

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 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 Commandant's House

other names/site number Building #262, Site #LW0090

2. Location

street & number 264 McClellan Drive ☐ not for publication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 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.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

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:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Commandant's House

Name of Property

Lawrence County, Arkansas

County and State

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 count.)

Contributing

Noncontributing

1

buildings

sites

structures

objects

1

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 WWII HomeFront
Efforts in Arkansas, 1941-1946

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/

Colonial Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE

walls STONE

roof ASPHALT

other

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

(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** birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance.
- ☐ **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.

Levels of Significance (local, state, national)

Local

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Military

Architecture

Period of Significance

1942-1948

Significant Dates

1942

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

Architect/Builder

U.S. Army, Builder

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:

Williams Baptist College

Commandant's House
Name of Property

Lawrence County, Arkansas
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Approximately 4 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 15 685557 4000260
Zone Easting Northing
2 _____

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing
4 _____

☐ 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 Evan Silva, Intern, Edited by Ralph S. Wilcox, National Register & Survey Coordinator
organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date June 29, 2009
street & number 1500 Tower Building, 323 Center Street telephone (501) 324-9787
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 **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 Williams Baptist College
street & number P.O. Box 3665 telephone (870)759-4120
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 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 Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property: Commandant's House

County and State: Lawrence County, Arkansas

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable):
We've Gotta Get Tough: History of WWII Homefront
Efforts in Arkansas, 1941-1946

Section number: 7 Page: 1

SUMMARY

The Commandant's House is located at 264 McClellan Drive, Walnut Ridge in Lawrence County, Arkansas. The one-story house, which was built in 1942 in the Colonial Revival style, was designed and constructed by the United States Army for use as the Commanding Officer's house on the Walnut Ridge Army Flying School grounds. The house was later used as the residence of H.E. Williams, the founder of Williams Baptist College until his death in 1998, and is one of the few permanently built and remaining buildings from the Walnut Ridge Army Flying School on the site.

ELABORATION

The Commandant's House is located on McClellan Drive, about .25 miles north of Fulbright Avenue in Lawrence County, Arkansas. The one-story house, which was built in 1942 in the Colonial Revival style, was designed and constructed by the United States Army for use as the Commanding Officer's house on the Walnut Ridge Army Flying School grounds. The house was later used as the residence of H.E. Williams, the founder of Williams Baptist College until his death in 1998, and is one of the few permanently built and remaining buildings from the Walnut Ridge Army Flying School on the site.

The Commandant's House features a U-shaped floor plan and follows convention for Colonial Revival houses built in the 1940s by being single story with a side-gabled roof, yet it retains uniqueness by featuring a centered gable with its original uncut stone foundation, walls, and chimney, some of which came from the demolished CCC camp in Pocahontas. The main section has a side-gabled roof, with the front-gabled wings running perpendicular from the house.

South/Front Façade

The front façade of the house is dominated by a unique centered gable doorway with a triangular pediment. The six-paneled door is flanked by a pair of double-hung, one-over-one windows, with the rest of the façade fenestrated by four more single windows of the same style. The original, uncut stone chimney is centered on the interior of the house and rises from the northern slope of the roof.

West/Side Façade

The western façade of the Commandant's House is dominated by a large side porch with a side-gabled roof added in the 1950s. Metal-framed, louvered windows encompass the entire porch. Immediately to the north of the porch there is a pair of double-hung, one-over-one windows and the rest of the façade is fenestrated by five single double-hung, one-over-one windows.

North/Rear Façade

The rear façade is comprised of the ends and inward facing walls of the two wings, as well as the rear of the

main section of the house. Both ends of the wings are fenestrated with two double-hung, one-over-one windows.

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The inward facing walls of the wings are identical copies of each other, both are fenestrated by four double-hung, one-over-one windows.

The rear of the main section is fenestrated by a ribbon of four double-hung, one-over-one windows. A rear terrace is also present, the slab serving as a sitting area with steps leading up into the house.

East/Side Façade

The eastern façade of the Commandant's House is fenestrated by several windows facing east while one faces south off the end of the wing projection. All the windows on the eastern façade are double-hung, one-over-one.

INTEGRITY

Overall, the Commandant's House retains excellent integrity. It retains its original foundation, walls, chimney and is still located in a university-owned, small town area of Lawrence County. Although three porches were added in the 1950s, they do not detract from the workmanship of the house. The house still exhibits its uniqueness through its military construction, centered gable, and uncut stonework.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Name of multiple property listing (if applicable):
We've Gotta Get Tough: History of WWII Homefront
Efforts in Arkansas, 1941-1946

Section number: 8 Page: 1

SUMMARY

The Commandant's House is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion A and C** with **local significance** for its association with the Walnut Ridge Army Flight Training School during World War Two, it being one of the last remaining buildings of the airfield, and an excellent example of a Colonial Revival style home in the Walnut Ridge vicinity. The Commandant's House, which was built in 1942, was designed and constructed by the United States Army for use as the Commanding Officer's house on the Walnut Ridge Army Flying School grounds. The house was later used as the residence of H.E. Williams, the founder of Williams Baptist College until his death in 1998. The house maintains uniqueness by featuring a centered gable with its original uncut stone foundation, walls, and chimney, some of which came from the demolished CCC camp in Pocahontas. The Commandant's House is being submitted to the National Register of Historic Places under the multiple property listing "We've Gotta Get Tough: History of WW II Homefront Efforts in Arkansas, 1941-1946."

ELABORATION

Lawrence County was organized in accordance with an act of the legislature of the territory of Missouri, and was approved on January 15, 1815, by Governor William Clark. Lawrence County originally comprised a large portion of southeast Missouri and northeast Arkansas. Since then it has had many counties formed from it which reduced it to its present size. The county was named in honor of Captain Lawrence, who distinguished himself in the U.S. Navy during the War of 1812.¹ Business in the county was mostly agricultural and timber related, much like the present day.

In 1870 the eastern district of Lawrence county was almost completely unsettled. However, in 1867, Colonel W.M. Ponder located at Old Walnut Ridge where he engaged in farming and sawmilling. The "Iron Mountain Railroad" agreed to locate a depot there. The first post office in Walnut Ridge was established in 1870, and the Lawrence County Bank, the first in the county, was established in 1890. Walnut Ridge flourished because of the railroad, as it caused a shift in economic and political influence and population from the western district to the east.² Another impact of the railroad was that in March 1887, Walnut Ridge became the seat of justice for the eastern district of Lawrence County. As a booming town, Walnut Ridge had, in 1889, seven general stores, four groceries, a bakery, a meat market, three hotels, two livery stables, a cotton gin, a grist mill, two churches, a schoolhouse, a courthouse, and a weekly newspaper, making it the second largest town in Lawrence County.³

¹ *The Goodspeed Biographical and Historical Memiors of Northeastern Arkansas*. Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1889, p.767-768.

² Gibbens, Jerry D. *Lawrence County History: Mother of Counties-Lawrence County-History and Families*. Paducah, Kentucky: Turner Publishing Company., 2001, p. 11/16/17.

³ *The Goodspeed Biographical and Historical Memiors of Northeastern Arkansas*. Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1889, p. 768/771.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Efforts in Arkansas, 1941-1946

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The Walnut Ridge Army Flying School was one of seven U.S. Army Air Forces pilot training schools established in Arkansas as part of the nationwide expansion of World War II pilot training. In early April 1942, a board of three army air forces officers, Lieutenant Colonel Burton Hovey Jr., Lieutenant Colonel John R. Cume Jr., and Captain Blanton Russell, went in search of a new location for an army air forces basic flying school. The site originally planned in Dyersburg, Tennessee, was deemed unacceptable because it would require moving five million cubic yards of dirt. The three men flew over an area just northeast of Walnut Ridge that looked promising. Returning by car the next day, they looked over the site and checked on public schools, housing, utilities, and transportation. On April 15, 1942, they recommended it for the flight school. The U.S. government approved the recommendation, and construction on the Walnut Ridge Army Air Field began June 20, 1942.⁴

In the months following the U.S. entrance into World War II, the Walnut Ridge Army Flight training field cleared farmland and timberland north of Walnut Ridge to construct a massive air base. The Commandant's House drew the attention of the War Department because it was constructed to be the commander's home under the guise of a guest house for military dignitaries. The Truman Senate Committee on Government Waste in the Military began an investigation and the Army Air Force halted construction and funding to the house. At three fourths completion, the Commandant completed the house using the demolished Civilian Conservation Corps camp of Pocahontas for the needed materials.⁵

The Commandant's House built in 1942 was designed in the single-story Colonial Revival style that was especially popular in the 1940s. The Colonial Revival style was inspired in part by the 1876 Centennial Celebration. The style took off in 1890 at the time that "manifest destiny" was at its peak, when Americans began to value their own architecture and heritage. Interest in Victorian architecture was beginning to wane as Americans sought architecture that reflected American values and traditions.

The style was popular from 1890 to 1940, but between World War I and World War II, Colonial Revival was the most popular historic revival style in the United States.⁶ This house however is one of the few, around five percent, that was built with a centered gable and retaining its original stone work on the foundation, walls, and chimney. The Great Depression and WWII led to a simplification of the style in the 1940s and 50s. Houses of this variety were often the side-gabled type, with stylized door surrounds and other details that merely suggest the colonial precedents, rather than mirroring them.

⁴ Walnut Ridge Army Flying School, found at: <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=2820>.

⁵ Williams, Dr H.E. *A Brief History of the Walnut Ridge Army Airfield: Mother of Counties-Lawrence County-History and Families*. Paducah, Kentucky: Turner Publishing Company., 2001, p.13/20/21.

⁶ Colonial Revival, found at: <http://www.fullertonheritage.org/Resources/archstyles/colonial.htm>.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Efforts in Arkansas, 1941-1946

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In the fall of 1945, the field was declared surplus and the Reconstruction Finance Corporation took it over for protection of the incoming aircraft and prepare for disposal of the facility. The United States Congress passed a bill which was designed to make such facilities available to the cities nearby to preserve the runways for civil aviation. The bill gave priority to the local city, in each case, provided they could submit a proposal that passed the terms of disposal as set forth in the regulations of the War Assets Administration. Southern Baptist College's board of trustees submitted, through Dr. H.E. Williams, a request for a waiver in their favor for 122 acres on the west side of the airport, to be used for the operation of the college. The Walnut Ridge City Council granted the waiver in favor of the college in May 1946, and the deeds were issued to the city and college in 1947. The President of Williams Baptist lived in the Commandant's House until his death in 1998.

Today, the Commandant's House is owned by Williams Baptist College and reflects the time of its construction in 1942. As a rare example of a Colonial Revival home in the Walnut Ridge vicinity and as one of the few remaining structures of the Walnut Ridge Army Airfield, the Commandant's House remains a lasting tribute to World War II military efforts in Arkansas.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Commandant's House is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion A and C** with **local significance** for its association with the Walnut Ridge Army Flight Training School during World War Two, it being one of the last remaining buildings of the airfield, and an excellent example of a Colonial Revival style home in the Walnut Ridge vicinity. The Commandant's House, which was built in 1942, was designed and constructed by the United States Army for use as the Commanding Officer's house on the Walnut Ridge Army Flying School grounds. The house was later used as the residence of H.E. Williams, the founder of Williams Baptist College until his death in 1998. The house maintains uniqueness by featuring a centered gable with its original uncut stone foundation, walls, and chimney, some of which came from the demolished CCC camp in Pocahontas. The Commandant's House is being submitted to the National Register of Historic Places under the multiple property listing "We've Gotta Get Tough: History of WW II Homefront Efforts in Arkansas, 1941-1946."

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

Colonial Revival, found at: <http://www.fullertonheritage.org/Resources/archstyles/colonial.htm>.

Gibbens, Jerry D. *Lawrence County History: Mother of Counties-Lawrence County-History and Families*. Paducah, Kentucky: Turner Publishing Company., 2001, p. 11, 16, 17.

The Goodspeed Biographical and Historical Memiors of Northeastern Arkansas. Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1889, p. 767-768, 771.

Walnut Ridge Army Flying School, found at: <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=2820>.

Williams, Dr H.E. *A Brief History of the Walnut Ridge Army Airfield: Mother of Counties-Lawrence County-History and Families*. Paducah, Kentucky: Turner Publishing Company., 2001, p.13, 20, 21.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

A part of the southeast $\frac{1}{4}$ of northeast $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 11 and a part of northwest $\frac{1}{4}$ of section 12, T 17 NR1 E, more particularly described as follows... 101. Staff Officer's Quarters/Commandant's House. It occupies approximately 4 acres of the original land grant of 121 acres.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary contains the land immediately surrounding the Commandant's House, as well as the home itself.