

# **OKLAHOMA'S LEGACY OF DEFENSE:**

**NATIONAL GUARD ARMORIES,  
DAVIS AIR FIELD (MUSKOGEE),  
WHITAKER EDUCATION AND TRAINING CENTER (PRYOR),  
AND  
CAMP GRUBER, OKLAHOMA**

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**for the**

**State Historic Preservation Office  
Oklahoma Historical Society**

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## ABSTRACT

This report summarizes the project to survey certain properties in accordance with the contract between the Oklahoma Historical Society State Historic Preservation Office (hereafter cited as OK/SHPO) and the Oklahoma Army National Guard (hereafter cited as OK ARNG). The duration of the project was from September 30, 1992 to September 30, 1993. These properties were to include: 1. Each of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) constructed National Guard armories in the Oklahoma Army and Air National Guard's inventory previously identified by the OK/SHPO as eligible (but not yet nominated) for the National Register of Historic Places, not to exceed 10 structures; 2. Any of 26 WWII temporary buildings in the OK ARNG inventory, located at a. Davis Field (4), b. Camp Gruber (22), and c. Whitaker Education and Training Center, formerly Whitaker School (3 1921 buildings), not to exceed 10 structures. These facilities, while constructed at various times and for different purposes, are the property of and associated with the OK ARNG.

The surveyors studied all properties specified in the contract, excluded those that no longer exist or no longer belong to the OK ARNG, documented the remainder, and documented additional properties they believe warrant further study as is described in the full report.

Intensive archival and library research was undertaken to establish the historic context(s) for the resources. Full National Register nominations were completed for twenty National Guard Armories. On-site field surveys at Davis Field, Whitaker Education and Training Center, and Camp Gruber resulted in the description, recordation, and mapping of numerous historic resources in each installation. For each resource, an Historic Preservation Resource Identification Form was completed, and photographic documentation was accomplished.

Several resources were deemed to warrant further investigation for possible listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Future study is recommended for potentially National-Register-eligible historic districts at Davis Field (1), Whitaker Education and Training Center (1), and Camp Gruber (3). Future study is also recommended for individual properties at Camp Gruber that may be potentially eligible for the National Register.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The conduct of the surveys reported here have brought the researchers into contact with many people, including a sizeable number of Oklahoma Military Department and Oklahoma Army National Guard personnel. In almost every case, the researchers found these people both informative and accommodating, in several instances willing to go beyond what was strictly necessary to answer questions about facilities under study. The researchers wish to recognize the contributions of these people--staff assigned to the various armories, Camp Gruber, Whitaker Education and Training Center, and Kent Ferrand and Eric Hanson, of the Oklahoma Military Department--in particular. As always, the staff and sources of the Oklahoma Historical Society were indispensable.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Financial assistance for completion of this project was provided by the U. S. Department of the Army and the Air Force National Guard Bureau. Under contract with the Oklahoma Military Department, the State Historic Preservation Office, Oklahoma Historical Society conducted an architectural/historic survey of the facilities described and prepared nominations to the National Register of Historic Places for twenty (20) National Guard armories. It is believed that the results of this effort will be of mutual benefit to the agencies involved and the citizens of Oklahoma.

## INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes the project to survey certain properties in accordance with the contract between the Oklahoma Historical Society State Historic Preservation Office (hereafter cited as OK/SHPO) and the Oklahoma Army National Guard (hereafter cited as OK ARNG). The duration of the project was from September 30, 1992 to September 30, 1993. These properties were to include:

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  - a. Davis Field (4),
  - b. Camp Gruber (22),
 and
  - c. Whitaker Education and Training Center, formerly Whitaker School (3 1921 buildings), not to exceed 10 structures.

These facilities, while constructed at various times and for different purposes, are the property of and associated with the OK ARNG.

To aid the two surveyors with identifying the above-mentioned properties, the OK/SHPO was supplied with three inventory lists:

1. ARNG Facilities Inventory and Stationing Plan (FISP), dated April 19, 1991.
2. National Guard Armories Eligible for Listing in the National Register of Historic Places, annotated by the OK ARNG as to ownership.
3. National Guard Armories Listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

In conducting the survey, the surveyors discovered that lists 1 and 2 were inaccurate for their purposes. The ARNG FISP

- a. listed structureless acreages as well as buildings;
- b. supplied construction dates that were actually acquisition dates.

The inventory of National Guard Armories Eligible for Listing in the National Register of Historic Places included properties that no longer belonged to the OK ARNG. The

surveyors had to adjust their targets accordingly. They studied all properties specified in the contract, excluded those that no longer exist or belong to the OK ARNG, documented the remainder, and documented additional properties they believe warrant further study as is described in the following discussion.

## WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION NATIONAL GUARD ARMORIES IN OKLAHOMA

### HISTORIC CONTEXT

#### Need for the Armory-Building Program

In Oklahoma the Great Depression of the 1930s simply continued a decade of economic distress. While in the first quarter of the twentieth century it projected the image of an oil-rich, cattle-rich state, the truth was that the post-World War I recession sent the economy into a decline from which it did not recover for twenty years. Much of Oklahoma's Native American and African-American populations, as well as some of the white population, was chronically impoverished. In the 1920s Oklahoma's cattle, wheat, and cotton farmers found little demand for their commodities. The cyclical droughts of the early 1930s, insect infestations, and misuse of the soil combined to drive farmers off their lands in western Oklahoma and devastated crops in the rest of the state. At the same time, continuing discovery and exploitation of Oklahoma's oil fields, duplicated in other states, flooded the market with crude oil by the early 1930s and further drove down prices.

To a certain extent, President Franklin D. Roosevelt's first New Deal attempts to remedy the national economic depression made the situation worse for Oklahomans. His Agricultural Adjustment Act, paying landowners to cut production of commodities, caused many of Oklahoma's tenant farmers to be turned off the land. Cut-backs in petroleum production under the leadership of Oklahoma's Governor William ("Alfalfa Bill") Murray (1931-1935) and technological innovations meant fewer jobs for the state's oil field workers. Both tenant farmers and oil field workers were usually unskilled laborers, resulting in high unemployment for men unlikely to find work elsewhere. The state average in 1935 was 23 percent, but in some counties the percentage of unemployed heads of families or single people exceeded 40 percent. The result was severe economic hardship for these people and their dependents. Many left the state or migrated to urban areas in search of relief. Programs such as the Civilian Conservation Corps, Public Works Administration, and Federal Emergency Relief Administration had limited impact on the problem in the state through early 1935.<sup>1</sup>

## Works Progress Administration Projects

Creation of the Works Progress Administration by FDR's New Deal administration in June 1935 brought a new attack on the problems of the Great Depression. The WPA was designed to combat record national levels of unemployment by setting up public works projects. The orientation was generally local. Labor, mostly unskilled, would be drawn from the county relief rolls. Laborers were limited to 130 hours per month at a guaranteed monthly minimum wage of twenty-four dollars. Labor-intensive construction further maximized employment. Materials would be purchased or acquired locally if possible, to keep down costs and stimulate the local economy. Projects chosen--roadwork, bridges, flood control, improvements to public utilities and sanitation systems, construction of schools and other public buildings--had to be permanent, useful additions to the community. Communities must demonstrate their sponsorship of the projects, often through in-kind contributions of land or materials. Many Oklahoma towns quickly took advantage of this solution to an immediate practical problem, at the same time providing much-needed improvements or permanent facilities at little cost to themselves.<sup>2</sup>

### The Armory-Building Project

The head of the WPA in the state was Major General W. S. Key, an Oklahoman, former prison warden, and commander of the 45th Division, which included, from 1923, the Oklahoma National Guard. Key resigned to become State Director of the WPA but maintained his interest in and support of the OK ARNG. He urged Oklahoma towns to apply quickly for many WPA projects but specified armory projects for towns that already had Guard units. While Oklahoma's National Guard had its origins in territorial days and had served honorably in the Spanish-American War, the Mexican Campaign, World War I, and numerous state emergencies, individual units rarely had permanent armories. Most rented make-shift facilities that lacked permanence and security, leading to the loss of equipment and arms. This real need of adequate facilities coincided with a national WPA armory-building program agitated for and won with the support of the National Guard Association. Bryan F. Nolen, an OK ARNG major and architect, had already been placed on active duty to design armories. Key added Major Nolen to his staff and pursued the program with the support of Governor E. W. Marland (1935-1939) and the State Board of Affairs.<sup>3</sup>

The WPA armory-building program in Oklahoma consequently oversaw the construction of fifty-one new armories between 1935 and 1937. Construction began generally in the fall of 1935 as soon as individual towns could acquire land

for building sites. In some cases this meant deeding public land to the state; in other cases land was purchased with funds raised by public donation or bond issues. Ground was broken first in Wewoka, Oklahoma, on October 8, 1935. Other towns followed suit through October and November, with men employed in site preparation, foundation excavation, and stone-quarrying. Construction halted temporarily in early November 1935 as Key and federal WPA Director Harry Hopkins debated the allocation of funds. But vociferous protests by Oklahoma's Congressmen, Senators, Governor Marland, state legislators, and local officials resulted in restoration of the program and resumption of work by the end of the same month. Bad weather, lack of materials, shortages of equipment, and other work stoppages slowed completion of the armories; but by the end of 1936 the first finished, Kingfisher Armory, was done. The rest of the armories, ranging in cost from about \$30,000 to more than \$60,000, were completed and dedicated during the next several months, into the summer of 1937. The dedication ceremonies included speeches by Key and Barrett, parades, banquets or barbecues, public tours of the facilities, and concerts or dances--all a very public affirmation of the WPA program and demonstration of support for the local Guard units.<sup>4</sup>

#### Impact and Subsequent History of the Armories

The WPA armories were immediately put to use, in some cases even before the formal dedication. By 1938 Guard officials agreed that the training and preparation of the OK ARNG was much improved because of the better facilities. But the armories were designed to be community centers and public meetings halls as well, a selling point strongly stressed to the public in WPA press releases. While the administrative sections of the building were reserved for Guard functions, the drill halls served as high school and college gymnasiums (for example, Tishomingo and Wagoner armories), concert halls, social centers, and exhibition halls. Sometimes leased to the public, armories provided space for skating rinks, manufacturing (Pawhuska Armory), and storage (Konawa Armory). With the mobilization of the 45th Division in 1940, armories assumed other functions. Haskell, Eufaula, Okemah, and Konawa armories were holding centers for German prisoners of war detailed from prisoner of war camps for agricultural labor. Before and after World War II, the buildings represented substantial physical contributions to Oklahoma towns, in some cases being the most imposing and valuable building in town. With their distinctive construction and style, they have remained a visible reminder of the WPA and the OK ARNG.<sup>5</sup>

## ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

The armories designed by supervising architect Major Bryan F. Nolen for the WPA share common characteristics, yet each is distinct from the others. That individuality was achieved through a certain style, flexibility of design, variation in materials, dual purpose, and labor-intensive construction.<sup>6</sup>

A WPA armory in Oklahoma is still immediately recognizable by its style. Nolen created a series of buildings that reflected their military purpose by their castellated appearance, but with a Art Deco influence. The fortress-like or military image was created through the use of projecting portals, parapets, piers and pilasters that simulate towers at each corner of the building, public entrances recessed beneath arches, narrow windows that resemble arrowslits, and vertical incisions in brick or stonework along the roofline that suggest battlements. These same features, with their strong vertical lines, are used to break up the horizontal mass of these large buildings. The overall rectangularity, sometimes reinforced with the decorative use of diamonds, rectangles, triangles and other geometric figures, reflect the Art Deco style popular in the decade before Nolen designed his armories. Stylistically, the armories fit WPA's encouragement of artistry and craftsmanship. But the armories vary widely in degree of ornamentation from the relatively plain Guthrie or Eufaula armories to the elaborate Konawa Armory with its extensive inlays of molded concrete. This variation was probably a function of the skill level of the available labor force.

Although the style of Nolen's designs imposed a standardization on the WPA armories, the need for flexibility was also taken into consideration. The armories must accommodate different numbers of Guard units and be built in far-flung locations that would afford variable site conditions, locally-available building materials, and labor skill levels ranging from craftsman to novice builder hired from the relief rolls. Consequently, Nolen designed standardized plans for one-unit, two-unit, and four-unit armories that allowed considerable adaptation. The one-unit armory at Eufaula, according to a notation on the blueprint, was apparently duplicated at Beggs, Hugo, Pawhuska, Tishomingo, Wagoner, Cushing, Guthrie, Okemah, Tahlequah, and Mangum. The four-unit Pawnee Armory differs very little from Anadarko Armory except in building materials. While most armories were one-story, modification of the basic one-unit design created a two-story building where ground space was limited, as in the case of Minco and Watonga. Kingfisher Armory, housing a two units, was designed with two full stories.

Building materials also depended on the location of the armory. The use of native stone, be it sandstone or limestone, reduced construction costs yet provided a material that was easily handled by unskilled labor. Thirty-three of Oklahoma's WPA armories were native stone, sometimes quarried from the construction site, as with the Guthrie building. Most today lie east of Interstate 35 in eastern Oklahoma. The other eighteen were brick, usually from the State Penitentiary at McAlester, Oklahoma. Most brick armories are located west of Interstate 35 in western Oklahoma. Both stone and brickwork on existing armories show variable levels of skill on the part of the builders, ranging from the rather poor quality of stonework on the Eufaula Armory to fine beaded mortar evident on the Wagoner and Mangum armories. Roofs were rolled asphalt applied over sheet steel and steel trussing, and interior walls might combine brick and native stone. Doors were panel-type, with narrow wooden slats set into broad plank frames. Windows were always steel-framed, usually center-pivot in style, and manufactured in Oklahoma, but their distribution and width might vary from building to building. Whether the armories were brick or stone, WPA spokesmen were fond of noting that the buildings were almost completely "fireproof" and, like the windows, Oklahoma products, being made from its native stone and clay.

Each building had the same general floor plan, being divided into two sections, reflecting the dual purpose of the building as an armory and a community center. Ideally the sections were set at right angles on a corner lot and each faced a street or alley. But modifications of the basic design might allow both sections to open on the same street. The flat-roofed administrative section offered the public entrance. It was bisected by a corridor leading from the public entrance to the drill hall. On either side of the corridor were administrative offices, classrooms, storage rooms, an arms vault, locker rooms, showers, and a garage which might be expanded to meet the needs of particular units. This section of the building was generally reserved for OK ARNG use. The barrel-roofed drill hall was designed for public as well as Guard use. Overhead doors at one end offered access from the street for trucks and large equipment; at the other end was a stage with enclosed wings. Beneath the stage was a basement rifle range, some of which had off-set observers' cubicles. Usually the range extended beyond the outer wall of the drill hall, and its roof was exposed as a low flat-roofed extension in the angle between the drill hall and the administrative section. While floors throughout the rest of the building were concrete, that of the drill hall was overlaid with wood block flooring, allowing the space to be used for dances and basketball games as well as Guard activities. All the armories contained these

basic rooms, but the arrangement, size and number might vary from building to building. Extensions might be added to the usual one-unit drill hall-administrative section floor plan to create space for more than one unit.

The drill hall floor, along with the native stone which must be quarried, cut, and set into the walls, testified to the labor-intensive nature of Nolen's designs. To create this industrial-type floor, a base of concrete was poured. Hundreds of thousands of four-inch wooden blocks were cut, sanded, set on end in asphalt, varnished, and polished. The great number of man-hours of work involved was a means of reaching the WPA goal of maximizing employment.

Project directors took pride in noting that most of the work was done with by hand with few mechanized tools and that unskilled labor received the greatest part of the payroll. Another noted that many of the unskilled men who came to work on the Konawa Armory left as experienced brick masons, therefore more employable in the future. Others pointed to Jim Price of the Eufaula Armory and Ed Greathouse of the Hominy Armory, who discovered they possessed a real

talent for stonecutting and left fine examples of their work to further individualize these armories.

WPA-built armories are locally significant because they typify WPA projects in their communities. Quite often, the armory is the only remaining example of WPA construction methodology in the area. In type, style, scale, materials, and workmanship, WPA armories are unique when compared to the rest of the built environment in Oklahoma.

#### Oklahoma's WPA Armories Today

Many of Oklahoma's WPA armories survive and are still in use by the OK ARNG. Others have been replaced by newer armories and have passed into public or private ownership.

The armories studied here revealed common characteristics and adaptations. In the administrative section, high concrete ceilings have usually been covered with dropped acoustical tile. Neon lighting has often been installed. Use of native stone for interior walls created problems with dust and grit. Some units solved the problem by painting, paneling, or otherwise covering the original walls. Original concrete floors have often been covered with linoleum or, less often, carpeting. Some rooms have been subdivided. Restrooms have often needed remodeling to accommodate personnel of both sexes. Often both interior and exterior doors have been replaced for better security. Most double doors in the portals have been replaced with single metal

doors set between wooden panels. While most armories still have their original steel-framed windows, many now have painted panes or are covered with some type of insert. In most cases the drill hall stage has been blocked in to create more usable space. Some areas of the drill halls may have been partitioned to provide storage, kitchen facilities, or ticket booths. Because of faulty design or construction, the drill halls' barrel roofs have proved chronically vulnerable to leakage. One of the first casualties of faulty dewatering systems was the wood-block flooring; in virtually all armories, the floor buckled and eventually had to be removed. Most armories now have concrete floors in the drill hall, sometimes with an additional layer of concrete poured over the original bed. Chronic water problems from underground seepage as well as leaks from the drill hall roof have also made most of the basement rifle ranges unusable.

Even with these problems and the modifications that have been made in the last five decades, Oklahoma's WPA armories are good and valuable buildings with a great deal of architectural and historical integrity. With proper maintenance, they should continue to be the integral parts of the communities they were meant to be in 1935.

#### METHODOLOGY

Working from the three lists supplied by the OK ARNG and the Department of Defense, OK SHPO identified armories for survey for possible National Register of Historic Places nominations. The surveyors researched and compiled materials on the WPA armory building program at the Oklahoma Military Department, the Oklahoma Department of Libraries, Edmon Low Library at Oklahoma State University, and the Oklahoma Historical Society. Newspaper and journal articles, published secondary works, archival manuscripts, vertical files, and library holdings of government documents yielded information pertinent both to the project as a whole and individual armories. Working independently, the surveyors then visited the selected armories for on-site research and survey. Local public libraries and oral interviews added to the body of information amassed. The surveyors photographed the elevations of the buildings, toured and photographed the interiors if possible, and interviewed armory personnel. Visits to the court house in each county in which specific armories were located provided in all cases except one the legal description of the property. From the information and photographs accumulated, the surveyors wrote and edited National Register nominations for individual properties.

## FINDINGS

The surveyors found that the remaining WPA armories continue to serve the OK ARNG well. Modifications to accommodate changes in Guard personnel, assigned duties, and equipment as well as to make the buildings conform to present expectations of good working environments have generally been internal and have not resulted in architecturally or historically significant alterations to the exteriors of the buildings. Consequently, the buildings are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C. With proper maintenance they should continue to contribute to both the OK ARNG and the communities in which they stand. The latter consideration has become increasingly important in towns that have declined economically and in population since the 1930s and have little hope of replacing the buildings with new community centers. A number of Guardsmen expressed appreciation for the buildings and the tradition of the 45th Division they represent in spite of some acknowledged disadvantages. Many expressed pleasure that the buildings were at last being recognized as historic.

The surveyors found that two of the armories, Ada and Tahlequah, selected from list 2, purporting to show the current status of WPA armories still owned by the OK ARNG, presently belong to the City of Ada and private owners, respectively.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Arrell Morgan Gibson, Oklahoma: A History of Five Centuries, second edition (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1981), 221-225; W. Richard Fossey, "'Talkin' Dust Bowl Blues': A Study of Oklahoma's Cultural Identity During the Great Depression," The Chronicles of Oklahoma 55 (Spring 1977): 12-33; Louise Welsh, Willa Mae Townes, John W. Morris, A History of the Greater Seminole Oil Field, Oklahoma Heritage Series (Oklahoma City: Western Heritage Association, 1981), 11, 65; The Indian Journal (Eufaula, Oklahoma), 20 June 1935; Daily Oklahoman, September 29, 1935.

<sup>2</sup>The Wagoner (Oklahoma) Tribune, 19 November 1935; U. S. Works Projects Administration, Oklahoma, Final Report of Activities and Accomplishments (N.p., 1943), 1-8; "Final Report of the Oklahoma Work Projects Administration, February 27, 1943," Archives of the Work Projects Administration and Predecessors, 1933-1943, Archives of the Works Projects Administration and Predecessors, 1933-1943, Series One, Final State Reports, 1943 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives, 1987), 1; "Building Construction Report, February, 1943," *ibid.*, 5-6; The Sulphur (Oklahoma) Times-Democrat, 11 July 1935.

<sup>3</sup>Major General Charles F. Barrett, "The Why and How of State Armories," The Reel Cart, Armory Dedication Edition, Headquarters Battery, 158th Field Artillery, Sulphur, Oklahoma, May 29, 1937, "Sulphur," Vertical File, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; 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), 38-48.

<sup>4</sup>Accomplishments: Works Progress Administration for Oklahoma, July 1, 1935-March 1, 1937 (Oklahoma City: Works Progress Administration, 1937), 38-44; The Pawnee (Oklahoma) Courier-Dispatch, 12 December 1935.

<sup>5</sup>Accomplishments, 40; Richard S. Warner, "Barbed Wire and Nazilagers: PW Camps in Oklahoma," The Chronicles of Oklahoma 64 (Spring 1986):50-59; W. David Baird, "Final Report: WPA Structures Thematic Survey (Phase III)," Stillwater, Okla: Oklahoma State University, 1987), 5, 11, 15, 21, 23.

<sup>6</sup>Baird, "Final Report," 15, 21, 23.

## DAVIS FIELD, MUSKOGEE, OKLAHOMA

HISTORIC CONTEXT

## Original Purpose and Construction

World War II found Oklahoma easing out of the Great Depression, but with its unemployment levels still high and its World War I-era prosperity only partially restored by New Deal efforts such as the Works Progress Administration. Among public works projects completed by the WPA were construction of and improvements on airport and airway facilities. The WPA worked closely with the U.S. Army Air Force in the years 1939-1940 to develop civilian airports that could be useful in defense, although the WPA followed its own guidelines as to labor and cost-sharing. In the autumn of 1941 the Army Air Force projected a series of bases which would be useful to nearby ground training facilities. Some of these bases might be the previously developed civilian airports. By 1943 numerous bases had been established near army ground forces divisional posts in various areas of the United States. These included Davis Field at Muskogee, Oklahoma, currently used by the OK ARNG for training purposes.<sup>1</sup>

In the early twentieth century the city of Muskogee in eastern Oklahoma prided itself on Hatbox Field, the oldest airport in the state. Muskogee had an additional reason to boast when in late 1941 construction of its second air facility neared completion. It would be the only city of its size in the United States to have two air defense airfields. Number 2 Airport, consisting of 720 acres of land five miles south of the city on U. S. Highway 64, was being built as a National Defense measure and was incorporated into the defense area begun earlier that summer with the establishment of the Oklahoma Ordnance Works at Pryor, Oklahoma, and Camp Gruber, near Braggs, Oklahoma. Number 2 Airport represented a joint effort by federal and local officials. While the city bought the land, contributing \$78,922 to the construction project, federal expenditures were \$548,040 with the WPA providing labor under the direction of area engineer Elmo C. Drumb. Bad weather in the fall of 1941 hampered construction, but Drumb estimated in early December that 85 percent of the grading, 90 percent of the fencing, and 60 percent of the hard-surfaced runways were complete. An eight-inch water line connected city mains to the field, but 80 percent of the sodding had yet to be planted. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, and American entrance into World War II severely curtailed public information about the airport but presumably hastened its completion.<sup>2</sup>

A few months later in 1942, city officials reported that Muskogee Municipal Airport Number 2 could provide facilities for the largest military and commercial aircraft. North, south, and northwest-southeast runways were paved, 150' wide and 4,000' long. Sodded strips adjacent to north and south runways and sodded northeast and southwest landing strips increased the capacity of the runways. Cone and flush boundary, range, and contact lights as well as new fencing and good drainage made it a fine addition to Muskogee as well as potentially valuable to the military. But until the project was accepted by the U. S. Army, there were no buildings or hangars at the field.<sup>3</sup>

Apparently, Muskogee Municipal Airport Number 2 was accepted after several months, for the name of the facility was changed to Davis Field, in honor of Major Jack Davis of Muskogee; and it became a military training center for the duration of World War II. Spartan Aircraft Company, headquartered at Tulsa, Oklahoma and long respected for its experience and expertise in the realm of aviator instruction, had begun primary and advanced training for pilots at Hatbox Field in November 1940 under contract with the Army Air Force. In a separate program, Spartan trained "Sergeant Pilots" at Davis Field. In 1944 a number of buildings were constructed to accommodate the training program. These included, among others, a large hangar with a control tower at its northwest corner, a general purpose aircraft shop building, and a parachute packing shop.<sup>4</sup>

#### The Post-World War II Era

Following the end of the war, the fortunes of Davis Field fluctuated with national defense demands. The field reverted to the City of Muskogee in 1947 but continued to serve as a secondary airport. The city converted some of the buildings for a variety of uses ranging from hay storage to light manufacturing. In 1955, during the Cold War, the field was reactivated and designated an Air Force Reserve base in the Continental Air Command. The Air Force, in accordance with its joint use, ninety-nine year contract with the city, assumed responsibility for maintenance of the field. The purpose of Davis Field was to train Air Reserve Technicians, and the base was one of the first in the United States to function under this program. The 713th Fighter Bomber Squadron commanded by Colonel Claude Sledd, a Muskogee building contractor, was assigned to Davis Field until the unit was decommissioned in 1957. At that time 65th Troop Carrier Squadron moved to Davis Field. It expanded in early 1963 to the 929th Troop Carrier Group. Fliers from Davis Field operating nineteen C-119 "Flying Boxcars" accumulated an excellent flying record in Continental Air Command-sponsored competitions as well as during their routine

reserve tours. The four hundred men of the 65th, from fifty-four towns in Oklahoma, Arkansas, Kansas, and Missouri, were called up for active duty during both the Berlin and Cuban Missile crises of 1962. President Lyndon B. Johnson chose to land at Davis Field in his 1964 visit to Muskogee, and Central Airlines scheduled two flights daily into the airport. At its peak of operation, the last half of 1964, Davis Field served 764 reservists and had a civilian staff of 181 and a payroll of \$1,243,738. Estimates were that the base contributed \$2.1 million annually to the Muskogee economy.<sup>5</sup>

Nevertheless, as the federal government embarked on a program to cut bases and expenses in late 1964, Davis Field had the dubious honor of being the first base of its type closed. The justification was that it failed to meet the current minimum capacity and flexibility standards set by the military for civil fields. The City of Muskogee was notified that Davis Field would be closed as of September 30, 1966. In spite of protests from the Muskogee business community, the C-119's were transferred to San Antonio, Texas in October 1965, and the number of civilians employed at Davis Field dropped to 65 by March 1966. In early 1967 Davis Field was relegated to "caretaker" status, and the property reverted to the city of Muskogee.<sup>6</sup>

#### Acquisition by the OK ARNG

Davis Field continued to function as a secondary civil airport for the City of Muskogee until April 1987, when it once again became a part of the national defense establishment through a joint-use agreement with the Oklahoma Military Department. The Oklahoma Army National Guard assumed proprietorship of Davis Field as an annex to Camp Gruber, a large World War II-era army training center adjacent to nearby Braggs, Oklahoma. Camp Gruber, Davis Field, and Whitaker School at Pryor, Oklahoma, renamed Whitaker Education and Training Center, became components of a training complex operated by the OK ARNG. The section of Davis Field reclaimed by the OK ARNG consisted of approximately forty-four acres of land on which were a good concrete runway, 150' by 7200', rated capable of handling C-130, C-141, C-5, and KC-10 aircraft. There was additional parking ramp space 1060' x 860' in area. Although the facility lacked mess halls or barracks, accessible features included fire plugs, utilities, paved roads, and fuel storage. Buildings included a relatively new concrete block fire station (P301) and three World War II-vintage buildings: P203, the small frame building originally used for parachute packing; P205, the large wood-frame hangar with its office and shop areas; and P206, the wood frame general purpose aircraft shop. While

P205 was in good repair and deemed a valuable building, both P203 and P206 were in poor condition.<sup>7</sup>

Subsequent to the OK ARNG resumption of control, the Davis Field facilities were brought up to a usable state. P205, its control tower at some point removed, was re-sided with aluminum. P203, although judged to have limited flexibility, was eventually renovated and transformed into an administration building. But P206, in accordance with recommendations, was demolished and its concrete foundation put to use as a maintenance slab and base for a communications tower. Loading ramps, three drop zones, adequate lighting, and the installation of a new warehouse and guard house at the gate restored Davis Field to the joint civilian/military use for which it was first intended.<sup>8</sup>

#### ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

The remaining World War II buildings at Davis Field, P203 and P205, and the concrete slab foundation of P206 are clustered beside Taxiway 6. They parallel the northwest-southeast runway and are at the extreme south end of a row of newer airport buildings (please refer to Map 1). It is safe to assume that they were typical military construction during their era. All were probably constructed with some speed and with little concern for aesthetics or durability. P203 and P205 are extremely functional in design and were probably duplicates of buildings erected according to standard military plans for similar purposes in dozens of other locations across the United States. Both P203 and P205 are set on concrete slab foundations and have balloon frames.

P203 is single-story, wood-sided building covering 2930 square feet. It has a gabled roof covered in asphalt shingles, gabled porches above entrances on the southeast end and northeast side, and a gable-roofed extension on the southwest side. At the northwest end is an overhead door. Windows are double-overhung; public doors are double. All doors and window frames are new metal replacements.

P205, its appearance suggesting its industrial/military purpose, is a very tall building covering 36,572 square feet. It consists of a central core approximately three stories high, flanked on the southwest and northeast sides by two-story extensions along the length of the building. The roof of the core of the building is end-gabled with a minimal slope. The roofs of the extensions are shed. Two rows of grouped windows light the offices and shops located in the extensions. The northwest and southeast ends of the building provide access for aircraft and vehicles. The very tall sliding wooden doors are original and are set into

shallow, two-story, flat-topped portals. Each door contains banks of clear glass panes, five rows of four, which supplement artificial lighting in the huge interior of the building with daylight. Originally wood-sided, the building had been covered with asbestos at the time the OK ARNG assumed control. It has since been sided with aluminum. Large lettering and the yellow-on-red "Thunderbird" insignia proclaim the hangar's current status as a facility of the OK ARNG.<sup>9</sup>

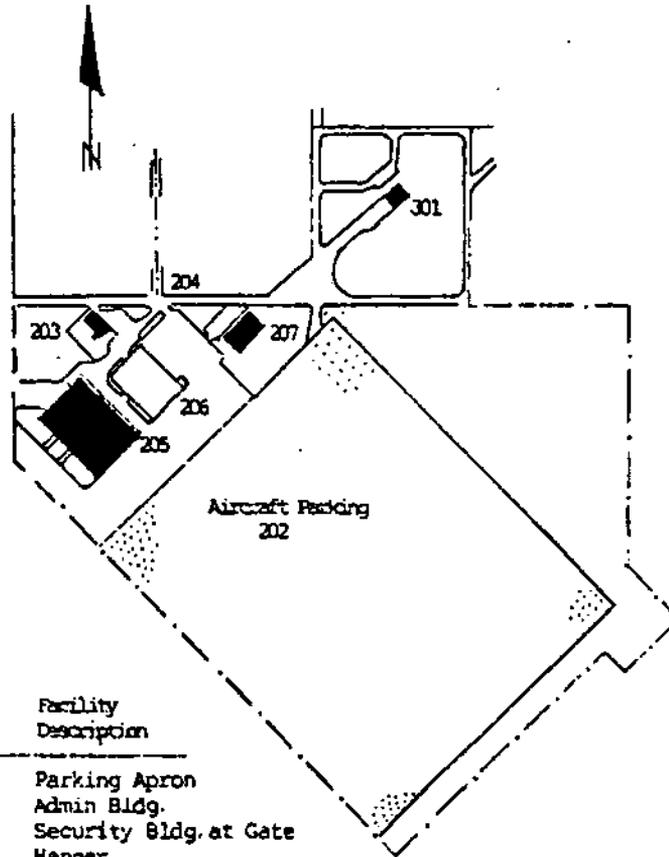
#### METHODOLOGY

The surveyor prepared for a survey of Davis Field by first acquiring as much information as possible about its history. This included exploring the vertical files, manuscript collections, and secondary sources at the Oklahoma Historical Society and reading 1941-1942 Muskogee, Oklahoma newspapers on microfilm. Unfortunately, additional research in government documents at Oklahoma State University and the Oklahoma Department of Libraries yielded little useful information. More fruitful were visits with personnel from the Oklahoma Military Department, who provided relevant files, and a visit to the Muskogee Public Library. The vertical file at the latter included folders and some primary documents related to Davis Field as a municipal property. The Map Room at Oklahoma State University also contained Soil Conservation Service aerial views of Davis Field showing it under construction in 1941 and equipped with C-119's in 1964. The surveyor then visited the site, photographed the two existing buildings and the foundations of the demolished P206, and prepared National Register Inventory Forms for P203 and P205 as requested.

#### FINDINGS

Of the four World War II-era Davis Field properties from List 1, the FISP that the surveyors were asked to study, only two exist. The first item, listed as acquired in 1942, refers to the forty-four-acre plot currently occupied and maintained by the OK ARNG. P206, the general purpose aircraft shop, as described above, was demolished, leaving only the concrete slab, now used for maintenance and as a foundation supporting a communications tower. While neither P203 nor P205 have been so altered as to be no longer recognizable as World War II-era buildings, the application of new materials used in renovation makes them problematic for nomination to the National Register, but they do warrant further study for inclusion in a historic district.

I. DAVIS FIELD



Facility Number	Facility Type	Facility Description
202	CM21	Parking Apron
203	ADM1	Admin Bldg.
204	TR19	Security Bldg. at Gate
205	HGR	Hangar
206	CM94	Maint. Slab
207	SUP7	Supply Whse
301	FIREST	Fire Station

CAMP GRUBER TNG SITE DAVIS FIELD ANNEX	
Drawn By CPT Remson	SITE PLAN
Approved BY CPT Clark	Scale 1"=400' Date 28 Jun 93 Page 1 of 1

1-28-93

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>U. S. Works Projects Administration, Oklahoma, Final Report of Activities and Accomplishments (N.p., 1943), 4; Frank Futrell, "Development of Base Facilities," in Wesley Craven and James L. Cate, eds., The Army Air Forces in World War II, 8 vols. (Washington, D.C.: G. P. O., 1983 [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958]), 7:131-135, 158-159.

<sup>2</sup>Muskogee (Oklahoma) Daily Phoenix, 10, 11 December 1941; "Muskogee History," 9, Muskogee Metropolitan Area Planning Commission, A Development Plan for Davis Field (N.p., 1967), 1, "Muskogee--Airports," Vertical Files, Muskogee Public Library, Muskogee, Oklahoma; The Mayes County Democrat (Pryor, Oklahoma), 5 June 1941; Futrell, "Development of Base Facilities," note 150, p. 719.

<sup>3</sup>"Muskogee History," 9.

<sup>4</sup>The Muskogee (Oklahoma) Daily Phoenix, November 20, 1964; Leo Kelley, "Bamboo Bombers over Oklahoma: USAAF Pilot Training during World War II," The Chronicles of Oklahoma 68 (Winter 1990-91):362,373; "Base Layout Plan, April 1962" and "Base Layout Plan, September 22, 1964" in "Muskogee Davis Field, Acquire Real Property--Aviation" folder, 87--321, Oklahoma Military Department, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

<sup>5</sup>The Muskogee (Oklahoma) Daily Phoenix, November 20, 1964, September 26, 1966; Tom Compere, ed., The Air Force Blue Book (New York: Military Publishing Institute, 1959), 290-291; The Daily Oklahoman, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, November 22, 1962.

<sup>6</sup>The Daily Oklahoman, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, September 16, October 28, 29, November 3, 1962; The Muskogee (Oklahoma) Daily Phoenix, November 20, 1964, September 26, 1966; The Muskogee Metropolitan Area Planning Commission, A Development Plan for Davis Field (Np., 1967), "Muskogee--Airports," folder.

<sup>7</sup>"Muskogee Davis Field, Acquire Real Property--Aviation" folder; Oklahoma Army National Guard, "Camp Gruber Training Site: Site Development Plan," Oklahoma Military Department.

<sup>8</sup>"Muskogee Davis Field, Acquire Real Property--Aviation" folder; "Camp Gruber Training Site," I-9.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

## WHITAKER EDUCATION AND TRAINING CENTER, PRYOR, OKLAHOMA

Whitaker Education and Training Center (WETC) is operated by Camp Gruber Training Site as a training center for several thousand officers and enlisted men and women each year. It occupies 617 acres in Mayes County on the south edge of Pryor, Oklahoma. The property was transferred to the OK ARNG in 1984, but it was noted for honorable service for many decades before this most recent acquisition.

### HISTORIC CONTEXT

#### The Establishment and Purpose of Whitaker School

Whitaker Education and Training Center is the modern incarnation of a project begun in 1897 to benefit orphaned white children in the Indian Territory. William T. Whitaker (1854-1922), one-eighth Cherokee Indian, came to the vicinity of Chouteau and Pryor, Cherokee Nation (in present-day northeastern Oklahoma) in 1871 from his native North Carolina. Whitaker, a merchant, and his wife reared eleven children of their own but became widely known for their generosity in sheltering orphans. Although the Cherokee Nation maintained an orphanage for its own young citizens, no such facility served white children. Whitaker filled this need in 1897 by building a large three-story stone house to accommodate twenty-one children on his forty-acre farm. This building, later called "Old Main," is presently Whitaker Hall (PR313) and the headquarters of WETC. Two frame cottages, a hospital, a power plant, water works, a laundry, and a dairy farm were added at the turn of the century. When the Cherokee National Orphanage burned in 1905, its residents were also transferred to Whitaker's care. The federal government appropriated \$10,000 for the home in 1906 and 1907. By 1908 the number of children and the size of the operation had outgrown Whitaker's management abilities. With the financial support of the townspeople of Pryor Creek (Pryor), Oklahoma, he deeded the facility to the state of Oklahoma, which expanded the acreage and named it successively Whitaker Orphan Home (1908), Oklahoma State Home (1910), East Oklahoma Home for White Children (1919), and Whitaker State Orphan Home (1923). The average number of children, ranging upward in age from six to eighteen years, was 245, almost equally divided between boys and girls.<sup>1</sup>

By 1921 many of the original buildings were in need of repair or replacement, particularly the school rooms, laundry, and frame cottages. New buildings constructed about 1921 were the school (Crowe Education Center, PR500), Commissary (PR101), and Power House (PR700). In 1932 the first of two new brick veneer cottages, Oak Cottage No. 2 (Sanford

Hall, PR307), began the replacement of the old frame cottages. Its twin (Burba Hall, PR309) was built in 1936. The Whitaker institution generally operated on a cottage rather than a dormitory plan with each unit, housing fifteen to twenty children, having its own kitchen and dining room, supplied by a central commissary. But in 1936 as an economy measure the Works Progress Administration built a new dining hall (Stafford Dining Facility, PR200) with three cold storage units, an ice plant, and a bakery. The Whitaker institution always strove for self-sufficiency and consequently produced dairy products, vegetables, and small grains on its 640 acres. Outlying buildings included a state-of-the-art dairy built in 1933, a sale barn dating from 1942, and a number of auxiliary buildings, as well as employee residences. Buildings added to the plant in 1940 were the laundry (PR707) and vocational building (PR708), which served as the carpentry and upholstery shop.<sup>2</sup>

In 1948 under the leadership of Superintendent Beale McCarty, a new period of expansion and renovation began with the support of the citizens of Pryor and a state bond issue of \$1.25 million. The result was fourteen new buildings and a swimming pool. These additions in the early 1950s included the administration building (now a National Guard Armory, PR100) and the clinic (McClain Clinic and Styron Hall, PR506), built in 1952. Several new cottages were added: McCarty Hall (Brown Hall, PR300), Fern (Davis Hall, PR301), Birch (McLeod Hall, PR302), Pine (McGee Hall, PR303), Spruce (Welch Hall, PR304)--all built in 1951; Cedar (Key Hall, PR306), Poplar (Clark Hall, PR310), Walnut (Potts Hall, PR311)--all built in 1952; and Comer (Weber Academy, PR312), built in 1953. In 1960 a new gymnasium (Bynyard Gym, PR502) replaced the old facility. A major renovation in 1967 was the expansion of Whitaker Hall.<sup>3</sup>

By the 1960s the focus of the Whitaker institution had shifted. Children sheltered at the school for the next two decades were those with special social and psychological needs. By the early 1980s a declining population at Whitaker, increasing costs, and the necessity for cutting state expenses put Whitaker's continued existence in jeopardy. The Department of Human Services's decision to close the institution on July 13, 1983, fortuitously coincided with the Oklahoma Military Department's search for a site for its proposed all-purpose training and educational center. On December 5, 1984, Oklahoma's Director of Public Affairs transferred the property and buildings to the Oklahoma Military Department. It became Whitaker Education and Training Center and an annex to the Camp Gruber Training Site near Braggs, Oklahoma. Forty-five students comprising the first class began Basic Non-Commissioned Officer Candidate School

at Camp Gruber, transferred to WETC in November 1984, and graduated in January 1985.<sup>4</sup>

The creation of the Whitaker Educational and Training Center and its continuing operation by the OK ARNG generally pleased the citizens of Pryor. The transition ameliorated the loss to the community of a prized and time-honored institution and presented it with a "growth industry" through renovation and construction expenditures, employee salaries, and trade generated for local businesses by the thousands of students assigned periodically to the center. Operations on the campus of branches of the Oklahoma Military Academy and Rogers State College further consolidated WETC as a factor contributing to the pride and economic life of the community.<sup>5</sup>

#### ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

The buildings at Whitaker School (Whitaker Education and Training Center), situated on a level, park-like campus, span several styles and decades (please refer to Map 2). They are arranged in a large, generally semi-circular pattern arching south from Park (Third) Street on the southeast edge of Pryor, Oklahoma. Facing Park Street and set slightly back from it is Whitaker Hall. On its west is the present National Guard Armory (PR100, Whitaker School's Administration Building) and VIP Quarters (PR400, Superintendent's House). To the east of Whitaker Hall is a complex of brick maintenance and storage buildings. Extending southward from Whitaker Hall and loosely spaced along either side of the semi-circular drive are the various dormitories. Opposite Whitaker Hall at the farthest point within the semi-circle are the Stafford Dining Facility (PR200) and McClain Clinic (PR506). Centrally placed within the semi-circle are the Crowe Education Center (PR500), the Hughes Education Annex (PR501), and the Gymnasium (502). Just off the campus on its southeast corner is the helicopter port, PR720. Various farm buildings and structures, many dating from the 1930s and 1940s, extend to the southeast. Most, as well as the six hundred acres outside the immediate forty-acre campus, are leased for agricultural purposes.

The oldest extant building, Whitaker Hall ("Old Main," PR313) was the original orphanage, constructed in 1897. The building was initially 60' x 71', three-storied, and built of randomly-laid rubble native sandstone. A two-story gallery extended across the north elevation; on the west and south elevations were one-story galleries. Extending to the east on the southeast corner was a one-story frame kitchen. The building was more functional than stylish but demonstrated the horizontal emphasis of the Prairie School com-

bined with a suggestion of the Italian Renaissance in the simple arches over the windows and double doors on the north elevation. At some point before 1920, the third story was removed. The new roof is hipped and has a small hipped dormer on each elevation. In 1967 the building underwent major renovations. The old galleries were removed, a new concrete porch was built at ground level on the west, north, and east elevations, and a flat metal awning with wrought iron supports was installed the length of the porches. The major alteration was a substantial two-story annex, which probably increased the size of the building by about 50 percent, on the south elevation. The annex, which lacks porches, was built of randomly-laid, slightly darker rubble sandstone retrieved from a demolished mill contemporary with the original Whitaker Hall. In spite of evident attempts to make the extension blend in with the original building, the annex is readily apparent as a major mutation of the building.<sup>6</sup>

Just to the east of Whitaker Hall is a complex of brick utility buildings. This includes adjoining buildings PR101, PR700, and PR701. At the extreme north end of the complex and at right angles to the others, is PR101, built in 1921 and distinguished by corbelled brickwork on the west elevation. At various times the Commissary and the Vocational Training Building, it is now categorized as administrative. Its row of seven north and two west windows probably once provided natural light to the interior but have now been reduced in size. Adjoining PR101 on the south is a much older building, partially in ruins on the east elevation, which was successively the Garage and the Mechanical Building. Its age is evidenced by segmental arches over the remaining windows and west overhead door. Adjoining it on the south is PR701, built in 1940, undistinguished except for a single window and door. It was formerly the Carpenter Shop. The southernmost building in this complex is PR700, built in 1920, serving first as the Power House and presently categorized as a maintenance or storage building. Unlike the other buildings in the complex, which are flat-roofed, PR700 is end gabled. Its metal hopper windows and overhead door on the south elevation are typically industrial.<sup>7</sup>

The other buildings contemporary with PR101 and PR700 are devoted to education and classroom instruction. These include the red brick Crowe Education Center (PR500), centered in the Whitaker campus, and the Hughes Education Annex (PR501), immediately to its south. Most impressive is PR500, originally the School, at which Whitaker children attended classes through tenth grade before transferring to Pryor High School for their final two grades and graduation. A two-story building, 86' x 120', the school represented a major up-grading of the facility in the round of construc-

tion that began in 1920-1921. The large brick building, with its horizontal mass emphasized by its concrete belt-courses, banks of windows, and entrances on each elevation, is both the visual and physical focus of the campus. Its Art Deco style is evident in the architect's use of stepped and pedimented parapets, pilasters which vertically break up the horizontal mass of the building, and geometric decorative elements. Inlaid cast concrete diamonds and rectangles, quoins, and arched niches as well as beltcourses of inlaid green and red tile distinguish the building. Immediately to the south of PR500 stands PR501, the brick Gymnasium added in 1929 and currently used for classes as an annex of PR500. PR501 echoes the style and general impression of PR500 without being so large or impressive. While it also lacks the parapets of PR500 and has fewer decorative elements, its concrete beltcourses and inlaid red and green tile mark it as a contemporary and companion piece.<sup>8</sup> Unfortunately, windows in both PR500 and PR501 have been filled in or reduced in size by as much as two-thirds. A door on the southwest corner of PR500 has also been blocked.

Although by the 1930s a number of the buildings at the Whitaker institution had existed long enough to be dear to the hearts of children sheltered there, several were seriously in need of replacement. Among these were wood-frame cottages housing small groups of children and functioning as self-sufficient units. In 1932 Oak Cottage No. 2 (Sanford Hall, PR307), a red brick-veneered two-story house, 53' x 87', was added to the campus at the extreme south end of the semi-circular drive. Generally symmetrical, in style it owed something to the Prairie School as well as to Colonial Revival architecture. The hipped roof, gabled dormers, second-floor sleeping porches on the east and west elevations, and porches wrapping around all except perhaps the south elevation suggested a home rather than an institutional facility. Unfortunately, according to one assessment, the construction was somewhat shoddy, with inferior materials set on a poor foundation. Nevertheless, Oak Cottage was duplicated by 1936 in Elm Cottage (Burba Hall, PR309). At some point, several windows on the sleeping porches were bricked and a door on the east porch of PR307 was blocked. The roof described as "tile" was covered with asphalt shingles. Presently PR307 and PR309 serve as dormitories for WETC students.<sup>9</sup>

Another major addition to the campus of Whitaker School in the 1930s was the Dining Hall (Stafford Dining Facility, PR200), a Works Progress Administration project completed at a cost of \$65,000. While the Dining Hall is similar to contemporary 1930s buildings on the campus in its home-like appearance and red-brick construction, its Tudor Revival style sets it apart. Two-stories with a one story north

elevation, the irregularly shaped building features front and end-gabled cat-slide roofs, two broad exterior chimneys of the north elevation, flat-roofed extensions on the east and west elevations, and double entrances set beneath gabled portals on the northwest and northeast corners. Decorative features typical of the Tudor Revival style included on the Dining Hall are large S-shaped braces on the chimneys, multiple lights in tall, narrow windows, a small gable-roofed stoop on the south elevation, and cast concrete quoins and scalloped moldings surrounding the primary entrances. In spite of its domestic appearance, the Dining Hall was classified as a "feeding plant" and marked a major shift away from earlier methods of providing food to Whitaker children. The capacity of the 90' x 130' facility in 1937 was placed at four hundred. The inclusion of three cold storage units, an ice-plant, and central kitchen and food storage areas in the flat-roofed extensions was viewed as an economy measure. The centralization brought the criticism that it eroded the home-style environment fostered in the cottage system and ended the hands-on experience children gained working in their own kitchens. Nevertheless, the construction of the Dining Hall as a WPA project, in spite of some complaints about shoddy construction, was generally viewed as progressive. Currently, as Stafford Dining Facility (PR200), the building provides food services to WETC students. Most of the windows have been reduced in size by about one-third, and new metal and glass doors have been installed in the primary entrances.<sup>10</sup>

The two cottages, the dining facility, and a number of agricultural buildings, including a state-of-the-art dairy, accounted for most of the 1930s construction at Whitaker School. During the early 1940s several utility buildings were erected: PR707 completed the quadrangle just east of Whitaker Hall. Adjacent to it on the east was PR708, the Upholstery and Carpet shops. Across from the present helicopter port stand other 1940s maintenance buildings. Not until the advent of Superintendent Beal McCarty was there another major round of dormitory construction. McCarty Hall (PR300) and Fern (PR301), Birch (PR302), Pine (PR303), and Spruce (PR304) cottages were built in 1951. In 1952 Cedar (PR306), Maple (PR308), Poplar (PR310) and Walnut (PR311) cottages were added. A late addition in 1953 was Comer Cottage (PR312). While some of these buildings are red brick, maintaining the visual impression of the campus, McCarty, Fern, Cedar, Maple, Poplar, and Walnut are of buff brick with brown inserts creating a diamond pattern. All the newer cottages are single-story Ranch Style buildings typical of 1950s domestic architecture. Currently they serve as dormitories for WETC students. Most appear unaltered. Additions to the campus center in the 1960s included the red brick Binyard Gymnasium (PR502), tennis courts

(PR505 and 504), and a swimming pool (PR503). The small concrete helipad, PR720, southeast of the main campus is a recent addition to the WETC facility.

#### METHODOLOGY

In preparation for the survey of Whitaker Education and Training Center, the researcher first accumulated information concerning Whitaker School. Visits to the Oklahoma Historical Society yielded a very early fire insurance map, articles from state newspapers, and, most helpful, the 1937 State Planning Board Survey of state-maintained orphan homes. The Oklahoma Military Department provided their file on the transfer of the Whitaker institution from the State Department of Human Services. Particularly useful were materials, interviews, and guided tours provided by personnel at WETC during the surveyor's visit to the site. A Whitaker scrapbook kept in Whitaker Hall includes documents and newspaper clippings dating from the late 1800s to the 1980s. Several boxes, folders, and scrapbooks of materials on the orphanage were located at the Pryor Public Library. Unfortunately missing are blueprints and other construction materials which were not available at either the Oklahoma Military Department or the Department of Human Services.

#### FINDINGS

Among the buildings the surveyors were asked to document in the OK/SHPO/OK ARNG contract were "the three 1921 buildings at Pryor." These, according to the FISP list supplied the surveyors and OK/SHPO--List 1--were PR502, PR700, and PR720. Examination of List 1 by a representative of the Oklahoma Military Department revealed that it was inaccurate and out-of-date. Nor were buildings included that were not partially maintained with federal funds. A newer FISP list and a Building Survey Form provided the surveyor demonstrated that of fifty-six buildings inventoried, nineteen were built more than fifty years ago, and most predated 1960. While PR700 is indeed a 1920-1921 building, PR 502 is the Binyard Gymnasium, built in 1960. PR720 is simply a helipad of very recent vintage. Having come to the conclusion that only PR700 of "the three 1921 buildings" was eligible for consideration for historic preservation purposes, the surveyor completed a National Register Inventory Form for it and for four more of the most notable WETC buildings.

WETC includes a number of buildings that represent well the many decades of service the institution provided Oklaho-

ma's orphaned and troubled children. Whitaker Hall is only the most prominent; PR500, PR200, and PR307 are also particularly noteworthy. It is unfortunate that while these buildings have retained much of their historical integrity, their architectural integrity has been eroded through recent alterations, particularly the reduction in window size on most buildings. Whitaker Hall, a very historic building, has undergone several alterations, some of which were done so long ago as to be unexceptionable. But the construction of a substantial annex in 1967, very recent in historic preservation terms, precludes its being individually National Register-worthy. In the same way, the enclosure of several sleeping porch windows and a door on PR307, which cannot be adequately dated, may eliminate this building from further individual consideration. However, these buildings as well as others noted above and some not inventoried in this survey warrant further study for inclusion in a possible historic district.

So, too, do remaining World War II-era buildings at the Oklahoma Ordnance Works (currently Mid-America Industrial Park approximately three miles to the south). The remaining power plant, waterworks, infirmary, administration building, communications building, guard towers, and assorted components of that huge munitions plant and prisoner-of-war camp were the first component of the National Defense area that eventually included Camp Gruber and Davis Field.

#### RESOURCES THAT WARRANT FURTHER RESEARCH

The following resources were deemed to warrant further study, pursuant to possible inclusion in an historic district:

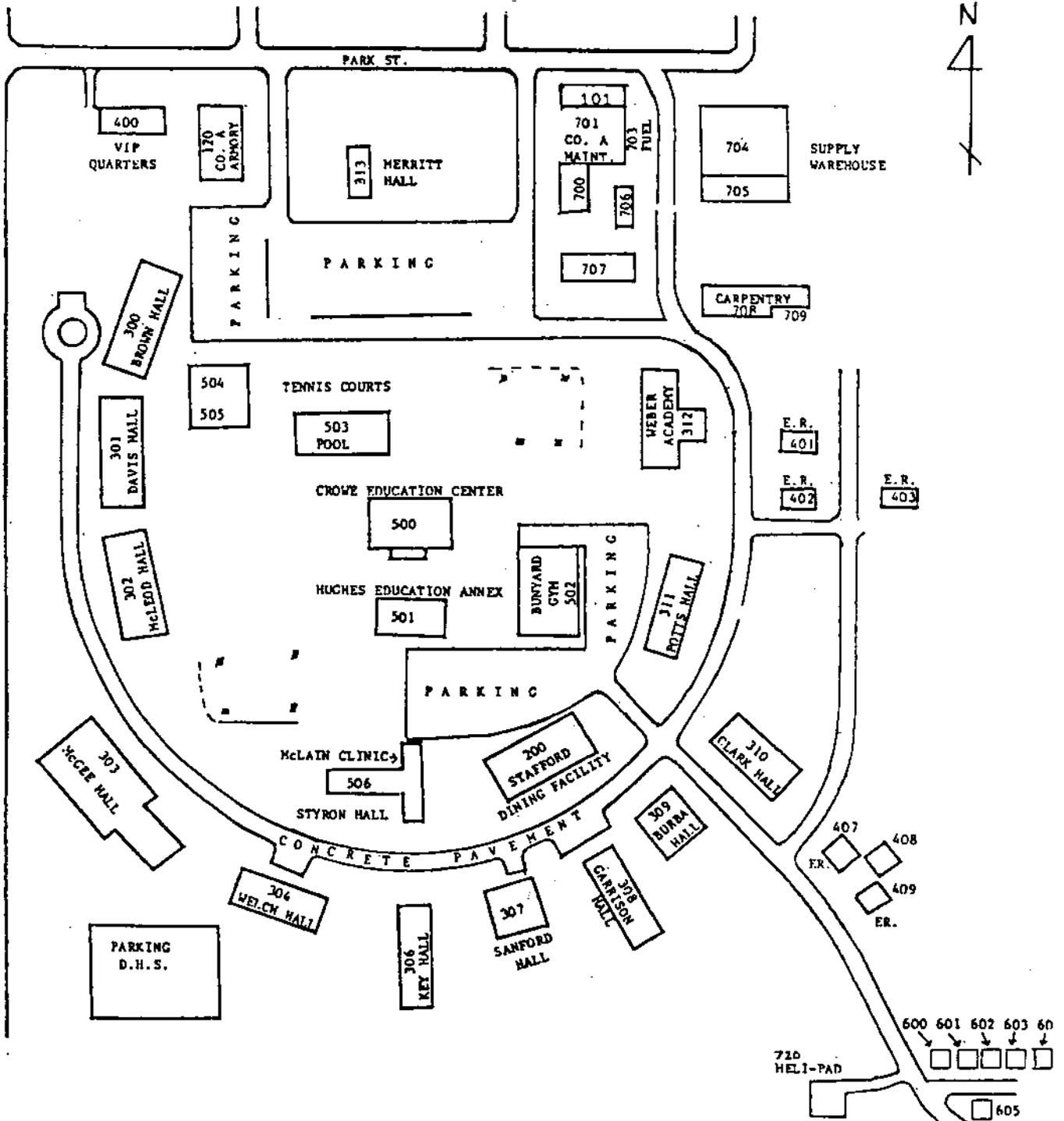
- PR313 Whitaker Hall, "Old Main," 1897
- PR500 Whitaker School/Crowe Education Center, 1920-1921
- PR700 Power House/Utility Building, 1920
- PR200 Dining Hall/Stafford Dining Facility, 1936
- PR307 Oak Cottage/Sanford Hall, 1932

## RESOURCES NOT WARRANTING FURTHER RESEARCH

Because of condition or degree of alteration, these resources over fifty years old were deemed not to warrant further investigation:

PR101 Commissary, c.1920  
PR501 Gymnasium, 1929  
PR309, Elm Cottage/Burba Hall, 1936  
PR701, Utility building, 1940  
PR707, Laundry, 1940  
PR708, Vocational Building, 1940  
Dairy, 1933  
Sale Barn, 1942  
Maintenance buildings, 1940s  
Garage/Mechanical Building, c. 1900? ruins  
Agricultural outbuildings, 1930s

# 2. WHITAKER E.T.C.



8-93 (from 1988)

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Dedication Booklet, Whitaker Education and Training Center, Pryor, Oklahoma; Mayes County (Oklahoma) Republican, 10 February 1921; "Whitaker State Orphan Home," State Homes for Orphans and Veterans in Oklahoma: A Preliminary Study of Present Facilities and Conditions (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma State Planning Board, 1937), 24.

<sup>2</sup>The Mayes County (Oklahoma) Republican, 10 February 1921; The Muskogee (Oklahoma) Daily Phoenix, March 14, 1937; "Whitaker State Orphan Home," 27-29, 30-33; "Preliminary Master Plan for Major Training Site Agreement," and "Building Survey Form: Oklahoma Military Department, Whitaker Education and Training Center, Pryor, Oklahoma," Oklahoma Military Department, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

<sup>3</sup>"Preliminary Master Plan"; "Building Survey Form...Whitaker"; The Pryor (Oklahoma) Daily Times, 13 April 1967.

<sup>4</sup>Dedication Booklet; "Transfer of the Real and Personal Property Acquired for and Used by the Whitaker State Children's Home, Pryor, Oklahoma," 454330, "Whitaker Education and Training Center" folder; The Pryor (Oklahoma) Jeffersonian, January 17, 1985.

<sup>5</sup>The Sunday (Daily) Oklahoman, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, January 25, 1987; Oklahoma Army National Guard, "Camp Gruber Training Site: Site Development Plan," I-2, I-6, I-9, I-10.

<sup>6</sup>"State Orphan Home, 1912," Fire Map Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Mayes County (Oklahoma) Republican, February 10, 1921; Pryor (Oklahoma) Daily Times, April 13, 1967.

<sup>7</sup>The Mayes County (Oklahoma) Republican, February 10, 1921; State Homes for Orphans, 26-37, 117-118; "Whitaker State Children's Home," Whitaker Education and Training Center," and "Building Survey Form" in "Whitaker Education and Training Center" folder.

<sup>8</sup>The Mayes County (Oklahoma) Republican, February 10, 1921; State Homes for Orphans, 26-37, 117-118; "Whitaker State Children's Home," Whitaker Education and Training Center," and "Building Survey Form" in "Whitaker Education and Training Center" folder.

<sup>9</sup>State Homes for Orphans, 26-37, 117-118; "Whitaker State Children's Home," Whitaker Education and Training Center," and "Building Survey Form" in "Whitaker Education and Training

Center" folder.

<sup>10</sup>The Muskogee (Oklahoma) Daily Phoenix, March 14, 1937; State Homes for Orphans, 26-37, 117-118; "Whitaker State Children's Home," Whitaker Education and Training Center," and "Building Survey Form" in "Whitaker Education and Training Center" folder.

## CAMP GRUBER, OKLAHOMA

HISTORIC CONTEXT

## World War II Mobilization and Camp Construction

When Germany invaded Poland on September 1, 1939, the United States was already involved in a major defense program designed to increase the size and efficiency of its armed forces. The outbreak of war in Europe prompted President Roosevelt to declare a limited national emergency on September 8, and the American government stepped up its emergency preparedness efforts. By June 1940 Congressional measures had augmented the federal budget for construction of arms and munitions plants, coastal defenses, expansion of existing military facilities, and new military training camp construction. A larger, more effective armed force was envisioned; in 1939 the United States armed forces numbered a scant 200,000. Plans for a new army of six million had been set, and by November of 1944 housing existed for that number of troops.<sup>1</sup>

The War Department had carefully developed mobilization plans in 1938 and 1939. Implemented in 1941-42, these resulted in the construction of more than 30,000 buildings in existing military bases and in new cantonments across the nation.<sup>2</sup> By December 1941, before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, sixty-one new cantonments had been completed.<sup>3</sup> In May 1941 plans for twenty-three additional cantonments had been approved, one of which was for a training camp to be built near Braggs, in the Cookson Hills of Oklahoma.<sup>4</sup> The Cookson Hills project would eventually occupy more than 65,000 acres (109 square miles) of eastern Oklahoma.

Because the War Department regarded the state's location, climate, natural resources, and large available work force as optimum, Oklahoma was considered to be a good site for air fields and pilot training fields.<sup>5</sup> Oklahoma became the site for a variety of defense facilities in the first year of the war: Munitions plants were constructed at Pryor and McAlester; airplane plants were placed at Tulsa and Oklahoma City. Twenty-eight army camps and thirteen naval air stations were built immediately prior to or during the war. These included army air fields at Enid, Muskogee, Frederick, Altus, Midwest City\Oklahoma City, Tulsa, Perry, Woodward, Ponca City, Gage, Ardmore, Chickasha, Mustang, and Miami, and naval stations at Clinton, Norman, Purcell, Shawnee, McAlester, Durant, and Stillwater. During the course of the war the War Department also placed prisoner of war camps and branch camps at Ft. Sill, Camp Gruber, Camp Tonkawa, El Reno, McAlester, Alva, and elsewhere.<sup>6</sup>

### Federal Acquisition of the Reservation Area

Federal acquisition of the large portion of Muskogee and Cherokee counties that became the Camp Gruber military reservation actually pre-dates World War II. This region, known generally as the Cookson Hills, was the target of a New Deal economic relief effort as early as 1935-36. The Cookson Hills area was poor farm land inhabited by impoverished farm families who suffered greatly in the agricultural depression of the 1920s and in the general economic depression of the early 1930s. In 1935 President Roosevelt, by executive order, established the Resettlement Administration as a new division within the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The RA's prime directive was "the retirement of exhausted land and resettlement and retraining of exhausted farmers."<sup>7</sup> Generally, the RA existed to assist farm families who were not being helped by a prior legislative program, the Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA). Part of the RA's mission was to identify impoverished rural areas and to resettle families on good land elsewhere. These activities were conducted by the Rural Resettlement Division. A second directive was to preserve land and forests; this activity was handled by the Land Utilization Division. In concert, the two divisions identified and purchased millions of acres of "submarginal" farm land and transferred the land to state control or placed it under the direction of the National Park Service or the U.S. Forest Service.<sup>8</sup> One of the target areas was the Cookson Hills.

In 1935 and 1936 the U.S. Department of Agriculture acquired nearly 30,000 acres of "submarginal" farm land in this area of eastern Oklahoma (of this number, 27,322.23 acres were transferred to War Department control in 1942).<sup>9</sup> In the intervening years, however, the Agriculture Department planned and carried out the "Eastern Oklahoma Cookson Hills Forestry, Fish, and Game Project," which turned the region into a wildlife management and recreation area. Activities were carried out by the Corps of Engineers, which built a dam on Little Greenleaf Creek to create Greenleaf Lake, and by the World Progress Administration, which accomplished reforestation, planting and sodding, road construction, and facility construction.<sup>10</sup> Greenleaf Recreation Area opened to the public in 1938 and was used for its original purposes until the United States entered the war. Among the park facilities were Greenleaf Lodge, an elaborate, 6,300-square-foot native stone building, a stone bathhouse, and numerous wood-frame and stone cabins.<sup>11</sup> All of substantial construction, these proved useful for inclusion in the Camp Gruber military facility after 1942.

## The Cookson Hills Project

The Cookson Hills Project was officially established on December 15, 1942, by Executive Order 9282 issued by President Roosevelt.<sup>12</sup> Later renamed "Camp Gruber," the project was intended to provide an infantry training center for the U.S. Army's 8th Service Command. Camp Gruber ultimately encompassed between 60,000 and 70,000 acres of eastern Oklahoma, or approximately 109 square miles of land lying east of the Arkansas River and State Highway 10 in Muskogee and Cherokee counties. The closest community was Braggs, in Muskogee County; the nearest small metropolitan area was Muskogee, site of several other defense facilities. Some of the land, 37,516.40 acres (private farm/ranch land belonging to the Pray family and others) was acquired through condemnation, and a major portion, 27,322.23 acres, was already under the stewardship of the federal government as part of the Cookson Hills recreation project.<sup>13</sup>

The official orders to begin construction on the Cookson Hills facility came through in early January, 1942. Surveying was completed early in the month; a contingent of men of the Southwestern Division of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was transferred from Enid Air Field to Muskogee in the second week of January; they quickly established a field headquarters in Braggs and a general headquarters in Muskogee. On January 12, twenty-five engineers and five truckloads of equipment arrived, and the personnel set about the daunting task of building a 35,000-troop facility in 109 square miles of territory. The site was cleared and construction was begun on the administration building during the first week of February. Later that month the camp was named "Gruber," after Brig. Gen. Edmund L. Gruber, long-time artillery officer at Fort Sill, Oklahoma.<sup>14</sup>

The contractor presenting the winning bid was Muskogee- and Kansas City-based Manhattan-Long Construction Company, an organization that had built other camps in the region. The original contract called for the construction of 1,731 frame buildings, including 479 barracks, 100 hospital buildings, 55 administration buildings, a bakery, 12 chapels, a laundry, 210 mess halls, 221 recreation buildings, 258 storage warehouses; 5 theatres, 19 guard houses, 59 motor repair shops, 50 officers' quarters, and 261 miscellaneous buildings (the original contract excluded the POW camp, as a War Department policy for these facilities had not yet been developed). The contract also required construction of a water supply system to bring water from Greenleaf Lake to a "three-million-gallon concrete water storage reservoir adjacent to the cantonment"; sewer, gas, and electrical systems; and roads, grading, and drainage. The contractor also had to relocate Highway 10 around the base.<sup>15</sup> Manhat-

tan-Long estimated that it needed to construct one new building every hour, in order to meet the completion deadline--no real feat for the company, for on the Fort Riley job it had built one every 38 minutes.

True to form, construction proceeded at breakneck speed through May of 1942, and the first general order was issued on May 21, although civilian workers were still on the job until early June. On June 9, Maj. Gen. J. E. Sloan and thirty-three officers of the command structure of the 88th Infantry Division arrived to inspect the facility. Sloan noted that "the designs of the buildings are a great improvement over those previously built for the army, and the layout and arrangement of the area shows great thought on the part of the designing officers and contractors."<sup>16</sup> He also mentioned that completion was expected by July.

Soon afterward, the 88th Infantry Division ("Blue Devil Division") was activated at Camp Gruber, and by July the division was up to full strength. The following year, 1943, the 42nd Infantry Division ("Rainbow Division") was reactivated at Gruber. In 1945 the 86th Infantry Division ("Blackhawk Division") was stationed there pending deactivation at the end of the war. Ultimately, more than 2,250 buildings at Camp Gruber billeted 44,868 troops, employed 4,000 civilian workers, and contained 3,000 German prisoners of war (in a facility west of Highway 10, separate from the base).<sup>17</sup> Camp Gruber served as infantry and support group training base for the U.S. Army until after the end of World War II.

#### Post-World War II Acquisition by Oklahoma National Guard

On June 3, 1947, Camp Gruber was deactivated. In that year it became surplus property, and 63,920 acres were placed under the authority of the War Assets Administration. However, rather than selling the land, the federal government retained control. In 1952 the General Services Administration assumed authority over 31,294.62 acres from the WAA, and between 1948 and 1952 the U.S. Army reassumed control of 32,626 acres. By 1953, then, virtually the entire 1942 reservation was still in federal hands (the exception being a 900-acre area that became part of Greenleaf Lake State Park, under authority of the State of Oklahoma). During the 1950s and 1960s most Camp Gruber's cantonment buildings and facilities were removed or destroyed.<sup>18</sup>

In 1967 the Oklahoma Military Department, Oklahoma Army National Guard, acquired 23,515 acres to established Camp Gruber as a state-operated training area under a twenty-five year federal license from the Tulsa District of the U.S.

Corps of Engineers. In 1973 and 1982 the license was amended, adding 2,560 acres and 6,952 acres, respectively, making a total of 33,027 acres. The present camp covers 87 square miles. The cantonment area covers 620 acres, and ranges occupy 460 acres. Today the Oklahoma National Guard uses Camp Gruber as a permanent training base. Its functions include primary use as a location for summer field exercises and for weekend training. There are new administrative buildings, temporary and permanent housing, vehicle storage buildings, and training-aids areas such as small-arms and artillery target ranges and air assault courses. The Greenleaf Lodge area, now called "Group Camp," is under National Guard ownership; it is not part of Greenleaf Lake State Park, although it is accessible via a park road.<sup>19</sup>

#### ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT:

##### Camp Layout, 1942-1946

Camp Gruber spread over 65,000 acres in portions of two counties. The main facility, or cantonment, was located in Muskogee County, east of State Highway 10 and contiguous with and immediately northeast of the small town of Braggs (please refer to Map 3). The cantonment lay in T14N R20E, primarily in Sections E 1/2 20, 21, 22, and W 1/2 23. The cantonment consisted of north-south and east-west streets in a U.S. Army modified triangular division layout. The cantonment served as an area for billeting, for general administration, for engineer, ordnance, maintenance, and chemical warfare operations, and for medical and hospital services.

North of the cantonment were the training-aids areas, including combat infantry ranges, field artillery ranges, and armor and tank destroyer ranges. Immediately north of the northernmost street were grenade courts, bayonet courts, and obstacle courses. Immediately north of these were three small-arms firing ranges. The huge area lying north and east of cantonment and training fields (in both Muskogee and Cherokee counties) were armor and tank destroyer driving ranges and field, anti-aircraft, and coastal artillery firing ranges (with a very large, centrally placed "impact" area that lay in Cherokee County).<sup>20</sup>

Southeast of the cantonment, on the western shore of Greenleaf Lake, lay a third use area. Here were placed various training and recreation facilities. Greenleaf Lodge (a 1937 WPA building) became one of the cantonment's two Officers' Clubs.<sup>21</sup>

## World War II-era Buildings

According to World War II and the U.S. Army Mobilization Program: A History of 700 and 800 Series Cantonment Construction (U.S. Depts. of Defense and Interior/National Park Service, 1991), there were two basic "series" of building types (and adaptations into two sub-series) used in the prewar-planned camps: "700 Series," which were more carefully constructed and were being used in the pre-1942-planned camps; and "800 Series," which developed out of 700 Series plans at the time the war was erupting. Plans for Camp Gruber and the other twenty-two camps build immediately after Pearl Harbor, the authors assert, were drawn in the summer and fall of 1941 and used the 800 Series buildings. They also assert that 800 Series camps would also have had a few 700 Series buildings, because not all building types were changed between series (these include motor repair shops, guest houses, and recreation buildings).<sup>22</sup>

In devising its building plans the Army developed several major determining criteria: speed of construction, simplicity, economy of materials, flexibility, and safety. An unspoken factor was impermanence: By War Department fiat, structures were to be built of the cheapest materials available, as the buildings were projected to last only from five to twenty years (yet, of the 30,000 buildings constructed before and during the war, in 1985, 24,000 remained in 159 installations in 39 states. In that year the Senate instructed the Army to begin replacing all WWII-era structures with pre-fab steel buildings, a task that is presently ongoing).<sup>23</sup> Standard plans were drawn for administration/recreation/storage buildings, mess halls, barracks, motor repair shops, guardhouses, theatres, churches, GI clubs, officers' barracks and houses, and so forth (for many of these, the plans, elevations, and photographs are reproduced in the aforementioned HABS document). Foundations were to be concrete slab and/or concrete stem wall/pier. There were no plans for buildings having load-bearing masonry walls or stone/brick veneer, as these were costly and time-consuming to construct.<sup>24</sup>

Therefore, virtually all buildings constructed at Camp Gruber in 1942 or afterward would have had these characteristics (with some variation): wood frame construction; exterior wall sheathing of wood, paper, and drop siding, or later, when wood became more scarce, of felt and gypsum sheathing and cement-asbestos shingle siding; roll roofing; external (700 Series) or internal (800 Series) brick chimneys; masonry, concrete block, or poured concrete foundations (in order of time progression); divided light, 8-over-8 window glazing with 10x12 inch or 9x12 inch panes; unfinished interior (framing members and trusses visible); and

double wood flooring (plywood, felt, and flooring).<sup>25</sup> As construction of new cantonments proceeded into the summer of 1942, materials shortages resulted, and the War Department ordered the purchase of even less expensive materials. Camp Gruber, however, was completed before these orders were released, and "standard" quality materials--from the original specifications were presumably used. For instance, both terra cotta (clay tile) and concrete foundations still exist at Gruber.

Preexisting buildings within the reservation boundary were also utilized by the army. A ranch house complex (located at the intersection of present 42nd Division Street [old 24th Street] and Central Europe Road [old F Street]) served as the post commander's billet. This consisted of a residential unit, garage, and other outbuildings. The ranch house had been built in 1936 by the Pray family. The home and outbuildings still stand and are in use by the Guard.<sup>26</sup>

One of Gruber's two Officers' Clubs was located at Greenleaf Lake, three miles south of the main cantonment. The club consisted of a large native stone building constructed in 1937 by the WPA, part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's recreation project before being attached to Gruber.

#### METHODOLOGY

The area of Camp Gruber surveyed for this project consisted of approximately 5.5 square miles lying in T14N R20E and .25 square mile lying in T13N R20E.

The surveyors prepared by compiling background information on the historic context of World War II mobilization and on the architectural context of World War II cantonment buildings. This included state and local histories, histories of WWII-era defense facilities in Oklahoma, and HABS reports on Fort McCoy and Camp Edwards, which were contemporaneous with Gruber. Archival research also helped specify the historical and architectural contexts. Sources included Tulsa, Muskogee, and Oklaoma City newspapers and vertical files at the Oklahoma Historical Society; WPA records deposited in the Archives Division, Oklahoma Department of Libraries; 1942-1946 and 1953 maps and building plans held by the Oklahoma Military Department and by the Camp Gruber Facilities Engineering Office. Combined with the HABS reports, these enabled the preparation of lists of resource types that might exist at Camp Gruber. Interviews with OK ARNG personnel also proved useful. The surveyors then

visited the site, photographed remaining buildings and structures, and prepared National Register Inventory Forms as requested.

Based on this research, surveyors expected to find wood-frame 700 Series and 800 Series buildings, WPA-built recreation buildings, prewar residential or domestic buildings, and a large underground reservoir.

### FINDINGS

A number of resources were identified during research and reconnaissance. These included resources listed in the OK ARNG Facilities Inventory and Stationing Plan (FISP) and other resources discovered in the field but not listed in the FISP (apparently because there are no current OK ARNG maintenance contracts for them).

Three districts were identified as potentially eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. These included the original ranch headquarters complex (6 buildings--residence, garage, "chicken house," stone barn, tile barn, tile shed); three of these buildings were listed in the FISP, and three were not listed. Greenleaf Lake training area (6 buildings--lodge and two wood-frame buildings), listed in FISP, was documented. A 1942 obstacle course (3 structures--stone wall, S-trench, bridge) not listed in FISP was identified in the field and documented.

Individual resources were also documented and judged potentially eligible. One National Register-worthy building, the Old Stone House, an abandoned residence, was identified in NW 1/4 Sec 26, T14N, R20E. This is located in the southeast corner of the cantonment and is not listed in the FISP. In addition, one potentially National Register-eligible structure was identified north of the cantonment. This is a 3 million gallon water reservoir built in 1942. It was listed in the FISP. Three target ranges structures (berm/bunkers remaining from 1942 small arms, machine gun, and rifle ranges) listed in the FISP were documented. These lay north of the cantonment and are all that remains of the 1942 firing emplacement-target bunker areas.

Four buildings listed on FISP were investigated and judged not to warrant further research: buildings GR5031, GR5025, and GR5033 were documented but are so heavily altered as to be ineligible for the National Register. Building GR155 is a 1960s concrete-block building and was misidentified as two 1942 buildings on the FISP. A fifth building (a small brick pesticide storehouse), not on the FISP, also does not warrant further research; its original

function cannot be documented, as it was part of a much larger building that is gone.

Five other structures not on the FISP were recorded photographically and judged not to warrant documentation or further research. These included sections of stone-lined drainage ditches; 2 exterior chimneys of demolished motor repair shops; 1 small incinerator of a demolished motor repair shop; and tank-repair ramps near demolished motor repair shops.

INDIVIDUAL RESOURCES AND DISTRICTS THAT WARRANT  
FURTHER RESEARCH

These resources documented during the survey are determined to have potential significance based on criteria A, B, C, or D from the Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines:

Individual Resources (refer to Map 3)

1. Stone residence (not on FISP)  
NW 1/4 Sec. 26, T14N R20E  
.15 mile south of section line road between 26 and 23

This one-story native stone building was constructed sometime between 1900 and 1930 by a Mr. James. It is a good local example of a type of vernacular Craftsman residence of the turn of the century. It has a full-width porch and two separate front entries. A shed-roofed screen porch has been added to the southwest side. All facades have double-hung windows with no lights or muntins present. Present roofing material is roll roofing. Documentation is an interview with Lee Pray, April 26, 1993.

2. Underground concrete reservoir (GR1409)  
SW 1/4, NW 1/4 Sec. 10, T14N R20E

This structure is a three-million-gallon concrete reservoir (now abandoned) that was built in 1942 to hold the cantonment's water supply. It is in a restricted area and is only accessible on foot. Atop the concrete cap (now exposed but originally earth-covered) is a concrete block with a brass knob containing the inscription "3rd Observation Battalion, Reservoir No. 769." Documentation sources include newspaper reports of the camp construction contract and a 1946 map of the reservation.

3. Three target storage structures, at firing ranges.  
On target range road, .5 miles north of Sicily Road  
N 1/2 Sec. 16 and NW 1/4 Sec. 15, T14N R 20E

Facilities numbers are in the series GR1100, GR1200, GR1300, and GR1400. They were constructed in 1942 as target storage bunkers and are still in use. No. 1 is .4 mile in length, running northeast-southwest across the machine gun range. No. 2 measures .3 mile in length, running east-west across the pistol range. No. 3 measures .2 mile in length, running west-northwest/east-southeast across the M-16 rifle range.

Each of these facilities consists of a very long concrete wall that buttresses an earth berm. At various

points 780-square-foot concrete bunkers are accessed through doors in the wall. Targets are stored in the bunkers. The wall also sheltered personnel whose duty it was to raise the targets and score the firing. Documentation includes 1943 cantonment layout map and 1946 map of reservation boundary.

These resources are documented on a 1943 cantonment layout map and on a 1946 map of the reservation.

### Districts

1. Pray Ranch headquarters complex (refer to Map 4)  
Intersection 42nd Division Road and Central Europe Road,  
Camp Gruber cantonment area  
SE 1/4, SE 1/4 Sec. 22, T14N R20E and SW 1/4, SW 1/4  
Sec. 23, T14N R20E  
Buildings GR900, GR901, GR902, GR903, GR904, GR905

There are six buildings in this district, all constructed by Bert Pray in 1936.

- a. A 1936 one-story brick vernacular Craftsman style residence (GR900). This was the ranch house of Bert Pray and family. The cross-gabled one-story house exhibits an east (front) entry porch, with arched door surround, recessed between two projecting cross-gable endwalls. Over the east (front) porch is a gable dormer with three windows. There is also a two-window gable dormer in the west. Craftsman details include a wide roof overhand and exposed rafter tails. A large internal chimney projects upward in the center of the roof. The single-hung windows occur in Craftsman-style sets of three on ground floor and in the gable ends. The windows have multi-lights over single lower panes. On the north side is a square bay window. The roofing material is asphalt shingles.
- b. A 1936 two-bay brick garage of vernacular Craftsman style and decoration (GR901, not on FISP). On the east side are two vehicle doors and one pedestrian door. On the north and south are single windows of the same style as found on the house. The roof is asphalt shingles.
- c. A large stone garage of similar construction and decoration (GR902). This building exhibits metal-frame awning windows with multiple divided lights on north, west, and east. Vehicle entries are

on east (blocked) and west (overhead door), and one pedestrian door is on the south.

- d. A small 1936 terra cotta tile "chicken house" (GR903). This building is plastered, concealing the tile blocks of which it is made. It has a curved roof (gable ends curved, not peaked). There are metal-frame awning windows on south and east sides.
- e. A large 1936 terra cotta tile barn (GR904, not on FISP). This barn, made of tile blocks, is two-story, having a loft in the north end. The end-gabled roof has doors up under the gables, north and south. The north (front) has an opening for a double-door, and there is a pedestrian door on the east side. West and east sides have metal-frame awning windows and the south side has metal double-hung windows.
- f. A small 1936 terra cotta tile storage building (GR905, not on FISP). This building, made of tile blocks, resembles the barn in construction. It has pedestrian doors on south and east, a small north window, and blocked-up windows on the south side.

According to the official Property Acquisition Map (1942, 1953), these buildings stood on land owned by the Pray family in the early decades of the century. The property was condemned in 1942 under Executive Order 9282. Buildings were dated to 1936 by interview with Lee Pray (son of builder Bert Pray, April 26, 1993).

- 2. Obstacle Course No. 2 (refer to Map 5)  
North of Sicily Road between 11th Street and 18th  
Street, Camp Gruber cantonment area  
S 1/2 Sec. 15, T14N R20E

The district consists of three resources that formed Obstacle Course No. 2 used during the 1942-1946 period.

The area is not presently used by OK ARNG for obstacle course training.

- a. Stone wall, lying in east-west direction across eastern half of obstacle course. It is approximately .1 mile in length, 4 feet high and 24 inches thick.
- b. S-trench, lying in east-west direction across eastern half of obstacle course, 100 feet north of

stone wall, approximately .1 mile in length, 10 feet wide, and 7 feet deep.

- c. Bridge with low stone walls and concrete abutments and deck, lying across a creek or drainage ditch that runs east-west .2 mile southwest of the stone wall. It is approximately 7 feet wide and 10 feet long; the walls are approximately 18 inches high.

These resources are documented on a 1946 map of the reservation and on a 1943 cantonment layout map. Although 7 or 8 other obstacle and training courses still remain as faint indentations in the terrain, this is the only such course having definition and structures above the plane of the surface.

- 3. Greenleaf Lake Training Area (refer to Map 6)  
Group Camp Road, accessed via main entrance Greenleaf  
Lake State Park  
NE 1/4 SE 1/4 Sec. 3, T13N R20E

This district consists of one 1937 WPA building and two 1942 wood-frame Series 700 Mobilization buildings, all three deemed potentially eligible for listing on the National Register.

- a. GR5010. Greenleaf Lodge. Constructed in 1937 by WPA workers, the lodge is a one-story, 6,365-square-foot native stone building. Its style is reminiscent of Craftsman, with cross-gables, wide roof overhang, and exposed rafter tails. The corners of the building are buttressed with short, stout wing walls, and there is a massive stone external chimney in the south end. Windows are regularly placed in east and west walls. They are shuttered and the glazing is not visible. There are walled stone patios on three sides of the building. The lodge functioned as a recreation center until its acquisition by the army in 1942. It is still used as a recreation building by OK ARNG. It is pristine on the exterior.
- b. GR5024. Its 25' 4" width identifies it as a Series 700 one-story wood-frame building. By its length, 58' 4", it would appear to have been a storage building. It retains all of the exterior features originally seen in these buildings: drop siding, 8-over-8 light windows with wooden shutters, and concrete pier foundation.
- c. GR5032. A Series 700 one story wood-frame building, it also retains the features exemplary of its

series. By its relatively long length, 98', it would appear to have been an administration/recreation type building. Its width is the standard 25' 4" of a Series 700 building.

Documentation sources include 1942 inventory list for Camp Gruber, pursuant to Executive Order 9282; WPA project cards; and newspaper reports on Greenleaf Lake.

Within the district are two heavily altered Series 700 buildings that would not be eligible, and are counted as noncontributing resources:

- a. GR5025. Greenleaf Lake area. Although constructed as a 700 Series in 1942, this building has been renovated on the exterior. Few original elements are present.
- b. GR5033. Greenleaf Lake area. Although constructed as a 700 Series in 1942, exterior renovation has removed most original elements.

The district also includes four buildings of very recent construction (public restrooms and dormitories), which are counted as noncontributing. They do not disturb the visual impact of the historic district and are clustered in the center of the loop made by Group Camp Road.

## RESOURCES NOT WARRANTING FURTHER RESEARCH

In addition to GR5025 and GR5033, these resources, either because of condition or availability of documentation sources, were also judged not to warrant further research:

- a. GR5020. Greenleaf Lake Road. Caretaker's cottage. Although constructed as a 700 Series building in 1942, it has been renovated on the exterior. Few original elements are present. There is no indication that this is the original site of this structure.
- b. GR5031. 42nd Division and Central Europe Road. Moved from the Greenleaf area to the cantonment area at an unknown date and remodeled on the exterior, this 700 Series building retains few original elements.
- c. Brick storage room. On Central Europe Road at 10th. A small room, this was attached to a large motor repair building. Currently used for chemical storage.

Other resources judged not to warrant further research include partial structures remaining from the 1942-1947 occupation:

- a. Chimneys. Two free-standing brick chimneys were observed and photographed in the motor repair area on Central Europe Road. Judging from the juxtaposition of chimney and concrete slab, these were exterior chimneys of the type used for Series 700 buildings.
- b. Incinerator room. One concrete "box" type incinerator was found on E Place, in the motor repair area. Not currently in use.
- c. Tank/track vehicle repair ramps. Several tank ramps were observed on Central Europe Road and on Sicily Road. None are in use.
- d. Stone-lined drainage ditches. Along Central Europe Road are found drainage ditches lined with stone. Interview sources say that the work may have been done by German POWs housed in the camp west of the main cantonment. No substantiating evidence exists.

## RESOURCES NOT FOUND

Of resources listed on the FISP, two could not be found or identified through all research methods.

- a. GR155, Administration/Armory, two buildings.  
Sited on 4th Street in headquarters plaza.  
Erroneously dated 1942 on FISP, this is a relatively new concrete-block building. On 1942-43 maps this site was occupied by a concrete pad, with division insignia, and flagpole. It was a ceremonial plaza situated due east of the division headquarters building. A 1964 Soil Conservation Service aerial photograph shows a building on the site. Interview sources indicate that construction dates from the 1960s or 1970s.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Historic American Buildings Survey, World War II and the U.S. Army Mobilization Program: A History of 700 and 800 Series Cantonment Construction. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of Defense and U.S. Dept. of Interior, 1991), 3, 9.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 3.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 40.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 44, note p. 70.

<sup>5</sup>Leo Kelley, "Bamboo Bombers Over Oklahoma: USAAF Pilot Training During World War II," Chronicles of Oklahoma 68 (1990):360-75.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 373; William P. Corbett, "They Hired Every Farmer in the Country: Establishing the POW Camp at Tonkawa," Chronicles of Oklahoma 69 (1991):368-71.

<sup>7</sup>Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., The Coming of the New Deal (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., Bantam Edition, 1958), 370-380.

<sup>8</sup>Bernard Sternsher, Rexford Tugwell and the New Deal (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1964), 269-274.

<sup>9</sup>Project Ownership Map, 1953 (1942, 1974), Camp Gruber (Facilities Engineering Division Archives, Oklahoma Military Department, Oklahoma City).

<sup>10</sup>"Index to Reference Cards for Work Projects Administration Project Files, 1935-1942" (Washington, D.C.: WPA, c. 1942), Micro T-395, Reel 11, Reel 55.

<sup>11</sup>Daily Oklahoman, July 28, 1937; *ibid.*, August 7, 1938.

<sup>12</sup>Executive Order 9282 (typescript, Facilities Engineering Office, Camp Gruber).

<sup>13</sup>Project Ownership Map, 1953; Muskogee Daily Phoenix, January 23, 1942; Daily Oklahoman, December 7, 1975.

<sup>14</sup>"Official Guidebook, Camp Gruber, Oklahoma [c. 1943]" (Vertical Files, Library, Oklahoma Historical Society); Muskogee Daily Phoenix, January 7, 1942; *ibid.*, January 10, 1942; *ibid.*, January 13, 1942; *ibid.*, January 21, 1942; *ibid.*, January 23, 1942; *ibid.*, February 8, 1942; *ibid.*, February 22, 1942.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, February 10, 1942; *ibid.*, February 22, 1942; *ibid.*, February 27, 1942.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., May 24, 1942; *ibid.*, June 9, 1942.

<sup>17</sup>"Camp Gruber Training Site, Site Development Plan," (Oklahoma Military Department, February, 1993), H-1.

<sup>18</sup>Map of Reservation Boundary, 1946; "Site Development Plan," I-1, I-2.

<sup>19</sup>"Site Development Plan," I-1, I-2.

<sup>20</sup>Map of Reservation Boundary, 1946, Camp Gruber (Facilities Engineering Division Archives, Oklahoma Military Department, Oklahoma City).

<sup>21</sup>"Official Guidebook," 35.

<sup>22</sup>HABS, World War II Mobilization Program, 44-45, note p. 70.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 3, 11, 25.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 25-34.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 5-59, 545-550.

<sup>26</sup>Interview with Sgt. LC Gary Lester, Camp Gruber, Oklahoma, by Dianna Everett, by telephone, April 7, 1993.

### Summary

Under contract with the Oklahoma Military Department/OKARNG, the Oklahoma Historical Society-State Historic Preservation Office conducted a statewide project to identify and document specifically designated OKARNG-owned National Guard Armories and World-War II era buildings at Davis Field, Whitaker Education and Training Center, and Camp Gruber. The survey period extended from October 1, 1992, through September 30, 1993.

Intensive archival and library research was undertaken to establish the historic context(s) for these resources. Full National Register nominations were completed for twenty National Guard Armories. On-site field surveys at Davis Field, Whitaker Education and Training Center, and Camp Gruber resulted in the description, recordation, and mapping of numerous historic resources in each installation. For each resource, an Historic Preservation Resource Identification Form was completed, and photographic documentation was accomplished.

Several resources were deemed to warrant further investigation for possible listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Future study is recommended for potentially National-Register-eligible historic districts at Davis Field (1), Whitaker Education and Training Center (1), and Camp Gruber (3). Future study is also recommended for individual properties at Camp Gruber that may be potentially eligible for the National Register.

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CAMP GRUBER

GR 1101 Reservoir

51

GR 1102-1103  
Target Parking  
(Resources) 52

MAP 4  
Abductee Center  
(Resources) 51

450

MAP 5

Pray Ranch  
702 544 1100  
702 544 1100 49  
• 515031  
X 515031

48

47

46

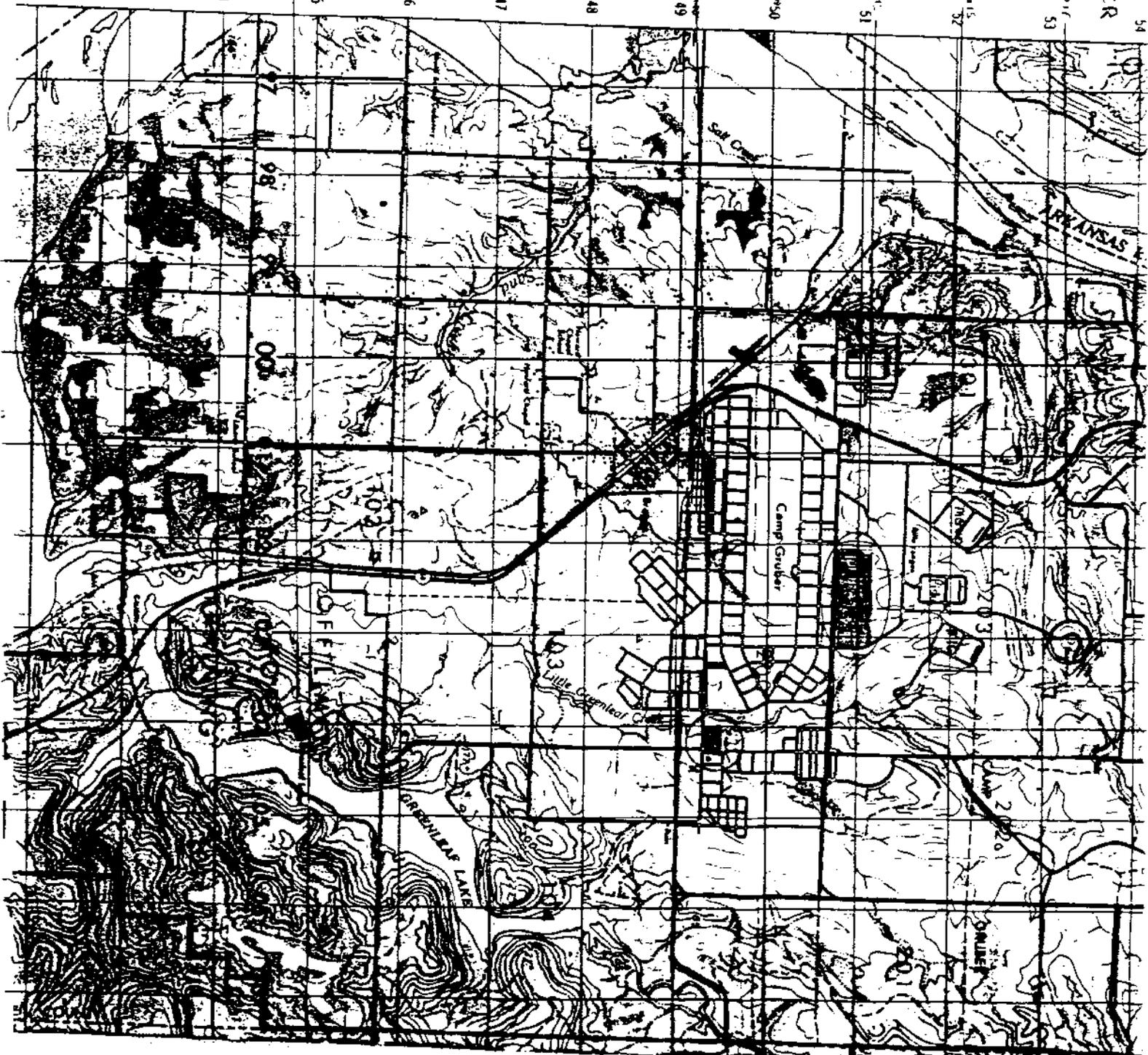
MAP 6

Greenleaf Meadows  
GR 5010 5011  
5024, 5025,  
5032 5033

44

43

42

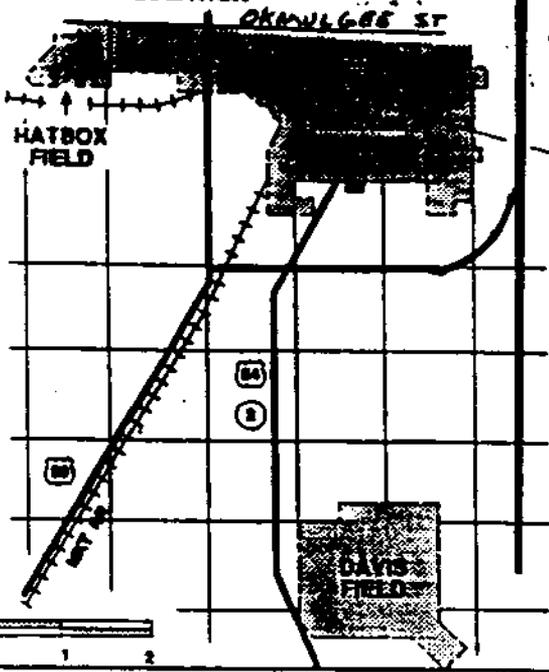


APPENDIX



# MUSKOGEE - DAVIS FIELD (MKO)

## AIRPORT LOCATION



## REMARKS:

1. RWY 17/36 UNMARKED
2. ACFT TIEDOWNS - 378
3. ELEV. - 810

SITE NO. - 19111.A

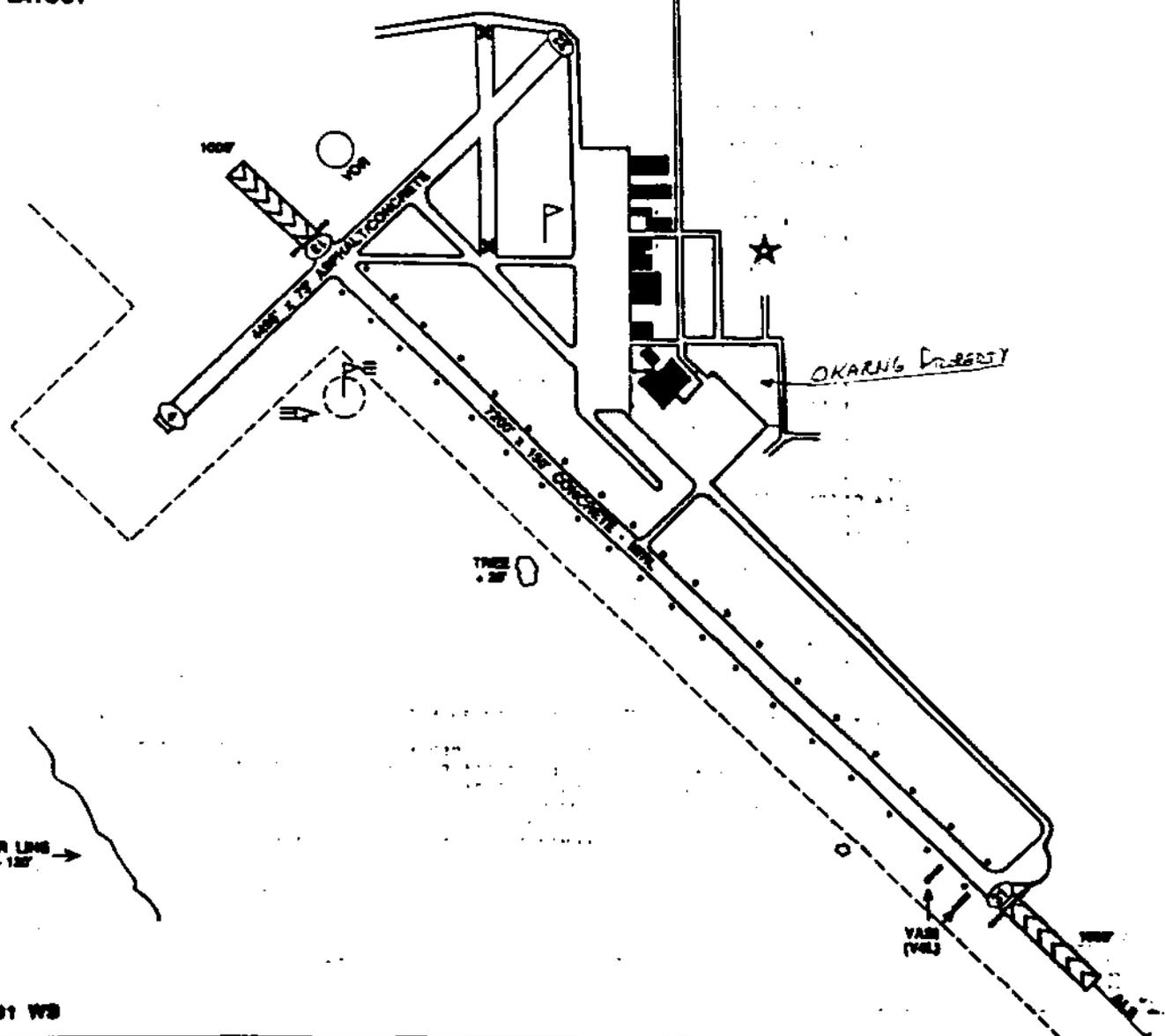
ACRES - 1440

MUSKOGEE REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER



5° 51' E  
MAG DEC  
1988

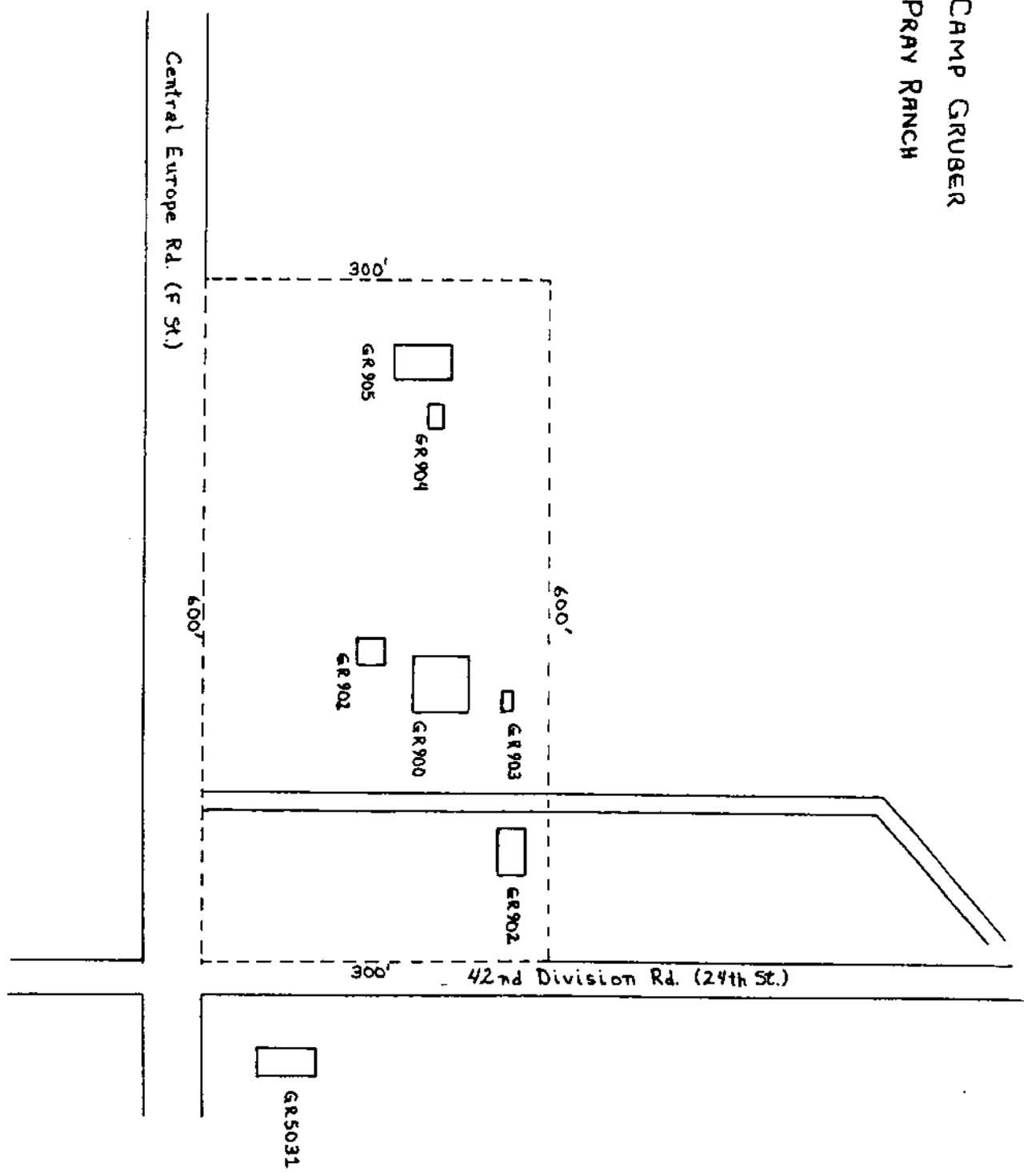
## AIRPORT LAYOUT



CONTOUR LINE  
ELEV - 120'

4.

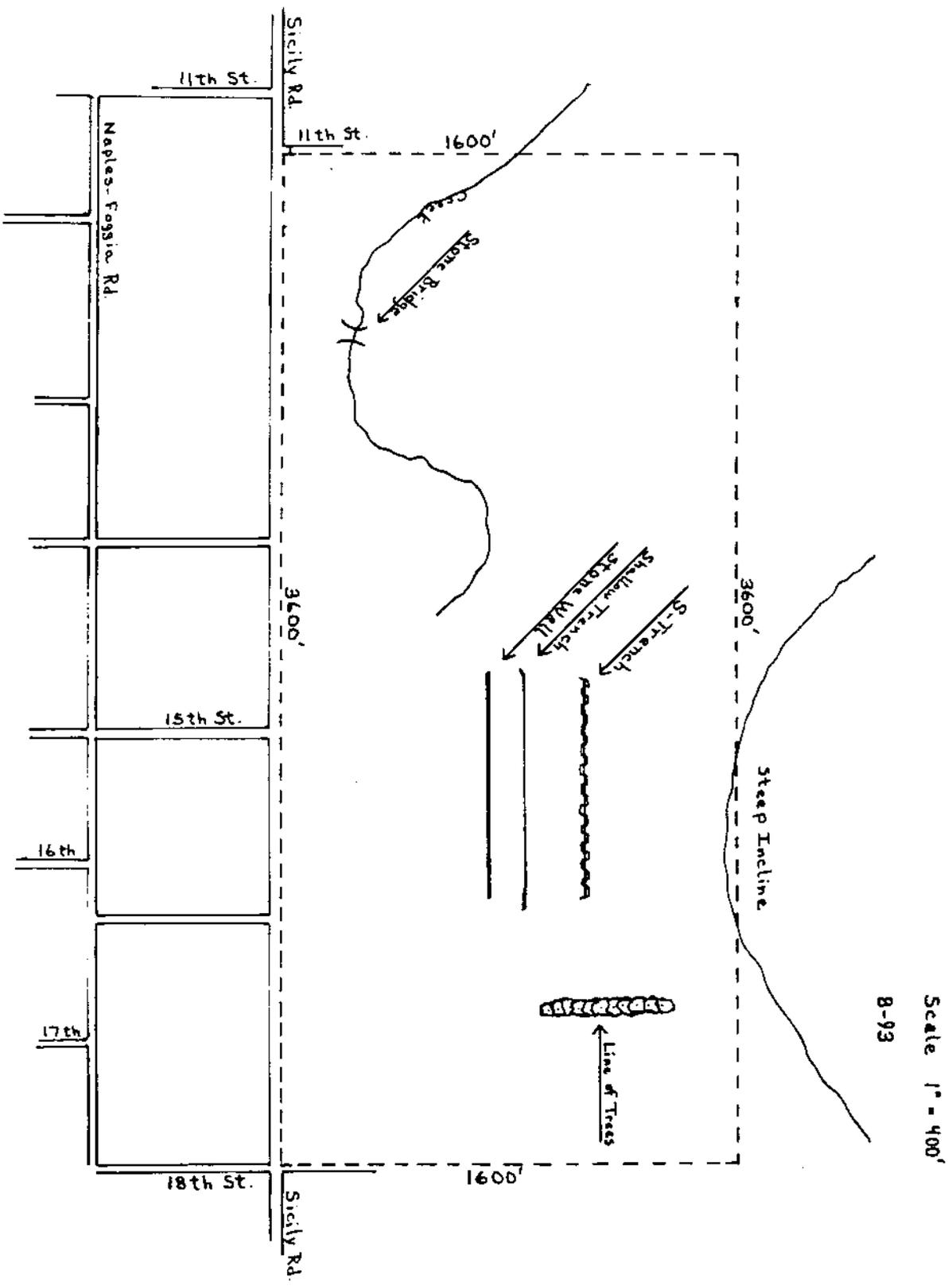
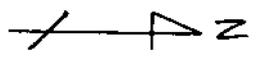
CAMP GRUBER  
PRAY RANCH



Scale  
8-93

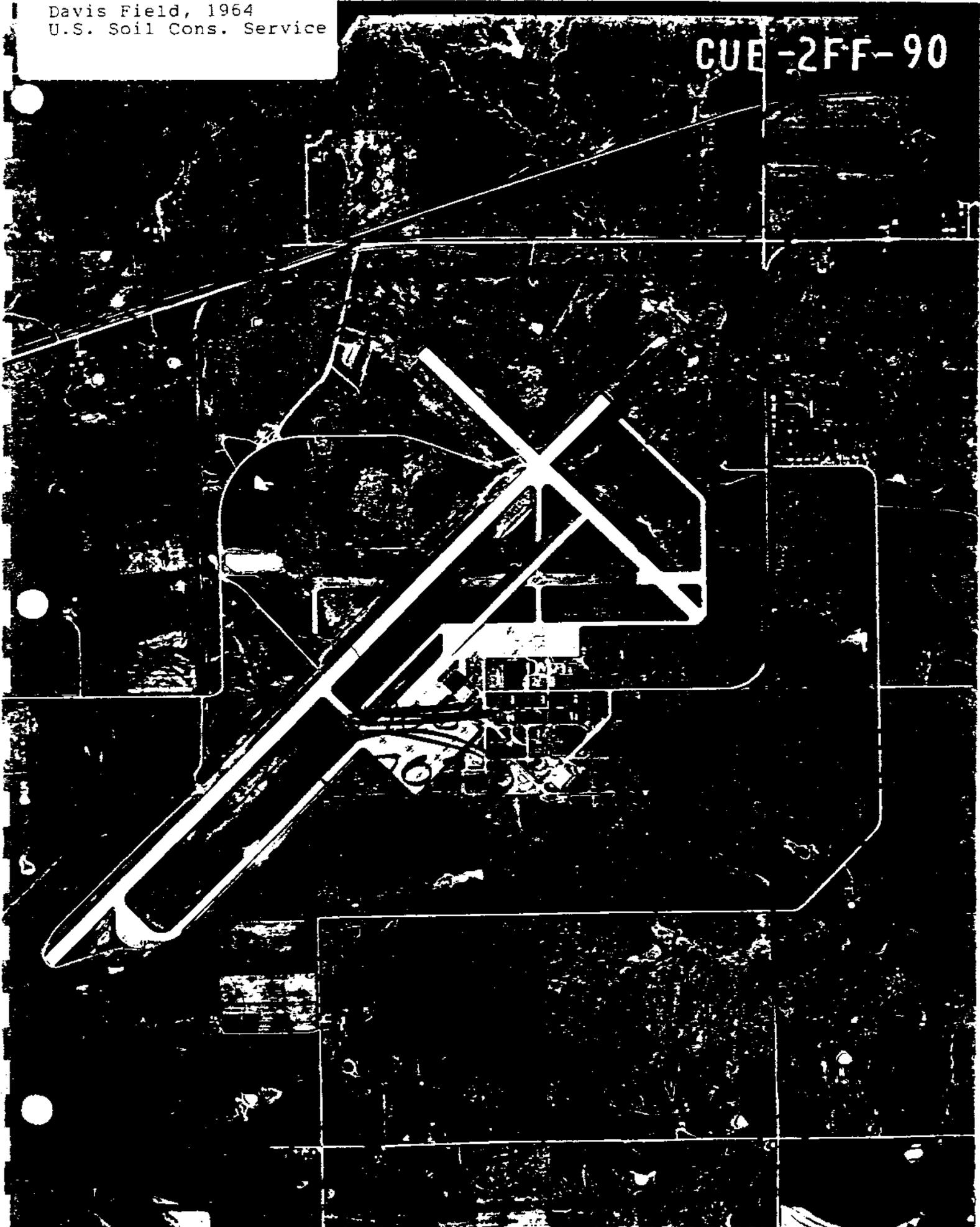
5.

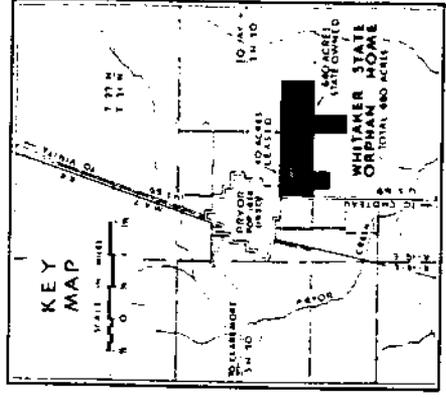
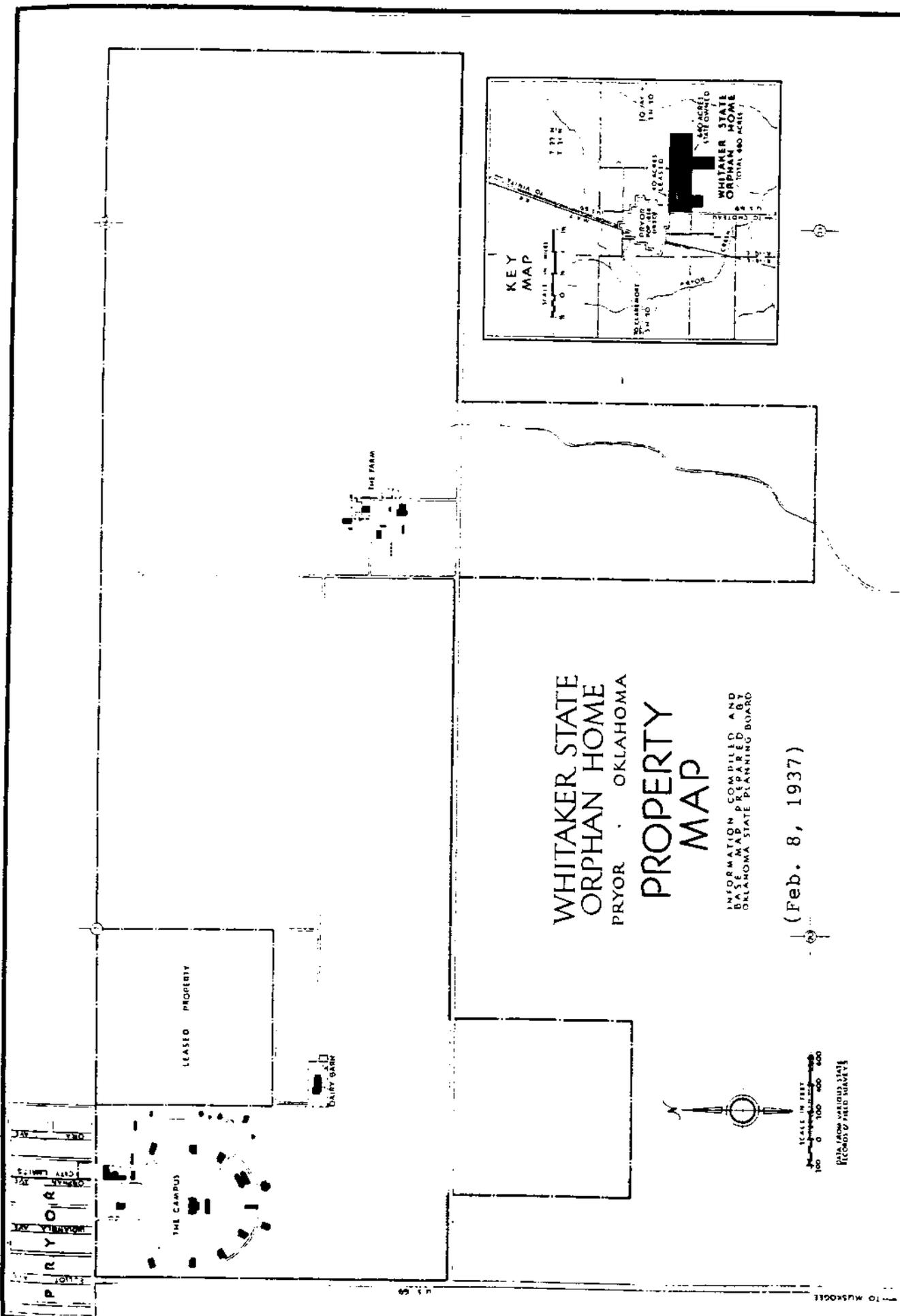
CAMP GRUBER  
OBSTACLE COURSE, 1942



Aerial photograph,  
Davis Field, 1964  
U.S. Soil Cons. Service

CUE-2FF-90

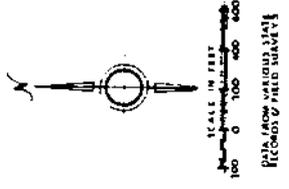




WHITAKER STATE  
ORPHAN HOME  
PRYOR · OKLAHOMA  
PROPERTY  
MAP

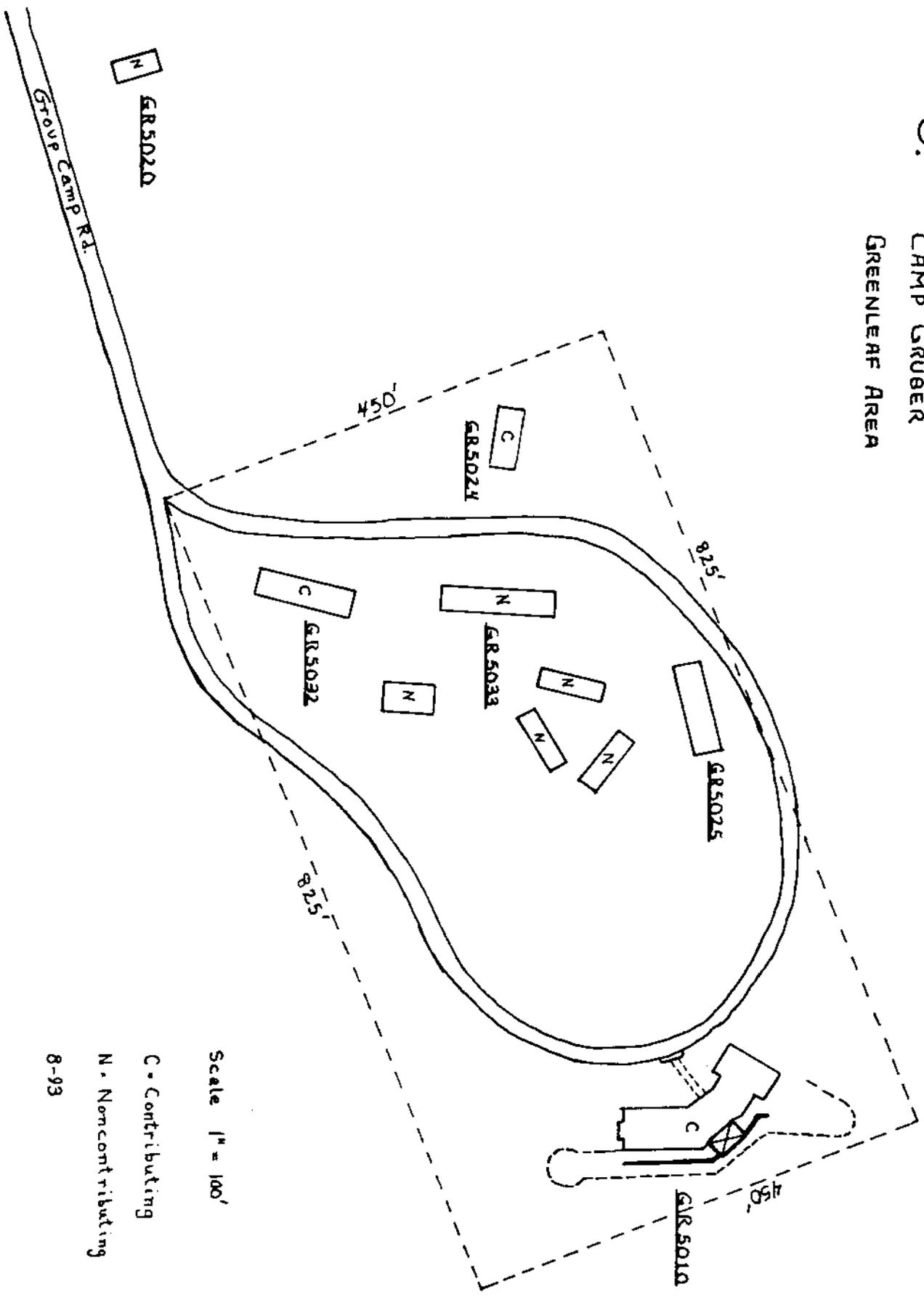
INFORMATION COMPILED AND  
BASED UPON RECORDS OF  
OKLAHOMA STATE PLANNING BOARD

(Feb. 8, 1937)



6.

CAMP GRUBER  
GREENLEAF AREA



Scale 1" = 100'  
C - Contributing  
N - Noncontributing  
8-93

3-41

CUE-5B-58



Aerial photograph,  
Davis Field, Nov. 1941  
U.S. Soil Cons. Service

