

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

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

For HCRS use only
received JAN 29 1980
date entered MAR 27 1980

1. Name

historic Hyattsville Armory

and/or common

Location

street & number 5340 Baltimore Avenue ___ not for publication

city, town Hyattsville ___ vicinity of congressional district Fifth

state Maryland code 24 county Prince George's code 033

Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Messrs. Berton A. Bromwell, Sr. and Berton A. Bromwell, Jr.

street & number 5340 Baltimore Avenue

city, town Hyattsville ___ vicinity of state Maryland 20781

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Prince George's County Courthouse, Registry of Deeds

street & number Main Street

city, town Upper Marlboro state Maryland

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title _____ has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date _____ federal state county local

depository for survey records _____

city, town _____ state _____

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Hyattsville Armory, often referred to by local residents as "the Castle on the Hill", was built by the State of Maryland in 1918 to house components of Company F of the First Maryland Infantry. Company F was formed on May 8, 1912, and initially met in a room above the Hyattsville Fire Department.

The Armory, designed by William Harris to house 150 guardsmen, is distinctly fortress-like and on its knoll it occupies a strong defensive position. It offers a commanding view of the surrounding area, and patterned after a medieval English castle, the Armory, built of native stone, communicates strength and mystery reminiscent of the legendary era of the Knights of the Roundtable. This can be discerned from the rectangular turrets flanking the arched limestone entrance-way as well as the parapeted walls of the building. The rear portion of the building which was used as an assembly area was patterned after the "great halls" of the castles. The roof supports of this assembly area even resembles the patterned timber work of the "great Halls", although done here in steel and designed as trussed bents. These bents divided the walls of the area into six (6) sections which can be ascertained from the exterior by the stone buttresses in the walls which take the added thrust of these large roof supporting structures.

The exterior walls of the building are solid eighteen (18) inch thick granite from nearby quarries laid up in random patterns with beaded mortar joints.

While the parapets in the main section rise only thirty (30) inches above the roof, the turrets measuring 7 feet 7 inches square rise fifteen (15) feet above the roof surface.

The reverse side of the "Great Seal of Maryland" is in limestone and appears above the main entrance-way incorporated in the parapet.

The fenestration of the front section were in the original building nine over nine and six of six lights double hung windows on the first and second floor and six of six lights in the English basement while on the first and second floor have one over one lights in the present structure. The present owner plans on restoring the windows to its original state.

In the assembly area in each bay there are six fifteen (15) light windows arranged three over three, all of which whose styles are pivoted to open.

Beyond the assembly area is a three story structure containing a garage flanked by offices and stairs which gain entry to the assembly area. Above the garage is the stage of the assembly area.

The third floor contains storage rooms. The basement below the assembly area contains the rifle range, gun storage rooms, boiler room, armory, shower and toilet facilities and living quarters. The assembly area as well as the basement is presently being used for storage and work shop of the present owner who operates the Bromwell Fireplace Fixture Company. There is still visible in the rifle range a shell pocked slanted wall bearing testimony to the many hours of marksmanship practice by scores of guardsmen. The large shower and toilet room used by the guardsmen is still in place, although the fixtures have been removed, the plumbing is visible.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #1

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NCRS USE ONLY
RECEIVED JAN 29 1980
DATE ENTERED

Hyattsville Armory
Prince George's County
Maryland

CONTINUATION SHEET ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

DESCRIPTION, continued

Entrance to the foyer from the main entrance is gain through a pair of segmented head wooden doors each containing twenty (20) lights in the upper section of each door measuring 3 feet 9 inches by 9 feet 3 inches and 2 3/8 inches thick. Another pair of these doors gain entrance to the assembly area after one passes through the foyer.

The first and second floors of the front block presently contain offices. Within this structure, floors appeared to be stripped oak flooring over wood joists. Walls and ceiling are lath and plastered.

The interior walls of the turrets as well as the front and rear walls of the assembly area are stone. Original room divisions in the basement were cinderblock.

Other than the stairs in the rear structure to the assembly area, the only other stairway is in the front section which contains stairs from the basement to the second floor.

The interiors most notable feature is the ceramic tiled walls in the Great Hall. Baseboards and chairrails are massive, simple, and uniformly intact throughout the building.

8. Significance

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

Specific dates 1918

Builder/Architect

Robert Lawrence Harris

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

SIGNIFICANCE

The Hyattsville Armory is significant in architectural and military history. It was the first Armory built in Prince George's County and the fifth in Maryland (after Elkton in 1915, Bel Air in 1916, and Westminster and Cambridge in 1917) and mightily continues the fortress-like nature of those four slightly earlier structures. Its architect Robert Lawrence Harris, served as state architect under Governor Albert C. Ritchie. In this capacity, Harris would supervise the design of similar armories in Salisbury, Kensington, Silver Spring, Hagerstown, Laurel, Easton, Crisfield, Pocomoke City, Centreville and Cumerland as well as an addition to the armory in Frederick. Thus, the Hyattsville Armory is something of a seminal work. Further, the unit headquarters here has a service history that is distinguished in its own right: it has seen action from Mexico to Central Europe, has several international decorations and has played a key role in establishing the American Legion.

HISTORY

The form of the building is bound up in military architectural history. Around the turn of the 20th century and doubtless as a result of the patriotic fervor that gripped the country in that era, a fervor that World War I certainly would increase, the various states in the nation had been building armories. These structures uniformly seem to have been inspired by the impregnable neo-castles put up in Manhattan in the late 19th century (e.g., the Squadron A Armory and the Seventh Regiment Army). During this romantic sabre-rattling forment, on May 8, 1912 the First Maryland Infantry established its Company F. That company's original meeting room, above the Hyattsville Fire Station, was obviously emotionally out of place--perhaps even an embarrassment--and the state lost little time in having Harris design more fitting quarters.

Harris was born in 1884 and, although little is know of his background, his architectural practice seems to have flourished. He was state architect under George Ritchie and, in that capacity, supervised the design of armories throughout the state following the Hyattsville building (which, in turn, closely resembles the Westminster armory). He left state service and continued to thrive, apparantly in Baltimore: he was associated with designing the Enoch Pratt Library and the Scottish Rite Temple (both in Baltimore) and, later several, also in an associate capacity, as architect of the Pentagon. These very traditional buildings are manifestations of an equally traditional life: he seems to have been an ardent clubman and was locally active in the Masons, the Shriners, and the Engineers' Club. He was also a distinguished amateur photographer: his shots of Maryland landmarks and landscapes won awards in exhibitions and competitions held in Boston, New York and Copenhagen. Although many of the prints have disappeared, his photographic paltes and cut film negatives have been on permanent loan to the Peale Museum since 1955. (Harris's son, William Calder Harris) gave this collection to the museum five years after his father's death.)

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #2.

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED JAN 29 1980

DATE ENTERED

Hyattsville Armory
Prince George's County
Maryland

CONTINUATION SHEET ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

SIGNIFICANCE, continued

If the Armory is a fitting companion to similar local buildings, as noted above, so, too, the service history of the unit headquartered in the Armory is significant in its own right. Company F saw active duty in the Mexican Border Incident on June 29, 1916, at Eagle Pass, Texas. Later, in the summer of 1917, the unit was mobilized and transported to Fort McClellan, Alabama and consolidated with elements of the Fifth Maryland Infantry Regiment to form the 115th Infantry Regiment, 29th Infantry Division. Fighting in France, its courage was exhibited in the Haute Alsace Sector and the Meuse-Argonne offensive. As a result of this fighting the battalion was authorized two campaign streamers for World War I.

On March 15, 1919, some of the men of the 29th Division met with some 600 other War Veterans at the "Paris Caucus" in Cirque de Paris, in Paris, France: that meeting resulted in the formation of the American Legion. On July 8, 1919, Post 3, composed of men of Company F, received its Charter and became the "First" American Legion Post in Prince George's County (the "third" in the State of Maryland). The Post was designated Snyder-Farmer Post 3, in memory of George W. Farmer and Maurice B. Anyder, Prince Georgians killed during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive in 1918. (In 1944, an additional name was added to the Post designation in honor of 2nd Lieutenant Harry M. Butler, a Prince Georgian killed at Normandy during World War II. The Post has since been known as Snyder-Farmer-Butler Post 3.)

One of the most notable achievements of Post 3 was the erection of the Memorial Peace Cross at Bladensburg (dedicated on July 12, 1922). The 40 foot high concrete and marble cross stands in memory of the 49 young men of Prince George's County who died in combat during World War I. The four sides of the base of the Monument bear the words "valor, endurance, courage, and devotion."

The Unit's fighting capability was tested once more in World War II when, after strenuous training, the 115th Infantry Regiment stormed ashore at "Omaha Beach," on D-Day. During the months of combat that followed, names of such places as St. Lo, Villeboudon, Vire, Brest, Bethendorf, Kirchberg and other enemy held towns and cities became fixtures in the history of "the fighting 115th," and the 5,948 casualties sustained attest to the ferocity with which the Regiment fought. The Unit's valor was recognized by its being awarded Campaign Streamers for Normandy (with arrowheads), North France, Rhineland and Central Europe, as well as other decorations including a distinguished Unit Streamer embroidered St. Laurent-Sur-Mer and a streamer in the colors of the French Croix de Guerre with Palm.

The 115th Infantry vacated the Hyattsville Armory on July 1, 1971 in accordance with the State of Maryland Military Department Order Number 16. The Unit moved temporarily to the Olney Military Site, Gaithersburg, Maryland, and, in 1972, to its

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #3

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY
RECEIVED JAN 29 1980
DATE ENTERED

Hyattsville Armory
Prince George's County
Maryland

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

8

PAGE 3

SIGNIFICANCE, continued

permanent home at the George M. Gelson Armory (also known as the White Oake Armory in Silver Spring).

Prior to its sale by the State of Maryland on February 19, 1975, the Armory served the Community of Hyattsville as a meeting place for numerous civic and church organizations and other pro bono groups.

The Armory was purchased in 1975 by Berton A. Bromwell and Son, to house the Bromwell Fireplace Fixture Company. Its reasonably intact fabric (alterations tend to be of reversible nature--changes in the windows' lights) make this Armory (with its relatives throughout the state) a clear symbol of the military's, and the nation's more romantic past.

9. Major Bibliographical References

115th Infantry by Chaplain F. Reynolds - Copywrite 1920
 Land Records, Prince George's County Courthouse: Liber 4481, page 483, Liber 127, page 87,
 Liber 12, page 567, Liber FS 4, page 97, Liber FS 2, page 135.
 SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #4

10. Geographical Data UTM NOT VERIFIED

Acreage of nominated property 26,882.83 square feet (less than one acre) ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED
 Quadrangle name Washington East Quad Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A	<u>18</u>	<u>331800</u>	<u>4313350</u>	B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet #5.

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

state	code	county	code

Form Prepared By

name/title William A. Aleshire, Robert F. Sellers, and James Maher (AIA)
 organization Prince George's Jaycees date 1979
 street & number P. O. Box 14 telephone (301) 262-5505 (301) 559-4326
(301) 422-4861
 city or town Hyattsville state Maryland 20781

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

J. Little 1-11-80

title STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER date

For HCRS use only

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

Keeper of the National Register

date 3-27-80

Attest:

Chief of Registration

date 3-26-80

Emma Jane Sax
Regional Coordinator

HR-8-300A
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED JAN 29 1980

DATE ENTERED

Hyattsville Armory
Prince George's County
Maryland

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 4

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES, continued

Interviews with:

Milton Zavadil, Jr., Assistant Chief of Staff, State of Maryland, Fifth
Regiment Armory, Baltimore, Maryland; Mrs. Hugh McClay, 4912 42nd Pl.,
Hyattsville, Maryland 20781; Mr. Francis Geary, 4220 Nicholson St.,
Hyattsville, Maryland 20781.

History, Department of Maryland, "The American Legion" 1919-1934 by Walter F.
Richardson, published July 1, 1934.

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY
RECEIVED JAN 29 1980
DATE ENTERED

Hyattsville Armory
Prince George's County
Maryland

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 5

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

In the town of Hyattsville on the Washington/Baltimore Boulevard (Route 1):

BEGINNING at a stone on the south line of Franklin Avenue (now known as Jefferson Street) and the West line of the Washington and Baltimore Boulevard, and running with the West line of the Boulevard: South 8 degrees 0 feet; West 115 feet; thence North 85 degrees, 23 feet; West 250 feet; thence, North 9 degrees, 24 feet; East 95 feet to the South line of Franklin Avenue; thence, with the South line of said Avenue, North 86 degrees, 47 feet, East 118 feet; thence, south 87 degrees 07 feet.

