

NPS Form 10-900  
(Rev. 10-90)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM



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1. Name of Property

=====

historic name Weatherford Armory

other names/site number Weatherford National Guard Armory

=====

2. Location

=====

street & number 123 W. Rainey Street not for publication N/A  
city or town Weatherford vicinity N/A  
state Oklahoma code OK county Custer code 039  
zip code 73096

=====  
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  
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I, hereby certify that this property is:   entered in the National Register

- 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  5-20-94  
Signature of Keeper Date  
of Action

=====

5. Classification

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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

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6. Function or Use

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Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>DEFENSE</u>	Sub: <u>arms storage</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>DEFENSE</u>	Sub: <u>arms storage</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

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7. Description

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Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Works Progress Administration

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation	<u>CONCRETE</u>
roof	<u>ASPHALT</u>
walls	<u>BRICK</u>
	<u>CONCRETE</u>
other	<u>N/A</u>

\_\_\_\_\_

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

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8. Statement of Significance

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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  
\_\_\_\_\_



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10. Geographical Data

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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>526310</u>	<u>3931120</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.)

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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

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Additional Documentation

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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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Weatherford Armory  
name of property  
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county and State

SUMMARY:

The Weatherford Armory (Weatherford 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 1935-1937. The armory property is located at 123 W. Rainey Street. The surrounding area is commercial. The armory's main entrance faces south. The floor plan is typical of WPA-built armories, in that the building comprises two distinct sections: A north section, with barrel roof, contains the drill area, while a flat-roofed south section comprises offices, supply and arms rooms, and garage. 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; slightly castellated parapet on the south side; corner and central pilasters topped with pediment-shaped concrete caps; a vertical panel of herringbone-pattern brick over each window on the south wall in the administrative/garage section; and vertical, steel-framed multiple-light windows in all facades. Other decorative elements include cast concrete window sills, diamond- and rectangular-shaped insets in the brickwork, and an elaborate main entry door surround, created in cast concrete, consisting of a compound segmental pointed arch recessed under a stepped panel. The steel-framed windows are all original, as are the single interior overhead vehicle door and most office doors and exterior pedestrian doors. Exterior alterations are limited to the replacement, in 1988-1991, of five original wood exterior overhead vehicle doors with steel doors, and the replacement of the original main entry wood doors with new wood double doors. Interior alterations are minimal: An interior wall was removed in one office, and wood-framed walls have created six new offices in the garage area. The Weatherford 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 Weatherford 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 123 W. Rainey Street (it is

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bordered by Eighth Street on the west, by Rainey on the south, by an alley on the north, and by a driveway accessing commercial property on the east). The surrounding area is commercial. The armory's main entrance faces south.

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 Weatherford Armory has two principal facades, one accessing Rainey Street, the main entry, on the south, and one accessing South Eighth Street, on the west. These walls are characterized by outwardly projecting pilasters that enframe window/door bays. The south facade's main focus is an elaborate door surround consisting of markedly stepped and castellated parapet and pilasters that enframe the compound segmental pointed-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 the drill hall section, characterized by shallow pilasters and first-floor door/window arrangement. Cast-concrete detailing is an important visual aspect of the primary facades. The secondary facades, on the north and east, are much less elaborate, though the administrative section (south side) of the east facade is characterized by fenestration similar to its counterpart on the west.

The roofline of the Weatherford Armory indicates that the building comprises two distinct sections: A north section, with barrel roof, comprises the drill area, while a flat-roofed, one-story south section comprises offices, supply and arms rooms, and garage. (Historically and presently), the drill hall is covered with roll roofing, while the south section is covered with tar and gravel. The roofline of the Weatherford Armory gives the building a fortress-like aspect. The south roofline exhibits a slightly castellated and stepped parapet. On the east and west the arc of the barrel roof, over the north section, contrasts with the horizontal line of the south section. At the northwest and southwest corners of the drill hall, shallow pilasters buttress the corners and rise to become pediment-shaped "towers." On the north (drill hall), the roofline is horizontal, with a moderate 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 or three lights set in four, five, or six rows (4/4/2, 3/6/3, 3/6/6, 6/3/6/3, 6/6/3, with one or two sets of vertical center-pivot windows and a bottom row that opens in hopper fashion). The SOUTH facade consists in four bays: Slightly off-center is the pedimented, stepped, upwardly projecting entry bay, with its compound

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segmental pointed-arched portal and new steel doors. 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. The westernmost bay contains a single 4/4/2 window which illuminates the garage area. On the WEST side, the southernmost bay contains four steel (new) overhead vehicle doors, while the northernmost bay contains a central steel (new) overhead vehicle door flanked by a triplet of 6/3/6/3 windows on the north and, on the south, by a 3/6/3 transom atop an original wood pedestrian door adjacent to two 6/3/6/3 windows. All of the overhead vehicle doors were replaced with steel doors in the 1980s.<sup>1</sup> Openings in the NORTH 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 of a central pair of original wood pedestrian doors that are topped with 3/6/3 transoms. On the EAST, the facade is irregularly pierced; there are two 3/6/3/3 windows and a triplet of 3/6/3 windows in the administrative (south) section, and a single 3/6/3/3 window in the drill hall section. There is also a small, two-foot-square ventilation window close to the ground in the center of the drill hall section. Several lights in the south facade are missing, and a few lights in each facade are painted to block sunlight.

The castellated parapet, reminiscent of Medieval English style, gives the building a military appearance. 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 diamonds and rectangles; vertical panels of brick laid in herringbone patterns above the windows in the south and east facades; and narrow, vertical steel-framed multiple-light hopper-opening windows in all facades. Original metal downspouts are in place on the east and west facades.

One of the distinguishing architectural features of the Weatherford Armory is the brickwork. In constructing the south facade, or front of the building, builders used good-quality face brick having a vertically striated pattern, and the mortar was pointed. On the east and north facades, however, common bricks were used, and the mortar is flush. This combination of brick types is typical of many early-day WPA endeavors, and it gives visual documentation of the use of whatever materials were available at the moment. The uneven quality of the bricklaying technique evident in this armory attests to the employment of untrained workers, or "trainees," on the Weatherford project. Decorative brickwork is also notable. Above each window on the south and east sides is a

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vertical panel of brick laid up in herringbone pattern. On the west side, in the drill hall wall, is a five-part panel of brick laid in alternating patterns of common bond and herringbone bond. Also in the west wall, a decorative "soldier" course of brick was used as the bottom or foundation row at the base of the drill hall wall and as a solid row or lintel above the garage doors.

Cast concrete decorative elements are another feature of the building: These consist of the parapet coping on west and south, all pilaster pediment-shaped caps; all window sills; the southwest and southeast corners of the building, where concrete blocks were jointed to look like individual stone blocks; the concrete-block corners of the upwardly projecting "towers" that enframe the drill hall on the west side; a concrete water-table above the base of the south and west walls, and the stepped panel in the south entrance door surround. A three-step concrete porch leads to the main entrance.

Window-type air conditioners have been installed in a south side and an east side window. The building retains its original metal downspouts on all facades. On the south wall near the southwest corner of the building is a cornerstone marking the construction as a 1936 WPA project, and over the main entry is affixed a diamond-shaped red and gold metal sign, symbol of the 45th Infantry Division. Affixed to the pilaster beside the main entrance is a metal sign identifying the unit as a part of the 171st Field Artillery. A gasoline pump sits near the garage doors, and a communications antenna rises above the main entrance bay (guy wires are affixed to short poles rising from the southwest and southeast corners of the building).

INTERIOR DESCRIPTION/ALTERATIONS:

The Weatherford 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 north, and an administrative/garage section on the south. The original floor plan has been generally maintained. In the administrative/garage section, rooms lie on either side of a north-south center hallway. Originally, the west half of the administrative section had a small office, a large four-bay garage, and a small tool room. In the 1950s and 1980s, six rooms were created within the garage by building wood-framed walls, but parking for four vehicles remains available. The small office and tool room remain intact. The west wing's original concrete ceiling is still visible in the garage area. On the east side of the hallway, the space is still divided into a classroom, a supply room (with original arms vault), and a shower/bathroom. All interior walls are brick; the

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central hallway walls have been plastered and painted, and drop ceilings have been added in the offices and in the hallway.<sup>2</sup> Between the south section and the drill hall is a load-bearing brick wall having original wood double doors that access the central hallway, and a panel-type overhead garage door that joins the garage and 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 stage, now enclosed by a concrete-block wall, rises in the east wall. The stage is now accessed from the drill hall floor by a new stairway and door. On each side of the stage are steps and original wood doors leading to dressing rooms, and to the south of the stage are steps and an original wood door leading down into the now-condemned underground rifle range. Narrow, shallow pilasters buttress the north and south walls. The drill hall's original 1937 wood-block floor was removed at an unknown date, but the concrete "lip" which surrounded it is still in place, giving the floor two levels.<sup>3</sup>

Except for the replacement of deteriorated wood overhead doors in the 1980s and the replacement of original main entry wood double doors with similar, new doors in 1989-1991, the Weatherford 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. Sgt. James Cole and Sgt. R. Lewellen, Batt. A, 171st Field Artillery, interview by Dianna Everett, Weatherford, Oklahoma, March 4, 1993.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.

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SUMMARY

The Weatherford Armory (Weatherford National Guard Armory) is significant within the economic context of Works Progress Administration projects in Weatherford, 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 \$45,000 into the economy of Weatherford, Oklahoma by employing an average of thirty-three 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 Battery D, 158th Field Artillery, of the 45th Infantry Division of the Oklahoma National Guard, which previously had no permanent armory. The Weatherford 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 seven WPA resources remaining in Weatherford, and it is the town's only example of military-style architecture. As it is essentially intact, the Weatherford 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

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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 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. 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>

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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>

Custer County, in western Oklahoma, was an agricultural region. The town of Weatherford was founded in 1898 by William J. Weatherford when a rail line was completed to the site. Agriculture, primarily wheat farming, was the mainstay of Custer County. With a 1930 population of 2,417, Weatherford was the county's second-largest town and functioned as a major service center. During the early 1930s a severe drought compounded the problems associated with a generally depressed economy.<sup>6</sup> By September of 1934, 1,848 families, or 28.2 percent of the county population were on direct relief. The WPA made a difference in Custer County, Oklahoma. By September of 1935, the number of families on relief had been reduced to 966, or 14.8 percent of the county population. In Weatherford, Oklahoma, by November of 1935, all available unemployed workers in town were on work relief,<sup>7</sup> and by September of 1936, 610 persons in Custer County were employed by the WPA.

As soon as possible in late 1935 and early 1936 Custer County municipalities created potential WPA projects. By the summer of 1936 these sponsors had submitted more than \$250,000 in proposals. The Weatherford city commission submitted plans for a library, a swimming pool, a new park, and a \$32,000 armory. A bond proposal funded the purchase of five downtown lots, which were deeded to the state. Thus, the city's share of the cost of the armory was provided in land.<sup>8</sup>

Groundbreaking for the Weatherford Armory took place on October 22, 1935, and construction proceeded through the rest of the year, through 1936, and into 1937.<sup>9</sup> Local purchases of materials added to the project's importance for the local economy. Due to funding lapses, 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, thirty-three men were employed on the site.<sup>10</sup> Finally completed in February, the Armory was dedicated on March 8, 1937. On that day, Weatherford celebrated with an open house, banquet, and band concert. General Key, state WPA

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director, and other state and local dignitaries participated in the dedication, and the program concluded with a dance in the new armory.<sup>11</sup>

WPA projects in 1935-1937 propped up the sagging rural economy of Custer County. By the end of 1937, estimated WPA expenditures in the county topped \$500,000, and projects in Weatherford totalled more than \$155,000 and included a \$6,000 library, a \$10,000 pool and bathhouse, school buildings totalling \$28,000, and bridge and road improvements totalling around \$42,000. The WPA's cost on the armory project was \$45,000, with the city contributing the land.<sup>12</sup> In human terms, thousands of person-hours of labor went into the armory's construction. Most significantly, a monthly average of forty-five men were employed on the project. 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-block floor in the 80' by 125' 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,<sup>13</sup> but ample time and labor were available to create a complicated design.

Upon completion, the Weatherford Armory became the home of Battery D, 158th Field Artillery, 45th Infantry Division, Oklahoma National Guard.<sup>14</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>15</sup> Because the Guard paid its members a monthly stipend, which they spent locally to feed and clothe their families, Oklahoma communities actively competed to secure local Guard units during these years. In Weatherford, the local field artillery unit had been established in 1924. By 1937 the unit included three officers and thirty enlisted men.<sup>16</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

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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>17</sup>

The new Weatherford Armory provided permanent housing for the unit, which formerly had been housed in a building at the stock pavilion (fair grounds).<sup>18</sup> The new facility was more than adequate for the detachment's needs. The building was divided into areas serving specific functions. The entire north section housed the drill hall, comprising the stage and the drill floor. The front, or south, section, housed the arms vault, supply room, dressing 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 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 Weatherford 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 Weatherford Armory.

WPA architectural philosophy prohibited the use of ornate features, intricate design, and elaborate trim; therefore, WPA armories tend to be straightforwardly

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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>21</sup> The massive pilasters topped by cast-concrete, pediment-shaped caps, the concrete 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 Weatherford 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 Weatherford 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 the largest and best preserved of seven WPA buildings remaining in Weatherford, and it is the town's only example of military-style architecture. In type, style, scale, materials, and workmanship, WPA armories, of which the Weatherford Armory is a fine example, are unique when compared to the rest of the built environment, both in Weatherford and across the 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.

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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; "History of Custer and Washita Counties," (Clinton, Okla.: Clinton Daily News, 1937), 15.
7. Daily Oklahoman, September 29, 1935; Clinton (Oklahoma) Daily News, November 10, 1935; ibid., November 17, 1935; Daily Oklahoman, September 12, 1937.
8. Arapaho (Oklahoma) Bee, January 17, 1936; Clinton (Oklahoma) Daily News, October 17, 1935; ibid., October 23, 1935; ibid., February 14, 1937.
9. Clinton (Oklahoma) Daily News, October 24, 1935.
10. WPA Project No. 154, "Index to Reference Cards for Work Projects Administration Project Files, 1935-1942," (Washington, D.C.: WPA, c. 1942), Micro T-935, reel 54.
11. Clinton (Oklahoma) Daily News, March 8, 1937; ibid., March 10, 1937; Daily Oklahoman, February 21, 1937.
12. Clinton (Oklahoma) Daily News, February 14, 1937; "Index to Reference Cards."
13. Clinton (Oklahoma) Daily News, June 14, 1936.
14. "Accomplishments," 44; Historical Annual: National Guard of the State of Oklahoma, 1938 (Baton Rouge, La.: Army and Navy Publishing Company, 1938), 187.
15. 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.
16. Historical Annual, 187.

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17. Nelson, Thunderbirds, 6-9; Franks, Citizen Soldiers, 38, 40.
18. Clinton (Oklahoma) Daily News, March 14, 1937.
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.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

Lots 6 (six), 7 (seven), 8 (eight), 9 (nine), and 10 (ten) of Block 62, original town, Weatherford, Custer County, being a property measuring approximately 155 feet east-to-west and 165 feet north-to-south.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:

These are the boundaries of the property as legally recorded in Book 60, page 376, Deed Records, Custer County.