

CAMP WILLIAMS

HABS WI-381

*HABS WI-381*

(Camp Williams-Volk Field National Guard Training Center)  
Camp Douglas  
Juneau County  
Wisconsin

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

FIELD RECORDS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
MIDWEST REGIONAL OFFICE  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
601 Riverfront Drive  
Omaha, NE 68102

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

CAMP WILLIAMS

- Location: Camp Williams-Volk Field National Guard Training Center  
Camp Douglas, Juneau County, Wisconsin
- Camp Douglas USGS Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: Zone 15 Easting 0719511 Northing 4867077
- Present Owner: Wisconsin Department of Military Affairs
- Present Use: National Guard Training Center (Army and Air Force)
- Significance: Camp Williams reflects a state level of significance in National Guard military history and military architectural history. It served from 1889 to 1940 as the primary, annual training facility and rifle range for the entire Wisconsin Army National Guard. It was also the site of significant WPA activity during the 1930s and early 1940s as crews constructed mess halls, latrines and other permanent facilities for the Guard. After World War II, the post also became a significant training site for Air National Guard units from around the nation.

PART I: HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of Erection:

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| 1889        | Land purchased by State of Wisconsin for the Wisconsin Rifle Range and temporary wood-frame buildings constructed |
| 1895        | Construction of Quartermaster Area  |
| 1896        | Construction of log cabin Officers' Club  |
| 1900s-1920s | Construction of wood-frame mess halls, headquarters and latrine buildings   |
| 1934-1941   | Construction glazed tile headquarters, mess hall and latrine buildings by the Works Progress Administration       |
| 1935        | Construction of first hard-surface airport runway   |
| 1954        | Camp Williams divided into an Air Force component (named Volk Field in 1957) and Army component (Camp Williams)   |
| 1950s-1960s | Construction of Airmen's barracks, aviation support facilities and runway improvements                            |

2. Original and Subsequent Owners: Wisconsin Department of Military Affairs
3. Alterations and Additions: The Camp Williams complex has been a dynamic and evolving resource since its inception in 1889. It developed as an annual training site and rifle range for the Wisconsin Army National Guard (WIARNG), and gained in 1895 a secondary function as the WIARNG's Quartermaster Repository. This latter area of large brick warehouses adjacent to a rail line has operated year round in a supply and logistics capacity since then. Cantonment areas for each of the WIARNG's regiments evolved on the base from its inception. Mess halls, latrines and laundry buildings were originally simple wood frame structures that were reconstructed approximately every decade. All of those facilities were replaced during the 1930s as part of a series of Works Progress Administration (WPA) programs to construct permanent masonry structures. Many of these buildings remain, and have been converted into barracks, offices and storage facilities.

The north portion of the base originally was open and used for target practice and troop maneuvers. The first airport runway was constructed in 1935. Since 1954, the Wisconsin Air National Guard has expanded its runways to incorporate most of this open area. The Air Guard has also built several large, modern air support buildings adjacent to the airfield.

B. Historical Context:

**Wisconsin National Guard**

A state militia was active in Wisconsin in the early 1830s; however, it was the Illinois Militia during the Black Hawk War. This activity notwithstanding, evidence of a Wisconsin Militia did not become apparent until the 1850s. Local militias may have been formed, but an 1858 state law officially permitted groups of forty or more to form a uniform company in the areas of artillery, light infantry or cavalry. Officers were decided by each unit and included one captain, one first lieutenant, one second or third lieutenant, four sergeants and four corporals, after which commissions, uniforms and arms were issued.<sup>1</sup>

The Wisconsin Militia terminated during the Civil War, although many of the state's militiamen took part in the conflict. The initial demand upon Wisconsin by the

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<sup>1</sup>John K. Mahon, *History of the National Guard* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1983), 86-87; "History of the Wisconsin National Guard," *Wisconsin National Guard Review (WNGR)* 14:3 (May 1937):3; "Brief Sketch of [the] Wisconsin National Guard," *WNGR* 24:5 (September 1947):12.

federal government was 780 soldiers, which were supplied by twenty-six of the state's fifty-one militia units. These men served, for instance, in the 1<sup>st</sup> Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry Regiment. Wisconsin soldiers were active in virtually all of the war's major campaigns, with a number of units belonging to the famed Iron Brigade.<sup>2</sup>

The state's militia reformed after the war. The Milwaukee Volunteer Corps, Lancaster Light Artillery and Richland Light Artillery were all established in 1867. The following year, the Milwaukee Light Guard, Milwaukee Zouaves, Alma Rifles, Manitowoc Volunteers and Monroe Light Battery were created. The Platteville Light Artillery, Beaver Dam Light Guards, Trojan Volunteer Battery, Merchant Zouaves of Milwaukee, Sheridan Guard of Milwaukee and the Delavan Volunteers joined the state militia in 1869. The arms provided for these militiamen included Springfield muskets, Springfield breech-loading rifles, Enfield rifles and cavalry carbines. It was thought, however, that these organizations were more social clubs and parade groups than fighting units. Adjutant General Parkinson reported in 1874 that some of the companies formed were likely affected by the "parade and glitter of uniforms," after which they disbanded.<sup>3</sup>

Perhaps noting the tentative nature that motivated units to join the state's militia after the Civil War, Adjutant General James K. Proutfit recommended that the "...only proper and fair manner of supporting any number of efficient militia troops would be by providing by general taxation for funds in supporting first class, independent companies...". Proutfit suggested that \$10 per year be paid to each of the 2,000 men authorized for Wisconsin's twenty companies. This did not happen, but, in 1873, the state did start providing the militia with \$100 per year per unit to help pay for armory rent and repairs. A year later, the award per unit increased to \$300 per year.<sup>4</sup>

The militia was poised for change as the year 1880 approached. A significant altercation came in 1879 when the term "national guard" was used for the first time – instead of the word "militia." Additionally, the battalion<sup>5</sup> method of organizing the Wisconsin Army National Guard was first implemented in 1880. The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion

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<sup>2</sup>Mahon, *History of the National Guard*, 99-100, 104; "History of the Wisconsin National Guard," *WNGR* 14:3 (May 1937): 3.

<sup>3</sup>"History of the Wisconsin National Guard," *WNGR* 14:3 (May 1937):3 and 14:4 (July 1939): 3; "Brief Sketch of [the] Wisconsin National Guard," *WNGR* 14:5 (September 1947):12.

<sup>4</sup>"History of the Wisconsin National Guard," *WNGR* 14:3 (May 1937): 3; Mahon, *History of the National Guard*, 114.

<sup>5</sup>Currently, a battalion typically is comprised of between three and five company-sized elements. A company consists of around 100 soldiers and is the unit typically supported by an individual community.

included the Beloit City Guard and the Janesville Guard, all under the command of Lieutenant Colonel W.B. Britton of Janesville. Also established in 1880 was Milwaukee's Light Horse Squadron, a predecessor of the 105<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Regiment. Three more battalions were created in 1881. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion consisted of the Bay City Guard of Green Bay, Oshkosh Rifles, Evergreen Guard of Oshkosh and the Fond du Lac Guard. Meanwhile, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion included the Mauston Light Guard, Governor's Guard of LaCrosse, Neillsville's Sherman Guard, La Crosse Light Guard and the Unity Guard. And finally, the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion claimed the Governor's Guard of Madison, Guppy Guard of Portage, Lake City Guard of Madison, Watertown Rifles and the Burchard Guard of Beaver Dam. Regiments were also established in the state in 1882. Battalions typically had three to seven companies, while a regiment had eight to twelve companies.<sup>6</sup>

The Wisconsin Army National Guard experienced some major changes in the early 1880s. Legislation was passed that provided for all guard members to have common uniforms. A five dollar allowance was also offered to each company for each guard member that attended an annual inspection. It was intended to help manage the costs of uniforms and equipment.<sup>7</sup> The guard also saw labor-related duty in the state during the 1880s. It responded in 1881 to the Sawdust Riot in Eau Claire. Members who answered the call were paid one dollar per day, although they brought their own bedding, clothing and arms. Calls to respond to labor disputes also came from the governor in 1886, 1889, 1894 and 1898. Most of these actions were not overtly confrontational. In 1886, however, when called to protect industrial facilities, the governor ordered the Guard to open fire if there were threats to the property. The guard ultimately killed seven strikers who the governor thought "... were foreigners infected with anarchistic propaganda..."<sup>8</sup>

Three regiments of the WIARNG, each with twelve companies, were called up for service during the Spanish-American War. The units mobilized and trained at the Wisconsin State Fair grounds near Milwaukee. But questions were raised about the President's ability to call up guard units for service outside the country. This

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<sup>6</sup>"Brief Sketch of [the] History of [the] Wisconsin National Guard," *WNGR* 14:4 (September 1947):12; "History of the Wisconsin National Guard," *WNGR* 14:5 (September 1937): 3. A regiment, prior to World War II, typically consisted of between ten and fifteen companies. Once the common method of organizing combat-oriented units, the term now is used only for specialized elements.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.* Previously there had been variations in uniforms across the state, generally manifested in differing styles, colors, buttons, etc.

<sup>8</sup>"Brief Sketch of [the] History of [the] Wisconsin National Guard," *WNGR* 24:5 (September 1947): 12; Mahon, *History of the National Guard*, 116-17.

conundrum led all guard members to volunteer for federal service.<sup>9</sup>

The Wisconsin Army National Guard reorganized in 1899, after the Spanish-American War. State strength was authorized at forty companies of infantry (consolidated into regiments and battalions), as well as a cavalry troop and a battery of light artillery. The state-provided appropriation for the WIARNG in 1903 was \$125,000.<sup>10</sup>

The WIARNG subsequently was called to active duty in 1916, when the United States was concerned about patrolling its common border with Mexico. It was also called upon in 1917 as the country entered World War I. This latter event was significant because it was the catalyst for the formation of the 32<sup>nd</sup> “Red Arrow” Division. The division served with such distinction that a French general called them “Les Terribles,” – meaning “The Terrible Ones” – which the division took for its nickname. The 32<sup>nd</sup> was known during World War I for always accomplishing its mission and its divisional insignia is that of an arrow piercing the enemy line. The 32<sup>nd</sup> Division’s strength was 23,000 men, 15,000 of which came from the WIARNG. The rest were from Michigan. During this period, the designation of Wisconsin units changed as the U.S. Army adopted a uniform unit naming system for the entire National Guard. The 1<sup>st</sup> Artillery Regiment became the 121<sup>st</sup> Field Artillery Regiment and the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry regiments became the 127<sup>th</sup> and 128<sup>th</sup> Infantry regiments, respectively. Elements of the 1<sup>st</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Infantry regiments were absorbed into the 127<sup>th</sup> and the 128<sup>th</sup>. And finally, the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry (originally the Light Horse Squadron of Milwaukee) was redesignated the 120<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery due to the fact that the U.S. Army did not deploy National Guard horse cavalry during the war.<sup>11</sup>

The WIARNG was again reorganized after World War I. The guard’s state appropriation had grown by 1923 to \$300,000 per year. An additional \$300,000 was also made available for the construction of armories and any needed repairs – if authorized by the governor. A loss of funding occurred thereafter, which led to the elimination of twenty units around the state. One of the funding problems encountered was the Great Depression, which caused the number of paid unit assemblies to drop for a time. But as relief programs were developed and

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<sup>9</sup>“Brief Sketch of [the] History of [the] Wisconsin National Guard,” *WNGR* 24:5 (September 1947): 12.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, “History of the Wisconsin National Guard,” *WNGR* 14:5 (September 1937): 3. Infantry units are the army’s primary fighting element.

<sup>11</sup>“Brief Sketch of [the] History of [the] Wisconsin National Guard,” *WNGR* 24:5 (September 1947): 12; “History of the Wisconsin National Guard,” *WNGR* 15:4 (July 1938): 4.

implemented, the WIARNG benefitted. A substantial number of Depression-era relief program dollars, for example, were used to build new armories in Platteville, Whitewater and Sheboygan, in addition to providing for significant improvements to the WIARNG's annual encampment site at Camp Williams in Juneau County. By 1940, with World War II spreading across the globe, the WIARNG's strength was again increased.<sup>12</sup>

World War II was a dramatic struggle fought on the Atlantic Ocean and in Europe, as well as on the Pacific and those islands between Hawaii, Australia, the Philippines and Japan. The 32<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division was a significant unit in the Pacific that saw action primarily in New Guinea and the Philippines; however, several of its formations were detached and saw action in Europe. Also, Janesville's 32<sup>nd</sup> Tank Company was detached from the division and deployed to the Philippines in November 1941 – where it lost 65 of its 100 members through combat, the Bataan Death March and subsequent imprisonment. The 32<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division served 654 days of combat during the war, which was the most of any army division. Numerous divisional units received Presidential Unit Citations and eleven soldiers were awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.<sup>13</sup>

The 1950s was a period of relative calm for the National Guard in Wisconsin. A new armory building program was undertaken in 1953 and continued for ten years – a span in which over thirty new armories were built around the state. In October 1961, the entire 32<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division was activated and sent to Fort Lewis, Washington, as part of the nation's response to the Berlin Crisis. The unit never deployed overseas and was released from active duty in August 1962. Activities around the state that required the use of the WIARNG continued. For instance, 3,000 soldiers were called up to maintain order in Milwaukee in August 1966 when white protestors started to challenge a group of black picketers at a judge's house. A number of other activations occurred in response to Vietnam anti-war events in Madison and Milwaukee. In 1978, the WIARNG was again placed on state active duty to fill in at state prisons where employees had gone on strike.<sup>14</sup>

New international threats and events that required National Guard involvement also

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.; "Tank Men off to Meet Gen. Wainwright," *WNGR* 23:5 (September 1946): 5; "Medal of Honor Recipients," Material online at [www.32nd-division.org](http://www.32nd-division.org).

<sup>14</sup>Mahon, *History of the National Guard*, 239, 258; "Organization of the 32<sup>nd</sup> 'Red Arrow' Infantry Division During the Berlin Crisis," Material available at [www.32nd-division.org](http://www.32nd-division.org); State Active Duty Database, Located at the Wisconsin Army National Guard Historian's Office, Joint Force Headquarters, Madison, WI.

evolved in the 1990s and beyond. The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990 inspired the United States to lead a coalition that liberated that Persian Gulf nation in 1991. The Wisconsin National Guard provided 1,100 soldiers and airmen for that action, most of which were stationed in Saudi Arabia. The state subsequently furnished soldiers for military operations in the Balkans, as well as provided humanitarian and nation-building assistance in Central America. With the 11 September 2001 attack on the World Trade Center and Pentagon in New York City and Washington, D.C., respectively, Wisconsin's Guard members were assigned until May 2002 to security duty at the state's airports. Thereafter, National Guard troops backed up units assigned to, or were themselves ordered to Afghanistan. The Iraq War and corresponding post-war efforts to build and institute an independent government in that nation are the most recent deployments experienced by the Wisconsin Army National Guard. As of 2008, over 7,000 Wisconsin soldiers have been called to active duty since 11 September 2001. Recent domestic missions for Wisconsin guardsmen have included support for rescue efforts in New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina in 2005, as well as assisting U.S. Border Patrol with operations along the Mexican Border – a mission begun in July 2006 and ended in July 2008. Within the state, the Wisconsin National Guard in June 2008 responded to massive statewide flooding by activating 750 soldiers and airmen in support to local authorities.

### **20<sup>th</sup> Century Military Architecture in Wisconsin**

Wisconsin passed in 1919 the Armory Aid Act to assist in the construction of armories throughout the state. The act called for the local municipality to furnish the site and at least one-half of the construction cost, while the state would cover the remaining half of the cost not to exceed \$20,000. The armory and the land were to be in the state's name and the state was also to receive the income from rentals. The local municipality, however, was to be able to use the drill hall for free for public-oriented functions, except for the cost of heat and light. Due to the high cost of material and labor, no construction occurred until 1921. By the end of 1922, the State Armory Board had assisted in the construction of three armories in Oconomowoc, Clintonville and Abbotsford, as well as reconstructing old armories in five other locations. The Armory Act was abolished in 1923. Records indicate that the state owned eight of the armories used by the WIARNG.<sup>15</sup>

The years 1928 and 1930 brought about the largest armory building program in the

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<sup>15</sup>*Biennial Reports of the Adjutant General of the State of Wisconsin* (Madison, WI: Democrat Printing Company, various years), [1922], 25, 31; [1924], 32. Henceforth cited as *AG Reports*. "Armories of the Wisconsin National Guard," *WNGR* 1:1 (January 1924): 33.

history of the WIARNG to that point. Thirteen individual armories<sup>16</sup> were constructed during that three-year span, six of which were built in 1930 alone. Efforts to build these armories utilized no state funding, except for the annual rent paid to unit associations and municipalities, and encompassed a wide variety of funding and ownership arrangements. For example, the Whitefish Bay and Jefferson armories were owned by their respective unit organizations, while soldiers in Fort Atkinson and Watertown shared a municipal building and a Turner Hall, respectively. With regard to methods of funding, the Jefferson Armory included a \$10,000 gift from the city, Milwaukee's Light Horse Squadron Armory came from the sale of its previous Shorewood location and the members of the Arcadia unit contributed half of their drill pay for two years to an armory fund. Other interesting initiatives included obtaining used paving brick for free by Kenosha's Troop E, 105<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, while the Rhinelander unit obtained subscriptions, received \$10,000 from the local American Legion post, as well as took out a loan. Of the thirteen armories constructed during this period, only the Light Horse Squadron Armory and the Chippewa Falls Armory (which is heavily altered) remain in use by the Wisconsin Army National Guard.<sup>17</sup>

Two years after the dedication of Milwaukee's privately funded Light Horse Squadron Armory, the National Defense Act of 1933 clarified the status of the National Guard and increased its size to 190,000 soldiers nationwide. One way to procure facilities to house this increased number of troops was to utilize Depression-era programs such as the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and Public Works Administration (PWA) to build armories. However, the initial legislation that created the WPA did not allow for armory construction, but rather, efforts were directed toward schools, hospitals and other community structures. In response, the National Guard Association, American Legion and other veterans' organizations lobbied intensely and the WPA developed a program to facilitate armory construction. Through the combined efforts of the WPA and PWA programs, hundreds of new armories were constructed or existing ones renovated across the country. Many of these armories were small and designed to house only one company-sized unit. Initially, the PWA undertook construction of most new armories, which were often large, multi-unit facilities. But by the mid-1930s, the WPA had assumed responsibility for the more numerous one-unit armories, while the PWA funded the construction of fifty-two armories nationwide at a cost of \$13 million. Meanwhile, the WPA (a larger program than the PWA) built more than 700 armories between

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<sup>16</sup>Armories constructed during the period include Kenosha and Arcadia (1928); Jefferson, Whitefish Bay, Watertown, Oconto and Fort Atkinson (1929); and Madison, Milwaukee, Rhinelander, Janesville, Waupaca, and Chippewa Falls (1930).

<sup>17</sup>"Armory Building Record is Made," *WNGR* 17:6 (November 1930): 23 "Four New Armories are Opened," *WNGR* 6:2 (March 1929): 12; "New Armory Wave is Sweeping State," *WNGR* 5:1 (January 1928): 6-8.

1935 and 1941.<sup>18</sup>

Within Wisconsin, communities were charged with locating and procuring a site for an armory while the state and the WPA would provide labor. Part of the justification for building military armories with WPA/PWA funding was that they would be utilized as community centers for sporting events and a variety of other social functions. Wisconsin constructed or augmented nine armories by the end of the program in 1942. Cities that received new armories as a result of the WPA were Platteville, Whitewater, Stoughton and Marshfield, while the PWA assisted with the construction of the Sheboygan Armory and Milwaukee's 126<sup>th</sup> Observation Squadron Armory (no longer extant). Cities with existing armories that were improved with WPA funds include Kenosha, Whitefish Bay, and Milwaukee, which received two vehicle storage buildings. Construction of unit cantonment areas at the WIARNG's Camp Williams was also undertaken by the WPA. Of the major facilities constructed by the WPA/PWA, only the structures at Camp Williams and Platteville remain in use by the Wisconsin Army National Guard.<sup>19</sup>

After World War II, the WIARNG sought to end its long-standing practice of renting armory space in cities lacking a state-owned facility and embarked on a joint armory construction program with the federal government. With the federal government picking up 75 percent of the cost, armories of two standard configurations were constructed in thirty-four Wisconsin cities between 1953 and 1963. Virtually all of these facilities remain in use today.<sup>20</sup>

### **Annual Training of the Wisconsin National Guard and the Development of Camp Williams**

As Wisconsin's National Guard grew and evolved throughout the 1800s, it became

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<sup>18</sup>Roy D. Keehn and the Illinois Armory Board, *The Illinois Armory Board Building Program: A Report Submitted to the Governor of Illinois and the 63<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly* (N.p.: 1934), 3-6; Works Progress Administration, *Report of the Progress of the WPA Program* (Washington, D.C.: WPA, various years/pages as follows): [1938] 70-71; [1939] 3-6, [1940] 80; Public Works Administration, *America Builds: The Record of the PWA* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1939), 203.

<sup>19</sup>*Report of the Progress of the WPA Program*, [1938] 70-71, [1939] 3-6, [1940] 80; *America Builds*, 203; Robert M. Fogelson, *America's Armories* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 196, 198; Dianna Everett, *Historic National Guard Armories: A Brief Illustrated Review of the Past Two Centuries* (Washington, D.C.: Historical Services Division, Office of Public Affairs, National Guard Bureau, n.d.), 33-34; "Will Build 10 New Armories," *WNGR* (November 1935): 1; "Armory Construction Over Until After Duration," *WNGR* 19:4 (July 1942): 7.

<sup>20</sup>"Historical and Architectural Survey of Selected Armories of the Wisconsin Army National Guard," Prepared by Heritage Research, Ltd., Menomonee Falls, WI (September 2005), 30-31.

important that camps be held for the purposes of advanced training. The state's Adjutant General recognized the value of such camps and suggested in 1875 that one be pursued. It was seven years before any action occurred. The first encampments were held in 1882 at Racine, Oshkosh, Devil's Lake and Oconomowoc. In 1885, Whitefish Bay hosted the summer encampment for the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion. The intent behind these early camps notwithstanding, many were considered to be an "outing," which sometimes included throwing men in the air with a blanket.<sup>21</sup>

Soon after the first camps were held, Adjutant General Chapman determined that it was important to develop a permanent encampment site. He focused in 1888 on the area around the small village of Camp Douglas in western Juneau County. General Chapman spent \$280 on 440 acres of land that he thought would work well for a rifle camp. The Guard started using the site in September 1888. Called "Camp Phillip Read" for the duration of the exercise, two men from each company in the state arrived for shooting exercises. Chapman subsequently sold the land to the state for the same price after the governor was authorized in 1889 to acquire up to 600 acres of land "...at or near Camp Douglas, in Juneau County, as a permanent campground and rifle range for the Wisconsin National Guard...".<sup>22</sup>

The camp was first used in 1889 when the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wisconsin Infantry arrived at Camp Douglas on 17 June for a six-day encampment. At the time, however, there were no roads. Soldiers had to march from the train to camp carrying "...a knapsack, haversack, canteen and a .45 caliber rifle, the combined weight causing the soldier to sink ankle deep in the sand" that covered the land between the railroad station and the camp. Arriving at the camp, the guardsmen found the following: (1) twelve shacks used as kitchens; (2) twelve sinks; (3) nine wells; (4) a range house; (5) a target house; and (6) the governor's cottage. Additionally, 153 wall tents were used, as were thirteen dining tents and nine hospital tents. There was no water system, baths, sewerage system or roads.<sup>23</sup>

The facility was originally known as the Wisconsin Rifle Range, after which it was called the Wisconsin Military Reservation. It was ultimately named Camp Williams for Lieutenant Colonel Richard R. Williams, who was a long-time quartermaster for the WIARNG. The camp also had an enviable rifle range and hosted in 1889 and 1890 shooting competitions for the U.S. Army. As noted, facilities offered by the early camp were nominal. In 1892, it was determined that better accommodations

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<sup>21</sup>"History of the Wisconsin National Guard, 3; "History of the Guard," *WNGR* (may 1937), 4.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*

should be provided. Thus brick warehouses were built in 1895 for the state quartermaster. Also built that year in the log cabin style was the officers' clubhouse, which is now used as the Wisconsin National Guard Museum.<sup>24</sup>

The camp evolved throughout the 1900s, 1910s and 1920s and reached a capacity of 8,000 troops. As well, ranges were developed that could accommodate any weapon in the WIARNG's arsenal. In 1924, the reservation contained 244 buildings – a number that included wooden latrines. Outside of the well-developed Quartermaster Area, many of these buildings were arranged in cantonment areas for each of the WIARNG's regiments and headquarters elements. A cantonment area is a temporary or semi-permanent site where troops are billeted for a particular event. Each regimental site contained wood-frame mess halls, latrines and regimental headquarters facilities. Soldiers continued to sleep in tents neatly arranged within their unit's cantonment area. These buildings were very rudimentary. Indeed, a 1927 article in the *Wisconsin National Guard Review* states that significant improvements for the year included the kitchens receiving concrete floors. Another 1927 project improved sanitary conditions by providing running water and sewage connections to the 1916-constructed, wood-frame kitchen buildings. In addition, the 128<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment's cantonment area received a wood-frame bathhouse for two of its three battalions. All of these buildings were constructed of wood and, as routinely reported in the *Review*, required a significant amount of annual repair.<sup>25</sup>

In 1954, the Wisconsin Air National Guard assumed responsibility for most of base – leaving the Quartermaster Area, a portion of the 127<sup>th</sup> and all of the 128<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment Cantonment Areas to the Wisconsin Army National Guard. The Air Guard in the late 1950s expanded runway capacity, constructed forty-three airmen's barracks and built a wide range of air support facilities such as fuel storage tanks, aircraft maintenance facilities and electronic navigation structures. The runway capacity ultimately reached 10,000 feet. The base was utilized for training by air squadrons from throughout the United States after these facilities were completed. In 1957, the Wisconsin Legislature renamed the Air Guard portion of Camp Williams as Volk Field in honor of Lieutenant Jerome Volk, who was the first Wisconsin Air

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<sup>24</sup>“Camp Williams Half a Century Old,” *WNGR* 16:4 (July 1939); “History of the Guard,” 4, 13.

<sup>25</sup>“Wisconsin Reservation Finest State Camp Ground in Country,” *WNGR* 1:1 (January 1924); 61; “Improvements Continued on Military Reservation,” *WNGR* 4:4 (June 1927): 16; “Improvements Made at Camp,” *WNGR* 5:1 (January 1928): 15; “Many Improvements at Camp Williams,” *WNGR* 6:4 (July 1929): 1; *Historical and Pictorial Review, National Guard and Naval Militia, State of Wisconsin, 1939* (Baton Rouge, LA: Army and Navy Publishing Company, 1939): xxii.

National Guard pilot killed in the Korean War.<sup>26</sup>

Both the Army and Air portions of the Camp Williams-Volk Field National Guard Training Center have continued to evolve to meet the needs of a rapidly changing military. The Quartermaster Area still contains many of its vintage 1895 brick warehouses. But the functionality of the area has been enhanced since the 1980s by the construction of a large Combined Support Maintenance Shop and United States Property and Fiscal Office building. The Air Guard had enhanced billeting throughout the post by barracks renovation and the construction of a large central billeting facility. It has also continued to modernize its airfield support structures and electronic navigation/communications assets.<sup>27</sup>

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement

1. Architectural Character: The built environment of the Camp Williams-Volk Field National Guard Training Center is largely located in distinct groups separated by open grass fields or partially wooded areas. Several of these areas date to the pre-World War II, army-oriented era of the facility. These groupings of buildings include the Quartermaster Area and the 127<sup>th</sup> and the 128<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment Cantonment areas (HABS No. WI-381-A and WI-381-B, respectively). These subcomplexes are located at the southwest corner of the base. A small cluster of buildings is located at the center of the built-up portion of the base and it includes the post headquarters and the Wisconsin National Guard Museum (HABS WI-381-C). Other built up areas generally are located near the center of the base and include two additional cantonment areas historically associated with the pre-World War II Wisconsin National Guards 105<sup>th</sup> Cavalry and 135<sup>th</sup> Medical regiments. A significant number of buildings were constructed by the Wisconsin Air National Guard in these portions of the base between the 1950s and the present.
2. Condition of Fabric: The Camp Williams-Volk Field National Guard Training Center has been maintained on an on-going basis for the training of military units. Consequently, the condition of the general facility is very

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<sup>26</sup>Robert Hoagenson, "The History of Camp Douglas, Wisconsin and Camp Williams-Volk Field," Graduate School Paper Presented to the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse (July 1965), 18-25.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

good. However, changes in the mission for the base have resulted in dramatic changes to the post's built environment. A WPA-era building program replaced most of the base's wood-frame structures with masonry buildings. A conversion of a majority of the base from an Army to an Air Force facility in 1954 resulted in the complete loss of its pre-World War II weapons ranges. And finally, the base's conversion into an airfield has resulted in the construction of numerous modern and sizeable airfield support facilities.

B. Setting:

The Camp Williams-Volk Field National Guard Training Center is located on a 2,336-acre complex adjacent to the Village of Camp Douglas, Juneau County Wisconsin. The base's south boundary coincides with Interstate 90/94. The general area is noted for picturesque rocky bluffs that rise from a generally flat plain. The southeast corner of the base is defined by one of these large outcroppings, known today as Target Bluff. The remainder of the post is flat and dominated by the camp's built environment and extensive runway complex. The surrounding terrain is rural and intermixed with farm fields and woods.

### PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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#### PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was sponsored by the Wisconsin Army National Guard and undertaken by Heritage Research, Ltd., a historical/environmental consulting firm located in Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin. The project was directed by Dr. John N. Vogel, while significant editorial contributions were made by both Dr. Vogel and Ms. Traci E. Schnell, M.A.. Dr. Vogel also accomplished the field photography and was assisted in that endeavour by Mr. Wayne Chandler of Mayfair Photography, Wauwatosa, Wisconsin. All photographs were archivally processed and printed by Mr. Chandler.