
2	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	4	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>

N/A 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 February 15, 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

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Marlow Armory  
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SUMMARY:

The Marlow Armory (Marlow National Guard Armory) is a self-contained, horizontal, one-story building measuring 140 feet north-south by 125 feet east-west and constructed of red brick with cast concrete detailing. A local project of the Works Progress Administration in Oklahoma, it was constructed in 1935-1937. The armory property is located at 702 West Main Street. The surrounding area is residential. 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; castellated parapet that marks the administrative (north) section; corner and central pilasters topped with pediment-shaped cast concrete caps; a vertically laid herringbone-pattern brick panel over each window in the administrative/garage section; 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, and an elaborate main entry door surround, created in cast concrete, consisting of an arch under a stepped panel. The steel-framed windows are all original, as are two of three exterior overhead vehicle doors. Interior doors are original. Exterior alterations are limited to the replacement, in 1988-1991, of one original wood exterior overhead vehicle door with a steel door, and the replacement of the original main entry door with a single steel door and replacement of two secondary pedestrian doors with steel doors. Interior alterations are minimal: An interior wall was removed in one office; wood-framed walls have divided a classroom into four rooms; and a wood-framed wall has created a storeroom in the garage area. The Marlow Armory retains appropriate integrity of location, setting, design, materials, and workmanship to enable it exemplify WPA-type military architecture in Oklahoma.

EXTERIOR DESCRIPTION:

The Marlow 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 1935-1937 of red brick manufactured in McAlester, Oklahoma, at the state penitentiary. The armory property is located at 702 West Main Street, in a residential area. It is bordered by residential property on the west, by an alley on the south, by Main on the north, and by Seventh Street on the east.

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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 street. The Marlow Armory has two principal facades, a main entry accessing Main Street, on the north, and a secondary entry accessing Seventh Street, on the east. These walls are characterized by outwardly projecting pilasters and piers that enframe window/door bays. The north facade's main focus is an elaborate door surround consisting of markedly stepped and castellated parapet, and massive, deep piers and wing walls that enframe the segmental-arched entry. The east facade is divided by shallow pilasters into two parts, one being the administrative section, characterized by garage doors, and the drill hall section, characterized by towering pilasters and first-floor garage door/window arrangement. The secondary facades, on the south and west, are not elaborate, although the administrative section (north side) of the west facade is characterized by metal-framed windows, rather than garage doors.

Viewed from the north, the building appears to have "wings" that project outward from the east and west walls, because the drill hall section is twenty feet wider than the administrative/garage section. This gives the plan a broad T-shape. On the west wall, where the drill hall joins the administrative section, the north end of an underground rifle range has an exterior concrete roof that looks like a "patio." This roof sits approximately three feet above ground level and offers no access to the interior.

The roofline of the Marlow Armory 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 with tar and gravel. The roofline of the Marlow Armory gives the building a fortress-like aspect. The north roofline exhibits a castellated and stepped parapet. On the east and west sides, the arc of the drill hall's barrel roof, over the south section, contrasts with the horizontal line of the north section. At the southeast, northeast, and northwest corners of the drill hall, pilasters buttress the corners and rise upward to become square-topped "towers." On the south (drill hall), the roofline is horizontal, with a single modest step at each corner.

Each facade exhibits regular openings that indicate the dual nature of the building and the functions of interior spaces. All windows are original and are hopper-opening. Glazing patterns include combinations of two, three, or four lights set in four, five, or six rows (4/4/2, 4/2/4/2, 3/6/3, 3/6/3/3, 6/3/6/3, 8/4/8/4), with one or more sets of vertical center-pivot windows and a bottom row that opens in hopper fashion). The NORTH facade

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consists in three 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 windows flanked by a 4/4/2 window. A narrow, vertical four-light casement window lies close to the inside pilaster on each side of the entry bay. On the EAST side, the northernmost bay contains two original wood-panel overhead vehicle doors and a pair of 3/6/3/3 windows; while the southern (drill hall) bay contains a north-facing 4/2/2 window, a new steel pedestrian door with 3/6/3 transom, a pair of 8/4/8/4 windows, a new steel overhead vehicle door, a pair of 8/4/8/4 windows and a permanently blocked pedestrian door with 3/6/3 transom, on the south. Openings in the SOUTH facade illuminate the drill hall. At the extreme west end is a 3/6/3/3 window, and east of this, two pairs of 6/3/6/3 windows are placed on each side of a off-centered pair of steel wood pedestrian doors that are topped with 3/6/3 transoms. On the WEST, the facade is irregularly pierced; there are two 3/6/3/3 windows in the administrative section; and a narrow, vertical north-facing window in the drill hall section, above the exposed roof of the rifle range, has been blocked with a wood insert. There is a small, two-foot-square ventilation window close to the ground in the center of the drill hall section. Some lights are painted to block sunlight.

The armory's slightly castellated parapet is reminiscent of Medieval English style. Though the building's massing is strongly horizontal, several architectural details influenced by Art Deco style give the building a vertical emphasis: the stepped parapet and massive piers and wing wall marking the main entry; pediment-shaped and square-topped pilasters, with cast-concrete caps and diamond-shaped and rectangular emblems; vertically laid herringbone-pattern brick panels above the windows on all three sides of the administrative (north) section; and narrow, vertical, steel-framed multiple-light windows in all facades. Original metal downspouts are in place on the east, west, and south facades.

One of the distinguishing architectural features of the Marlow Armory is the uneven quality of the brickwork. In constructing the administrative section, or north section, builders used good-quality face brick having a vertically striated pattern, and the mortar was pointed. On the west and south facades (drill hall section), however, common bricks were used. The courses wander slightly off level, and the mortar is flush with the brick face. This unsophisticated, less-than-perfect application of bricklaying technique is typical of many early-day WPA endeavors, and it gives visual documentation of the use of untrained workers, or "trainees," on the Marlow project.

Cast concrete, cast in blocks to resemble stone, and jointed, are important decorative elements. These consist of the two-layer parapet coping on the north, east, and west; pediment-shaped caps on all pilasters, and caps and faces of the two massive piers and wing walls comprising the main entry

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surround; the stepped panel and arch in the north entrance door surround; the northeast, northwest, and southeast corners of the building, where three vertical shafts of cast-concrete blocks make up each corner; the pediment-shaped caps of the upwardly projecting "towers" that enframe the drill hall on the east and west sides; the drip-mould at the base of the north, east, and west walls; and all window sills. The exposed roof of the underground rifle range (at the northwest corner of the drill hall section) is a concrete slab. A two-step concrete porch leads to the main entrance.

Alterations to the exterior have been minimal. Two north facade windows have been repaired by replacing three lights and muntins and replacing them with a single light. The main entrance has been boxed in, and a single steel door with one light replaces an original wood-panel double door. In the 1988-1990 period one original wood overhead vehicle door was replaced with a steel door and four original wood pedestrian doors were replaced with steel doors.<sup>2</sup>

The building retains its original metal downspouts on all facades. On the north wall near the northeast corner of the building a cornerstone marks the construction as a 1936 WPA project and bears the inscription "State Armory/Built by Works Progress Administration/1936/W.S. Key/State Administrator." In addition, the pilasters at northwest and northeast corners each contain a concrete block inscribed "Built by WPA 1936."

Modern signage identifies the structure as a military facility. Over the main entry is affixed a diamond-shaped red and gold metal sign, bearing the "Thunderbird" symbol of the 45th Infantry Division (now Brigade). An original steel flagpole sits outside the main entrance. A wooden sign at curbside identifies the building as a National Guard Armory.

INTERIOR DESCRIPTION/ALTERATIONS:

The Marlow Armory exhibits a rectangular plan that was standard for WPA armories. The building is divided into two functional sections, a drill hall area on the south, and an administrative/garage section on the north. The original floor plan has been maintained. In the administrative/garage section, rooms lie on either side of a north-south central hallway. A small office, a two-bay garage, and two supply rooms occupy the east half. Within the garage, a small original tool room was enlarged in the 1950s. The garage now serves as a kitchen. The office, once divided into two rooms by an original wood-framed wall, was remodeled in the 1970s to become now one room, and a drop ceiling was added. On the west side of the hallway is a large classroom, a supply room with arms vault, and the shower/latrine area. Wood-framed walls were added in the 1970s to divide the classroom into four offices, and a drop ceiling was added. The supply room and shower/latrine remain intact.<sup>3</sup> All interior walls are brick; the central hallway's brick walls have not been concealed. Between the south section and the drill hall is a load-bearing brick wall having

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original wood double doors that access the central hallway.

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. An elevated stage in the east wall has been closed off by a concrete-block wall. On each side of the stage are steps leading up to original wood doors that access dressing rooms, and to the south of the stage are steps leading down to an original wood door accessing the now-condemned underground rifle range. The drill hall's 1937 original wood-block floor was removed in the 1960s and replaced with a new concrete floor.<sup>4</sup>

Except for the replacement of deteriorated wood exterior doors in the 1980s, the Marlow 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.

ENDNOTES

1. W. David Baird, "Final Report: WPA Structures Thematic Survey (Phase III)," (Stillwater, Okla.: Oklahoma State University, 1987), 12, 15-16.
2. Sgt. Kenneth Allen, Batt. B, 171st Field Artillery (MLRS), Marlow, Oklahoma, February 3, 1993.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.

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SUMMARY:

The Marlow Armory (Marlow National Guard Armory) is significant within the economic context of Works Progress Administration projects in Marlow, Oklahoma, 1935-1937, 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 1937 by local men who were qualified for work relief under WPA guidelines. The project brought \$50,000 into the economy of Marlow, Oklahoma, by employing an average of 50 previously unemployed, unskilled workers for more than thirteen months. The armory also filled a longstanding military need for an adequate, secure drill hall and arms storage building for the 45th Military Police Company, Special Troops, of the 45th Infantry Division of the Oklahoma National Guard, which had previously had no permanent armory. The Marlow 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 the largest and best preserved of four WPA structures remaining in Marlow, and it is the town's only example of military-style architecture. As it is essentially intact, and maintains integrity of setting, location, design, workmanship, and materials, the Marlow 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

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Progress Administration in 1935 only a few Oklahomans received adequate assistance. The urban unemployed and displaced farm families combined to 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, stadia, 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 activities 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>

Stephens County, in southern Oklahoma, was a rural region, with the town of Marlow functioning as a minor service center. This part of Oklahoma had originally been part of the Chickasaw Nation, Indian Territory. Marlow, a town of 3,084 in 1930, had been founded in 1891, on the Rock Island Railroad.

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Until the discovery of major oil fields nearby in the 1912-1920 era, most families had centered their lives around agricultural production. Thereafter, many people became involved in petroleum exploration/production and oilfield services. Agricultural depression in the late 1920s in Stephens County was compounded by overproduction of petroleum and a consequent drastic drop in oil prices in the early 1930s, a catastrophe that put hundreds out of work.<sup>6</sup> The effects were severe in Stephens County and in Marlow, Oklahoma. By September of 1934, 2,732 families, comprising 34.7 percent of the county population, were receiving direct relief. WPA work gave men and women a dignified way to earn a meager living. By September of 1935, the number of families on relief had been reduced to 1,693, or 23.8 percent of the county population, and by September of 1936, 1,027 persons in Stephens County were on WPA projects.<sup>7</sup>

By late summer of 1935 Stephens County municipalities had submitted a number of proposed WPA projects. The Marlow City Commission submitted four, including a stadium, a swimming pool/bathhouse, a school, and an armory. After some debate, the city commission selected a site, purchased three lots at Main and Seventh Streets, and donated the property to the state.<sup>8</sup>

Groundbreaking for the Marlow Armory took place on November 7, 1935, and construction proceeded through the rest of the year, through 1936, and into 1937.<sup>9</sup> 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. By October, from 70 to 122 men were employed at the armory site.<sup>10</sup> The Guard unit moved into the new facility on November 30, before the building was completed.<sup>11</sup> Finally finished in January, 1937, the armory was dedicated on April 1, 1937, despite the heaviest snowfall of that winter season. On that day, Marlow 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 in the new armory.<sup>12</sup>

WPA projects in 1935-1937 propped up the sagging rural economy of Stephens County. By the end of 1937, the WPA had invested in projects ranging from farm-to-market roads to a stadium and sewer cleaning. The armory was the largest project in Marlow. The WPA's cost on the armory project was \$50,000, 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 fifty men were employed on the project, with the work rolls sometimes climbing to 122 persons. These figures testify 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-

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block floor in the 80' by 140' drill room (more than 100,000 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 a complicated design.<sup>14</sup>

Upon completion, the Marlow Armory became the home of the 45th Military Police Company, Special Troops, 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 Marlow, the local field artillery unit had been established in 1927. By 1937 the unit included two officers and forty-eight 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 Marlow Armory provided permanent housing for the unit, which formerly had been housed in the Eason Building (a commercial building), in the 300 block of West Main.<sup>19</sup> 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, dressing room, classroom, offices, storage rooms, locker room, and garage. Underground, on the west side, beneath the stage, was 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 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>20</sup>

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The Marlow National Guard Armory presently houses Battery B of the 171st Field Artillery (Multiple Launch Rocket Systems), 45th Infantry Brigade, 35th Infantry Division (headquartered in Kansas).

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE:

The Marlow 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>21</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 of brick manufactured within the state. The Marlow Armory is constructed of Oklahoma brick.

WPA architectural philosophy prohibited the use of ornate features, intricate structure, 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 Art Deco detailing or by virtue of being a provincial interpretation of a romantic high style, such as Tudor.<sup>22</sup> The massive pilasters topped with square or pediment-shaped cast-concrete caps, the herringbone-pattern brick panels over the windows, and the stepped parapet and stepped panel over the entrance, are vertical Art Deco touches that lighten the otherwise somber appearance of the Marlow Armory. The slightly castellated parapet adds a medieval flavor. 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. WPA armories, as exemplified by the Marlow 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>23</sup> The armory is the largest and best preserved of four WPA structures remaining in Marlow, and it is the town's only example of military-style architecture. In type, style, scale, materials, and workmanship, WPA armories, of which the Marlow Armory is a fine example, are unique when compared to the rest of the built environment, both in Marlow and

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8. Marlow Review, October 10, 1935.
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11. Marlow Review, November 26, 1936.
12. Ibid., March 25, 1937; *ibid.*, April 1, 1937.
13. Ibid., August 29, 1935; *ibid.*, September 5, 1935; *ibid.*, September 3, 1936; *ibid.*, March 25, 1937.
14. Ibid., October 22, 1936; *ibid.*, December 3, 1936; *ibid.*, January 14, 1937; "WPA Project No. 242, "Index to Reference Cards."
15. "Accomplishments," 44; Historical Annual: National Guard of the State of Oklahoma, 1938 (Baton Rouge, La.: Army and Navy Publishing Company, 1938), 33.
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.
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19. Marlow Review, November 26, 1936.
20. Nelson, Thunderbirds, 12.
21. "Accomplishments," 38, 40; Historical Annual, 18.
22. Final Report on the WPA Program, 1935-43 (Washington, D.C.: G. P. O., c. 1943), 52; Baird, "Final Report," 15, 21, 23.
23. Ibid., 17; *ibid.*, 2.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

This property consists of Lots 1 (one), 2 (two), and 3 (three) of Block 99 (ninety-nine), city of Marlow, Stephens County, a property measuring approximately 165 feet north-south by 150 feet north-south.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:

These are the boundaries of the property as legally recorded in Book 247, page 273, Deed Records, Stephens County.