

Hawthorne Naval Ammunition Depot, Greenhouse  
(Hawthorne Naval Ammunition Depot,  
Building No. 20)  
Personnel and Industrial Area  
Hawthorne  
Mineral County  
Nevada

HABS No. NV-21-A

HABS  
NEV,  
11-HAWT,  
2-A-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
San Francisco, California 94102

# HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

## HAWTHORNE NAVAL AMMUNITION DEPOT, GREENHOUSE

(Hawthorne Naval Ammunition Depot, Building No. 20)

HABS No. NV-21-A

HABS  
NEV,  
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2-A-

Location: Personnel & Industrial Area,  
Hawthorne Army Ammunition Plant,  
Hawthorne, Mineral County, Nevada

### Significance:

The Greenhouse, Building No. 20, was one of the original thirty-three industrial structures built in the Personnel & Industrial Area of the Hawthorne Naval Ammunition Depot during the initial construction phase of 1928-1932. The Hawthorne Naval Ammunition Depot (NAD) is a nationally significant military district. It was built for state-of-the-art ammunition storage in the late 1920s (criterion C); it is by and far the largest depot of its kind known in the world with 2501 magazines and storehouses, 212 miles of railroad track, 418 miles of blacktop, and 232 square miles of land (criterion C); and it is significant for its role in World War II. Producing a vast amount of ordnance, it was THE Naval Ammunition Depot for the Pacific Theater during World War II.

Operations have included: production of propellant charges, projectiles, bombs and rockets; demilitarization of all types of munitions; and storage of national stock piles of munitions. Since the 1940s until the facility was turned over to the army in 1977, Hawthorne NAD was the country's largest producer of Navy mines and depth charges.

The Depot is also significant for the role it played in the military history of the State of Nevada. It represents 50 plus years of federal military operation in Nevada. The Hawthorne NAD is the oldest twentieth century U.S. military reservation in Nevada. It has been in continuous active operational status since its commissioning in 1930 (criterion A). The Depot is the best collection of early twentieth century military, cultural resources in Nevada (criterion C). The Hawthorne NAD represents the largest industrial activity in the State of Nevada during World War II, as well as during the Korean and Vietnam conflicts.

The operation has been the local area's major employer and has represented relative economic stability to the town of Hawthorne since its commissioning. The Depot significantly changed the fortunes of the town of Hawthorne.

Over 90% of the buildings within the 148,000 plus acres of the Hawthorne NAD date from World War II or before. The district as a whole and great majority of the

individual buildings within the district retain integrity of design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Description:

The 18' by 75', rectangular-in-plan, one story greenhouse is of steel frame construction above concrete footings, parged concrete exterior half walls, and a concrete slab floor. Operative, hinged, multi-light, wooden sash windows of 16" by 24" glazing fit between the steel frame. North, south, east and west elevations are glazed from approximately 3'0" to the eave line (approximately 8'0"). The medium pitched (7/12), gabled roof of steel rafters is enclosed by 16" by 24" multi-light, wooden sash lights. The windows closest to the ridge line are hinged at the ridge line and tilt up and out to allow ventilation. A wooden door with nine lights is centered on the south end of the building. A gabled, glazed entry hood with scrolled metal brackets and a central, wooden finial is located over the south end door. The entry hood does not show on the original drawings. This served as the only original door.

Plant benches were built on both long sides of the greenhouse and as a center island creating two equidistant aisles. The wooden and metal frame structural system of the building is exposed to the ridge line. The metal frame of the structure is bolted and includes single cranks located on the east and west interior walls. Steam heat coils were installed under the plant benches.

In 1944, the original building was enlarged to include an 18' by 24' potting shed at the north end. The potting shed addition has the same 7/12 pitched gable roof but it is covered with asbestos shingles and has two frame ventilators and fixed skylights. Raking boards accent the eave lines. The walls of the potting shed are wood framed, covered with asbestos shingles, and have a horizontal row of hinged four-light windows and corner boards. There are centered, double wooden doors with a raised panel design on the north end allowing direct access to the potting shed. An opening was cut between the greenhouse and potting shed and a section of potting bench removed to allow the construction of a door between the two structures.

The potting shed has a concrete floor with drain. Beaded board interior partitions divide the space into the main "potting" area with potting benches, a toilet room, and a closet. At a later time, a lavatory was added to the potting shed. A 1960 drawing shows the addition of shower facilities to the potting shed; however, the alteration was never built.

The Greenhouse is in poor condition and is not presently being used. Approximately 20% of the glass is broken and the potting shed windows are boarded.

Four drawings for the Greenhouse are on file at the Hawthorne Army Ammunition Plant. There are two original drawings dated 9/23/30 which include location plan, floor plan, elevations, sections, heating sections and details. One drawing dated 2/5/44 and 3/7/44 shows the addition of the potting shed and another drawing dated 10/27/60 shows an addition of a shower to the potting shed.

### History:

The Hawthorne NAD was created by an Act of Congress following the destruction of the Navy's East Coast main ammunition facility in 1926. In 1928, \$3.5 million were allotted for the development of the Naval Ammunition Depot at Hawthorne. Ground breaking ceremonies were on July 24, 1928. The Greenhouse, Building No. 20, was part of the original depot construction. Thirty-three industrial buildings and twenty-two residential buildings were built in the Personnel & Industrial Area during the initial construction period.

There was much concern about making the desert a desirable place for military personnel to live. The Greenhouse served a significant purpose in helping to develop the Personnel & Industrial Area into a little oasis in the desert. The plants, flowers, and trees which initially landscaped the area were started in the Greenhouse. The greenhouse was used year-round by the grounds crew from its construction through the Vietnam conflict to beautify the base and create wind breaks. Today cottonwoods, elms, pines, junipers, and rose bushes remain from the initial landscaping of the Personnel & Industrial Area. An orchard and exterior garden originally were planted next to the greenhouse. In addition, twenty nine quarters had gardens adjacent to their units and the residential area had fifteen additional garden plots. Many of the flowers and vegetables grown in these gardens began in the greenhouse.

The Greenhouse was ordered from the American Moninger Greenhouse Company of Brooklyn, New York, and was to be constructed by local labor in 1931. Bids were opened October 29, 1930, for a site-built greenhouse and they were all rejected due to excessive cost. The lowest bid was \$ 8,344.00. A requisition was then prepared for delivery of a pre-manufactured greenhouse to be delivered to Hawthorne knocked down and then to be assembled by day labor. Four thousand dollars was allotted for the delivery of materials necessary to construct the 18' by 75' Greenhouse.

By the end of February 1931, the excavation for the Greenhouse and the concrete work necessary to bring the steam heat from the heating trench to the building were complete. On March 17, 1931, the knocked down greenhouse was received at the Depot. By the end of March 1931, the concrete footings and half walls were in place. Two months later, the concrete floor was installed, the steel frame was in place, and the glazing was in progress. During the month of June 1931, the glazing was

completed, the plant benches were assembled in place and the pipe work for the steam lines was in progress. The construction of the Greenhouse was completed by July 18, 1931, for a total cost of \$5,990.00. By making a separate purchase of the Greenhouse and erecting it with station labor, a saving approximately \$2,354.00 was realized.

Sources:

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Koval, Ana B. "Hawthorne Naval Ammunition Depot" National Register District nomination. 1989.

U. S. Department of the Navy, Bureau of Yards & Docks. Original Hawthorne NAD Greenhouse Drawings. Drawings No. 109,541 and 109,542 dated 9/23/1930. one drawing dated 2/5/1944 and 3/7/1944., and one drawing date 10/27/1960.

U. S. Department of the Navy. Lieutenant Commander C. H. Cotter, USN Monthly Reports to the Bureau of Yards and Docks, Jan 31, 1931, p. 4; February 28, 1931, p. 4; March 31, 1931, p. 5; June 1, 1931, p. 4; July 1, 1931, p. 4.

U. S. Department of the Navy. Correspondence from Chief of Bureau of Yards and Docks to Officer-in-charge of Construction, Naval Ammunition Depot, Hawthorne, Nevada. November 6, 1930.

Wilding, James, facilities manager at Hawthorne NAD. Telephone interview, January 29, 1991.

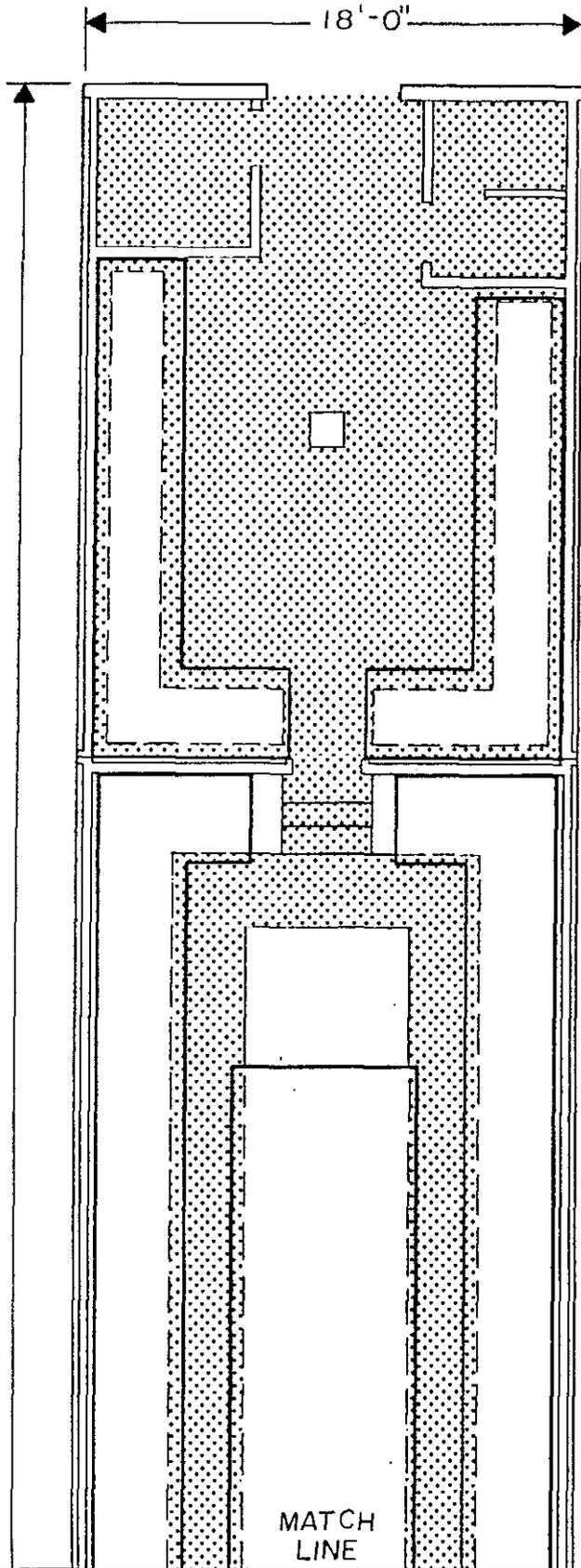
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October 1, 1990.

Hawthorne Naval  
Ammunition Depot

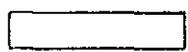
[Hawthorne Army  
Ammunition Plant],

Greenhouse [Bldg. No.20]  
[North end]

HABS No. NV-21-A



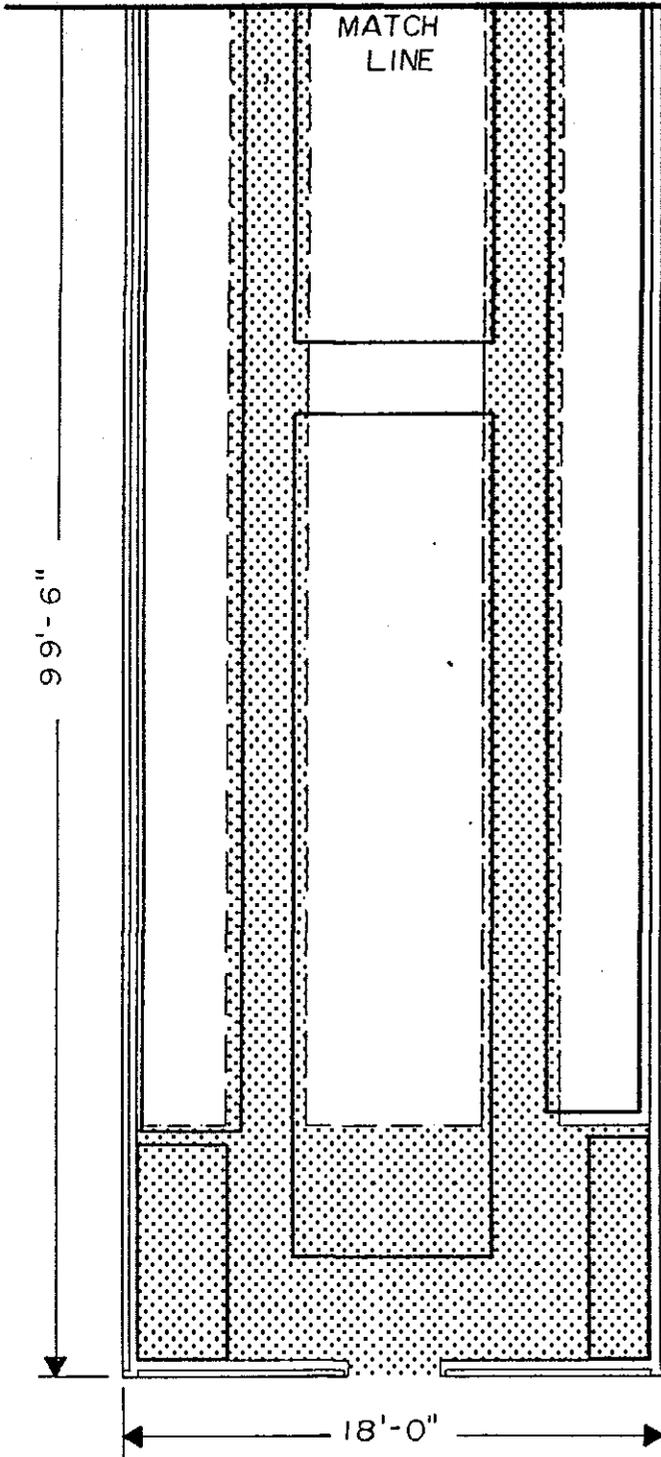
Legend

-  — CONCRETE HALF-WALL WITH SASH WINDOWS
-  — POTTING BED OUTLINE
-  — CONCRETE FLOOR & WALKWAY
-  — DIRT DRAINAGE AREAS

graphic  
scale: 

drwn. by: DC BUUM

msrd. by: DC BUUM &  
M ISLEY



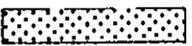
# Hawthorne Naval Ammunition Depot

[Hawthorne Army  
Ammunition Plant],

Greenhouse [Bldg. No. 20]  
[South end]

HABS No. NV-21-A

## Legend

-  — CONCRETE HALF-WALL  
WITH SASH WINDOWS
-  — POTTING BED  
OUTLINE
-  — CONCRETE FLOOR  
& WALKWAY
-  — DIRT DRAINAGE  
AREAS

graphic

scale: 

drwn. by: D C BUUM

msrd. by: D C BUUM &  
M ISLEY

