

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



419

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 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 U.S. Naval Reserve Training Center (NRTC)
other names/site number Navy Operational Support Center Nashville, Naval Reserve Armory, Reserve Training Building (RTB)

2. Location

street & number 1515 Davidson St. NA not for publication
city or town Nashville NA vicinity
state Tennessee code TN county Davidson code 037 zip code 37201

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 for 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.)

E. Patrick Nighthawk May 20, 2011
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register.
 See continuation sheet
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)

James [Signature] Signature of the Keeper 7/12/2011 Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)
See continuation sheet.

- 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 count)

| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|
| 1 | | buildings |
| | | sites |
| 2 | 1 | structures |
| | | objects |
| 3 | 1 | Total |

Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DEFENSE/military facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Nautical Moderne

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE
walls CONCRETE; METAL, Steel

roof METAL, Steel
other METAL

Narrative Description

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

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.

Criteria Considerations N/A

(Mark "x" in all 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 grave
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1948-1949

Significant Dates

1948, 1949

Significant Person

NA

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Architect/Builder

Keeble, Edwin A.

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): N/A

- 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: _____

U.S. Naval Reserve Training Center
Name of Property

Davidson County, TN
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 2.86 acres Nashville East 311 NW

UTM References

(place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 16 523303 4002214
Zone Easting Northing
2 _____

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing

4 _____

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(See Continuation Sheet)

Boundary Justification

(See Continuation Sheet)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Hallie A. Fieser (Graduate Research Assistant) and Elizabeth Moore (Projects Coordinator)
organization MTSU Center for Historic Preservation date January 24, 2011
street & number Middle Tennessee State University, Box 80 telephone (615) 898-2947
city or town Murfreesboro state TN zip code 37130

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 **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

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

Property Owner

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

name See continuation sheet
street & number _____ telephone _____
city or town _____

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 listing. 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.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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7. NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

The U.S. Naval Reserve Training Center (NRTC) is located in Shelby Park on the northeastern bank of the Cumberland River in Nashville, Davidson County, Tennessee. The Reserve Training Building (RTB) is the principal building in the nomination and was designed by Nashville architect Edwin A. Keeble as a two story, steel clad modified Butler hut armory building with a Nautical Moderne central projection which closely resembles the prow of a ship, complete with a large yardarm (flagpole) extending from a curved deck above the second floor. The "prow" of the building faces south toward Davidson Street and the Cumberland River. The structure has an overall east-west linear plan that extends from both sides of the central projection. A 1949 Armory addition is located on the west end of the building, extending toward the south from the south façade of the 1948 building. The walls and roof are comprised of standing seam steel sheets, and the structure is situated on a concrete block foundation. According to 1982 architectural plans, the RTB underwent renovation that included the replacement or covering of all windows c. 1982 with either new double-glazed metal windows or new insulated metal panels. Replacement windows follow similar stylistic patterns of the originals and original openings remain. The interior of the building reflects the nautical theme of the exterior, including narrow stairs with rails wrapped in white rope and doors featuring porthole windows that closely resemble the galleys of a naval ship. The property is in good condition and not currently in use. Despite alterations and replacements, the RTB retains much of the original layout, design, materials and location.

The RTB is one of three contributing resources in the complex, located within the boundaries of Nashville's historic Shelby Park. A contributing dressed-stone retaining wall of fieldstone separates the building from the steep slope at the rear of the property. The c. 1948 retaining wall runs along the north elevation of the property, curving at the northeast and northwest corners before continuing along the northern ends of the east and west elevations. A contributing 1948 single story, concrete block, shed-roofed transformer house is utilitarian in design and sits within the hill at the north of the property, between the retaining wall and the bounding and non-contributing chain-link fence.

1. Reserve Training Building (1948, 1949, contributing building)

Located in Shelby Park, and constructed by the Navy in 1948, the Reserve Training Building (RTB) is a variation of Art Moderne called Nautical Moderne. Basic elements of this style include the familiar horizontal lines, expanses of windows, and overall streamlined appearance of Moderne design. Nautical Moderne includes more nautical details such as porthole windows, and in the case of the nominated building, the prow and deck. Featuring a modified T plan, the building rests on a 2.86-acre site and is bordered by Davidson Road to the south, and 336-acre Shelby Park to the east, north, and west.¹ The entire facility faces the Cumberland River to the south and "the overall plan is linear on an east-west axis, with shorter flanks extending southward

¹ Metro Nashville Tax Assessment Maps, available online.

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on the west end of the building for the 1949 Armory addition, and at the midpoint of the original 1948 training center.”² The entire building rests on a concrete foundation and is constructed of standing seam steel panels from Butler hut buildings. Constructed from steel building parts prefabricated by Butler Manufacturing Co., founded in Kansas City, Missouri, all exterior walls and roof are framed and enveloped in steel.³

EXTERIOR

The south façade is the most distinctive of the building, featuring forty-four bays and a large projection at the center designed to resemble the prow of a ship. “The ‘bow’ of the building, which looks onto the Cumberland River, is built to resemble the nose of a heavy warship, ploughing through the waters—complete even to a captain’s bridge above prow, with a signal-hoist and yardarm.”⁴ The basement level of the building is fully visible on this portion of the building due to the terrain. The two-story curved extension, constructed of concrete masonry block, features a blank concrete wall on the basement floor, a band of three-light vertical metal-and-glass hopper and pivoted windows on the first floor, and a flat deck on the roof of the first story with metal-and-glass hopper and pivoted windows on the façade of the second story. A railing that furthers the appearance of a ship is present around the deck. The windows of the ship’s prow are replacements that date to c. 1982, but are set within original openings and resemble the bands of metal-and-glass windows of the original structure. The tip of the prow nearly reaches Davidson Road, and is only separated by a chain link and barbed wire fence.

The east and west elevations of the central projection contain bands of four- and five-light metal-and-glass hopper and pivoted windows on the first floor. These are also replacement and date to c. 1982, but are set within original openings and resemble the metal-and-glass windows of the original structure. The west elevation of the central projection has three four-light metal-and-glass hopper and pivoted windows on the first floor. Three entrances are located on the west elevation of the central projection, two on the first floor with concrete stairs leading from the parking area up, and one on the basement level. The first floor entrances are replacement double metal doors with small windows. The basement entrance contains double metal doors with larger single-light windows.

The south façade of the east-west wing of the building on either side of the ship projection originally featured a band of four-light vertical metal-and-glass windows across the entire façade (see figure 4). These windows are no longer extant, having been replaced with plain metal panels c. 1982. Original window openings, however, are evident beneath these panels. Some replacement windows have been placed in these panels, mainly two-light metal-and-glass awning

² *Naval Reserve Force Cultural Resources Survey: Naval Reserve Center Nashville, Tennessee*. Austin, TX: Hardy-Heck-Moore Inc. for Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southern Division, 2004, 26-27.

³ Quonset: Metal for A Modern Age. “The Huts.” Alaska Design Forum. <http://www.quonsethuts.org/huts/index.htm> (accessed September 16, 2010).

⁴ “New Naval Reserve Armory Opens Here.” *Nashville Banner*, March 9, 1949: 1-2.

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windows and six-over-six double-hung vinyl windows. At the west end of the south façade is the 1949 Armory projection. Metal paneling covers the original window bands, but one one-over-one awning window is located on this wall.

The three elevations of the building are less architecturally distinctive than the façade. The east elevation features another set of entry doors, which are c. 1982 metal security doors with small windows that replaced an original set of wood doors. This entrance is centered and flanked by “metal-sash windows to the north, and metal siding covering the windows on the south.”⁵ The metal windows are c. 1982 five-light metal-and-glass hopper windows.

The north elevation faces into the hillside and the stone retaining wall behind the facility. Original openings are currently covered with c. 1982 metal panels, much like on other facades, although some c. 1982 two-light metal-and-glass windows are scattered along the elevation. A central gable projects from the side gable roof with three three-light metal-and-glass hopper windows in the gable. Along the western half of the east-west axis, a slight shed roof extension provides attic space for the structure. At the west end of the north elevation, the 1949 flat roof Armory extension projects slightly to the north. Along the north and east elevations of this projection are boarded multi-light windows. A small shed-roof porch is located at the east end of the north elevation. Two single metal doors are located along this elevation.

The west elevation of the building is the 1949 one-story Armory. Like the rest of the building, the Armory is sheathed in metal and has windows covered over c. 1982. Around 1980 a small, metal shed roof and carport was added to this elevation. The shed roof of the carport rests on the stone retaining wall holding the hillside. Beneath the carport, on the Armory, are a set of metal entry doors and a set of four four-light metal-and-glass hopper and pivoted windows. A single garage-door entrance is located on this elevation. The gable of the 1948 portion of the RTB is visible above the flat roof of the Armory.

INTERIOR

The interior of the RTB continues the Nautical Moderne detailing. Metal doors featuring porthole windows are located throughout the building. Additionally, the staircases are narrow and steep, emulating the galley of a ship. In the prow extension, the metal railing for the staircase is even wrapped in white rope, furthering the nautical theme. Most of the floors are concrete, walls drywall, and ceilings either drywall or acoustic tile. Drywall covers many of the original window openings.

The first floor of the RTB features rooms to the north and south of one long hallway, which extends the length of the original building, and into the 1949 extension to the west. Fifteen rooms and a

⁵ Ibid., 27.

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stair hall are currently located to the north of the hallway. Originally, there were thirteen rooms and a stair hall, but one of the larger rooms is now partitioned into three. On the south side of the hall, there are currently eleven rooms and the large drill hall. Originally on the south side of the hall were nine rooms and the large drill hall, but partitions have been added in two of the larger spaces. The ship's prow contains a large drill hall/gymnasium that is open to both the first and second floors. In the bow of the ship on the first floor are six rooms, a corridor, and a stair hall. Double doors on the west side of the prow lead onto the balcony that circles the front of the building.

The west corridor of the 1948 portion of the building leads into the 1949 Armory on the first floor. This extension stretches from north to south with one large room at the northern end, a large room in the middle, and several partitioned spaces on the southern end. The south end was originally one large room. These rooms were undesignated on the original plan, but have been labeled diesel shop, metal shop, and gunnery on 1970s plans. Plans from 1985 label the spaces as engine room, garage, and multi-media room/library, as the southern room was divided into two rooms at that time. The partitions were added sometime after 1985 and were heavily damaged in the flood of May 2010.

The second floor features a linear layout, as there is no second story for the 1949 addition. Instead of a long hallway connecting rooms, like on the first floor, each room here is connected to another room, with only short halls to the east side of the ship extension. Four rooms with angled "attic-like" ceilings connect to each other to the west side of the ship extension. To the east side, eight rooms of various sizes comprise the remainder of the building. The halls and rooms have concrete floors, drywall walls, and acoustic tile and plaster ceilings. No original floor plans have been located from the linear portion of the second floor, but it appears that some attic space has been converted into more functional areas. In addition, repairs were made to the second floor after arson in 1972 and 1973. The ship extension retains its original layout on the second floor. The drill hall is open to the first floor and has a balcony that overlooks the space on the southern end of the drill hall. In the current and historic floor plan, the south end of the drill hall provides access to three rooms and a stair hall.

The only basement space is located under the drill hall and ship prow extension. Basement space consists of concrete and tile floors, concrete support columns, drywall walls, and drywall ceilings, much of which was damaged and removed due to flooding in May 2010. The concrete support columns and concrete floor remain in place.

While the space of the RTB has been adapted over the years, the original layout is mostly extant. Most of the walls are non-load bearing, constructed of wood framing and drywall, and some partition walls were added later to further divide the space. Many of these walls, both original and added, suffered damage from flooding in May of 2010, but concrete structural components remain intact. The first floor suffered some damage and will require the replacement of some material,

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while the walls in the small basement space were almost completely lost to flood damage. Remediation efforts are currently underway.

2. Transformer House (1948, contributing structure)

A one-story, concrete block, flat-roofed transformer house is located on the hillside to the north of the Reserve Training Building. It sits on a concrete block foundation between the retaining walls and bounding chain-link fence. The transformer house has a metal double-door entrance on the south elevation and metal vents on the east and west elevations.

3. Retaining Wall (1948, contributing structure)

A dressed-stone retaining wall runs along the rear, or north, elevation of the RTB. The wall retains the hillside behind the structure and curves at the northeast and northwest corners before continuing around the sides of the building.

4. Chain-link Fence (c. 2009, non-contributing structure)

A chain-link and barbed-wire fence was constructed around the site in 2009 when the Navy moved their operations out of the RTB.

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The U.S. Naval Reserve Training Center (NRTC) is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C for its local architectural significance. Constructed in 1948 and 1949, the two story Reserve Training Building (RTB), the principal building in the nomination, is a “modified Type B” Butler Hut that the Navy used for many armories/training centers. Much of the building is composed of metal Butler buildings, but historic plans show that architect Edwin A. Keeble of Nashville made this a unique resource when he designed the prow, making a ship-shaped building. A report commissioned by the Southern Division of the Naval Facilities Engineering Command noted that “The design of the building, with its ship’s prow wing extension, is unique within the Naval Reserve construction program, although its general nautical theme was referenced elsewhere in the 1940s Hut Armories.”⁶ This is an excellent example of programmatic architecture in Nashville. An addition on the west was in the plans but was not built until 1949. In the 1980s a small breezeway/garage was added on the west elevation and there have been some interior changes. Overall, the building retains its integrity.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

As the “ship’s prow” indicates, the history of the Naval Reserve and the construction and design of the Reserve Training Building (RTB) are closely intertwined. Created “to provide trained personnel to supplement the Active Force in war, national emergency, or when otherwise needed,” Congress officially established the Naval Reserve Force on March 3 of 1915 and formally organized the U.S. Naval Reserve on August 19, 1916.⁷ By the end of World War I, reservist numbers reached 330,000. Additional Naval Reserve Acts in 1925 and 1938 added personnel, facilities, and organization leading up to World War II. The Naval Reserve played a large role during World War II, with over seventy-five percent of the 3,220,000 persons on active duty in the Navy coming out of the Naval Reserve.⁸ A great influx of reservists called for additional training facilities.

In the post-WW II years, Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal lobbied for and eventually got an enhanced Naval Reserve program. This program had improved training for the reserves and included expanding and building new reserve buildings. The original effort called for the construction of fifty-six permanent new reserve centers. However, responding to funding concerns and a war-weary public, an alternate building program was established that allowed for faster and less expensive construction. As building materials were still in short supply in the immediate post-war years, the plan was to use surplus materials, such as Butler buildings, Quonset huts, and other pre-fabricated metal buildings. These new buildings were called “Hut Armories” and were intended to be temporary, to be replaced with permanent construction when funds were available. Generally, Navy specifications called for using the pre-fabricated buildings and adding a more appealing façade or entry (head house) to the building. New Naval Reserve buildings were to be

⁶ *Naval Reserve Force Cultural Resources Survey: Naval Reserve Center Nashville, Tennessee*, 30.

⁷ Department of the Navy, *Naval Orientation* (Washington D.C.: U.S. GPO, 1991), 15-1—15-2.

⁸ *Ibid*, 15-1.

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erected near population centers and be near good transportation. The new centers did not have to be near the ocean.⁹

In 1949, the Naval Reserve had 300 training centers built over a four-year period (1946-1949) of which 193 were Hut Armories. The centers could include primary and secondary training buildings, garage facilities, storage buildings, and small arms ranges. The primary training building, like the nominated property, typically had classrooms, administrative rooms, and assembly rooms. This was a short lived program and after 1949 there was no new construction until 1953.¹⁰

Nashville's NRTC is one of the 193 Hut Armories constructed during this building program. Built in 1948-1949, the NRTC in Shelby Park officially opened on March 9, 1949.¹¹ A common trend across the nation was to locate urban training centers either in a municipal park or on the outskirts of town near existing military facilities.¹² Following this trend, the Navy and the City of Nashville selected a site in Shelby Park, locating the center in a municipal park away from busy commercial and residential areas in the city. Originally comprised of more than 361 acres (currently approximately 336 acres), Shelby Park first opened as an amusement park at the turn of the twentieth century. The land officially re-opened as a public park on July 4, 1912. Shelby Park was not a stranger to military training, as sources indicate that the grounds were utilized as a boat assault training area during World War II.¹³

Following selection of Shelby Park as the location, the Navy agreed to a lease from Nashville's Board of Park Commissioners (now the Metropolitan Board of Parks and Recreation) on October 25, 1946. The Navy appropriated \$225,000 so that the training facility could be in use by the summer of 1948. Nashville's first Naval Reserve unit—comprised of seventy-five World War II veterans—was established later in 1946.¹⁴ This new reserve unit met "first at Vanderbilt University's old gym, and then the old officer's club building at the Thompson Lane Classification Center," according to a *Nashville Banner* newspaper article declaring its opening.¹⁵ The 2004 Cultural Resources Survey prepared by Hardy-Heck-Moore, Inc., out of Austin, TX, notes another location, the Vanderbilt Hospital Amphitheater, as the unit's first meeting place.¹⁶ Following Navy orders, three surface divisions were formed and after only two months, the reserve unit had 190 men.¹⁷

⁹ *Naval Reserve Force Cultural Resources Survey: Naval Reserve Center Nashville*, 14.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 15.

¹¹ "New Naval Reserve Armory Opens Here." *Nashville Banner*, March 9, 1949: 1-2. "History of the Navy Reserve." Department of Navy, Navy Reserves. <http://www.navyreserve.navy.mil/Lists/Formedia/Attachments/11/Timeline.pdf> (accessed November 24, 2010).

¹² *Naval Reserve Force Cultural Resources Survey: Naval Reserve Center Nashville*, 19.

¹³ *Ibid*, 28.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 28.

¹⁵ "New Naval Reserve Armory Opens Here." *Nashville Banner*, March 9, 1949: 1-2.

¹⁶ *Naval Reserve Force Cultural Resources Survey: Naval Reserve Center Nashville*, 29.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 28.

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Serving as the main Naval Reserve training and organizational center in Nashville, the reservists of the NRTC learned to assist active duty forces should global or international conflict arise. The Nashville NRTC served the Nashville and Mid-South region and prepared reservists primarily in three surface divisions for duty aboard surface vessels. Another extant facility, located on a military base in Millington near Memphis, was established in 1942 to train reservists in the Mid-South region for naval aviation duties.¹⁸ More recent Naval Reserve Centers have been built in Knoxville and Chattanooga.

The Nashville NRTC not only trained reservists to assist active duty forces, but they also provided domestic aid and assistance during natural disasters. Major floods of the Cumberland River in 1948 and 1950 required their community involvement. Reservists trained at the Naval Reserve provided relief for flood victims through the evacuation of household goods and livestock for local farmers in areas throughout Middle Tennessee. Reservists also assisted with clean up from hurricanes and earthquakes.

The first major military contribution of the Nashville post was during the Korean War. A report notes that "75 percent of the Nashville Reservists were called to active duty for the Korean Conflict between 1951 and 1953," shortly following the construction of the facility in Nashville.¹⁹ Later military involvement that called naval reservists from Nashville to active duty included the Vietnam War (1962-1975), the Cuban Missile Crisis (1962), Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm (1990-1991), and Operation Iraqi Freedom (2003).²⁰ Although outside of the period of significance for the NRTB, they illustrate the active role of naval reservists in Nashville.

The RTB experienced few changes from its construction until the 1970s when repairs and improvements were required following arson on the second floor in 1972 and 1973. These changes, completed by W. Terrill Hall and Associates architectural firm, did not greatly alter the layout of the facility. They primarily consisted of repairs to the second floor and improvements to HVAC, lighting, electrical, and plumbing components. The largest change to the building came in 1982, when architectural plans called for the replacement of windows in the ship's prow with similarly designed double-glazed metal windows. At this time, most windows on the east-west wing of the building were replaced with new insulated metal panels.

¹⁸ The Memphis Naval Reserve Aviation Base and Naval Training Station was commissioned in 1942. In 1943, the name was changed to the Naval Air Station Memphis and served both reserve and active duty purposes until 1993. At that time, it became the Naval Support Activity Center Memphis (later the Naval Support Activity Mid-South) and the airfield was turned over to the city of Millington. The complex was established as a 2200 acre base. It now comprises 3500 hundred acres and serves a variety of administrative and activities functions, including the Naval Reserve Center. ("History," CNIC//Naval Support Activity Mid-South website, <http://www.cnic.navy.mil/MidSouth/AboutUs/History/index.htm>, accessed 1 March 2011).

¹⁹ *Naval Reserve Force Cultural Resources Survey: Naval Reserve Center Nashville*, 28.

²⁰ "History of the Navy Reserve." Department of Navy, Navy Reserves. <http://www.navyreserve.navy.mil/Lists/Formedia/Attachments/11/Timeline.pdf> (accessed November 24, 2010).

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In the 1980s, another push for the construction and expansion of NRTC facilities was made, much like that following World War II. Sponsored by the Reagan-Bush administrations, the Whole Center Rehabilitation Program provided funding for expansion and improvement to NRTCs. Originally constructed with Butler building components, supplied by Butler Manufacturing Co., the Nashville RTB was not designed to be a permanent facility and many facilities were in need of new buildings or improvements to existing structures.

In Nashville, an expansion in the numbers of reservists as well additional funding urged M. D. Miller, the Head of Operations Branch, Real Estate Division in Charleston, to write to the Metro Parks Commission to request changes to the facility:

Due to growth, the existing center has become inadequate. Planning for the construction of a new facility is currently being undertaken. In order to meet present requirements, approximately seven (7) acres of land will be needed....²¹

In 1987, James H. Fyke, director of the Metro Board of Parks and Recreation responded that there was no room for expansion in Shelby Park or in any other parks.²² Over the next twelve years, the Naval Reserve explored different options for a larger facility and eventually moved to Smyrna, Tennessee in July of 2009.

Although the Naval Reserve vacated the building in Shelby Park, they left the structure intact and today it represents the significance of the Naval Reserve units in Nashville. The Naval Reserve provided local relief in Nashville as well as active duty in international conflicts and wars due to the training of reservists in the Naval Reserve Training Center in Shelby Park.

PROGRAMMATIC/MIMETIC ARCHITECTURE

The Naval Reserve Building (RTB) is a good example of programmatic or mimetic architecture. Buildings are considered mimetic architecture when they copy (mimic) something not usually considered a building, especially if the mimicked resource is associated with the new building. For example, a building shaped like a shoe that sells shoes or a doughnut shop shaped like a doughnut. Mimetic architecture is not a replica of the mimicked resource and may be a caricature or just have elements of the mimicked resource. Mimetic architecture was predominant in the early to mid-twentieth century, often in commercial buildings, and part of its function was to catch the attention of automobile drivers. With the façade of the building mimicking the prow of a ship and the body of the building having an expanse of windows sometimes seen in ships, the Naval Reserve Armory property is a good and rare example of a mimetic building in Nashville and Davidson County. The circa 1938 Botel (Historic Bellis Botel) in Savannah, Tennessee, a boat

²¹ *Naval Reserve Force Cultural Resources Survey: Naval Reserve Center Nashville*, 29.

²² *Ibid.*, 29.

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shaped hotel, is another example of a mimetic building associated with the sea. Other well known examples of mimetic architecture in the state are the circa 1931 Airplane Service Station (NR 3/18/04) in Powell, a gas/service station built like an airplane; the 1983 Grand Guitar in Bristol, which has been used for music sales and as a radio station; and the Pals Sudden Service drive-ins with the examples of fast food on the roof, being erected today. Even the 2001 Country Music Hall of fame is mimetic architecture. It has piano keys, WSM radio tower, and CDs/records on the exterior. From above, the shape is said to look like a bass clef.

BUTLER BUILDINGS

Like many of the Hut Armories built across the country, the Nashville NRTC was built as a modified Type B Butler Hut with materials supplied by the Butler Manufacturing Company. Prominent Nashville Architect Edwin A. Keeble took the Type B Hut design and modified it to give the appearance of a ship, effectively tying the form of the building to its function as a Naval Reserve facility and creating an excellent example of mimetic architecture. Founded in Kansas City, MO, in 1901 by Emanuel Norquist and brothers Charles and Newton Butler, the Butler Manufacturing Company historically specialized in prefabricated metal building components that were assembled onsite to offer quick solutions primarily for industrial, military, and commercial uses. These "Butler Buildings" or "Butler Huts" provided quick solutions for industrial and military purposes and were particularly utilized during in the WWII and post-WWII period. In 1948-1949, when the RTB in Nashville was constructed, the company maintained three plant locations: Kansas City, MO; Minneapolis, MN; and Galesburg, IL. Although the company has undergone organizational transformations throughout the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, the Butler Manufacturing Company continues to produce metal building materials primarily for commercial and industrial products.

EDWIN A. KEEBLE

The design of the NRTC is one of many Nashville examples of architecture by architect Edwin A. Keeble. Born into a distinguished Tennessee family in Monteagle, Grundy County on August 18, 1905, Edwin A. Keeble was the fourth of six children to John Bell and Emmie Frazer Keeble. The son of a Nashville attorney and later dean of Vanderbilt University Law School, Keeble lived in Nashville and attended Montgomery Bell Academy. Growing up in Nashville near the Vanderbilt campus, Keeble gained an appreciation for architecture and at the age of sixteen, he entered Vanderbilt.²³ Finishing an engineering degree at Vanderbilt in 1924, he began to pursue a study of architecture. After two years at the University of Pennsylvania, Keeble spent the summer of 1926 at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes Artistiques at Fountainbleau and then studied at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris for the next year under Georges Gromort, a French architect known for his

²³ Frank H. Orr, Elbridge B. White, and Charles W. Watterfield Jr., eds. *Notable Nashville Architecture 1930 To 1980*. (Nashville: Middle Tennessee Chapter American Institute of Architects, 1989), 76.

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publications on classical architecture, city planning, and landscape architecture.²⁴ Keeble was perhaps also later influenced by Gromort's military service, as a ranked officer on both active duty and in the reserves of the French military.²⁵

In 1928, Keeble returned to complete a degree in architecture at the University of Pennsylvania, graduating at the age of twenty-three. After practicing privately for a few months, Keeble joined forces with Francis "Dolly" Warfield in 1929. The firm of Warfield and Keeble operated for fifteen years, designing and engineering buildings for both private and public clients.²⁶ The firm's earliest major governmental commission came from the state of Tennessee and the Works Progress Administration. Between 1940 and 1942, Warfield and Keeble designed five new National Guard Armories, in the communities of Cleveland, Shelbyville, Centerville, Columbia, and Murfreesboro. Designed with a "rather standardized but vaguely Art Deco-style architectural plan," each of these armories was sited on the primary highways of the towns at the time. Although built to prepare for war, these buildings served the communities for peaceful gatherings almost weekly.²⁷ The armories were among the final projects completed by the firm before both Warfield and Keeble entered the armed services during World War II.²⁸

Following his commission as a lieutenant in the U.S. Navy in 1944 and two years of service, Keeble entered private practice. The ship-like Naval Reserve Building in Nashville was one of his earliest post-war commissions. Connections and building contributions in Nashville as well as his Navy service made him an ideal candidate to design the new Naval Reserve Building. Drawing upon time spent in Naval ships and other training facilities as well as his experience designing National Guard Armories during the New Deal era, Keeble was able to create spaces within the building that closely resemble areas on a ship. The use of wide expanses of windows, doors featuring porthole windows, and long, narrow corridors and stairways of the interior reflect the nautical theme of the ship's prow on the exterior. Keeble's design combined the standard metal building materials of World War II military-financed construction with a simple variation, transforming the otherwise standard building into a unique Nautical Moderne building.

Over the next twenty-four years, Edwin A. Keeble continued to work with the Navy, adding numerous rocket and ammunitions plants for the U.S. Navy across the country, while maintaining

²⁴Carroll Van West. "Edwin A. Keeble: 1905-1979." *Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*, Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press (2002), <http://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/imagegallery.php?EntryID=K002> (accessed October 25, 2010).

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²⁵ Henry Hope Reed, "A Brief Biography of Georges Gromort," in *The Elements of Classical Architecture*, trans. and ed. Henry Hope Reed. (New York: Classical America, 2001), 11.

²⁶ Trina Binkley. "Dr. Cleo Miller House Property Nomination." Murfreesboro, TN: MTSU Center for Historic Preservation, 1995, 11.

²⁷Carroll Van West. *Tennessee's New Deal Landscape: A Guidebook*. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2001), 78.

²⁸ Trina Binkley. "Dr. Cleo Miller House Property Nomination." 11.

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his own practice in Nashville. In addition to planning and designing the Veterans Administration Hospitals in both Washington, D.C. and Nashville, Keeble designed several churches in Nashville including Woodmont Christian Church (1947-1949), Vine Street Christian Church (1957-1958), and First Baptist Church (1965-1970).²⁹ Keeble transformed downtown Nashville with his design of the L&C Tower. Opened on April 30, 1957, the *Nashville Banner* touted the opening as the "birth of a new skyline for Nashville."³⁰ Keeble also designed many facilities at Vanderbilt University in Nashville and several buildings at the University of the South in Sewanee. He taught at both the University of Pennsylvania and Vanderbilt.³¹ After a long and successful architectural career, spanning nearly half a century, Keeble retired in 1970. Nine years later, Edwin A. Keeble passed away on September 22, 1979 in Sewanee, Tennessee.

The Naval Reserve Building, the principal building of the Naval Reserve Training Center, is an excellent intact example of programmatic architecture in Nashville. Designed by Edwin A. Keeble, the basic Butler Hut Type B plan was adapted with a ship's prow extension in order to emulate the administrative and training functions served by the structure. It is a rare surviving example of mimetic architecture in Davidson County and, while no longer in use by the Navy, clearly illustrates its original design intent. Although alterations have been made to the windows and some minimal partitions were added to the interior, the building retains a high degree of integrity of design, feeling, association, materials, and setting.

²⁹ Frank H. Orr, Elbridge B. White, and Charles W. Warterfield Jr. eds., 28-47.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 32.

³¹ Frank H. Orr, Elbridge B. White, and Charles W. Warterfield Jr. eds., 28-47.

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property consists of approximately 2.86 acres, a small rectangular portion on the southern end of parcel 09402022900 identified on the attached Davidson County Tax Map. The 2.86-acre lot is the portion of the tax parcel that was leased from the city of Nashville to the Navy in 1946. The nominated property is a part of Nashville's 336.43-acre Shelby Park. The nominated property is bounded on the south by Davidson Street, a private park street, and on the west, north, and east by adjacent park property. The 1946 lease describes the boundaries as follows:

All that certain lot, piece or parcel of land lying and being in Nashville, Davidson County, Tennessee, and being more particularly described as follows: Property in the southwesterly portion of Shelby Park, beginning at a point on the northerly side of River Road .2 mile from the westerly boundary line of Shelby Park, thence in an approximate northerly direction 250 feet to a point, thence at a right angle in an easterly direction 200 feet to a point, thence at a right angle in a southerly direction 250 feet to River Road, thence at a right angle 200 feet along the northerly margin of River Road to the point of beginning; said tract fronting 200 feet on the northerly side of River Road and said frontage being more particularly identified as being the frontage points between station points....

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

All of the nominated property was leased by the U.S. Navy in 1946 from the Nashville Board of Parks Commissioners (now the Metropolitan Board of Parks and Recreation). A large chain-link and barbed wire fence clearly delineates the property from the rest of the park.

See figures 1 and 2.

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PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographs by: Elizabeth Moore, Projects Coordinator
MTSU Center for Historic Preservation

Date: September 2010

Digital Files: Tennessee Historical Commission
Nashville, Tennessee

- 1 of 20 Naval Reserve Building, south façade, photographer facing northwest.
- 2 of 20 Central "ship" projection, south façade, photographer facing northwest.
- 3 of 20 Central "ship" projection, east elevation, photographer facing west.
- 4 of 20 Central "ship" projection, south façade and west elevation, photographer facing northeast.
- 5 of 20 South façade, west end between "ship" projection and drill hall, photographer facing north.
- 6 of 20 Drill hall, south façade and east elevation, photographer facing northwest.
- 7 of 20 East elevation, photographer facing southwest.
- 8 of 20 North elevation, photographer facing southeast.
- 9 of 20 North elevation, photographer facing southwest.
- 10 of 20 Drill hall, west elevation, photographer facing northeast.
- 11 of 20 Interior, typical hallway, photographer facing west toward Drill Hall.
- 12 of 20 Interior, detail of interior metal door with porthole windows.
- 13 of 20 Interior, detail of stair with rope wrappings.
- 14 of 20 Drill hall addition, photographer facing east.

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- 15 of 20 Drill hall addition, photographer facing northwest.
- 16 of 20 Drill hall/gym in "ship" projections, photographer facing south.
- 17 of 20 Attic space, photographer facing east.
- 18 of 20 Basement of "ship" projection, photographer facing north.
- 19 of 20 Transformer House, photographer facing northwest.
- 20 of 20 Stone Retaining Wall, northwest corner of property, photographer facing north.

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Figure 1. Tax Map showing nominated 2.86 acre parcel.

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Figure 2. Tax map showing nominated 2.86 acre parcel within larger park parcel.

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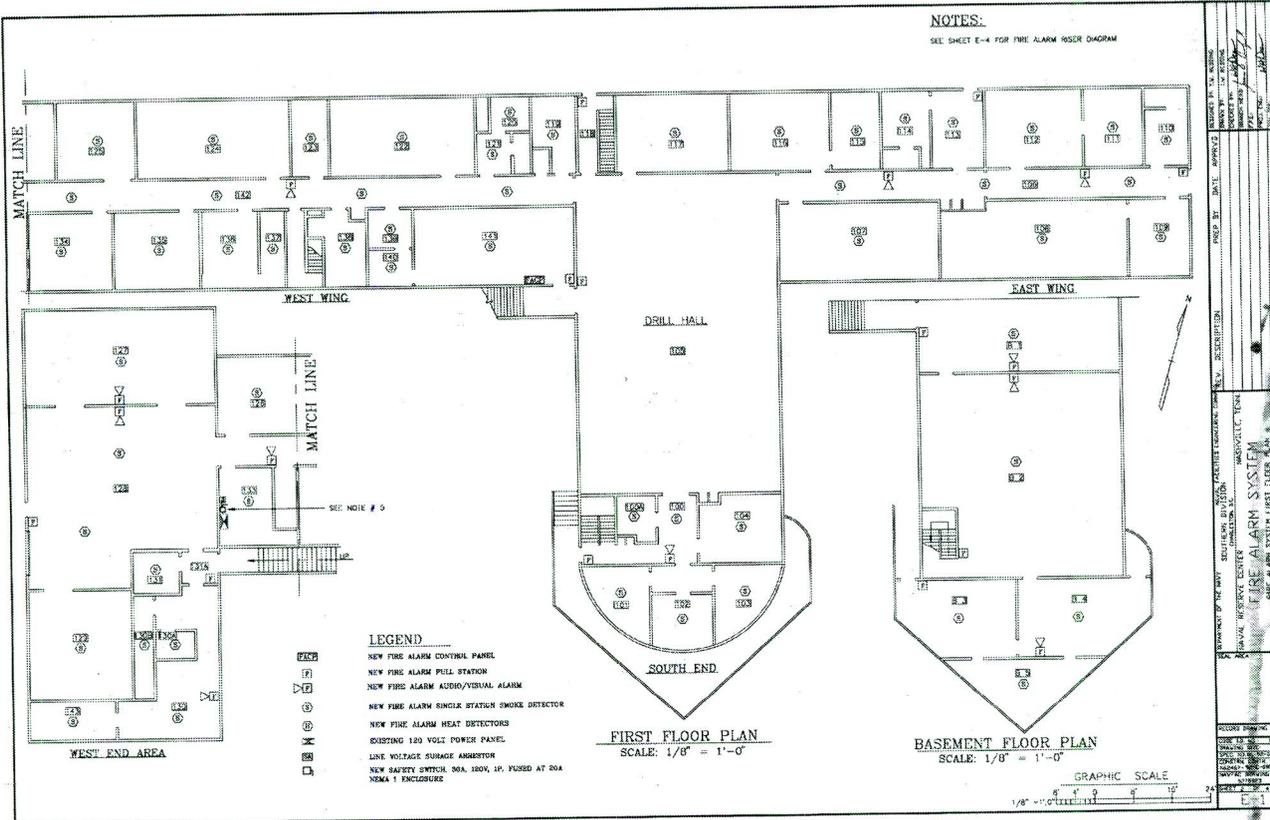


Figure 3. Naval Reserve Training Building Current Floor Plan.

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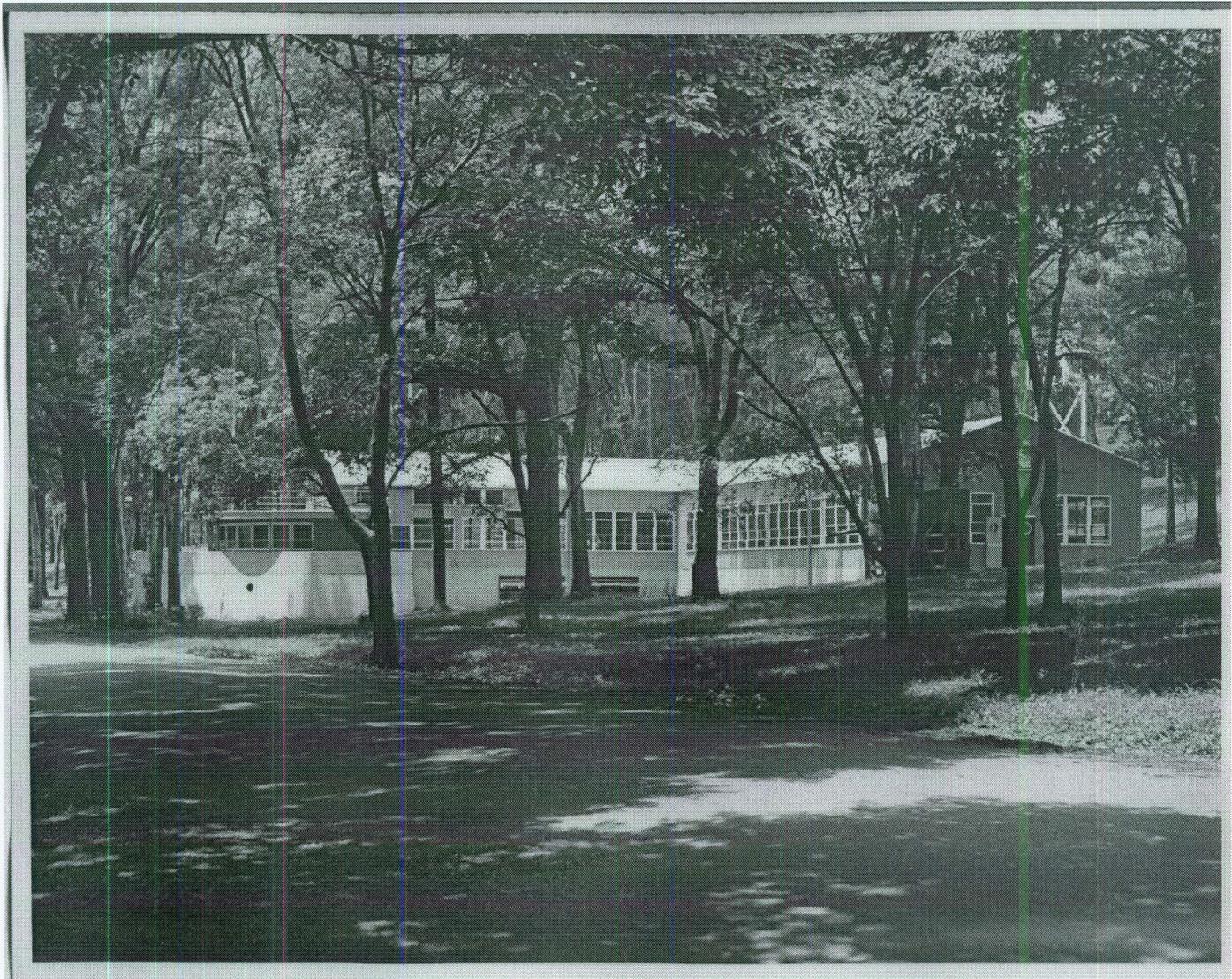


Figure 4. Historic photo of Naval Reserve Training Building showing original windows (date unknown).

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Note: Historic floor plans, site planting plan, elevation are included on the photo CD but not printed out due to the loss of clarity in the printing.

Original façade and elevations – Figure 5
Original floor plans – Figure 6 and Figure 6A
Site planting plan – Figure 7
1949 plan – Figure 8

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Name of Property

County and State

Section number _____ Page _____

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 11000419

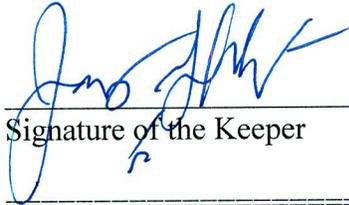
Date Listed: 7/6/11

Property Name: U. S. Naval Reserve Training Center

County: Davidson

State: TN

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.



Signature of the Keeper

7/6/2011
Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

Section 5: Ownership of Property

The Ownership of Property is hereby amended to read "PUBLIC- Local"

The land on which the building sits was leased by the US Navy. Upon determining the property excess to their needs, the Navy returned the land and all improvements to the City/County government.

The Tennessee State Historic Preservation Office was notified of this amendment.

DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file

Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)







































