NPS Form 10-900
(Oct. 1990)

OMB No. 10024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

601

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 any 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 Fort Gibson National Cemetery

other names/site number

2. Location

street & number 1423 Cemetery Road ☐ not for publication N/A

city or town Fort Gibson ☐ vicinity

state Oklahoma code OK county Muskogee code 101 zip code 74434

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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.)

Blake Wade 4-5-99
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

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.)

Karen Romne Tupek Federal Preservation Officer 4/15/99
Signature of commenting or other official/Title Date

Department of Veterans Affairs
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this 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 Keeper: Edson H. Beall
Date of Action: 5/20/99

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	
0	2	buildings
1	0	sites
1	1	structures
1	2	objects
3	5	Total

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

Civil War Era National Cemeteries

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)
Funerary: Cemetery

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)
Funerary: Cemetery

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)
No style+

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)
foundation Concrete
walls Brick
roof Asphalt
other Marble

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.)

- [x] **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 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.
- [x] **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)

Military

Period of Significance

1868-1939

Significant Dates

1868

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/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):

- [ ] preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- [ ] previously listed in the National Register
- [x] 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
- [x] Federal agency
- [ ] Local government
- [ ] University
- [ ] Other

Name of repository
Department of Veterans Affairs

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 32.3

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	15	298720	3964480
2	15	298710	3964090
3	15	298560	3964100
4	15	298560	3964300

☒ 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 Therese T. Sammartino, Staff Assistant, National Cemetery System

organization Department of Veterans Affairs date February 17, 1999

street & number 810 Vermont Avenue, N.W. telephone (202) 565-4895

city or town Washington, D.C. state _____ zip code 20420

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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name Department of Veterans Affairs

street & number 810 Vermont Avenue, N.W. telephone _____

city or town Washington, D.C. state _____ zip code 20420

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.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the 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.0. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

DESCRIPTION (Continued)

MATERIALS:

Foundation: Stone
Walls: Stone
Roof: Metal
Other: Iron, concrete

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

The Fort Gibson National Cemetery is located at 1423 Cemetery Road, Fort Gibson, Oklahoma, two miles northeast of Fort Gibson and ten miles northeast of Muskogee, in Muskogee County, in the Three Forks country where the Verdigris and Grand Rivers join the Arkansas River. The main entrance gate, located on the north side, has double wrought-iron gates flanked by concrete pillars painted white, with a pedestrian gate 3 feet 6 inches wide, on each side. To the left of the main entrance is a steel sign which reads:

FORT GIBSON NATIONAL CEMETERY
ESTABLISHED 1868.

The cemetery was originally enclosed by a wooden picket fence, which was later replaced with a sandstone wall, 18 inches wide, averaging 6 feet high, with 4-inch stone capping, constructed in 1870. This stone was obtained from the quarries on the banks of the Neosho (Grand) River. This wall, which enclosed approximately seven acres, was subsequently removed. All of the cemetery is enclosed by chain link fencing, except along the northern boundary from the entrance gate to the northeast corner. This area is enclosed by wrought-iron fencing supported by concrete pillars. The flagpole is situated directly north of the main entrance gate and is surrounded by the Officers Circle. The administration building and service building are located just east of the main entrance. In the center of Section 7 is a rostrum, and a recently constructed committal service shelter is situated near the southeastern corner of Section 16. Just outside Section 13 is a carillon bell tower.

Graves were originally marked by stakes, painted white and numbered in black, which were later replaced with upright marble headstones. As of January 31, 1999, there were 12,333 sites used for the interment of 13,452 casketed remains and 495 sites used for the interment of 618 cremated remains. As of January 31, 1999, there were 3,593 gravesites available for the interment of casketed remains and 601 sites available for the interment of cremated remains.

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION (Continued)

The brick administration building with an asphalt shingle roof, was constructed in 1990.

The brick service building was constructed in 1953, and is partitioned into a workshop, supply room, locker and shower space, public restrooms and vehicle storage. The roof is asphalt shingles. A maintenance bay, as well as space for an employee break room were added in 1989.

An octagon-shaped stone rostrum, fifteen feet in width and three feet, six inches in height, with a concrete slab floor, was constructed in 1939. The railings and steps are of concrete, but no roof provides any overhead protection. The structure is located in Section 7.

A brick committal service shelter was completed in 1998. The exterior roof is metal, and the interior of the roof is wood. Along one wall are granite seals of the insignias of the five branches of the military service which are inlaid into the brick wall. Another wall contains names of persons and organizations who donated monies towards the construction of the shelter. Construction of this shelter was partially funded by donations.

Just to the west of the Officers Circle is a monument made of an original cast-iron seacoast artillery tube secured by a concrete base. Affixed to the monument is a bronze plaque inscribed as follows:

UNITED STATES NATIONAL
MILITARY CEMETERY
ESTABLISHED 1868
INTERMENTS 2,123
KNOWN 156
UNKNOWN 1967

The tube was originally mounted on a carriage, which has been removed.

A carillon tower was placed in the cemetery in 1985 through a donation by the American Veterans of World War II, Korea, and Vietnam (AMVETS) and is located in Section 10.

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION (Continued)

The numbers shown for contributing resources within the property reflect the following:

Sites: Cemetery

Structures: Rostrum

Objects: Artillery monument

The numbers shown for non-contributing resources within the property reflect the following:

Buildings: Administration building, service building

Structures: Committal service shelter

Objects: Flagpole, carillon

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Fort Gibson National Cemetery is significant under Criterion A and is an important component of the multiple property submission of Civil War Era National Cemeteries. It is significant under Criterion A because of its association with the Civil War. The cemetery is also significant beyond the Civil War era, as it includes the remains of veterans associated with many wars and every branch of service who had served their country throughout its history.

The period of significance ends in 1939, the year the rostrum was constructed.

Fort Gibson, founded in 1824, (then Cantonment Gibson) was not only the oldest and most celebrated military establishment in the annals of Oklahoma but, in its early days, it was the farthest west outpost of the United States and, in many respects, continued for years to be one of the most important on that frontier. The military reservation was located on the Grand River about three miles above the point where the Grand flows into the Arkansas. In addition to this strategic river location, Fort Gibson lay alongside the Texas Road, the major north-south artery in the Indian Territory. Because of its location, possession of the fort was considered crucial to the conflict in the Indian Territory. The fort was named "Fort Gibson" in honor of Colonel George Gibson, then United States Commissary

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)

General of Subsistence. This new fort was first garrisoned by five companies (B, C, G, H, and K) of the 7th U. S. Infantry stationed at Fort Smith, Arkansas, and commanded by Colonel Matthew Arbuckle.

On February 14, 1833, a treaty was made with the Indians regarding use of the land near the fort. Later, the Cherokees made a determined effort to have the garrison removed, as they claimed that the fort had served its purpose as a protecting agent. They further stated that the site of Fort Gibson would serve the community better if it were changed into a town. This location was important because of the natural rock and the river was the most important highway. The Cherokees finally won their point with the Government and on June 8, 1857, Fort Gibson was abandoned by members of the 7th Infantry, the regiment which established the fort thirty-three years before, in 1824.

The Cherokees created a town, and called it Kec-too-whah, which was short-lived, because this location was a strategic position for military forces. Early in 1863, the old post was re-established by Brigadier General James G. Blunt, commander of the District of the Frontier and the 1st Division, Army of the Frontier. The name of the post was officially changed to Fort Blunt, until the latter part of that year. For a time in the possession of the Confederate Army, it was afterwards regained by the Union side and on April 5, 1863, the whole hill was reoccupied by three Cherokee regiments, four companies of Kansas cavalry, and Hopkins' Battery of Volunteers, an aggregate of 3,150 men, with four field pieces and two mountain howitzers. A main works embraced fifteen to twenty acres with angles and facings; from this extended a line of earthworks about a quarter of a mile in length, the whole defense being considered strong enough to resist a force of 20,000 men. To this work was, for a time, given the name of Fort Blunt, in compliment to Major General James G. Blunt, then commanding the district of the frontier.

General Blunt had made a forced march from Kansas to Fort Gibson and on the night of July 16, 1863, crossed the Arkansas River, proceeded down the Texas Road, and the next morning attacked the Confederate command under General Douglas H. Cooper at Honey Springs, near the site of the present Oktaha, south of Muskogee. By this engagement, the most important battle in the Indian Territory during the war, the Union forces succeeded in preventing a union of Cooper's forces with those of General William L. Cabell, coming from Fort Smith, and the probable recapture of Fort Gibson by the Confederates.

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)

After this battle, the strength of Fort Gibson was increased until on July 31 it aggregated 5,204, and on August 31 there were 6,014 troops at the garrison, with eighteen field pieces. Being the most important fortified point in the Territory, it served as headquarters for the military operations in this region during the remainder of the Civil War and played a conspicuous part in strengthening the hands of the loyal elements among the tribes. The name of Blunt was officially attached to the post until December 31, 1863, when it was dropped in favor of the old name, Fort Gibson.

There were three military cemeteries located in and around Fort Gibson in which the dead were buried from the earliest days of the fort. The first of these was created in 1824 when Fort Gibson (then Cantonment Gibson) was erected and garrisoned by the 7th U. S. Regiment of Infantry. During the decade and a half in which this regiment and several dragoon regiments garrisoned Cantonment Gibson, the personnel were decimated by recurrent epidemics of malignant fever, which necessitated the establishment successively of these cemeteries in order to receive the many dead. After the abandonment of the post in 1854, the cemeteries fell into a neglected state with the result that the wooden headboards marking the graves rotted or were burned away and the identity of most of the dead remained unknown.

In 1868, the national cemetery was established on land which was originally part of the military reservation. The site chosen was an area 450 feet square, on the south side of the "Tahlequah Road," in the southeast corner of the military reservation that surrounded the fort.

In April of that year, the Post Quartermaster distributed flyers and placed advertisements in newspapers advising contractors that bids would be accepted for the removal of remains of the deceased Union soldiers buried in the vicinity. All marks and inscriptions with each body were to be recorded, and original headboards were to be attached to the coffins and set up at the new graves. Records were to be kept as to the position of the graves so that at the new resting place the graves would be in their original order.

By June 1869, 2,117 bodies have been reinterred in the national cemetery. The majority had been removed from the many burying grounds in the area around the fort. Exact locations were the old post cemetery on the south side of Fort Gibson; the graveyard near the New Canal; the rear of Vann's house; the hill near Mr. David's; John Jones Farm; the Soldiers Garden; the Government Brick Yard; near the Old Corral; Cranwell's Brick Yard; the Bottom between Grand River and Fort Gibson; and the West Side of the Arkansas. Remains were also removed from battlesites and encampments located

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)

at Honey Springs, Tahlequah, Park Hill, Wolf Creek, Cabin Creek, Fourteen Mile Creek, Twelve Mile Creek, Hilderbrands Mill, Mackey's Saline, Flat Rock, and Fort Wayne. Of the 2,117 bodies reinterred, 150 were identified, and 1,967 were unknown.

On August 6, 1872, William W. Belknap, Secretary of War, directed the Quartermaster General to arrange for the removal of the remains of other soldiers and their families found at Forts Washita (located in present Bryant County near Durant, Oklahoma) and Fort Arbuckle (in present Garvin County near Davis, Oklahoma) to the national cemetery. Both these forts had been abandoned by the military, and it seemed more reasonable to move these remains to a place where graves were being cared for, rather than to try and maintain the cemeteries at abandoned military posts. Superintendent William Thomas was sent to the abandoned forts in addition to sites on Big Sandy Creek and Middle Boggy Creek, where there were reportedly graves of Union soldiers. He was to determine the locations of the cemeteries and the number of graves to be moved. The graves on Middle Boggy Creek were the graves of Rebel soldiers and were not moved. Bids were advertised for, and a contract was let to P. J. Byrne of Fort Gibson. Owing to the careless manner in which the men who served at these remote posts had been buried, and the fact that fires had been permitted to run through the cemeteries and burn off all wooden headboards, and the difficulty of finding other marks of identification in the graves, or indeed, of finding the remains and the boxes containing them in such condition that they could be removed at all, instructions were given to abandon further removal. However, information was later acquired of additional graves at Fort Washita, Fort Arbuckle, and Big Sandy Creek. Efforts were then renewed, and another contractor undertook to remove the remains to the Fort Gibson National Cemetery, but this effort proved abortive. During the winter of 1872-1873, there were about 150 reinterments in all, and most of them were unidentified.

The removal of remains from all these burial places was attended with much difficulty because of the lack of identifying marks. It was impossible to determine whether they were removing soldiers or civilians, and the whole undertaking was attended with much confusion.

In 1873, it was reported to the office of the Adjutant General at Washington that the bodies of one hundred and twenty-five soldiers killed in the Battle of Washita were buried on that battlefield. This again stimulated interest in the subject of removal. Also, it appeared that, during the Civil War, a large number of Confederates died and were buried near Fort Washita. Records state that correspondence relating to this subject would indicate that removal of the dead from this cemetery was limited to those known to have been in the service of the Union Army, and the Confederate dead were probably not disturbed.

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)

Secretary of War Belknap's idea for moving remains from those abandoned cemeteries at Forts Washita and Arbuckle was later extended to include the cemeteries at all abandoned military posts. Fort Towson, near the Red River, had been abandoned in 1854. During the winter of 1878-1879, 120 reinterments were made into the national cemetery from Fort Towson.

By Executive Order dated February 13, 1891, the military reservation of Fort Gibson was transferred to the Department of the Interior for disposition, except for a piece of ground 600 feet in length by 500 feet in width on the southwest corner, it being the site of the Fort Gibson National Cemetery (6.9 acres). Records show that by 1940, the cemetery contained 8.6 acres, but there is no written record of how the additional 1.7 acres were acquired. An additional 23.7 acres of land to the east and southeast of the original acquisition was purchased by condemnation proceedings in 1952. This land borders the entire eastern boundary and a portion of the southern boundary. A metes and bounds description dated March 31, 1954, showed that the cemetery contained 32.3 acres.

The cemetery was expanded in 1994 by the purchase of 16 acres from a private owner, but this land has not yet been developed for burial.

Several noted burials in the Officers Circle include:

Talahina Rogers Houston, the second wife of General Sam Houston, is buried in Grave 2467. She was born in 1799 and died in 1833 of pneumonia. She had originally been interred at Wilsons Rock near Muldrow, Oklahoma. In the late 1890's, the editor of a Fort Gibson newspaper had met someone who told him where Houston's Cherokee wife was buried, and he began a campaign to have the body reinterred in the Fort Gibson National Cemetery. He convinced the War Department that someone of such status as the wife of the President of the Republic of Texas should be buried in a national cemetery, and permission was given for this burial. In September 1904, with much pomp and ceremony, a funeral parade, and services at the cemetery, the reinterment was made. There is some controversy over the correct spelling of her name, and many articles have been written on this subject. "Talahina" is a Choctaw word, and Mrs. Houston was Cherokee. Many people believe the correct spelling of her name is Tiana. Her headstone still bears the spelling of "Talahina." It is said that the newspaperman picked up this name from another newspaperman who said it was an incorrect interpretation of her name. Only since that name appeared on the headstone has she been known as "Talahina." In papers written during her lifetime, she is called "Diana."

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)

Vivia Thomas, interred in Grave 2119, whose story is very interesting. One of the many versions of her legend is that she was a high-spirited daughter of wealthy Boston parents and attended Boston society's finest affairs. At a ball after the Civil War, she met and fell in love with a handsome young lieutenant. After several months of courtship, they announced their engagement. Shortly before the wedding date the lieutenant suddenly left. His note stated that he desired to go west in search of adventure, that marriage and Boston society were not for him. Broken-hearted and bitter over the embarrassment caused her and her family, Vivia left home in search of her lover. Learning from the military that the lieutenant was stationed at Fort Gibson, Indian Territory, her long journey began. She cut her hair, dressed in men's clothing, and joined the Army. She avoided recognition by the young lieutenant, although she frequently observed him. She discovered he had an Indian girl friend he visited each evening. One cold evening, Vivia trailed, ambushed and killed him. An intensive investigation was conducted to no avail, and the matter was dropped. However, Vivia became remorseful and was disturbed over the killing. She visited the grave at night and contracted pneumonia from continued exposure, and one night she collapsed near his grave. Her comrades were so impressed with her courage in coming alone to the frontier and carrying out a successful disguise as a male that, rather than condemning her, they awarded her a place of honor for burial in the Officers Circle.

Captain John P. Decatur, interred in Grave 2101, was the Sutler at Fort Gibson and is the brother of Commodore Stephen Decatur, naval hero of the War of 1812. He was appointed as Sutler to the Army at Fort Gibson in April 1831. The Sutler served an important role for the Army, particularly at the remote frontier posts. The Army provided food and uniforms for the troops, so the soldiers and their families were dependent upon the Sutler's Store for everything from shaving equipment and toothbrushes to dress fabrics and jewelry. He died on November 12, 1832, of typhoid.

Mary Eliza Mix, interred in Grave 2110, was reputedly a spy for the U. S. Government. Since she died before the Mexican War, the only war in which she could have been a spy was the War of 1812 or some of the Indian skirmishes.

Major Joel Elliott, interred in Grave 2233, was a member of General George Armstrong Custer's Seventh Cavalry. Major Elliott commanded the Seventh Cavalry during the year that Custer was suspended from his command and rank after being court-martialed on seven charges growing out of desertion of his command at Fort Wallace to hurry to his wife at Fort Riley after receiving reports of cholera there. General Custer led a troop of 800 men against a Cheyenne village at the Washita River. Major Elliott took a detachment of 19 men in pursuit of a group of Indians escaping from the village. Over a considerable period of time, shots were heard in the distance. The fact was fully

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)

reported to General Custer several times, but he made no effort to send troops to rescue Elliott's detachment. Major Elliott and the 19 men with him were all killed. He was originally buried at Fort Arbuckle, and his remains later transferred to Fort Gibson National Cemetery. In 1875, a military post was established in Wheeler County, Texas, as a protective measure against Indian outbreaks. The post was named Fort Elliott in his honor.

Billy Bowlegs, also known as Sonuk Mikko, was named Captain of Company F in April 1862, when the First Regiment of Indian Home Guards was formed at LeRoy, Kansas. He proved to be a fine officer and leader of his men. He was cited as deserving high praise for his service at the Battle of Prairie Grove; he led seventy five of his men in a brave charge at Greenleaf Prairie. At the Battle of Honey Springs, he was again named in a report for his gallant conduct and efficient service. He is buried in Grave 2109.

John Nicks, second postmaster of Oklahoma and first postmaster at Fort Gibson at the time of his death on December 31, 1831. He is buried in Grave 2099. When the War of 1812 ended (1815), the Armed Forces were reduced, and Nicks was discharged as a Major. He was in Louisiana at the time, and he remained there, practicing law while seeking reinstatement into the Army. By December, he was accepted and he served for six more years, before resigning a Lieutenant Colonel's commission to accept the appointment as Sutler to the 7th Infantry, a regiment he had served with for several years. In 1827, when the mail route was extended to Fort Gibson, Nicks was appointed Postmaster. He was one of the Commissioners appointed to locate a county seat for the newly organized Lovely County, Arkansas. His name appears as witness on many of the treaties drawn with various Indian tribes.

Three former cemetery employees are buried here:

Francis M. Brooke, cemetery superintendent from July 1967 to June 1981.

Theodore F. Robison, last Civil War veteran to be assigned as superintendent. He served as superintendent from July 28, 1914 to September 4, 1930.

Marvin Bradley, Cemetery Caretaker, who devoted over 20 years of his life in caring for the cemetery grounds.

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)

There is one Medal of Honor recipient buried in the national cemetery:

John N. Reese, Jr., Private First Class, U. S. Army, Company B, 148th Infantry, 37th Infantry Division - On February 9, 1945, Reese was engaged in the attack on the Paco Railroad Station, Manila, Philippines which was strongly defended by 300 determined enemy soldiers with machine guns and rifles, supported by several pillboxes, three 20-mm. guns, one 37-mm. gun, and heavy mortars. While making a frontal assault across an open field, his platoon was halted 100 yards from the station by intense fire. On his own initiative, he left the platoon, accompanied by a comrade, and continued forward to a house 60 yards from the objective. Although under constant enemy observation, the 2 men remained in this position for an hour, firing at targets of opportunity, killing more than 35 Japanese and wounding many more. Moving closer to the station and discovering a group of Japanese replacements attempting to reach the pillboxes, they opened heavy fire, killing more than 40 and stopped all subsequent attempts to man the emplacements. Enemy fire became more intense as they advanced to within 20 yards of the station. From that point, Pfc. Reese provided effective covering fire and courageously drew enemy fire to himself while his companion killed seven Japanese and destroyed a 20-mm. gun and heavy machine gun with hand grenades. With their ammunition running low, the two men started to return to the American lines, alternately providing cover for each other as they withdrew. During this movement, Pfc. Reese was killed by enemy fire as he reloaded his rifle. The intrepid team, in 2 ½ hours of fierce fighting, killed more than 82 Japanese, completely disorganized their defense and paved the way for subsequent complete defeat of the enemy at this strong point. Reese is buried in Section 2, Grave 1259-E.

A memorial headstone honors another Medal of Honor recipient, Corporal John Haddoo, U. S. Army, who died on September 30, 1877. He is interred in the Custer National Cemetery, Crow Agency, Montana.

STRUCTURES DEMOLISHED

Lodges - The original superintendent's lodge, built in 1870, was a wooden cottage of three rooms located on the opposite side of the road. Soon after it was built, the site for a new lodge was selected, but it was not until 1878 before construction was begun. It was built according to a design by Quartermaster General Montgomery C. Meigs. The exterior of these lodges was generally finished with a material indigenous to the location, and at Fort Gibson, it was sandstone. This lodge was replaced with a lodge constructed in 1934, located to the left of the entrance gate. This design was standard in national cemeteries during the late 1920's and continued in use until the 1950's. The

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)

building was a solid masonry, one and one-half story structure with a combined architectural style of Dutch Colonial and English Half-Timbered. There was a full basement under the dwelling. The first floor exterior walls were 12 inches thick and of common brick, and the second floor was built under a gambrel roof with walls of wood frame. An enclosed porch was across the rear of the dwelling at the second floor level. This lodge was demolished in June 1983.

Stable and Toolhouse - A stone structure, built in 1870, and located about midway between the lodge and the east property line. It had been remodeled and converted to other utility usage from time to time. It was mainly used as a small tool storage and shop for lawn mowers, etc. The building also contained an 800-gallon water tank which was used as a booster for the irrigation of the grounds. The second floor was unfinished rough wood floor with walls and roof unceiled. The foundations and outer walls were sandstone. The size was 32 feet 2 inches by 22 feet 2 inches, approximately 630 square feet.

Tool Shed - A small frame building, constructed in 1932, located east alongside the old stone stable. The walls and roof were frame, walls were weather boarded, and the roof was covered with sheet metal. The foundation and floor were concrete. The size was 12 feet 4 inches by 10 feet 4 inches, approximately 105 square feet floor area.

Stable and Garage - The stable and garage was located outside the stone wall and adjacent to the property line. It was a one-and-one-half-story, frame structure constructed in 1937. The foundation and the first floor were concrete, and the second floor was wood. The roof was covered with corrugated metal.

Pump and Cistern House - A long narrow frame building constructed in 1921, located between the lodge and old stone stable and tool shed. This one-story structure had a concrete foundation and floor. The roof was wood shingle and had metal conductors and down spouts.

Public Comfort Station (Old Cistern House) - A small frame building built as a cistern house in 1939, was converted into a public comfort station and was located about 20 feet east of the lodge. The building had a concrete foundation and floor and wood frame walls. The roof was wood shingles.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

National Cemetery System Microfilm Records

Department of Veterans Affairs Historic Preservation Office

Report of the Inspector of the National Cemeteries for the years 1870 and 1871

Foreman, Grant. Fort Gibson, A Brief History. Norman, Oklahoma, University of Oklahoma Press, date unknown.

Wagner, Karen. Bivouac of the Dead, Oklahoma's National Cemetery. 1992.

Holt Dean W. American Military Cemeteries. North Carolina. McFarland and Company, Inc., 1992.

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA – UTM REFERENCES (Continued)

POINT	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
5	15	298460	3964280
6	15	298420	3964450

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA - VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundaries are indicated on the accompanying base map.

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA - BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The National Cemetery Administration has used the existing boundaries of the cemetery.

FORT GIBSON NATIONAL CEMETERY
Muskogee County, Oklahoma
Armando A. Sammartino, photographer
Date of Photographs: November 13, 1998

All negatives are stored with Technical Support Service (401B), National Cemetery Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20420

VIEW OF: Sign at main entrance, view looking southeast
NEG. NO. 6774-5
PHOTO 1 of 20

VIEW OF: Main entrance gate, view looking south
NEG. NO. 6774-3
PHOTO 2 of 20

VIEW OF: Main entrance gate, showing iron fence
NEG. NO. 6774-4
PHOTO 3 of 20

VIEW OF: Northwest corner of cemetery

NEG. NO. 6774-27
PHOTO 4 of 20

VIEW OF: Flagpole, view looking south

NEG. NO. 6774-29
PHOTO 5 of 20

VIEW OF: Administration building, south elevation
NEG. NO. 6774-1
PHOTO 6 of 20

VIEW OF: Utility building, south elevation

NEG. NO. 6774-2
PHOTO 7 of 20

VIEW OF: Rostrum

NEG. NO. 6774-7
PHOTO 8 of 20

VIEW OF: Committal service shelter, east elevation
NEG. NO. 6774-12
PHOTO 9 of 20

VIEW OF: Committal service shelter, north elevation
NEG. NO. 6774-13
PHOTO 10 of 20

VIEW OF: Committal service shelter, west elevation
NEG. NO. 6774-14
PHOTO 11 of 20

VIEW OF: Committal service shelter, south elevation
NEG. NO. 6774-15
PHOTO 12 of 20

VIEW OF: Carillon

NEG. NO. 6774-20
PHOTO 13 of 20

VIEW OF: Artillery monument

NEG. NO. 6774-8
PHOTO 14 of 20

VIEW OF: Cemetery, view looking southeast
NEG. NO. 6774-11
PHOTO 15 of 20

VIEW OF: Cemetery, view looking northwest

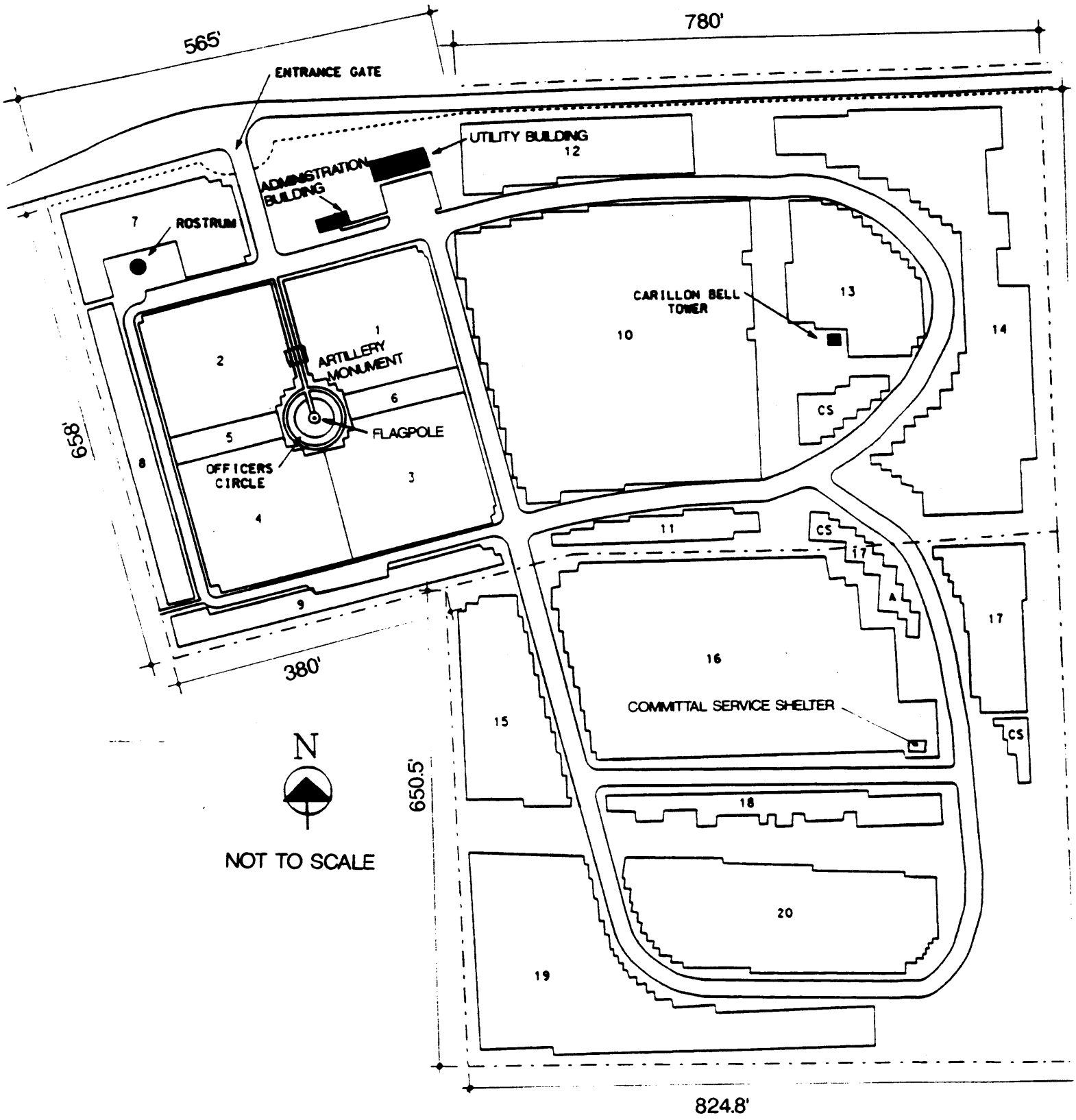
NEG. NO. 6774-28
PHOTO 16 of 20

VIEW OF: Cemetery, view looking west, showing rostrum
NEG. NO. 6774-26
PHOTO 17 of 20

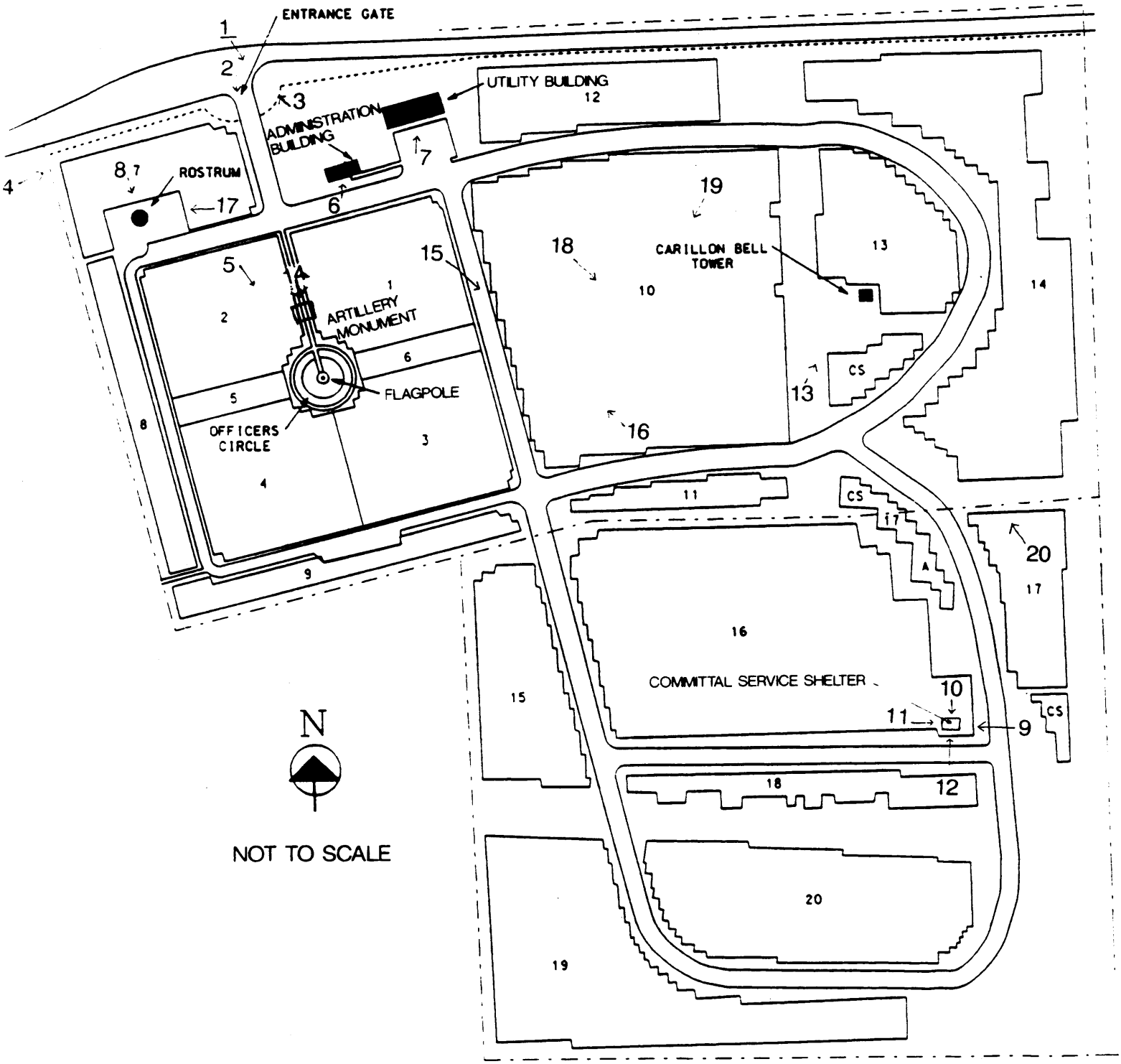
VIEW OF: Cemetery, view looking southeast, showing committal service shelter
NEG. NO. 6774-23
PHOTO 18 of 20

VIEW OF: Cemetery, view looking southwest
NEG. NO. 6774-22
PHOTO 19 of 20

VIEW OF: Cemetery, view looking northwest, showing carillon
NEG. NO. 6774-19
PHOTO 20 of 20



Base Map
Fort Gibson National Cemetery
Muskogee County, Oklahoma



Sketch Map
Fort Gibson National Cemetery
Muskogee County, Oklahoma

Note: Numbered arrows correspond to the views in the accompanying photographs

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

PROPERTY NAME: Fort Gibson National Cemetery

MULTIPLE NAME: Civil War Era National Cemeteries MPS

STATE & COUNTY: OKLAHOMA, Muskogee

DATE RECEIVED: 12/08/00 DATE OF PENDING LIST:
DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: 1/22/01
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 99000601

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL:	N	DATA PROBLEM:	N	LANDSCAPE:	N	LESS THAN 50 YEARS:	N
OTHER:	N	PDIL:	N	PERIOD:	N	PROGRAM UNAPPROVED:	N
REQUEST:	N	SAMPLE:	N	SLR DRAFT:	N	NATIONAL:	N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

✓ACCEPT ___RETURN ___REJECT _____DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Additional Documentation Accepted

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER Edson Beall DISCIPLINE Historian

TELEPHONE _____ DATE 1/10/01

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION (Continued)

The brick administration building with an asphalt shingle roof, was constructed in 1990.

The brick service building was constructed in 1953, and is partitioned into a workshop, supply room, locker and shower space, public restrooms and vehicle storage. The roof is asphalt shingles. A maintenance bay, as well as space for an employee break room were added in 1989.

An octagon-shaped stone rostrum, fifteen feet in width and three feet, six inches in height, with a concrete slab floor, was constructed in 1939. The railings and steps are of concrete, but no roof provides any overhead protection. The structure is located in Section 7.

A brick committal service shelter was completed in 1998. The exterior roof is metal, and the interior of the roof is wood. Along one wall are granite seals of the insignias of the five branches of the military service which are inlaid into the brick wall. Another wall contains names of persons and organizations who donated monies towards the construction of the shelter. Construction of this shelter was partially funded by donations.

Just to the west of the Officers Circle is a monument made of an original cast-iron seacoast artillery tube secured by a concrete base. Affixed to the monument is a bronze plaque inscribed as follows:

UNITED STATES
NATIONAL MILITARY CEMETERY
ESTABLISHED 1868
INTERMENTS 2,123
KNOWN 156
UNKNOWN 1967

The tube was originally mounted on a carriage, which has been removed.

A carillon tower was placed in the cemetery in 1985 through a donation by the American Veterans of World War II, Korea, and Vietnam (AMVETS) and is located in Section 10.

FORT GIBSON NATIONAL CEMETERY

FORT GIBSON NATIONAL CEMETERY
MUSKOGEE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA
PHOTO 1 OF 20

FORT GIBSON NATIONAL CEMETERY
MUSKOGEE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA
PHOTO 2 OF 20

FORT GIBSON NATIONAL CEMETERY
MUSKOGEE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA
PHOTO 3 OF 20

FORT GIBSON NATIONAL CEMETERY
MUSKOGEE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA
PHOTO 4 OF 20

FORT GIBSON NATIONAL CEMETERY
MUSKOGEE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA
PHOTO 5 OF 20

FORT GIBSON NATIONAL CEMETERY
MUSKOGEE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA
PHOTO 6 OF 20

FORT GIBSON NATIONAL CEMETERY
MUSKOGEE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA
PHOTO 7 OF 20

7 210
ADA R
GOFF
HIS WIFE
JAN 3 1903
JUL 6 1987

FORT GIBSON NATIONAL CEMETERY
MUSKOGEE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA
PHOTO 8 OF 20

FORT GIBSON NATIONAL CEMETERY
MUSKOGEE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA
PHOTO 9 OF 20

FORT GIBSON NATIONAL CEMETERY
MUSKOGEE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA
PHOTO 10 OF 20

FORT GIBSON NATIONAL CEMETERY
MUSKOGEE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA
PHOTO 11 OF 20

FORT GIBSON NATIONAL CEMETERY
MUSKOGEE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA
PHOTO 12 OF 20

FORT GIBSON NATIONAL CEMETERY
MUSKOGEE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA
PHOTO 13 OF 20

FORT GIBSON NATIONAL CEMETERY
MUSKOGEE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA
PHOTO 14 OF 20

FORT GIBSON NATIONAL CEMETERY
MUSKOGEE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA
PHOTO 15 OF 20

FORT GIBSON NATIONAL CEMETERY
MUSKOGEE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA
PHOTO 16 OF 20

FORT GIBSON NATIONAL CEMETERY
MUSKOGEE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA
PHOTO 17 OF 20

FORT GIBSON NATIONAL CEMETERY
MUSKOGEE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA
PHOTO 18 OF 20

FORT GIBSON NATIONAL CEMETERY
MUSKOGEE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA
PHOTO 19 OF 20

JOHN J.
RHODES
ARVELLE
NAVE
BENJAMIN D.
COX

FORT GIBSON NATIONAL CEMETERY
MUSKOGEE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA
PHOTO 20 OF 20