

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instruction in National Register Bulletin How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (formerly 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Building #29

other names/site number LW0182

2. Location

street & number 162 North Beacon Rd not for publication

city or town Walnut Ridge vicinity

state: Arkansas code: AR county: Lawrence code: 075 zip code: 72476

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official: [Handwritten Signature]

Date: 7/23/12

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
State or Federal agency or Tribal government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau or Tribal government

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

- entered in the National Register
determined eligible for the National Register
determined not eligible for the National Register
removed from the National Register
other, explain

Four horizontal lines for signature and date input.

Building #29  
Name of Property

Lawrence County, Arkansas  
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**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing.**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

"We've Gotta Get Tough": History of  
World War II Home Front Efforts in  
Arkansas, 1941-1946

**Number of contributing resources**  
**previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Function**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

DEFENSE/ air facility

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION/air-related

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: Double Closed Arch Truss Hangar-  
Demountable Type DH-1 (2 bays)

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Metal,

roof Metal

other \_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

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

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### 8. Statement of Significance

#### Applicable National Register Criteria

Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

#### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Military

Architecture

#### Period of Significance

1942-1946

#### Significant Dates

1942

#### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

#### Cultural Affiliation

#### Architect/Builder

Havens and Emerson, Engineers

Forcum-James, Contractor

#### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

#### Narrative Statement of Significance

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

### 9. Major Bibliographical References

#### Bibliography

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

#### Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

#

#### Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Wings of Honor Museum- Walnut Ridge  
Arkansas

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### 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property <1 acre

#### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1.	<u>1 / 5 /</u> Zone	<u>6 / 8 / 6 / 4 / 1 / 6 / /</u> Easting	<u>4 / 0 / 0 / 0 / 1 / 7 / 1 /</u> Northing
2.	<u>/ /</u> Zone	<u>/ / / / / / / /</u> Easting	<u>/ / / / / / / /</u> Northing
3.	<u>/ /</u> Zone	<u>/ / / / / / / /</u> Easting	<u>/ / / / / / / /</u> Northing
4.	<u>/ /</u> Zone	<u>/ / / / / / / /</u> Easting	<u>/ / / / / / / /</u> Northing

[ ] See continuation sheet

#### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

#### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Travis Ratermann  
organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date 7/23/2012  
street & number 323 Center St 1500 Tower Building telephone 501-324-9874  
city or town Little Rock state AR zip code 72201

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

#### Continuation Sheets

#### Maps:

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

#### Photographs

Representative images of the property.

#### Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

### Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name City of Walnut Ridge  
street & number 300 West Main St telephone 870-886-6638  
city or town Walnut Ridge state AR zip code 72476

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.* A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number.

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to range from approximately 18 hours to 36 hours depending on several factors including, but not limited to, how much documentation may already exist on the type of property being nominated and whether the property is being nominated as part of a Multiple Property Documentation Form. In most cases, it is estimated to average 36 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form to meet minimum National Register documentation requirements. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places, National Park Service, 1849 C St., NW, Washington, DC 20240.

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**National Register of Historic Places**  
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**Building #29**

Name of Property

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We've Gotta Get Tough": History  
of World War II Home Front  
Efforts in Arkansas, 1941-1946

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

**DESCRIPTION**

Walnut Ridge Army Air Force Base Building #29 is an excellent example of a United States Army Air Force constructed airplane hangar from the World War II era. While a fine example of World War II construction, it also relays the story of those who were stationed at the Walnut Ridge Army Air Field through World War II. Located near Walnut Ridge, Arkansas, at 162 North Beacon Road, Building #29 was constructed by the United States Army. This large, one-story, metal-framed hangar was built in 1942 and is one of five intact DH-1 plan hangars constructed in Arkansas left from this World War II era but the only one remaining at Walnut Ridge. The large one-story building rests on cast-concrete foundation, and has metal-framed walls and exterior cladding. Of the other hangars that were present in 1942, two have burned and the other one has been heavily altered in order to accommodate a new function. When completed in 1942, the Walnut Ridge Army Air Force Base hanger, designated Building #29, was constructed in using the Army Air Force design plans, known as a Demountable Type DH-1, similar to other US Army Air Force Hangars constructed during the World War II.

The site on which Walnut Ridge Army Air Force Base Building #29 is located is generally set on the northeast side of Walnut Ridge Regional Airport in Walnut Ridge, Arkansas. Surrounding the hangar on the northeast side is the original runway used by the Army Air Force Training service. Located to the Southeast and the Northwest there are cleared areas or vacant lots surrounding the hangar, while the Southwest elevation of Building #29 abuts North Beacon Road. Building #29 offers a remarkable contrast to the other nearby hangars and buildings, which are rectilinear with flat or gabled roofs.

**Northeast Elevation**

The front façade of Building #29 faces northeast and is situated on the elevation with the large door openings. It is clad with corrugated metal siding, which is also found on the other three sides of the hangar building. The two dominant architectural features of the Type DH-1 hangar are noticeable from this elevation. The first are the large fourteen manually operated doors mounted on tracks. Seven doors open to the left of the center support post, and seven to the right of the post. When open, the doors fit into a "pocket" which is directly in front of the lean-to on each side of the hangar. The "pocket" on the southeast corner of the hangar also contains a single aluminum door located near the southeast corner of the "pocket". The door consists of two upper panes and two lower panes. These four panes are located in the upper half of the door. The lower half of the door consist of only a single panel. A small shed roof covers both of the "pockets" and continues to project out off the front of the hangar between the two "pockets". The northeast elevations of the two lean-tos consist of only corrugated aluminum panels. The lean-tos are original to the building. The second architecturally significant feature is the closed-arch, double bowstring trussed roof with a central triangular point. This type of roofline is very typical of the Type DH-1 hangar used by the Army Air Force in the early 1940s.

**Southeast Elevation**

Moving right to left across the first floor of the lean-to addition there are three, eight-pane, casement windows surrounded by 12 fixed-panes for each casement window. However, only the center window of the three casement windows is visible from the outside of the building. The other two windows have been covered with corrugated metal on the outside of the building, but are still visible from inside of the lean-to. In the center of the lean-to, there are two, eight-over-one casement windows. To the left of those windows are four window

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units that are comprised of a centralized three-pane awning window with a fixed light of either side of the awning. In addition, as part of the window unit, there are five fixed-lights above and below the centralized awning window in the unit. To the left of the windows is a single, aluminum-door with four-panes of glass in the upper half of the door. The lower half of the door is a solid piece of aluminum. The lean-to is covered by an aluminum shed roof. The upper story of the hangar's southeast elevation is a small flat surface located between the top of where the shed roof meets the main portion of the hangar and the hangar's barrel vaulted roof. Within the flat area that spans the length of the hangar are eight evenly spaced windows units made up of 20 windows panes. The top row consist of ten fixed-pane windows, while the bottom row consist of a single fixed-pane followed by a awning window with three panes, then another single fixed-pane. The window pane arrangement then repeats for the last five window panes.

**Southwest Elevation**

The southwest elevation also consist of two masses, the first being the one-story lean-tos added to the addition at the time of construction and the second being the main airplane hangar mass. Working right to left, the lean-tos are constructed in three sections, two lower metal lean-tos and one slightly taller lean-to constructed of brick. The first section of the lean-to is located on the southwest corner and is clad in corrugated metal. The fenestration is limited in this section of the lean-to with only a central window opening that has ply-wood covering the inside of the window. To the left of the window opening is a single, aluminum, hollow-core door that opens inward to the left. A small-corrugated metal shed roof covers the entranceway while a corrugated metal shed roof covers this entire section of the lean-to. The second section is the tallest of the three sections, with more fenestration. This section of the lean-to is constructed of brick unlike the other two sections which are steel frame clad in corrugated metal. An aluminum, hollow-core door is located to the far right of this section and opens inward to the right. Located to the left of the door are and adjacent to the door frame is a column of fifteen structural glass blocks. Located to the left of the column of structural glass blocks are four windows openings, evenly spaced across this section of the lean-to. The first window in this section starting from the right consist of ninety-six structural glass blocks, while the middle two windows consist of sixty-four glass blocks. The fourth windows located to the far right of this section in a single stationary window with a metal awning above it. A shed roof also covered this section of the lean-to. There is a tall chimney located in the southwest corner of the lean-to, along the back of the lean-to but also along the exterior wall of the larger hangar mass. The third section of the lean-to is located adjacent to the second section only it is not as tall. The third section is equivalent to the height of the first section. However, the third section contains two windows and a doorway. The first window, a single pane stationary window, is located nearly five feet from where the second and third sections meet. Nearly thirty feet to the left of the window is a flush, aluminum, hollow-core door, which leads into the hangar. Just to the left of the door is another one-over-one, double-hung windows that also contains a window air conditioner unit. To the left of the windows is a thirty to forty foot span of exterior wall with no fenestration before coming to the northwest corner of the hangar.

The second massing, or the core of the building, is the actual airplane hangar. The visible portions of this mass are all located above the shed roof of the lean-tos. The second story contains very little fenestration with the exception of a few windows. Working right to left the first window is centrally located in the first archway of the roof. The window consists of a single stationary window, which is covered by an aluminum awning. Located to the left of the first window is the chimney, which protrudes through the lean-to roof and along the outer wall of the hangar. A second window is positioned to the left of the chimney and is located to the right of the first roof valley, where the arched roof meets the bottom of the central point. A third window is located to the left of the second roof valley, where the arched roof meets the bottom of the central point. The fourth

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and final window on the second mass is centrally located in the second archway of the roof. The windows are a mirrored image in either arched roof.

**Northwest Elevation**

The northeast elevation is a mirror image of the southeast elevation. The only difference is that all of the windows, except for one small part of the larger window, which was left exposed. The other metal window frames are still intact but have just been covered by metal siding, to preserve the frames from the weather. The second story windows are also a mirror image of the southeast elevation and are still intact.

**Integrity**

Though Building #29 had several of the of the windows covered by corrugated metal in order to save the cases, it still retains excellent integrity, and is able to convey the feeling of a airplane hangar that was present during the World War II years (1941-1946). The quality of the construction of the building in 1942 is still readily apparent. The building has not been heavily modified from its original design, other then the loss of the windsock, frame, and pole shown in original photographs. One other change is the addition of the brick office to the back of Building #29, which faces the street, not the runway. This area would have been clad in aluminum siding and the roof height would have been even with the lean-to roof. Even with the covering of the windows and the loss of the windsock, the integrity has not been compromised, as it is the last remaining hangar from the World War II period as it still is in alignment with the original airstrip constructed in 1942.

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**SIGNIFICANCE**

Building #29 near Walnut Ridge, Arkansas, is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with local significance under **Criterion A** for its association with military base construction in Arkansas and **Criterion C** for its association as a type DH-1 airplane hangar. Building #29 is also being nominated as part of the historic context "*We've Gotta Get Tough": History of World War II Home Front Efforts in Arkansas, 1941-1946*, under the air training facilities, hangars, runways, and associated buildings property type. Building #29 is a well-preserved example of military constructed hangar designed by Havens and Emerson out of Cleveland, Ohio, and built by Forcum-James of Dyersburg, Tennessee, during the buildup following America's entrance into World War II and continuing on in the war years. Designed as a "Type DH-1" double aircraft hangar by Havens and Ermerson, Building #29 was not a standard plan for the type DH-1 hangar. Usually set at 184' wide, Building #29 is 224' wide due to the addition of original lean-tos on each side of the hangar. Building #29 constructed by the Forcum-James Company<sup>1</sup> in 1942 features both cast-concrete floors and "closed-arched bays connected by a distinctive peaked mid-section and flanked with piered door pockets," which exemplifies the type of construction built by contractors for the United States military during this period. Although metal siding has concealed the windows of Building #29, the hangar still is significant for its associations with World War II-era construction in Arkansas.

**Elaboration**

The military has a long history in Arkansas. The area surrounding Fort Smith, Arkansas, has had military occupation since 1817. It was influential in the peace between the Cherokee and the Osage,<sup>2</sup> during the Mexican War as a supply outpost and during the Civil War. Other areas such as Arkansas Post were gaining notoriety during the Civil War for the Confederate built Fort Hindman, which was later destroyed by Union Troops in January 1863. Though Arkansas has had a long history of military occupation, it was not until World War II that Arkansas's role became even more prevalent as the US military branches, especially the Army Air Force, could be found in all corners of the state. The Army Air Force would construct seven new Army Air fields throughout Arkansas: Newport, Blytheville, Helena, Pine Bluff, Camden, Stuttgart, and Walnut Ridge.

Following the end of World War I, the United States military, including the Army Air Force went through a drastic demobilization. Between 1919 and 1938, all of the armed services went through lean budgetary years. However, "through various means and to various degrees they survived the lean years of the early 1920s and the Great Depression"<sup>3</sup> only to grow stronger and leaner in the 1930s. As part of that stronger and leaner mentality that grew out of the 1920s and 1930s, the airplanes that were manufactured were heavier and more powerful. This led to less new construction and more upgrades of existing facilities with more limited funding. However, in 1926 with the passage of the Air Corps Act of 1926 funding for ground facilities expanded

<sup>1</sup> Over the years, the Forcum-James Company had several names associated with the same company. In 1911, it started out as the Obion Cooperage Company of Obion, Tennessee. Then in 1914 it changed its name to the Forcum-James Company which is the contractor of record for Building #29. In the 1950's the company split with the larger portion becoming the Forcum Lannom Contractors LLC. <http://www.forcumlannom.com/heritage.html>

<sup>2</sup> Jeremy Lynch, "Fort Smith National Historic Site," *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture*. <http://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=4522>. (accessed September 1, 2010).

<sup>3</sup> Julie Webster, *Historical and Architectural Overview of Military Aircraft Hangars* (Champaign, IL: United States Army Construction Engineering Research Laboratory, 2001), 3-1.



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greatly from \$500,000 in FY28 to nearly \$5.4 million in FY30. It is also during this time, that standardized hangars would begin to be used as part of the "Five-Year Plan." Early on in organizing this standardized plan attempt, all hangars had to "measure about 110 x 120 or 240 ft."<sup>4</sup> It was also during this period at the plans for the "1929-A and -B, and 1930-A, -B, -D, and -E designs all had a gable roof and substantial piers at all four corners."<sup>5</sup> It is also at this time that a new standardized layout of base and airfields was designed by the Building and Grounds Office to replace the World War II standard.<sup>6</sup> Though the Five-Year Plan was slow to take off, the final two years of the Five-Year Plan brought two new bases and extensive improvements to three existing bases.<sup>7</sup> Yet, it was the beginning of a slow process in rebuilding the air arm of the US Army.

"The Second World War marks an immensely important period in the history of the U.S. Air Force. During the 6 short years of declared war in Europe, from 1939-1945, the U.S. Army Air Corps evolved from a second-tier air service, operating as an underappreciated subsidiary of the army, to a premiere air power of the World."

Until mid 1939, the United States made a conscious decision that it would maintain its neutrality as Germany began to rearm itself for what would be the occupation of Czechoslovakia in March of 1939 and then attack on Poland in September of 1939. Between September 1939 and March 1940, a period known as the "phony war" because there were no major hostile acts or no land operations attempted during this period<sup>8</sup>, the United States government was already beginning to "[anticipate] a major emergency, [and began] to [press] for further rearmament."<sup>9</sup> It was during this time that it became "quite clear to American political and military leadership that the Army Air Corps was substantially under-strength in comparison to other global powers."<sup>10</sup> The Chief of the Air Corps had stated in January 1939 that the United States Air Corps was fifth or sixth rate. When Germany invaded Poland in September 1939, the Air Corps had only about 800 first line combat aircraft and 25,000 men, while the German Air Force had 4,000 planes and 500,000 men.

It is at this time, that troop preparation was beginning to increase. It was also beginning to increase in the Air Corps as well. By the time tanks rolled through Poland in 1939, the US Congress had already authorized the expansion of the Air Corps to a 24-group strength of 6,000 planes. As Adolf Hitler's *blitzkrieg* crumbled much of France in the mid-1940, President Roosevelt called for an additional 50,000 planes per year. Aircraft production soared from 3,611 in 1940 to peak at 96,270 per year in 1944. All told, the U.S. produced some 296,000 airplanes for WWII.<sup>11</sup>

In order to fulfill this need Congress responded with the First Aviation Objective of 54 combat groups.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 3-9.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 3-11.

<sup>8</sup> "Phony War." *Encyclopædia Britannica*. 2010. Encyclopædia Britannica Online.

<<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/457343/Phony-War>>. (accessed Sep. 01, 2010).

<sup>9</sup> Lenore Fine and Jesse A. Remington, *The Corps of Engineers: Construction in the United States* (Washington D.C.: Center for Military History, U.S. Army, 2003), 108.

<sup>10</sup> Webster, 4-1.

<sup>11</sup> Harold Johnson, "The Massive Buildup," *Wings of Honor*, <http://www.wingsofhonor.org/Pages/Task.aspx> (accessed June 11, 2012).

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However, by the time it passed congress there was a Second Aviation Objective, which called for 84 combat groups. In order to achieve these levels both personnel and equipment the Army Air Corps was supported by new funding levels.<sup>12</sup>

Although World War II began for the United States in December of 1941, Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Department of War had been preparing for war since early 1939. By the summer of 1940, the Army Air Corps planned for an enormous expansion of combat aircraft training facilities. By September 1940, the President's Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense had begun collecting information about potential sites for locating air-training facilities.

A number of factors dictated where the AAF would locate any given training airfield. Climate, topography, population, access to railroads, distance from coasts and ease of land acquisition all came into play. In Arkansas, the efforts of the Governor, and U.S. Senators and Representatives were also instrumental.

The immensity of scale and rapidity of completion of WWII facilities nationwide is very difficult to overstate. All over the nation, land was acquired for the construction of industrial, military and support facilities meant to train and arm a vast armed force necessary to fight a land, sea and air war on two fronts. The construction of Air Corps airfields illustrates the spectacular feat of construction and organization on the American home front. In 1939, the Army Air Corps had seventeen airfields in the entire United States. By late 1945, the AAF had nearly *eight hundred* airfields in the continental United States. Many of these airfields were immense. The Walnut Ridge Army Air Field in Arkansas covered 3,096.22 acres; its five auxiliary fields combined covered another 2,623.9 acres.

As the United States moved closer to combat readiness, so did many of the towns located throughout Arkansas including Fort Smith (Camp Chaffee), North Little Rock (Camp Robinson) and Oakhaven (Southwestern Proving Grounds).<sup>13</sup> These areas were either already escalating their preparedness or were being pushed to be completed in early 1942 especially with the need for munitions which would be arriving via the Southwestern Proving Ground in Hempstead County, Arkansas. With the need for munitions, there was also going to be a need for pilots to fight in combat or escort bomber runs. This area was also beginning to escalate its production as early as June of 1940 as part of the larger 273-combat group plan.

By 1940, the State of Arkansas had a non-college civilian pilot training unit in Pine Bluff, with at least the hope of another unit in the Hot Springs, Arkansas, area<sup>14</sup>. Yet, there was also a larger contingent of college-level pilot courses being taught throughout the state in 1940. Colleges such as Henderson State, Hendrix, Ouachita, and the University of Arkansas already had at least 10 students taking the course, which included "72 hours of ground instruction and from 35 to 45 hours in the air - sufficient to qualify students for private

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 4-2.

<sup>13</sup> Arkansas was home to its share of WWII facilities. A short, incomplete list of the largest includes the Naval Ammunition Depot outside Camden, Jacksonville Ordnance Works outside Jacksonville, Southwestern Proving Ground near Hope, civilian operated Primary Flying Schools at Camden, Helena, and Pine Bluff, Basic Flying Schools at Newport and Walnut Ridge, and Advanced Flying Schools at Blytheville and Stuttgart. Each of these flying schools had from three to five auxiliary airfields. The Army operated huge training camps at Camp Chaffee near Fort Smith and Camp Robinson near North Little Rock. Adams Field at Little Rock served as an Air Transport Command (ATC) Air Freight Terminal, was home to the 12th Ferrying Service Detachment, and hosted AAF Glider Training in 1943.

<sup>14</sup> "Air Training Unit for Pine Bluff," *Arkansas Gazette*, 28 June 1940, 1.

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pilot's licenses."<sup>15</sup>

The military also took notice of the program by early 1941, as military engagement into World War II became imminent. By July 6, 1941, the War Department had already approved a proposal for a pilot training program in Helena.<sup>16</sup> The new training school would be able to administer to 100 men with the expectation that enrollment would reach 200 cadets. This flying school would also have "two auxiliary fields [that] will be made available in a radius of from five to seven miles of the base."<sup>17</sup>

This system of creating airplane-training facilities throughout the United States, with one or two auxiliary fields, was typical of the pre-World War II build up. It became an even bigger system once the war was brought to the shores of Hawaii on December 7, 1941, with the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Arkansas would become "one of the army's major centers for the basic training of aviation cadets."<sup>18</sup> To meet these goals set out by the Army Air Corps, for training new pilots, the Air Corps would have to have more new airfields.

By the middle of May, Arkansas had already had two contract schools in Pine Bluff and Helena for training cadets, with a third one under construction in Camden. At this same time the filing of condemnation proceedings were taking place to acquire land north of Stuttgart, Arkansas, as well as area between Tuckerman and Newport and then another site near Lake Village, to be used for new army flying schools.<sup>19</sup>

On February 28, 1942, a new Primary Flight School was authorized at Camden and on March 14, 1942, a new Basic Flight School was authorized at Dyersburg, Tennessee, and on March 30, 1942, an Advanced Twin-Engine School at Blytheville, Arkansas. On April 30, 1942, a new Advanced Twin-Engine School was authorized at Stuttgart, Arkansas, and on May 1, 1942, a new Basic Flight School was authorized at Newport, Arkansas.

This rapid expansion continued, and ultimately, the three Flight Training Commands established fifty-six Contract Primary Flight Schools, twenty-six Basic Flight Schools, forty-four Advanced and Specialized Schools, and one hundred fifty-one College Training Detachments for WWII aircrew training.

Meanwhile, as the survey for the Dyersburg Basic Flying School was nearing completion, it was determined five-million cubic yards of dirt would have to be moved to build the airfield there. Washington said to find a new site quickly.<sup>20</sup>

In early April 1942, a Board of three Army Air Forces Officers, Lt. Col. Burton Hovey, Jr., Lt. Col. John R. Cume, Jr., and Capt. Blanton Russell took off in search of a new location. Their flight brought them over an

<sup>15</sup> "180 Arkansas Students in Pilots Courses," *Arkansas Gazette*, 1 August 1940, 5.

<sup>16</sup> "Pilot School at Helena Approved," *Arkansas Gazette*, 6 July 1941, 2.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> "Arkansas to be Center of Flier Training," *Arkansas Gazette*, 15 May 1942.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> Johnson, Harold "The Role of Walnut Ridge." Wings of Honor. <http://www.wingsofthonor.org/Pages/WRAAF.aspx> (accessed June 12, 2012).

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area just northeast of Walnut Ridge, Arkansas, which looked promising. Returning by car the next day, the Board, along with the Army Corps of Engineers from Little Rock, looked over the site, and checked on the schools, housing, utilities and transportation.

The Board was favorably impressed with the Walnut Ridge location, and on April 15, 1942, recommended it be substituted for the Dyersburg site. As the recommendation moved up the chain of command, planning and surveying continued for the site at Walnut Ridge. The Board's recommendation was approved, and construction work on the Walnut Ridge Army Air Field (WRAAF) began on June 20, 1942. By July 2, 1942, Forcum-James Construction Co. had already begun grading, draining and applying sod the 3,200 acres to be included in the airfield. It was stated in the *Pocahontas Star Herald* that this portion of construction would be completed in forty-days.<sup>21</sup>

A tract of land consisting of 3096.22 acres was taken for the project at a purchase price of \$305,075. There were 58 improvements, including the Moran School on the property. Like all of the other training schools throughout Arkansas the Walnut Ridge Army Air Force base also consisted of five auxiliary air fields located at Biggers, Beech Grove, Bono, Pocahontas and Walcott, which bought up another 2,623.9 acres for these airfields.

The Air Field was activated on August 15, 1942, with the arrival of the initial contingent of key military personnel. Ten days later, 100 troops arrived, but there was no housing available on the air field, so these troops were transported to and from the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp, located at five-mile springs, north of Pocahontas for the first 30 days.<sup>22</sup>

Meanwhile the first three classes of Aviation Cadets programmed for Walnut Ridge were sent to Blytheville, which was being built as an Advanced Twin Engine School. Blytheville was scarcely any better prepared than Walnut Ridge. Circus tents were utilized for operations headquarters and classrooms. The runways were not ready, so flying was done from oil-coated dirt strips. With everything still coming together at the Army Airfield in Walnut Ridge, Building #29 was part of that construction and was constructed by the Forcum-James Construction Company.

Building #29, is a Type DH-1 hangar and has a very distinctive overall look to it. According, to a study conducted in 1999 by the United States Army Construction Engineering Research Laboratory, Type DH-1 hangars were typically found at bases developed during what was known as the 84-group plan expansion. Of this 84-group plan expansion, twenty new airfields were constructed. It is stated that these twenty new bases were already being considered by the summer of 1941. Following the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the military enacted the 273-group plan, with the addition of fifty new bases. It is more likely that the base construction was started as part of this plan, but held on to the design plans associated with the 84-group plan.<sup>23</sup>

Finally, near the end of September 1942, the Southeast Training Command at Maxwell Field clarified the situation by announcing 102 Aviation Cadets and 3 Student Officers from Decatur, Alabama, and 20 Aviation

<sup>21</sup> *Pocahontas Star Herald*, July 2, 1942, 1.

<sup>22</sup> Captain Charles D. Baylis, *Wings Over America: Basic Flying School Class Book* (Baton Rouge, LA: Army and Navy Publishing Co., Inc., 1943), 1.

<sup>23</sup> Webster, 4-9 - 4-11.

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Cadets from Camden, Arkansas, would be sent to Walnut Ridge for Basic Flight Training. Once these cadets began training, Building #29 would become their aircraft's home for all problem solving and mechanical repairs.

The first Student Officers and Aviation Cadets in Class 43-B began training at Walnut Ridge at 1:00 P.M on October 12, 1942. In just under 21 months, 5,310 students entered training and 4,641 graduated. Forty-Two students, instructors and passengers were killed in training. The last class graduated on June 27, 1944. Between January 1941 and August 1945, 312,911 Aviation Cadets and Student Officers entered the United States Army Air Force (USAAF) Flight Training Program. About 3.4% of the flight students graduating from Basic Flight Schools between December 12, 1942, and June 27, 1944, received their training at the AAFBFS at Walnut Ridge.

On September 1, 1944, the WRAAF was transferred to the Department of the Navy and was known as the Marine Corps Air Facility (MCAF), Walnut Ridge. The Marine Corps trained for only a brief time, using SBD-5's and FG-1D Corsair's. VMF-513 transferred to Walnut Ridge on September 14, 1944, and then moved to Mojave, California, on December 4, 1944. Never a thriving place, the station newspaper referred to it as "MCAF - Outpost of Charm and Seclusion." It would not take long before the Marine Corps Air Facility at Walnut Ridge was decommissioned March 15, 1945.<sup>24</sup>

Following the end of World War II and the demobilization of many of the aircraft constructed between 1941- and 1945, the Walnut Ridge Army Air force base and Building #29 were used as part of one of the "largest post-war aircraft salvage facilities operated by the War Assets Administration."<sup>25</sup> Nearly 10,000 "warbirds" were flown into Walnut Ridge before they were sold, scrapped, or melted down. By 1948 the War Assets Administration had been retired and by 1950 the land was returned to the original owners with the remaining airport infrastructure was deeded to the City of Walnut Ridge for what would soon be the Walnut Ridge Airport, which is still in operation today.<sup>26</sup>

Yet, while the building continues to tell the story of those that trained at Walnut Ridge and worked in Building #29, the architecture and engineering associated with Building #29 is also a significant part of the overall atmosphere at the air base. The "two steel-truss, closed-arch bays connected by the distinctive peaked mid-section and flanked by the large piered pocket doors"<sup>27</sup> are distinctive to 1941-1942 year period of military development during the military build up prior to the United States' entrance into World War II.

<sup>24</sup> Harold Johnson, "Walnut Ridge Army Flying School," *Encyclopedia of Arkansas*. Accessed on June 13, 2012.

<sup>25</sup> "War Assets Administration Warbird Salvage Facility," *Walnut Ridge Army Flying School Museum*. <http://www.walnutridge-aaf.com/board.html> (Accessed July 16, 2012).

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Webster, 4-7.

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Building #29, Steel Airplane Hangar, is one of the last surviving original buildings of the former Walnut Ridge Army Air Field, and stands as a proud reminder of the significant role Walnut Ridge – and Arkansas – played in training pilots and in other supporting roles for WWII. The hangar played an integral role in keeping the airfield's training planes in an airworthy condition during a perilously crucial time in our nation's history. "By the end of the war, the Air Force was operating out of a network of sophisticated air fields, training bases, air depots that remain the nucleus of its infrastructure today."<sup>28</sup> Therefore, Building #29 near Walnut Ridge, Arkansas, is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with local significance under **Criterion A** for its association with military base construction in Arkansas and **Criterion C** for its association as a type DH-1 airplane hangar. Building #29 is also being nominate as part of the historic context "*We've Gotta Get Tough": History of World War II Home Front Efforts in Arkansas, 1941-1946*, under the air training facilities, hangars, runways, and associated buildings property type.

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**GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

At the southeast corner of Building #29, located along North Beacon Road, go to UTM 15 S. 686424 E. 4000134. Go northwest to UTM point 15 S. 686375 E. 4000180. Then go northeast UTM point 15 S. 686404 E. 4000209. Then turn southeast to UTM point 15 S. 686453 E. 400161. Then return to the original UTM point at UTM 15 S. 686424 E. 4000134.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The boundary contains the land that is currently associated with the Building #29.





**Building #29, Walnut Ridge, Lawrence County, Arkansas**



UTM  
15, 686416, 4000171

**Building #29, Walnut Ridge, Lawrence County, Arkansas**



UTM  
15, 686416, 4000171









