**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

**1. NAME**

**COMMON:**

Battery D

**AND/OR HISTORIC:**

Hindman Hill

**2. LOCATION**

**STREET AND NUMBER:**

Military Road

**CITY OR TOWN:**

Helena

**STATE:**

AR

**CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:**

One

**COUNTY:**

Phillips

**CODE:**

05

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

(Check One)

- District
- Building
- Site
- Structure

**OWNERSHIP**

- Public
- Private
- Both

**STATUS**

- Public Acquisition:
  - In Process
  - Being Considered

- Preservation work
  - In progress

**ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC**

- Yes:
  - Restricted
  - Unrestricted

**PRESENT USE** (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Agricultural
- Government
- Park - Private
- Transportation
- Comments

- Commercial
- Industrial
- Private Residence
- Other (Specify)

- Educational
- Military
- Religious

- Entertainment
- Museum
- Scientific

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

**OWNER'S NAME:**

John M. Connaway and Anne C. Pope

**STREET AND NUMBER:**

P. O. Box 367

**CITY OR TOWN:**

Helena

**STATE:**

AR

**CODE:**

05

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

**COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:**

Phillips County Courthouse

**STREET AND NUMBER:**

Helena

**STATE:**

AR

**CODE:**

05

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

**TITLE OF SURVEY:**

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

**DATE OF SURVEY:**

May, 1971

**DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:**

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

**STREET AND NUMBER:**

Plaza West, Suite 1030

**CITY OR TOWN:**

Little Rock

**STATE:**

AR

**CODE:**

05
Battery D consists of a series of rifle entrenchments and earthen fortifications on Hindman Hill. Access to this Union Battery is gained via Military Road where two commemorative markers stand at the entrance. Though the other Helena batteries have been greatly altered since they were constructed in 1863, Battery D has changed little.

On the crest of Hindman Hill are the earthworks of Battery D. The remaining rifle trenches lie on the southwest slope of the hill. Battery D is partially covered with trees and thick undergrowth; however, the owner keeps the foliage cut on the crest and upper portion of the hill so that the earthworks and nearby rifle trenches are clearly visible.

Covering about one acre of the hillside, Battery D has remained basically unaltered in the 110 years since its construction. Wind and weather have softened the starkness of this Union Army fortification, but its military purpose remains readily apparent.
On July 4, 1863, two of the most well-known battles of the Civil War were fought. While Union forces repelled the Confederates' northermost advance at Gettysburg, Rebel troops at Vicksburg capitulated to Grant's army after a lengthy siege. The Confederate losses at both Gettysburg and Vicksburg foretold the eventual outcome of the war.

The coincidence of Union victories on Independence Day was made still more ironic by a third success in eastern Arkansas. The Battle of Helena was a futile attempt by Confederates to recapture the Mississippi River town of Helena from Federal occupying forces. Like their comrades in Mississippi and Pennsylvania, the Confederate forces in Arkansas also ended the day in defeat.

During the siege of Vicksburg Grant's Union army was supplied via the Mississippi River. If the Confederates could have retaken a river stronghold above Vicksburg they would have been able to harass Federal supply shipments to the besieged city. Hence, the primary objective of the attack on Helena was to relieve Vicksburg.

Union forces, commanded by Major General Benjamin Prentiss, had taken advantage of Helena's topography by building a series of fortifications on hills surrounding the city. Four hilltop batteries overlooked each of the roads leading into town.

Because of rumors that Confederate forces were on the march, the four batteries were strengthened in late June by the construction of a series of rifle entrenchments and abatis in front of each battery. Other defensive
Significance - (Continued - Page 2)

measures instituted in late June included the sounding of
reville at 2:30 A. M. to prevent being caught unawares,
felling many trees to obstruct the principal roads leading
into town, and stationing a Federal timber-clad, the "Tyler",
along the Helena waterfront.

By July 3, the Rebels had moved to within five miles of
Helena. That afternoon Confederate commander Lieutenant
General Theophilus H. Holmes met with his subordinate
officers to explain the order of battle. Simultaneous
attacks were to be launched against each of the four
batteries. Once these fortifications were captured, the
city was to be occupied. With almost twice the number
of Union defenders, the Confederates fully expected to
retook Helena; however, their own errors, along with the
strong Federal fortifications, made victory unattainable.

Because the roads leading into Helena had been barricaded
with felled trees, the Confederates, unprepared for this
obstructionist tactic, left their artillery behind. Another
costly Confederate mistake was a misunderstanding among
the subordinate generals as to the exact hour to begin the
attack. Poor communications and poor timing hampered the
Confederates throughout the morning.

Though three of the original batteries have been lost to
urbanization during the last century, one remains intact.
Battery D, the southernmost fortification, looks much
the same today as it did when soldiers lost their lives
in trying to keep or gain possession of it.

Like Batteries A, B, and C, Battery D consisted of earthen
fortifications on a hilltop overlooking one of the roads
leading into Helena. A series of rifle entrenchments were
constructed down the steep hillside in front of Battery D,
with a timber abattis lying in front of the first rifle
pit. Located atop Hindman Hill, Battery D controlled the
road leading into Helena from Little Rock. Colonel
Significance (Page 3 - Continued)

William E. McLean commanded the Union defenders of Battery D, consisting of troops from Indiana with reinforcements from Missouri and Iowa.

The Battle of Helena commenced with the Rebel attack on Battery D. At daybreak Confederate Arkansas troops under the command of Brigadier General James F. Pagan began their assault on Hindman Hill. After rushing the first rifle pits, the Rebels made a slow but steady climb up the fortified hill. During their hard fought ascent, Pagan's brigade was continually under fire from Union forces in both Batteries D and C. The Confederate commander attacking Battery C misunderstood his orders and waited until sunrise, rather than daylight, to begin his assault. In the meantime, the unhampered guns of Battery C were taking a terrible toll among the Confederate ranks attacking Battery D.

Later in the morning, after the fourth tier of rifle pits had been taken, General Pagan ordered a brief respite for his weary troops. At this point Brigadier General Dandridge McRae led about 200 Rebel troops from the late but successful attack on Battery C to aid in the assault on Battery D. Attacking from Pagan's left flank, McRae's men drew the Union fire from Battery D long enough for Pagan's direct assault to take the last line of rifle pits. As the withering Yankee fire quickly dissolved McRae's attack, Pagan ordered a charge in the final and desperate attempt to take Battery D. However, with the Union guns again focused on Pagan's Arkansas brigade, the Rebel thrust was stopped, and the troops were forced to take cover in the captured Union rifle pits.

While the Battery D guns kept Pagan's men pinned down, orders came from General Holmes to withdraw, and the message was passed verbally through the Confederate lines. Thinking all his men had received the word, General Pagan issued a prearranged signal to retreat; however, about 240 men in an isolated ravine never received the order. As the main force abandoned the area, this group of soldiers was surrounded by Union troops and taken prisoner.
Significance (Page 4 - Continued)

The strong fortifications of Battery D protected the Union forces well, as demonstrated by the number of casualties. While 47 were killed and 115 wounded among the attacking Confederates, only five were killed and ten wounded behind the Union earthworks. General Prentiss met superior Confederate numbers with well-constructed defenses.

Besides being representative of Civil War earthworks, the site is also important as visible evidence of the Battle of Helena. On July 4, 1863, Battery D exemplified the fate of the Confederacy and the future of the Union.
**MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**


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**APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:** one acre

**LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES**

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**FORM PREPARED BY**

Dianna Kirk, Staff Historian
Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
Suite 1030, Plaza West
Little Rock

**STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison 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 National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

[ ] National [ ] State [ ] Local

Name: ____________________________
Title: State Historic Preservation Officer
Date: June 11, 1974

**NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

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

Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date ____________________________

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date 9-17-74
1. NAME

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4. IDENTIFICATION

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