

United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

B-1071

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date entered

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

## 1. Name

historic Fifth Regiment Armory

and/or common

## 2. Location

street & number 219-247 West Hoffman Street N/A not for publication

city, town Baltimore N/A vicinity of congressional district Seventh

state Maryland code 24 county independent city code 510

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property

name State of Maryland Military Department Contact: Col. Raymond Clift  
728-3388 x244

street & number 231 West Hoffman Street

city, town Baltimore N/A vicinity of state Maryland 21201

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Baltimore Superior Court Building

street & number Fayette and Calvert Streets, Room 610

city, town Baltimore state Maryland 21202

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Maryland Historical Trust

Historic Sites Inventory has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1980  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Maryland Historical Trust, 21 State Circle

city, town Annapolis state Maryland 21401

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date <u>N/A</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The Fifth Regiment Armory is an imposing, fortress-type structure situated in mid-town Baltimore northwest of the central business district. The building with its landscaped parking lots and pedestrian walks forms an island accessible on all four sides by wide, attractive city avenues. It is a counterpart in size and scale to the State Office complex immediately to the south and to other mid-to high-rise commercial and residential structures in the immediate vicinity.

The armory building consists of full basement, first floor containing a 200' x 300' drill hall, mezzanine or "balcony" level, and newer second (reconstructed 1933) housing the trussed steel drill hall roof. The foundation materials are various: brick, cinder block, and poured cement.

The symmetrical front facade, oriented to the north (Hoffman Street), has 22 bays in the newer second floor finished in glazed brick, centered over the 13 bays of the original lower section, which is faced with grey granite. Reading from the west to the north corner, the features of the facade are as follows:

The lower, original facade to the right of the center block consists of a five-bay section punctuated at the corners and between bays by triangular buttresses stepped back at levels corresponding to the line of stone coping at the water table, between each floor and across the top of the parapet. Each bay contains two windows at basement level, and three windows at first floor level, all 2/6 casement with stone sills and topped by flat stone arches. At mezzanine level are tall rounded arch windows trimmed with stone. The curve of each arch is filled with stationary glass panes, and surmounts four 4/4 sash windows. On the front facade these windows have been altered considerably by infilling with metal panels and the addition of security gates.

Under the second and third bays from the west corner a flight of stone steps leads to wide doorways at first floor level. Doors beneath stairs give access to basement storage areas. The two sections on either side of the center block are identical.

Windows of the same style and scale are repeated on the newer second floor addition above. Each bay is flanked by strip buttresses. Stone molding runs in a line across the tops of the windows and at the flat roofline.

The center block, projecting slightly from the side sections, is characterized by a tall, rounded stone arch with keystone over wide, slightly recessed doors. The doorway is flanked by two sets of buttresses, matching those of the side sections. Between the buttresses windows occur, two each at basement and first floor level, 2/6 casement, at second floor, one 3/6 casement, all with stone sills and flat stone arches. Stone coping above windows corresponds to that of the side sections. Two crenelles occur between the pairs of buttresses at the roofline. At the roofline, two crenelles occur between the pairs of buttresses and three crenelles top the center of the block.

Set back slightly beneath the stone arch is a lunette featuring a 10' x 15' memorial tablet executed in bronze by Baltimore sculptor Hans Schuler. The bas relief sculpture depicts an heroic figure of Victory standing over men in the trenches of World War I. At the base on the stone arch flanking the bas relief are bronze eagles. A massive bronze gate comprised of 13 square panels with a single center door seals the entrance when the facility is closed. The lunette and door were added to the structure in 1925.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

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DESCRIPTION (continued)

Centered over the arch is a stone tablet bearing the seal of the State of Maryland.

The west (Howard Street) and east facades contain 12 bays with buttresses and fenestration as noted for the front facade. The sides are identical except that the west side has basement level doors instead of windows giving access to vehicle storage areas.

The southeast (Preston Street) facade maintains the same spacing of bays and fenestration types as the front facade. At each end of the facade 22 stone steps lead to enclosed vestibules at the first floor level. The vestibules contain four windows each, 1/1 sash with stone sills and flat stone arches.

At center of the southeast facade a two story entry projects 20' from the front wall plane. On both floors three 2/3 casement windows flank a rounded arch doorway trimmed in stone with casement windows filling the curve of the arch. Beneath the windows is a roll-up metal garage door. Circular stone tablets punctuate the upper corners of the center block and two stone tablets, one above each set of first floor windows, are inscribed "1901" (year of original construction) and "1934" (year of rebuilding).

Inside the front facade entrance is a domed entry hall, composed of painted plaster over lath, presently in need of minor cosmetic repairs. This hall is probably the only remaining element of the original interior. Glazed tile hallways, much high quality, natural finish woodwork and doors, and bright open spaces created by the balcony windows make for a generally pleasant interior.

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA:

Verbal Boundary Description:

In the City of Baltimore:

BEGINNING for the same at the corner formed by the intersection of the northwest side of Preston Street and the southwest side of Jenkins Alley and running, thence, southwest binding on Preston Street 366'; thence, southwest binding on Preston Street 366' more or less to an alley 20' wide called Mason's Alley 328'" more or less to Hoffman Street, thence, northwest binding on Hoffman Street 366' more or less to Jenkins Alley and, thence southeast binding on Jenkins Alley 328' 3" to the place of beginning.

Boundary Justification:

The nominated property comprises the total parcel historically associated with the resource.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1946	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1901 original construction  
 1933 substantial rebuilding  
**Builder/Architect** Architects for both original and reconstruction: Wyatt & Nolting

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)** Applicable Criteria: A, C  
 Applicable Exceptions: none  
 Significance Evaluated: state

The Fifth Regiment Armory is primarily significant for its association with the reorganization and expansion of the National Guard system in the 20th century. It derives additional significance from its role as a social center for its community, a function it has served continuously since its construction date. As Maryland's oldest armory building, constructed in 1901, it does not conform to the standard architectural form which was established in the World War I era; however, it has architectural significance in its own right as a unique design by the prestigious Baltimore firm of Wyatt and Nolting.

The Fifth Regiment Armory was designed by the Baltimore architectural firm of Wyatt and Nolting. William G. Nolting (1866-1940) and J.B. Noel Wyatt (1846-1926) designed a number of public buildings, most notably the Baltimore City Courthouse (1900) and the Veterans' Bureau in Washington, D.C. The firm also designed the Pikesville Armory (1903).

The Fifth Regiment was the first armory built by the State for the National Guard. The land was purchased from Baltimorean William H. Spence in 1900 for \$125,000 and had been the site of "Bolton," the country seat of George Grundy. The original structure cost \$450,000 to build and had a barrel vault roof over the drill hall floor, which was apparently finished with sheet metal. After a series of damaging fires, the roof and interior of the entire building were completely destroyed by an uncontrollable blaze in 1933. Wyatt and Nolting were recalled to the site to rebuild all but the exterior shell of the first floor and balcony. Operating under tight budget constraints (\$1.4 million was allotted for the rebuilding, \$750,000 from the State and the balance from the Federal Relief Administration), the architects came forth with the present design which "is not all that could be desired in beauty and perfection of lines but is a compromise with economic handicaps."<sup>1</sup>

In 1921, the women's board of the Armory, desiring a memorial to the dead of World War I, commissioned Baltimore sculptor Hans Schuler to create a bronze lunette bas relief for the center front facade. The winged figure of Victory imposed over those of men in trenches (actually modelled on the faces of men of the Fifth Regiment) is considered by some critics to be the masterpiece of this prolific contributor to the City's impressive stock of artwork in places dedicated to the uses of the public. The lunette and doors were cast at the J. Arthur Limerick Company and were dedicated in ceremonies at the Armory on Armistice Day, 1925.

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National Park Service**

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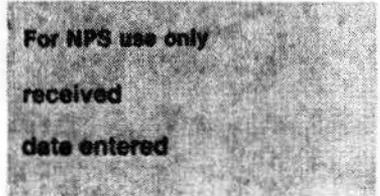
Fifth Regiment Armory

Continuation sheet Baltimore City

Item number

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## HISTORY AND SUPPORT (continued)

The Fifth Regiment Armory was intended for public uses as well as military from the beginning. In 1903, a special act of the legislature allowed the Armory to be used for the German "sangerfest" in that and many subsequent years. In 1904, the Armory rented space to businesses burnt out by the great fire of 1904. In 1912, the Armory gained national notoriety as the site of the National Democratic Convention which nominated for President the then-Governor of the State of New Jersey, Woodrow Wilson.

In 1924, the officers' association of the Fifth Regiment began operating a radio station on a 2-4 meter band, transmitting from one of the balcony rooms of the Armory. The station's call letters, "WFBR," reflected its unique status as "World's First Broadcasting Regiment."

At completion of the rebuilding after the fire of 1933, thousands of troops and the Governors of the 13 original states were feted at the rededication ceremonies held over two days in September, 1935.

Possession of a newly rebuilt armory with doubled interior spaces for exhibitions and meetings catapulted Baltimore into a new era of prestige as one of the leading convention cities of the United States. The Convention of the American Bottlers of Carbonated Beverages held at the Armory in November, 1935 christened the building as the City's new convention and exposition hall.

The history of the Fifth Regiment of the Maryland National Guard for whom the armory in Baltimore was built parallels the history of Maryland from Revolutionary to modern times. The Regiment, known as the "Dandy Fifth," originated in the old "Maryland Line" troops of the Continental Army, made up of men from all over the State. These troops responded to the call of the Continental Congress for troops in 1776. The Regiment saw action in both sides of the Civil War, in the Spanish-American War in 1898, and both World Wars. At the close of World War II, the 29th Division (of which the Fifth Regiment is a part) received distinguished unit citations and the French Croix de Guerre with Palm was given to the entire division. The Regiment was again called to active duty during the 1960s to control civil disturbances at home.

The turn of the 20th century brought about a number of changes in national military departments. One of these was the trend toward the professional civilian soldier, and the burst of armory building in Maryland in the early years of this century is a reflection of the State's commitment to that concept.

The 1920s saw a steady growth in numbers and strength of the Maryland Guard. During this time, the First Regiment headquartered at Bel Air and Fifth Regiment at Baltimore decentralized to a chain of statewide armories with component companies at Chestertown, Kensington, Silver Spring, Frederick, Easton, Hagerstown, Cambridge, Laurel, Elkton, Hyattsville, Westminster, Crisfield, Pocomoke City, Salisbury, Centreville, and Annapolis.

In 1948 the Department of the Army gave battle honors to the Fifth Regiment dating back to the beginning of the American Revolution. The recognition of the Fifth's historical continuity made the Maryland militia one of the oldest in the nation's history.

<sup>1</sup>Baltimore Sun, January 12, 1945.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

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Vertical files, Enoch Pratt Free Library, Maryland Room, Baltimore.  
Clipping files, the Baltimore Sun.  
Who was Who in America, Vol. I, 1897-42, Chicago: Marquis, 1943.  
Scrapbooks compiled by Col. Feingold, Fifth Regiment Armory, Baltimore.  
Land Records of Baltimore City, Liber RO 1848, folio 61.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 1.2 acres

Quadrangle name Baltimore East, MD

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UMT References

A 

1	8	3	6	0	1	5	0	4	3	5	1	4	8	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

B 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

C 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

D 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

E 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

F 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

G 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

H 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

### Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet No 1.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Susanne Moore, Historic Sites Surveyor

organization Maryland Historical Trust date 1980; revised July 1985

street & number 21 State Circle telephone (301) 269-2538

city or town Annapolis state Maryland 21401

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

8-14-85

title STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER

date

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

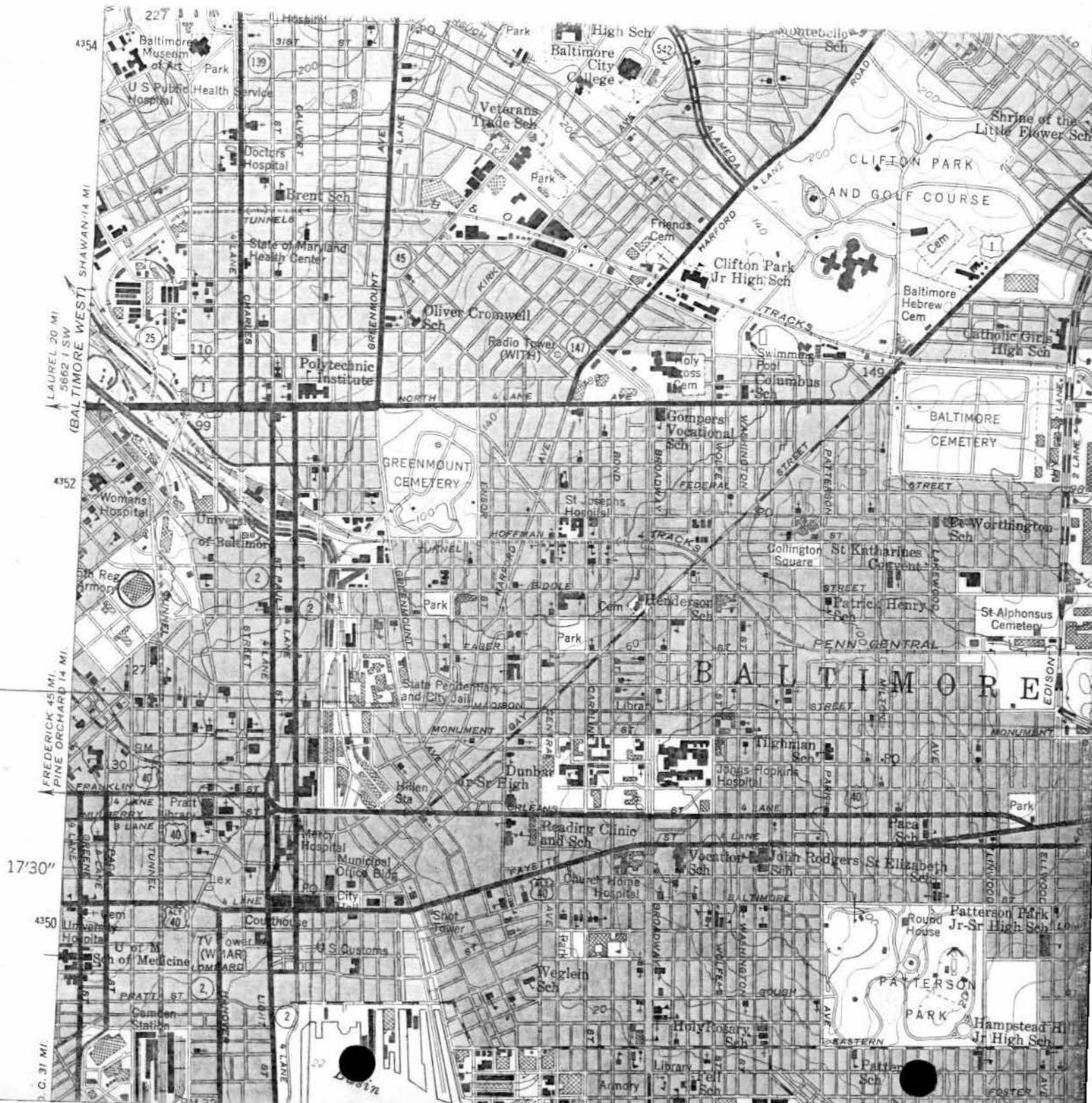
date

Chief of Registration

B-1071  
FIFTH REGIMENT  
ARMORY  
BALTIMORE CITY,  
MARYLAND

18-360150-4351480

MARYLAND NATIONAL  
GUARD ARMORIES  
THEMATIC GROUP



17'30"