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The Arkansas National Guard Museum is Open!

The Arkansas National Guard Museum tells two stories.

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The Arkansas Military Journal is an unofficial publication of the History Detachment, Arkansas National Guard. The purpose of the journal is to aid in the preservation of Arkansas Military History. Comments and materials for publication are invited.

Correspondence should be addressed to: The Adjutant General, CS-HS, Box 936, Camp Robinson, North Little Rock, Arkansas 72199-9600.

A ROOKIE IN ROBINSON

by
PVT. NED ELLER

Pvt. Ned Eller produced the following cartoon while stationed at Camp Robinson during World War II.. Currently no further information is available on this soldier. The cartoon he produced details life in Basic Training at Infantry Replacement Training at Camp Joseph T. Robinson. The humorous twist no doubt brings back memories to almost anyone who has attended Basic Training. The cartoon is in a booklet form and was evidently reproduced in an unknown quantity of copies. This copy is housed in the Arkansas National Guard Museum Archives at Camp Robinson in its original form except for the first section which had the last frame torn in half, undoubtedly as some previous owner's attempt at censorship of a common occurrence during in-processing of soldiers. The version, which follows, has been shrunk to fit within the margins of the Arkansas Military Journal.

A ROOKIE IN TRAINING CAMP

1. HI, FOLKS!



A ROOKIE IN TRAINING CAMP

2. THAT DOGGONE BUGLER!

By PVT. NED ELLER

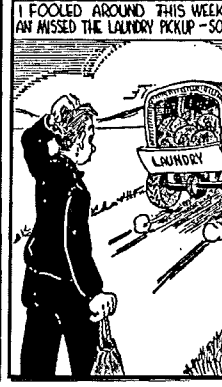


A ROOKIE IN TRAINING CAMP



3. LEARNING THE ROPES

By PVT. NED ELLER



A ROOKIE IN TRAINING CAMP

4. FEEL LIKE A HORSE!

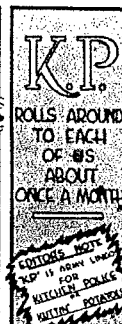
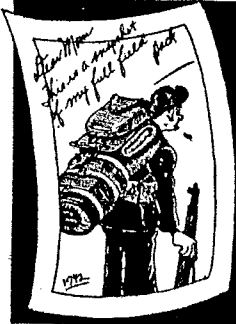
By PVT. NED ELLER



A ROOKIE IN TRAINING CAMP

6. THIS IS THE LIFE!

By PVT. NED ELLER



A ROOKIE IN TRAINING CAMP

7. HALF WAY MARK!

By PVT. NED ELLER



A ROOKIE IN TRAINING CAMP

8. PROBLEMS AFIELD!

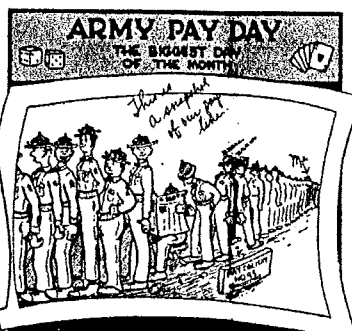
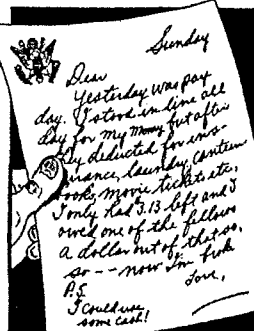
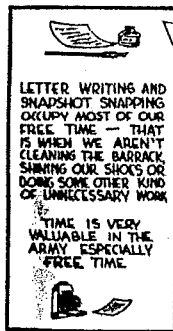
By PVT. NED ELLER



A ROOKIE IN TRAINING CAMP

9. THE GHOST WALKS

By PVT. NED ELLER



A ROOKIE IN TRAINING CAMP

10. SHANK'S MARE

By PVT. NED ELLER



A ROOKIE IN TRAINING CAMP

11. IT'S ALL IN THE DAY!

By PVT. NED ELLER



A ROOKIE IN TRAINING CAMP

12. DUST GETS IN YOUR EYE!

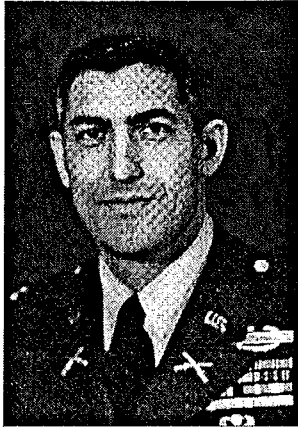
By PVT. NED ELLER



WORLD WAR II TRAINING AT CAMP JOSEPH T. ROBINSON

An Account of Samuel Lombardo

Training Officer, Infantry Replacement Center



Lt. Colonel Samuel Lombardo (Ret)

WWII Japan Korea Vietnam

**Combat Infantryman's Badge Silver Star Bronze
Star w/oak leaf cluster for valor
Army Commendation Medal**

Samuel Lombardo was born in Caraffa, Calabria in southern Italy July 12, 1919. At the age of 10 his family immigrated to the United States and settled at Juniata Gap near Altoona, Pennsylvania, where his father worked as a mason. On November 11, 1939 Samuel joined the 110th Infantry Regiment of the 28th Division made up of Pennsylvania National Guard. After a few months they participated in the Carolina Maneuvers where Lombardo developed an expertise in map reading and land navigation. While returning from the Carolina's the unit was camped near Lynchburg, Virginia when news of the Pearl Harbor bombing came over the radio. The units of the 28th Division returned to

Indiantown Gap to await further orders.

These orders soon arrived and the troops departed for Camp Livingston, Louisiana. While here Samuel Lombardo applied and was accepted for Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning, Georgia where he completed the three-month course on July 14, 1942. Upon graduation his first assignment would be Camp Joseph T. Robinson. Lt. Colonel Lombardo (Ret) provided the following information in response to a request by the Arkansas National Guard Museum to give insight to the training that was conducted at Camp Robinson as an Infantry Replacement Training Camp.¹

¹ The above information was obtained from Lt. Col. Lombardo's book, *O'er the Land of the Free*, Beidel Printing House Inc, Shippensburg, PA, 2000, 176 pages.

"On 14 July 1942 I graduated from OCS Class 33, Harmony Church Area Fort Benning, Georgia, and my first assignment was the 12th Training Regt, Camp Robinson, Arkansas.

I arrived at Camp Robinson in late July 1942, and was immediately assigned as a training officer of Basic Training. There were six officers assigned to each company of around 200 or more. We taught our own company in the basics of close-order drill etc., but were also assigned to committees, who taught in special subjects such as First Aid, Map Reading, etc. As a Committee member, we taught the entire Regiment, a company size class at a time. The only time we had bigger classes was for the Night Demonstrations on "Sounds". The size of this class was a Battalion size. My specialty was Map Reading.

It seemed that everyone was hesitant to get involved in Maps. I took a liking to maps from the start. So I was "permanently" assigned to this teaching duty. In my off-duty time, I made training aids to help the men visualize the ground as I saw it.

One special aid I made was a stand with a paper mache model of a hill, with a gentle slope on one side and a deep slope on the other.

Then I turned the model to face the class and they could see how the same hill appeared on a map with contour lines.

I also took classes of volunteers on Saturday PM during our off time, to the outskirts of Camp and the woods. Everyone had a map or aerial photo; I showed them what the subject was on the ground, and then on the map. I always had 10 to 15 volunteers, and believe, that all benefited from the demonstrations.

Our training cycles ranged from 7 weeks to 13 weeks. This was determined by how the fighting was going on overseas, and how many replacements were needed.

Discipline was tough, especially for the officers in our Regt. For example, our Regt C.O. would sit at the end seat in our mess hall, and watch every officer eat. If the Officer drank 2 milks or walk out with an apple or orange, the Officer would receive a letter, requiring a reply as to why he violated Army Regulations, i.e., rations was one bottle (small) of milk, and food had to be consumed in the mess hall. He would also have a bugler stand next to him near the edge of the Training Area. On the first note of 'Duty' we were supposed to take our first step into the training area. The same thing happened in

the P.M. on our return from the field. We were to step into the Regimental Area, not one minute early. Otherwise, answer by endorsement the next day why the strict schedule was not kept.

My friend, Lt. John Raper from Oklahoma, had been a teacher. His duties were to organize a class for the evening and teach those, who could not read or write. His classes had 30 to 40 soldiers. He had no other duties during the day.

We also had soldiers who had never worn shoes before. So we had a job breaking new shoes in. Everyone broke in their boots by putting them on, wading through a tub full of water. Wading a while, until the boots were thoroughly soaked. Then just sit around and then walk around the grounds for an hour or two. Then you took the boots off, stuff newspaper inside of them. Then apply Neats Foot Oil to the outside of them and let them sit through the weekend. This was the best system to insure a good fit, and no blisters.

We had a parade every Saturday am. Needless to say, everyone was up for it. We trained very hard, and by the end of the training cycle, everyone was fit. We took many hikes, starting with the 10 mile, and ending with the 20 mile by the end of the cycle.

On one occasion we took a ten-mile hike (our first one) and we had 6 or 7 men drop out. I informed all the men 180-200, that anyone dropping out, would again have to hike that evening. Since I made a statement, I had to follow through. So that evening, all of the dropouts hiked up, and I led them on a 10-mile hike. No one dropped out, but I was real tired, since I had walked 20 miles that day instead of 10 miles.

For recreation we had the standard Day Rooms, and Clubs, but I think that a lot of credit must go to the people of Little Rock. They organized dances and other activities for the Enlisted men as well as the Officers. The city welcomed all of the service personnel with open arms. I don't know of any city in the U.S. that did more."²

One incident of interest was the fact that Lt. Lombardo was not afraid to make suggestions up the chain of command. After returning from his first day in the field with his company, Lt. Lombardo noticed how all troops stopped in the regimental area and remained at attention for a minute or two. Upon asking one of his sergeants why this occurred he was informed that "Retreat" was being played by the regimental

² Personal account provided May 2001 by Lt. Col. Samuel Lombardo to the Arkansas National Guard Museum.

bugler. Since no one could actually hear the bugler except those who were close, Lt. Lombardo returned to the Orderly Room and made an immediate recommendation to the Regimental Commander. He suggested that a tower be built in the center of the regimental area tall enough to be above the roofline of the barracks. This would allow the bugler to climb up stairs and play where the entire regiment could hear. Within a week the regimental commander stated it was a good idea and the tower was immediately built. Now all bugle calls would be heard not just in the regimental area but over a large part of the entire camp.³

"After 1 1/2 years at Camp Robinson I was assigned as a training Officer and Camp Army Commander, for the new cadre for Camp Fannin, Texas. I left Camp Robinson with much more confidence than when I arrived,

and better shape, and with nothing but fond memories of Camp Robinson."⁴

In October of 1944 Lt. Lombardo volunteered for overseas duty and was assigned as an infantry rifle platoon leader in Company I 394th Infantry Regiment of the 99th Infantry Division. This duty would take him through combat during the Battle of the Bulge, the Remagen



Remagen Bridge as it appeared on 10 March 1945 when we crossed it.

Photo from *O're the Land of the Free*

Bridgehead, the Rhur Pocket and

Central European Campaigns. The most interesting aspect of this time was he and his troop's desire to have an American flag. When this request was denied, the platoon took it upon themselves to construct one in combat conditions during spare minutes and hours from scraps sewn to a

³ Lombardo, *O'er the Land of the Free*, pp. 55-57.

⁴ Personal account, May 2001.

and was flown in every captured German town that Lt. Lombardo's troops happened to occupy. Often many higher-ranking officers voiced their envy at seeing the flag and not having one themselves. Today this flag still exists at the National Infantry Museum at Fort Benning, Georgia. Samuel Lombardo wrote his account of the flag making, feeling an obligation to his family and all US citizens, especially school children, to share the story and what "Old Glory" should mean to us all.⁵

The History Detachment of the Arkansas National Guard wishes to thank Lt. Col. (Ret) Lombardo for the opportunity to share his experiences at Camp Robinson and the touching story of the importance of a hand sewn flag to a group of GI's slogging through some of the most important battles of WWII. For information on the availability of the book, contact Biedel Printing House Inc., 63 West Burd St, Shippensburg, PA, 17257



Some of my men displaying "our" flag for the first time on the east side of the Rhine River, near Remagen. (March 1945)

⁵ Lombardo, *O're the Land of the Free*.

THE ARKANSAS MANEUVERS, 1941

By B. FRANKLIN COOLING III

The following article was originally printed in the Arkansas Historical Quarterly, Vol 26 No. 2, pages 103-122. Permission to reprint has been granted by the Arkansas Historical Association June 19, 2001.

The summer of 1941 found Europe ablaze with war and the conflict slowly creeping elsewhere in the world. The United States government, already alerted by the activities of Nazi Germany and Japan, began to intensify its own preparations for the possibility that it too might be drawn into the struggle. Selective Service was nearly a year old by August 1941, but the massive mobilization techniques of the period took time to grind out a Modern Army. Training and equipping large bodies of men required more effort than many Americans realized at the time. Part of the process was the "testing" of men and material in field maneuvers.

The first indication of impending maneuvers for such field armies as the Second Army came through channels in late 1940. The news arrived in an informal note from then Lt. Col. Mark W. Clark, of the Plans and Operations Section (G-3) of General Headquarters (GHQ), United States Army, in Washington to Colonel Fred L.

Walker, Chief of Plans and Operations for Second Army. Colonel Clark wrote:

"We are going to put out a training directive to cover a 3-4 month period after MTP [Mobilization Training Program] training (13 weeks) is completed. It will also set up Corps and Army Maneuvers. Only some Corps will have exercises. All armies will have exercises, probably 2nd and 3rd Armies with GHQ at [Camp] Beauregard [Louisiana] in September."¹

Second Army headquarters immediately began detailed planning for these exercises. As they developed subsequently, these exercises included maneuvers in Tennessee in June, others in Arkansas in August, and concluded with the massive and well-known (today) Louisiana operations in September. The Arkansas maneuvers thus constituted the second phase of

¹ Cited in Maj. Bell 1. Wiley and Capt. William P. Govan, History of the Second Army, Study Number 16, Army Ground Forces, 1946, a historical manuscript in the files of Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, Washington, D. C.

the 1941 maneuvers of the Second Army. This article will concern itself then with the so-called Corps and Army maneuvers in Arkansas between the middle of August and the middle of September 1941.

The VII Army Corps field exercises and maneuvers in southwestern Arkansas took place from August 17 until August 28. These were "warm up" exercises for units which had not participated in the Tennessee maneuvers. While GHQ laid down no prescribed exercises, requirements from Second Army headquarters in Memphis, Tennessee, and experience in the June maneuvers, led VII Corps commander, Maj. Gen. Robert C. Richardson to plan six main exercises. These encompassed so-called "controlled field exercises" with a concluding exercise as a two-sided free maneuver in which the VII Corps, less one of its divisions, operated against this division, itself reinforced with certain auxiliary troops.²

The need for controlled field exercises in the preliminary stages of combined training of new

divisions could be scarcely exaggerated. One of the VII Corps divisions' the 27th Division (New York National Guard) had received experience in Tennessee. Of the other two divisions in the VII Corps, the 35th Division (National Guardsmen from Arkansas, Missouri and Kansas) had finished less than one month's combined training. The 33d Division (Illinois National Guard) had just completed the MTP phase prior to the concentration of the whole corps in Arkansas. Neither Maj. Gen. R. E. Truman of the 35th Division nor Maj. Gen. Samuel T. Lawton of the 33d Division felt that their units were ready for any future contingency.

The Corps exercises were designed to lead these "green" divisions progressively through the principal types of field operations including a concentration, an advance to contact with an enemy, an attack, the organization of a defensive position, and finally a withdrawal. Carefully planned in advance and closely fitted to the terrain, these maneuvers were thought to be of great value in preparing divisions for the more difficult work to follow, leading up to and including the GHQ phase.

Following the controlled exercises there was time for but one so-called "free exercise" in the period allotted to the VII Corps.

² HQ VII Corps, Report of VII Army Corps Field Exercises and Maneuvers in Southwestern Arkansas-August 17-28 and Participation of VII Army Corps in Second Army and GHQ Maneuvers August 29-September 30, 1941, dtd. 29 Oct. 1941, in RG 400 Maneuver Report VII Army Corps, Arkansas-Louisiana Aug. 10-Sept. 30, 1941, vol. 1. All records cited in this article are in GSA, National Archives and Records Service, World War II Division, Alexandria, Virginia, unless otherwise noted.

This free maneuver was designed to test reconnaissance agencies and particularly their ability to evaluate enemy information.

In addition to the above series of problems, special river-crossing exercises for one reinforced battalion per division were staged on the Red River, south of Fulton, Arkansas. These problems, which involved the construction of a pontoon bridge across the river, would prove their value in the later crossings of the same river during the GHQ maneuvers.³

All of the exercises would lead logically into the Army controlled maneuvers in early September. Here a provisional Regular Army Corps would be pitted against the National Guardsmen of the VII Corps. Finally, both Corps would unite and move southward with the Second Army for its mid-September mock conflict with the Third Army in Louisiana. The area allotted by Second Army to the VII Corps for its exercises in Arkansas had been determined in the spring of 1941. The boundaries ran from Mena on a line through Foreman, Hope, Arkadelphia, Norman, Waldron to Mena. This area included part of the Ouachita Mountains. But a detailed reconnaissance by a VII Corps General Staff group early in July led to some alteration of the maneuver grounds. Because of the

paucity of roads in the mountains, the almost continuous extent of its woodland, and the difficulty of conducting operations with new troops in such broken terrain, the Staff officers decided to avoid the northern part of the area. In fact they moved the scene of action to the area between the Little Missouri and Red rivers. Thus the maneuver limits became generally Prescott-Nashville-Fulton-Rosston-Chidester. Even then this approved area left much to be desired from the standpoint of early training for divisions. There were no outstanding terrain features other than the wide valley of the Little Missouri (with but few crossings), the difficult obstacles presented by small swampy streams wherever they occurred, and a low, flat arc of ridge running through the Blevins-Washington-Hope triangle.

The terrain was generally flat. Artillery lacked good observation points for fire control. A considerable portion of the area was heavily wooded. Except for the concrete highway, U. S. 67, and a few graveled state highways, good roads were almost nonexistent. Use of tertiary roads required considerable work by way of repair and general maintenance. According to VII Corps G-3 (Operations) personnel, extremely detailed reconnaissance and very careful planning would be

³ *Ibid.*

required in order to build suitable exercises without use of excessive time in shifting troops between exercise sites.⁴

The VII Corps completed its initial concentration during the period from August 11 through 17. The 33d Division moved from Camp Forrest, Tennessee while the 27th Division motored from Fort

McClellan in Alabama and the 35th Division arrived from the more locally situated Camp Robinson. Apparently the troop movements caused some interruption to normal civilian life especially in such urban

areas as Little Rock. Newspapers reported that the scream of sirens on motorcycles and police cars, and the sound of backfire from Army trucks resulted in calls from local residents of the southwestern section of the city, seeking

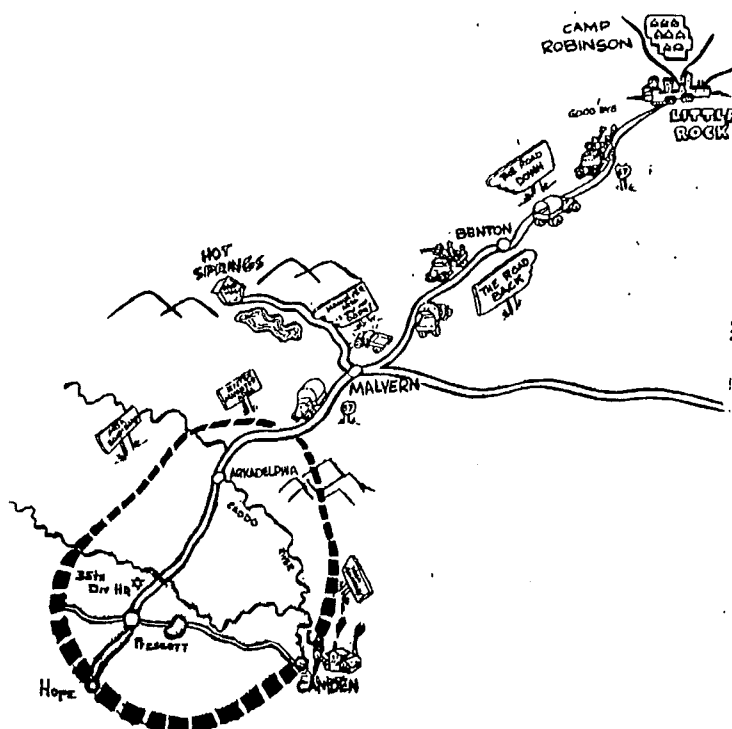
information about "shooting and ambulances." Then too the usual amount of "yoo-hooing" and tossing of "write me" notes developed between passing soldiers and young women along Broadway.⁵

But by August 17, 1941, nearly seventy thousand men of the VII

Corps had been effectively collected in the maneuver area.

Prescott even took on the appearance of an armed city. Reader, Arkadelphia, and Prescott all became railheads for supplies.⁶

An interesting feature of these exercises was the effort made to build up a logical enemy situation, even though the troops available to represent the "enemy" were limited to the Corps reconnaissance regiment and a battalion of infantry.⁷ Throughout



⁴ Rept. of ACoS. G-3 on August-September Maneuvers, Arkansas- Louisiana, Oct.-20, 1941, Appendix 3 to VII Corps Rept., *Op. cit.* See also Little Rock, *Arkansas Gazette*, August 14, 1941, p. 13.

⁵ Little Rock *Arkansas Gazette*, August 13, 1941, p. 1.

⁶ Admin. Order No. 1. August 5, 1941, HQ VII Corps, Birmingham, Alabama, Appendix 5 to VII Corps Rept. *Op. cit.*

⁷ Directive for Operations No. A (Blue), August 1, 1941, Field Order No. 1, August 2, 1941 in Appendix

the maneuvers VII Corps headquarters attempted to inject unit designations and commander's names of Third Army forces as the "enemy" into the war games. Thus Second Army troops would be psychologically prepared for the Louisiana maneuvers later.

A thorough enemy "scenario" had been prepared. It was based on a hypothetical war between Red KOTMK (Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, Missouri, and Kentucky) and Blue ALMAT (Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Tennessee) forces. KOTMK, as a country, formerly included Arkansas and Louisiana. ALMAT had conquered this territory from KOTMK in 1918. The existing international situation at the beginning of the maneuvers indicated that KOTMK planned to renew warfare in order to recover these lost provinces. The situation slowly degenerated into open warfare when the maneuvers opened on August 17-18.

The Blue Second Army on the east bank of the Mississippi River between Memphis and Vicksburg had detached its VII Corps for the purpose of defending passes through the Ouachita Mountains and crossings over the Red River north of Shreveport. On August 17, KOTMK forces hypothetically

invaded Arkansas from the west between the Ouachita Mountains and the Little Missouri River. The VII Corps received the mission of blunting this thrust.⁸

Accordingly, during the night of August 17-18, the 33d and 35th divisions, and elements of Corps troops moved into concealed bivouacs southwest of the Little Missouri River near Prescott.⁹ This tactical night march (preceding the opening of Exercise C-1) included the construction of pontoon bridges across the Ouachita River.

Hardworking engineer troops quickly constructed these bridges and the divisions sped quickly into position. Unfortunately a small delay occurred when the bridge used by the 35th Division broke down near US 67. Bunching together of the relatively "green" men and their equipment caused the temporary collapse between 8:45 and 12:15 p.m. But such an experience proved to be good training for planning officers and engineers alike. The senior officers remained remarkably patient. Less patient, perhaps, were the struggling non-coms. One Master Sergeant in the 33d Division noted that the hardest thing for his Illinois troops;

5, *ibid.* Also Little Rock Arkansas Democrat, August 20, 1941, p. 1.

⁸ Red Scenario, C-1, C-2, August 13, 1941, Appendix 6 to VIT Corps Report, *Op. cit.*

⁹ Synopsis of Corps Exercises for August 17-23, Appendix 5, *ibid.*

"...was to get out of those trucks and set up their sleeping quarters. They couldn't see where they were, and being Chicago boys they were really frightened at the thought of snakes. But they did it just the same."¹⁰

Screened by the 107th Cavalry Regiment, the 33d and 35th divisions moved forward generally along the axis of US 67. The 27th Division remained in its initial bivouac area near Rosston. At this point the Red "enemy" was imaginary. Later on August 17, the 107th Cavalry, and an infantry battalion from the 27th Division switched over to represent the Red army for purposes of the war games.

During the afternoon of August 18, and the following night, the Red Second Division theoretically broke up the screen of Blue cavalry harassing its advance. By 10:00 a. m. on the 19th, the Red army had organized a defensive line from Blevins to the northern corner of Ordnance Lake.¹¹ Thus the purpose of so-called exercises C-1 and C-2 were to perfect the advance to contact with the enemy. Finally they included the actual engagement and attack by the Blue VII Corps forces to seize a critical terrain objective.

C-1 exercise, on August 18, constituted essentially a Command Post Exercise (CPX) or "walk-through" for officers. This was designed to enable the actual operation to proceed smoothly with the troops on August 19 and 20. Useful for training purposes, the elaborate planning and reconnaissance afforded by the CPX problem would have been absent in time of combat.¹²

In the actual exercise the three divisions moved forward along the general lines as follows: The 33d Division on the right toward Blevins, the 35th Division in the center on a Prescott-Washington axis, and a sweeping envelopment of the enemy right by the 27th Division from Rosston through Hope to Washington. By the evening of August 20, stiff Red resistance had stymied the Blue attack. Thus the umpires ruled that VII Corps divisions had to consolidate along high ground running from Blevins to Hope.

Critique at this stage by Corps officers remained limited to incidents in river crossings, speed of moving troops in and out of bivouac, air-ground communications, leadership and initiative of the officers. Lt. Gen. Ben Lear, Commanding General of the Second Army particularly stressed military courtesy and

¹⁰ Little Rock *Arkansas Democrat*, August 19, 1941, pp. 1, 2.

¹¹ Red Scenario, C-1, C-2, *Op. cit.* and *ibid.* for both August 19 and 20, 1941, select articles

¹² Comments of VII Corps G-3 in Critique on Exercise G-1, C-2, August 20, 1941, Appendix 6 to VII Corps Rept. *Op. cit.*

junior leadership as being so important at that stage of the training.¹³

Yet this was only the first stage of three long weeks of maneuvers, mistakes, and experience. Exercise C-3 (August 21-22) opened early on the morning of August 21 with the situation continuing from the C-2 scenario. The Red forces had been reinforced during the night and had stiffened resistance to Blue attacks.

Orders from VII Corps headquarters now called for the occupation and organization of the division positions for defensive purposes. August 21 was spent in fulfilling this assignment. The enemy provided harassment from artillery and air bombardment but made no determined effort to break the Blue lines.

Red forces received added reinforcements on the night of August 21-22. Their counterattack came at dawn on August 22. Local penetrations developed all along the Blue front during the long hot Arkansas day. The VII Corps threw in local and division reserves. But enemy breakthroughs caused Corps headquarters to issue a warning order for withdrawal. At the end of the exercise period enemy forces, superior in numbers and

more aggressive, were theoretically forcing the Blue forces into a retreat.

The C-3 exercise provided experience in the selection, occupation, and organization of a defensive position. The young National Guardsmen received practice in use of obstacles and coordination of fields of fire. Defense against mechanized, and air attacks were also factors in C-3 problems. All units in the Corps participated and medical units practiced evacuation procedures. Casualty figures were arbitrarily set at 15% of front line infantry battalions and 5% of those battalions on the march or in reserve; 5% for all artillery battalions, as well as certain numbers from various headquarters units.¹⁴

The C-3 exercise particularly illustrated deficiencies in camouflage, communications and employment of anti-tank measures. The relatively recent organization of anti-tank battalions in the Corps contributed to the obvious weaknesses. Overexposure of guns, lack of cooperation between infantry and anti-tank troops, and general poorness in the administration of anti-tank units came to light in the exercise. As General Richardson emphasized:

¹³ See Lear's comments in Critique on Exercise C-1, C-2, *op. cit.*, p. 9 particularly.

¹⁴ Scenario for Umpires G-3, Appendix 7, VII Corps Rept. *Op. Cit.*

"The present organization is guesswork gotten up by some staff officer in the War Department who did the best he could. It is up to us to study this situation very closely so that we will be able to offer to the War Department an intelligent judgement based on our experience."¹⁵

August 23rd found the VII Corps engaged in another CPX problem in anticipation of Exercise C-5. Its purpose was to illustrate and apply the principles of command and staff functions in planning and executing a night withdrawal several miles to the rear. The actual field exercise of the problem took place subsequently on the night of August 25-26.

The scenario for C-5 held that the Red army had broken up local attacks of Blue forces and had widened and deepened salients in the latter's defense line. From 8:00 a. m. until dark on the 25th, action fluctuated along the entire front of the VII Corps. Umpires ruled that both sides sustained local reverses but by 3:30 p. m., observation planes of the 27th Division reported hypothetical Red motorized columns approaching from the west. The VII Corps sent in its last reserves about this time, however the Red reinforcements had driven to the town of Hope by nightfall.

¹⁵ Critique of G-3, August 22, 1941, Appendix 7, VII Corps Rept. Op. cit

The second phase of C-5 involved the night withdrawal of the corps south of Terre Rouge Creek. Red outlining forces (107th Cavalry) continued to press Blue covering forces throughout the night. One covering force had its transportation captured. Caught up in the spirit of the war games, the men of this ill-fated force decided to go on fighting. This display of grit and determination in the youthful, American soldiers greatly pleased Corps observers and umpires.¹⁶

General Richardson praised the withdrawal itself citing especially good air-ground communications. General Lear agreed but scored the hesitancy of Second Army troops to close with the enemy. He declared:

"My observation of the training of the Second Army has led me to conclude that we are somewhat lacking in aggressiveness on the part of lower echelons when they are on an advanced guard mission. The scouts are not pushed out boldly on first meeting the enemy. Too much time is lost. The commander of the leading element must at once attempt to determine the location of the enemy, his strength, his flanks, and get that information back to the next commander promptly."¹⁷

¹⁶ Lt. Col. J. R. Hodge, G-3 VII Corps, Critique of Exercise C-5, August 26, 1941, Appendix 8, VII Corps Rept. Op. cit

¹⁷ Lt. Gen. Ben Lear, Critique on Exercise C-5, *ibid.*

The passage from exercise C-5 to C-6 slightly altered the scenario and introduced added realism through a two-sided Field Maneuver. This involved the 27th and 35th divisions teaming up against the 33d Division. The hypothetical situation remained the same. The Red Third Army continued to be in contact with the weaker Blue Second Army north of the Little Missouri River along the general line Oklahoma-Hot Springs. The Red VII Corps (for purposes of C-6, the 27th and 35th divisions) had been protecting the southern flank of the KOTMK south of the Little Missouri. But this army was preparing for an attack in the near future. The Red VII Corps bivouacked in the area southeast of Hope on the night of August 26-27, preparatory to moving eastward. It had the mission of seriously interrupting traffic over the Missouri -Pacific railroad.

The Blue 33d Division (Reinforced) bivouacked in the area north of Waterloo. Blue forces controlled the area east of the line of contact of the main forces and north of the Little Missouri. Camden was strongly defended by a garrison of Blue troops. They also had patrols posted along the railroad. The mission of the 33d Division and its attached troops was to prevent interruption of vital

communications over the railroad between the river and Camden until dark of August 28.

The superior Red force seized the initiative and attempted to pin down the inferior Blue units. At the same time it tried to sweep the Blue's southern flank in order to cut the railroad line north of Camden. In turn, the commander of the Blue units, General Lawton, decided to push directly westward with both of his brigades. He reasoned that they could seize high ground and thereby stop the oncoming Red tide. He did contain the main thrust of the Reds in the vicinity of Laneburg and Rosston. But Lawton's forces responded too slowly to the flanking thrust by a brigade combat team of the VII Corps. The delay proved to be fatal.

The Red combat team, composed of the 69th brigade, began its operation at 9:00 p. m. on August 27. Moving by truck convoy, the combat team soon succeeded in enveloping the southern flank of the Blue forces. This column scattered Blue units while covering a distance of approximately fifty miles during the night. It cut the Missouri Pacific line with impunity. The maneuver succeeded largely because heavy mist at dawn on the 28th prevented Blue bombing planes from striking the Red targets.

General Richardson did not spare the criticism, which he directed at caution displayed by Blue forces in the exercise. He observed that lack of numbers was compensated by superior defensive terrain. He condemned the rush to the west, which had caused the Blue troops to overlook the turning movement executed by KOTMK forces.¹⁸

But the Corps commander also lashed out at Red mistakes. General Richardson pointed out that once the Blue situation was known to Red commanders, they had not moved with sufficient daring. In general, he felt that all officers engaged in these maneuvers had much to learn about reconnaissance. In fact, reconnaissance and aviation would be two factors, which were stressed repeatedly by the Corps commander during the maneuver period.

Exercise C-6 ended the Corps phase of the August- September war games in Arkansas. The more exciting Army phase began on August 29. It consisted of one continuous exercise with two days each week set aside as rest and clean-up periods. The Army phase would include some 120,000 to 130,000 men moving around in southwestern Arkansas from August 29 through September 10,

1941. The immediate scenario envisioned that the VII Corps would gradually withdraw southward from the Camden-Magnolia-El Dorado area after initially guarding the Ouachita River from hostile forces crossing south of Arkadelphia from the east and north.¹⁹

Once again a united VII Corps took the colors of the Blue ALMAT army, seeking to join the main Second Army on the Red River in Louisiana without a major engagement. The hypothetical Red army was now represented by a Provisional Corps of regular troops. These included the 5th and 6th Infantry Divisions, the 2d Cavalry Division, the 4th Cavalry Division (Heavy Mechanized), and later the 1st Armored Division. This Provisional Corps was commanded by Maj. Gen. Clarence Ridley. The VII Corp of National Guardsmen remained under General Richardson.²⁰

The 5th Division had taken part in the Tennessee maneuvers and consisted mainly of Selective Service men. It motored from Fort Custer, Michigan to join the 6th Division near Pine Bluff. The 2d Cavalry Division was supposed to sweep in from Crossett on the eastern flank of the retreating Blue army. Near the end of the

¹⁸ Critique of Exercise C-6, August 28, 1941, Appendix 9. VH Corps Rept. *Op. cit.*

¹⁹ Rept. of VII Corps G-3. October 20, 1941, Appendix 3, VII Corps Rept. *Op. cit.*

²⁰ VII Corps Rept. par 5. p. 3. Little Rock *Arkansas Democrat*, August 29, 1941. p. 1

exercise, the 1st Armored Division would attack from the southwest in order to encircle the Blue force. The 4th Cavalry Division remained in bivouac throughout much of the war game. Such was the plan of operations for Red troops.

But the exercise had even greater interest than merely two corps locked in mock combat. The VII Corps, comprising three National Guard "Square" divisions, opposed the smaller, but more mobile "Triangular" Regular Army divisions of the Provisional Corps. In General Richardson's words: "It appeared to be a test between highly mobile forces, richly endowed with mechanization [the Red triangular divisions] on the one hand, against the slower infantry divisions endowed with more weight but with almost no mechanization [the Blue square divisions].²¹ To some observers, however, the Army maneuver phase must have looked like a pushover for the Regulars!

But the terrain favored delaying action and greatly facilitated the mission of the VII Corps. The Ouachita River served initially as a formidable obstacle to forces advancing from the north and east. By use of small covering detachments, the VII Corps was able to prevent any crossings in

force until such time as it had moved out of immediate danger. G-3 officers still felt that coverage of one hundred and forty miles of river shoreline had merely delayed the withdrawal for several days, rather than helping block the pursuing "enemy."²²

Numerous small streams provided additional obstacles for the Red advance. Thus the Blue commanders had to utilize relatively few of their units as a rear guard. The network of roads in the area permitted the VII Corps to use the principal highways through Magnolia and El Dorado. The roads were sufficiently close together so that major elements of the Corps were within supporting distance of one another at all times.

On occasion the spirit of the chase became quite avid. The little town of Junction City witnessed some particularly "hot" action on September 6. The *Arkansas Gazette* caught the flavor of the "battle" in its description. It noted:

"The quiet little border town of Junction City astride the Arkansas-Louisiana border 18 miles south of El Dorado awoke this morning to find itself in the midst of the most violent battle of the war games thus far. Starting shortly after dawn, the Reds and Blues fought

²¹ Second Army and GHQ Phase, in Maneuver Report VII Army Corps, Arkansas-Louisiana August 10-September 30, 1941, v. 11. Also Little Rock, *Arkansas Gazette*, September 1, 1941, p. 1.

²² Memorandum ACofS, G-3 to CG VII Corps, Sub: G-3 Comments on Army Phase, September 10, 1941, enclosed with *ibid*

from house to house through the town and nearly every front yard could boast a machine gun nest. Garages were turned into lookout posts. So hot was the action that one soldier was captured under a porch and others were cornered in stores and garages. As the day drew on the Blues were ousted and withdrew across the line, stubbornly fighting all the way. By noon most of the action had reached the vicinity of Summerfield [Louisiana] while scattered clashes occurred as far eastward as Bastrop [Louisiana] and westward to Homer [Louisiana]. All day the Junction City highway was a slow moving mass of convoy and civilian cars as the public took a holiday to see the big show. Thousands of dusty soldiers marched and rode alternately by as they moved to the front."²³

By the 7th of September, Blue forces had virtually completed the evacuation of Arkansas. Two days later the 1st Armored Division joined in the Red attack against the Blues. Maj. Gen. Bruce McGruder's force of over three Hundred tanks (18 and 30 ton models), operating from the direction of Shreveport, attempted to cut the Blue line of retreat to the Red River. In so doing it ran into extremely effective obstacles in the form of north-south streamlines in the Gibsland-Shreveport-Alexandria area of Louisiana.

²³ Little Rock, *Arkansas Gazette*, September 7, 1941, p. 9.

Extensive demolition work had been executed by VII Corps and division engineers. Much to the delight of the VII Corps, the Red forces were unable to break through the circular defenses thrown up by the Blues.²⁴

Neither force accomplished its mission. The Reds were unable to crack the Blue defense lines. At the same time the Blue troops found themselves effectively hampered in any further retreat to the Red River. The Army phase ended at 12:00 noon on September 9, 1941. G-3 officers of the VII Corps quickly heralded the superiority of the triangular organization of the "enemy." But they were more than pleased with the National Guardsmen's ability to contain the armored attacks. But by this time the August-September maneuvers had moved beyond the borders of Arkansas and hence beyond our immediate interest.

The Army phase exercises proved to be of high value in the training of the VII Corps as a team. It provided a good test in mobility for the component units of the Corps and how well these units could move on a restricted road net. It also gave excellent training and experience in delaying action and "barrier tactics" to the Guardsmen.

²⁴ Report of VII Corps G-3, October 20, 1941, Appendix 3 VII Corps L. *OP. cit.*

General Richardson saw several lessons evolving from the Army maneuvers. They applied to both his own units as well as those of General Ridley. Thus the VII Corps commander summarized the military lessons as:

- a. That terrain is the key to successful military operations and it should be studied profoundly.
- b. To stop mechanized forces a highly integrated plan of demolitions coupled with the use of aggressive antitank battalions has great chances of success. The same preparation against horse cavalry will be successful.
- c. The wide range of mechanized forces has necessitated our restudy of the type of radios that we must have.
- d. The broadening of the area of operations brought about by mechanization will require additional observation aviation for all divisions and a new type of radio for air-ground communication.
- e. Antitank battalions though recently organized have already proven of inestimable value. Commanders should give much thought to the organization of these units and make suggestions for their perfection.²⁵

²⁵ Critique of Army Phase, September 10, 1941, attached to Maneuver Rept. VU Corps *Op. cit.* v. 11. See also Little Rock, Arkansas Gazette, September 11, 1941, p. 5.

The Arkansas maneuvers were generally characterized by many of the deficiencies that had appeared in Tennessee in June.

Reconnaissance left much to be desired. Intelligence information had not been properly distributed to units with promptness. Signal communications were inadequate. March and road discipline proved to be deficient.

But General Lear of Second Army reported improvement in some areas. These included leadership and training of small tactical units, dispersement, concealment and, camouflage, and demolitions in defense against armored attack. He closed a letter of critique to all subordinates with this comment:

"The Second Army must be better than any other unit in every respect. [underlining his]"²⁶

Deficiencies in weaponry and equipment plagued the Arkansas maneuvers as it did all the exercises in 1941. Simulated weapons were numerous and few divisions had full compliments of vehicles. But apparently the soldiers complained least about the lack of equipment. They were bitterer, perhaps, about workers in distant factories who denied them

²⁶ Memorandum General Lear for Commanders of all Second Army Units, September 10, 1941, Sub: Comments on VII Corps Exercises, 18-28 August and Second Army Maneuvers 29 Aug.-9 Sept. 1941, filed with VII Corps Rept., *Op cit.*

the equipment by striking for higher wages.²⁷

Undoubtedly these same kinds of deficiencies in equipment hampered the full employment of airpower in the maneuvers. Certainly airpower, and especially bombardment type, was used to a greater extent in Arkansas than in Tennessee. But the repeated inference in critiques to lack of air security and air-ground support, would seem to indicate, at least in part, a failure by various echelons of command to appreciate the air threat on the tactical battlefield. This may very well have been due to the lack of sufficient aircraft to emphasize the point.²⁸ General Richardson once noted:

"I cannot stress too much the necessity imposed upon higher commanders in the future to think in terms of aviation. The people of the country-the very intelligent military critics who feel a deep interest in our army, because they are paying for it and their defense is in jeopardy-are looking at that. They read in the newspapers of the close coordination between air & ground forces in the German Army, and they are insistent that we do the same thing and that we know something about it. The whole focus of the interest of the American people is directed on

how well we do that. We must take the air into our confidence."²⁹

Similarly, following Exercise C-5, on August 26, the VII Corps commander pointed out again: "I cannot impress too strongly on everyone connected with this exercise that whenever a problem is presented to them, the first thing they [should] think of before, during and after is the air." Two days later he declared, following Exercise C-6:

"I feel it my duty to reaffirm the necessity of keeping our minds thoroughly fixed on the question of air-ground cooperation. We must train our minds so that in every instance we think immediately of the affect of aviation, both friendly and hostile."³⁰

Given time, such kernels of wisdom would bear fruit among the subordinate officers and men of his corps.

These maneuvers were of value to the young American army of pre-World War 11 days. But what meaning could these exercises have held for the inhabitants of Arkansas whose lives were often disrupted, whose towns were overrun, and whose ways of life were temporarily, if not permanently altered?

Arkansans residing in the vicinity of the maneuvers certainly

²⁷ See Carrick W. Heiskell, "War Games Helping US Army to Become Powerful Machine," Little Rock, Arkansas Gazette, September 7, 1941, p. 9.

²⁸ See Lear's memo, September 10, 1941, *Op. cit.* on anti-aircraft deficiencies in regular divisions particularly.

²⁹ Critique on Exercises C-1, C-2, *Op. Cit.*

³⁰ Critique on Exercises C5 and C-6. *Op. Cit.*

viewed the completion of the exercises with mixed feelings. Many of them had never seen the engines of war before. Tanks, trucks, artillery pieces, and airplanes were something new to most of them. They probably watched with misgivings the masses of soldiers and equipment, which tore into their land, and damaged their orchards and crops, despite strict orders from headquarters to be careful of private property.

Mr. R. W. Glasgow of the *Arkansas Democrat* described one representative case in the August 20 issue of that newspaper. Mr. Glasgow recounted talking with an unnamed but typical storekeeper and wife in the neighborhood of Rosston where the 27th Division had bivouacked. The newspaperman recalled that the wife had told him: "We'd heard about soldiers, just like other people have, and naturally we expected them to take a few watermelons." Her husband continued by telling how, true to form, the New Yorkers of the 27th Division had liberated some of the watermelons. But instead of complaining to military authorities, the enterprising Arkansans turned the situation into a lucrative business. On the following day, when the soldiers came into their store, the shopkeeper and his wife quickly

sold out the remainder of the melons and all of their soda pop. This impressed Mr. Glasgow that the army and the Rosston folks had gotten along splendidly.³¹

Elsewhere we can read of free shower baths for the troops put on at Hope by patriotic city fathers under the slogan, "Welcome soldiers to Hope, Arkansas; Hot Springs may bathe the world, but we bathe the army" Contemporary newspapers also comment on the county editor in Nevada county who allowed the press officer of the 35th Division to run his newspaper with army troops in order to add realism to the war games. Then too we can easily speculate on the huge profits made by local Arkansans when the troops got paid at the end of August. In fact an Army payroll which ran into the millions did attract the eyes of local merchants and businessmen. As the *Arkansas Democrat* told its readers:

"Merchants, unprepared for the rush, were overwhelmed with business. Many of them sold in one day as much as they ordinarily did in an entire year-especially country dealers in tobacco, candies and refreshments."³²

³¹ Little Rock, *Arkansas Gazette*, August 20, 1941, p. 6.

³² See Little Rock *Arkansas Democrat*, August 22, 1941 (free showers at Hope); August 21, 1941 (Nevada County newspaper); and September 1, 1941 (Concerning profits made from the Army payroll).

There were random outcries from the troops about high prices and equally irate replies from some citizen groups. But these were small in number and exist even today in any situation where a large body of men in uniform suddenly enter a civilian peacetime community. More notable, perhaps, were the sentiments of Mayor Don Harrell, of Camden, when he concluded:

"The truth of the situation is that the people of Camden have just about turned the town and their homes over to the soldiers. They have been invited into the houses of Camden for meals and baths and entertainment. The city has furnished free showers for thousands of the men and dances, and other forms of entertainment have been added for their enjoyment. We in Camden know how the soldiers feel about us. They have been more than liberal in their praise of the true Southern hospitality, which they have found there."³³

Other war games followed in 1941, including those in Louisiana, which tended to overshadow the Arkansas exercises. Within six months the United States found itself in a world war. Therefore the Arkansas maneuvers of 1941 must be kept in some sort of perspective. They should be

considered beside other peacetime preparations of the armed forces.

The weaknesses of inadequate weapons and unbalanced training should be weighed against the gains. Larger units were now being brought together in experiences approaching actual wartime operations. The American people, or those who witnessed the maneuvers in their own dooryards, could now feel the quickening pace of the war build up. They could now see the visible proof of why inflation, higher taxes, and the drafting of loved ones were necessary. Perhaps an overriding result of the Arkansas maneuvers was aptly summed up in 1944. One "GI," in the midst of the battle for Saipan, said succinctly; "if it wasn't for the shootin' I'd say the Louisiana-Arkansas Maneuvers were as tough as this."³⁴

There were undoubtedly many other soldiers who recalled later that all the heat, dust, snakes, and chiggers in Arkansas had been well worth it, once they had entered real combat.

³³ Little Rock, *Arkansas Gazette*, September 2, 1941, p. 5.

³⁴ Edmund G. Love (Capt) *The 27th Infantry Division in World War 11* (Washington, 1949), p. 13.

Melchior M. Eberts

A Brief Account of an Arkansas Pilot's Outstanding but Brief Career



1Lt. M. M. Eberts
ca 1916-17

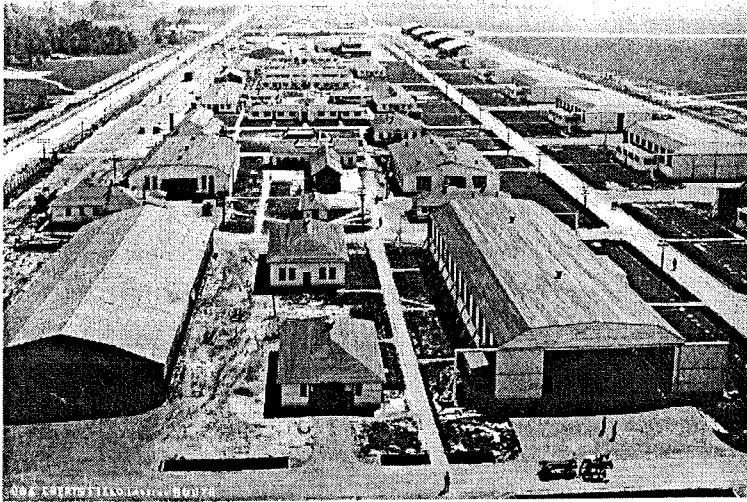
Many people are aware of the former existence of an Army Air Corps Training facility known as Eberts Field near Lonoke, Arkansas. Less familiar perhaps is the man who gave his life and name to the facility, as well as a local American Legion Post, the first in Arkansas.

Melchior M. Eberts was born at Little Rock, Arkansas in 1889 the son of H. F. H. Eberts. Upon completing his early education, Eberts received an appointment to West Point in 1911 graduating with the Class of 1915. Upon graduation as a Second Lieutenant, Eberts was assigned to the Third Infantry at Columbus, Ohio Aeronautic School as an instructor. On July 1, 1915 he was promoted to First Lieutenant and then volunteered for aviation

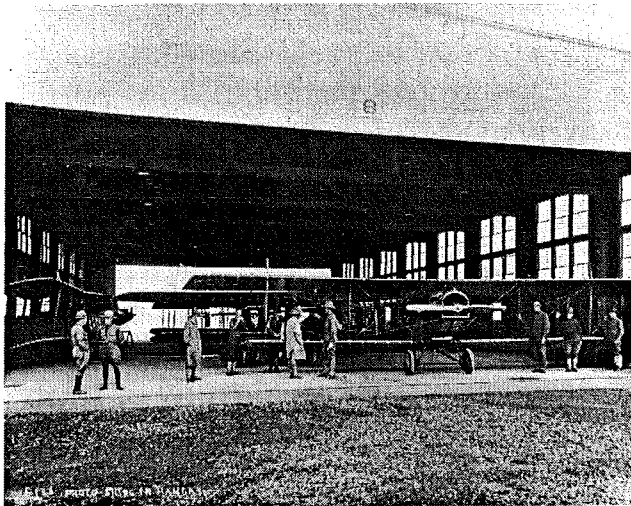
service and was sent to Columbus Field, San Diego, California.

Only 28 years old, Lt. Eberts arrived at Columbus, New Mexico on May 15, 1917 on a flight from the Columbus Aviation School. This flight was to have been an exhibition before delegates of a convention of the Texas Bankers Association. At an altitude of 1500 feet the plane was caught in an air pocket and plunged to earth. Captain James L. Dunsworth who was piloting the plane at the time of the crash was severely injured but survived, while Lt. Eberts would lose his life in the line of duty. His death halted a career marked by quick promotions as the result of his aptitude to army life, which led to his commission as a Captain of Aviation on the day of his death.

The valiant spirit of such a gallant man would live on through the name of the M. M. Eberts



Aerial View of Eberts Field



Hanger at Eberts Field

Aviation Training Field at Lonoke, Arkansas and M. M. Eberts Post No. 1, American Legion of Little Rock. Eberts Field was named after him by the War Department on November 11, 1917 and would train aviation forces for years afterwards until its discontinuance

sometime after World War II. The American Legion Post was organized on July 7, 1919 and when a committee was tasked with naming the post, M. M. Eberts was adopted by a unanimous vote.

Coincident with the names figuring in Captain Ebert's life, he was transferred from Columbus, Ohio to Columbus Field at San Diego and came to his untimely death at Columbus, New Mexico. Captain Eberts was buried with

full



Gassing Up At Eberts Field

military honors and lies in the Academy Cemetery at West Point, New York.

A Soldier Speaks

Personal Reminiscences

The following accounts and letters highlight first hand accounts of Arkansas soldiers or events related to Camp Pike and Camp Robinson. It is hoped that readers will be able to see events as experienced through their eyes.

Pvt. William L. Cokly wrote the following letter from Camp Pike to his sister Mrs. G. B. Kennedy at Lake Village, Arkansas. The letter was written during his basic training and details some of the experiences all soldiers faced while at Pike. While further information on Cokly is not available, it is evident that he did go on to see duty in France during WWI. The letter was found in an envelope from "Corporal William L. Cokly, 10th Co JAR Inf, American Expeditionary Forces (on back is Reg Iny 47 Engrs A.E.F.)" dated September 5, 1918 and postmarked, "Bordeaux, France." It is not known why the letter from Pike was in an envelope from France. The original letter is held in the archives of the Arkansas National Guard Museum and is reproduced as written with only a few grammatical corrections to improve readability.

Camp Pike, Ark

Dear Sister, how are you all. Boy now I am well but have had a bad cold. I got caught out in a hard rain one sure did get some wet I am some tird (tired) I have been taking a two our (hour) hike every day and I mean we have to run half of the time and I will tell you what we have too carry is our tent and Blankets and gun the weaghit is a Bout 70 pbs but I can stand it if inny body else can stand it I no(know) I wrote you all that I though(t) we was going too leave hear But I don't think we will leave soon now the Boys are still Braking out with measles and mumps and we are under a Quarnties (quarantine) and some strict too I like the army fine But the (there) is some work hear We have to get up at Four a clock and go to the Fields at Five But I don't think the war will last verry much longer the (they) sure are dooing some good work now

I sure will Bee some glad when I
 can Say I am a Free man again
 I hurd one of our officer Say we
 wood never see France he didn't
 think we stand our oversea
 (examination) next week
 Say I am sinding you all one of my
 pictures and sind one For Jack if
 he wants one I will sind Florince
 one She said sind her one they are
 not good I will have some good
 ones made when I can get out too
 go some where this is a terble
 (terrible) Place too Bee cant go no
 wher at all day are (or) night

Say Sister Bee sure and sind my
 suit some days too Say Sister I
 am sinding you all my army Searl
 number you Bee sure and put the
 number a way some where so it
 wont get lost cause is I got too
 France and don't get Back you all
 can get my insurance By writing
 the war Dept at Washington DC
 this is the no 2870930

Will close write soon
 Love too all
 Co C 1 Reg Raplacement Depot
 William L Cokly

Robert E. Hardgrave WWII and Arkansas and Missouri National Guard

Robert Hardgrave joined the Arkansas National Guard after active duty serving in the 217th Engineers at Russellville from 1947-56. The next 10 years would be spent in the Missouri National Guard. Upon returning to Arkansas Mr. Hardgrave reentered the Arkansas Guard as a member of 25th RAOC from 1972-86 at which time he retired from military service. Robert Hardgrave provided the following questionnaire to the Arkansas National Guard Museum

Q: What is your name?
 A: Robert E. Hardgrave.

Q: When and where were you born?
 A: 17 Dec 1926 at Altus, Arkansas.

Q: Where did you live prior to being in the service?
 A: Altus until 1936, then western Pulaski County.

Q: Were you married or single at the time? Describe how your family felt about your entry into military service.

A: Single, my mother was rather upset. I had two older brothers overseas at the time.

Q: Where were you employed?
 A: On the family farm.

Q: When did you enlist?
 A: January 1945.

Q: Why did you enlist?
A: I enlisted before I was drafted. At that time it was just the thing to do for people in my age group. We were in a war.

Q: When did you arrive at Camp Robinson and how did you get there?

A: Early 1945 by train from induction center at Ft. Chaffee.

Q: Describe this trip.

A: Just a train ride of 3 to 4 hours.

Q: Describe your first impressions, thoughts or memories upon arriving at Camp Robinson.

A: We were kept pretty busy. I don't recall many details but I didn't have much difficulty in adjusting to Army life. I kinda liked military life.

Q: What training unit were you placed in?

A: Co A 1st Battalion 75th Training Regiment in the Expansion Area.

Q: Describe any officers or NCO's you remember.

A: T/Sgt Leonard Riggs, Platoon Sgt and Drill master, a really good NCO. He not only looked sharp, he was

sharp! 1st Lt. Eugene Baird, Platoon Leader, a tough but fair and honest. He was admired as a competent instructor.

Q: Who were some of your friends, describe them and what happened to them after leaving Camp Robinson?

A: Stan Grohoski from Wisconsin, sent to the Philippines; Earl Hammer from Oklahoma, sent to Europe; Harold Wright from Arkansas, sent to Korea as Occupation Force. We were reunited there. Wright and I went to college together at Arkansas Tech after discharge.

Q: What were your facilities (barracks, chow hall etc) like? Describe them.

A: Sixteen man tarpaper huts. Mess halls were typical WWII, no luxuries but comfortable enough.

Q: Over the time you were at Camp Robinson, give an overview of the training you received, what you thought about it and how it helped or did not help you when deployed.

A: First six weeks were basic subjects, i.e. Marksmanship, drill, First aid, weapon familiarization. Rest of the

- cycle was squad and platoon tactics, heavy weapons, combat courses, and transition firing.
- Q: Describe the primary job for which you were trained, any higher ranks you achieved at Camp Robinson or later, and what it was like actually doing that job overseas.
- A: Trained as a rifleman. In Korea in 1946 to Bn HQ and became Bn Opn NCO(Sgt).
- Q: Describe any other memories you might have of Camp Robinson or the local area. (What you did for entertainment or fun, did you meet any of the locals, etc)
- A: I grew up in Pulaski County so I often went home on weekends. I had a girlfriend in Little Rock.
- Q: When did you leave Camp Robinson for your unit?
- A: Early summer 1945.
- Q: What unit were you assigned to and describe your feelings upon leaving Camp Robinson.
- A: Glad Basic was over but really didn't feel glad to leave Robinson.
- Q: Where in the war were you sent and describe your experiences while in active service/combat?
- A: To Asiatic-Pacific. Joined Co B 63rd Infantry, 6th Division. Briefly in Luzon, war was over and then to Korea in Army of Occupation through 1946. Stayed in 63rd Regiment, HQ Co. 1st Bn.
- Q: When did you get out of the military?
- A: February 1947.
- Q: Have you been back to Camp Robinson since the war? If so describe what you saw or your feelings and thoughts upon returning.
- A: Have been at Robinson many times as a member of the Arkansas Army National Guard. It surely has changed since 1945.
- Q: Describe or tell of any other thoughts or comments you would like to add to this questionnaire to provide insight to those who wish to know more about WWII, training at Camp Robinson or combat in general.
- A: I have read a lot of military history. The infantry replacement system has been justly criticized as inefficient, demoralizing, unfair to the trainees and on

and on. Mostly because the trainees were thrown into combat without even knowing their comrades and consequently "not being part of the team". However, by late 1944 most of the line divisions were already overseas so it would have been impossible to train from scratch with a parent unit. I feel our senior commanders in Europe wasted a lot of manpower in getting bogged down in attrition warfare such as in the Hurtgen Forest, which

had no real strategic purpose.

Personally I felt I was well trained at Robinson in 1945. We had good officers and NCO's and good facilities. Some time was wasted on "fluff" but overall it came out okay. One thing needs to be emphasized, training doesn't stop with the completion of 12 weeks of Basic. By the time I retired at age 60 from the Guard, there had always been something to learn, something new or changing every year. Basic at IRTC in 1945 was just a good start.

GUARDING THE PEACE

A Brief Chronology of the Arkansas National Guard during the Central High Crisis of 1957

The intent of the following article is two-fold. First, it is to show the activities of the Arkansas National Guard during the entire Central High incident. The second, and main task, is to demonstrate that the Guard performed its mission professionally and successfully. An additional factor is to consider did family and community reactions, as well as negative images attached to the Guard by the media and regular Army place stress upon Guardsmen. This appeared to be a "no win" situation for the Guard.

In the fall of 1957 members of the Arkansas National Guard found themselves thrust into the national and international spotlights with desegregation efforts at Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. While many had seen active military service during WWII and Korea, the Central High incident would be unlike any activity most had trained for previously.

One mission tasked to the National Guard personnel is to assist their local community and state during civil disturbances. When the Arkansas Air and Army Guard went forth to help keep the peace in Little Rock, most had not received adequate training in this activity. Two days prior to school beginning, Governor Orval Faubus requested Adjutant General of Arkansas, Major General Sherman

Clinger to find out what troops had prior experience in riot training.¹ How well they would perform was unknown. A civil disturbance is very different from combat. In combat the enemy is identified and neutralized. Who would the enemy be? Would it be the black students or the crowds of angry whites? Undoubtedly many of the soldiers were emotionally and personally involved with events surrounding desegregation. Would their personal feelings and thoughts, or pressure from family and friends keep them from performing their duty? The possibility of a catastrophe was imminent with no clear solution at hand.

The desegregation issues that placed Little Rock in an

¹ Roy Reed, Faubus, The Life and Times of an American Prodigal, Fayetteville, AR: University of Arkansas Press, 1997, 202.

unwanted spotlight began with the 1954 Supreme Court decision (Brown vs. Topeka) that made segregated schools unconstitutional.² The Little Rock School Board made plans to follow the court ruling with a gradual integration starting with the 1957 school year and proceeding slowly over the next few years. School officials were not actually in favor of the measure but were merely complying with existing Federal laws.³

By the time the 1957 fall term drew near, opposition to desegregation had grown drastically. Many threats of violence were made, whether real, imagined, or concocted, to thwart the admission of black students at Central. These threats caused Gov. Faubus to make the decision to use the National Guard. Details of the build up of this fear are well documented in Roy Reed's, *Faubus: The Life and Times of an American Prodigal*.⁴

On September 2, 1957 approximately 289 Air and Army Guardsmen under command of Lt. Colonel Marion Johnson were called out by the Governor and

sent to Central High.⁵ The orders given to the Guardsmen were to maintain the peace. Faubus had determined that the only way to do so was to not allow the entrance of the nine black students to Central High. When the nine students arrived prior to the first bell, a hostile crowd of approximately one thousand met them, held back by Arkansas troops. As the students made their way to enter the school, they met Guardsmen who turned them away in compliance with the Governor's order. The crowd, beyond catcalls and jeers, did not give the Guard any significant trouble. Not since the War Between the States had Arkansas so openly defied the federal government.⁶

For the next three weeks the Guard was on duty at Central while legal authorities in the federal courts decided the issue. During this time individual Guardsmen were instructed not to load weapons at any time unless ordered to do so by Lt. Col. Johnson. Their bayonets were to remain sheathed at all times, and they were to talk to no one concerning the situation. The black students did not attempt to reenter the school and by the week of 16-20 September the force at Central was reduced to a fifteen-

² Ibid., 162.

³ Operation Arkansas, Command Report, Headquarters Arkansas National Guard, Camp Robinson, Arkansas, Pt I and II, 23 September to 23 October 1957, Annex C, Appendix 3, Tab A, 3, Archives, Arkansas National Guard Museum. Hereafter cited as Op Ark I or Op Ark II.

⁴ Reed, 207-208.

⁵ Major W. D. McGlasson, "The Forgotten Story of Little Rock," *The National Guardsman*, August 1958, 5.

⁶ Reed, 209; Op Ark I, Anx B, App 2,2.

man unit during the day and night. It seemed as though some semblance of order had been achieved. During this time members of the news media were present in large numbers and no incidents involving State Guardsmen that resulted in bodily or property damage were reported. The first stressful tests had passed to the credit of the men of the Guard.⁷

Over this same three-week period, however, events behind the scene led to the larger confrontation that occurred on September 23. Three days prior to that a Federal District Court issued an injunction against Gov. Faubus, Gen. Clinger and Lt. Col. Johnson from interfering with the integration of Central High School. In compliance the Governor ordered the Guard withdrawn from Central. Little Rock police replaced the Guardsmen at the school, and Faubus left the state for the Southern Governor's Conference.⁸

On Monday, September 23, only a small crowd of a few score, mainly the media, was present outside Central High as the school day began. As word leaked out that the nine black students had entered the school, some in the crowd unsuccessfully attempted to break through the police lines. By

noon the original small group had swelled to perhaps a thousand angry agitators and the police were reinforced bringing their total to one hundred officers. Fearing that police could not handle the situation, Lt. Governor Nathan Gordon requested that one hundred and fifty Guardsmen be organized and kept on a five-minute alert, to be ready to move to Central on Gordon's order. However, officers under orders from Police Chief Potts had the black students removed and order was established. The Guardsmen were then placed on a thirty-minute alert after 4:00 p.m. for the remainder of the evening.⁹

During the night of September 23rd, President Eisenhower acted swiftly. He ordered the 327th Infantry of the 101st Airborne Division to Little Rock on the 24th. At 3:00 p.m. on the 24th the President ordered the Arkansas National Guard (approximately 10,000 men) federalized and notified Gen. Clinger of that action. All units were to report to their home armories according to their alert plan¹⁰ with the exception of the 1st and 3rd Battalions of the 153rd

⁷ Op Ark I, Anx B, App2, 3.

⁸ Reed, 222; Op Ark I, Anx C, App 2, Tab A, 3.

⁹ Op Ark I, Anx B, App2, 3. According to Reed, pg 224, the crowd had reached 1000 early and the violence began upon the arrival of four black newsmen.

¹⁰ An alert plan instructed soldiers of any unit the time frame within which they had to be present as well as with what equipment.

Infantry, 39th Military Police Company and Company D, 212th Signal Battalion. These units were ordered to proceed immediately to Camp Robinson to act as an alert force, ready to deploy to Central on a moment's notice. These units, comprised of 107 officers, 15 warrant officers and 1184 enlisted men, arrived at Camp Robinson by noon on September 25th. The 101st troopers arrived at Central High earlier that day.¹¹

From the outset the Guard's mobilization created many problems. Mobilization orders were channeled through U.S. Army officers and caused poor relations with the Guard immediately. Army personnel formulated the entire plan in secret without consultations with Guard officers in Arkansas. Many of the problems could have been avoided through effective communications.¹²

The first major problem involved the mobilization process. Normally when plans are made to mobilize a Guard unit, an "alert" period is announced to allow the soldiers to prepare for upcoming duty. During the alert period soldiers would notify and make arrangements with employers, employees and family to reduce the effects of their absence.

Federal officers did not allow the Arkansas Guard any time in alert status. This proved a major hardship not only for the Guardsmen but for those who relied on them as well.¹³

A second problem involved transporting the alert force to Camp Robinson. With no planning time, these troops had neither gasoline nor courtesy cards to purchase fuel for the trucks to move them to their destination. This caused a delay until fuel could be "borrowed" from the U.S. Purchasing and Fiscal Office. These same measures were followed in providing rations and facilities for the troops upon arriving.¹⁴

The majority of Arkansas troops reported to their local armories and remained there awaiting further orders. The manner in which they had been called to duty, as well as the unwillingness of the Army to allow the Guard staff any role in directing the call up, frustrated most, if not all soldiers. In fact the Army officers may have hampered the efforts almost as much as they supposedly expedited the early stages of the mobilization. Resentment was compounded when the men at home armories were required to report each morning and evening, while

¹¹ Op Ark I, Anx C (Operations); Draft Report of General Sherman Clinger; McGlasson, 5.

¹² McGlasson, 5.

¹³ Op Ark I, Anx A (G1 Section), 1.

¹⁴ Op Ark I, Anx C, App 4, Tab A, 4.

carrying on with their civilian duties during the day. Many officers referred to this episode as nothing more than "30 days of house arrest."¹⁵

For these troops at home armories, however, the first 30 days of mobilization did not hinder their lives to any large extent. The first week they reported for duty in person, day and night. Soon after this first week they were only required to phone in each day. Training was conducted for two hours, five nights a week. While this may have been an inconvenience, it did have benefits. The troops received training along with complete medical screenings, and drew quarters and rations allowances as prescribed by regulations when on active duty. At the end of the first 30 days this group was released from service with the exception of certain individuals who rotated through as part of the alert force at Camp Robinson and Central High.¹⁶

The majority of Guard troops who took part in events at Central were in the "alert force" housed at Camp Robinson. Initially the number was established at 1800 soldiers. This was reduced over time as events began to calm, but this group had the most difficulties in the entire

mobilization. Unlike the "stay at homes" these men were away from work, families and school. They had had no time to make arrangements for being absent from their civilian duties.

Individuals began to apply for hardship releases the first week. The group receiving the most attention was the 300 soldiers who were students (high school and college) and teachers. These men were released within a few days of arrival at Camp Robinson. Other requests were considered on an individual basis. A system developed to select the members of the alert force, which consisted of three key considerations. First, men whose active duty imposed the least hardship were retained. Second, each unit was assigned a small quota on manpower to help spread the load throughout the state. The last measure was to develop a rotation system utilizing a replacement pool to allow soldiers time to return home occasionally to keep personal business steady and deal with family problems which might arise. With these efforts being made, the soldiers settled in to perform their directed duties in accordance with orders.¹⁷

The Guardsmen were not thrust "into the fire" the first day. That duty was assigned to the Airborne who assembled at

¹⁵ McGlasson, 5.

¹⁶ Op Ark I, Anx D, 1; McGlasson, 22.

¹⁷ McGlasson, 22.

Central High on September 25th. The threat of violence came early in the day when soldiers escorted the nine black students into classes. Guardsmen began their duty by pulling the night shift when the school was unoccupied. At 10:00 p.m. on September 25th, the first federalized Arkansas soldiers of the 1st Battalion 153rd Infantry were placed on the grounds at Central. Approximately 200 men were sent to the school to provide security. This consisted of twelve 2-man guard posts at each door into the school; nine 2-man foot patrols on the north, east, and south sides of the school; and road blocks on designated streets. A rotation system was put in place to relieve each of these posts every two hours through the night. A reserve force was established and consisted of five officers and sixty men. Until October 1st, members of the 1st and 3rd Battalions of the 153rd Infantry relieved the airborne troops each evening. During this night phase, no incidents of any nature occurred for the Guardsmen.¹⁸

From October 1, 1957 until the end of the school year all

exterior security by the military was done with National Guard troops. The 101st pulled its troops from outside duty and remained entirely inside the school. With a few exceptions, the only interior duty by the Guard at this stage was during the evening shift and on weekends. Guard posts and

patrolling were still major tasks but now the responsibilities included making sure the integration of the nine students continued. Each morning Guardsmen



escorted the nine students to school. As incidents of harassment or threatened violence occurred the troops responded by escorting the students from the vehicles to the school doors where the 101st troops took over control. From October 1st – 10th, the Guardsmen had the responsibility of getting the black students to school. On the first day the crowd tested the Guardsmen's resolve. No escort to the school doors had been provided and groups of white students on the steps jeered and verbally harassed the black students as they entered. Thereafter, the Guardsmen

¹⁸ Op Ark I, Anx C, App 5, 1-5.

escorted the students to the school doors.¹⁹

On October 10th, Guardsmen began a transition to interior duty at Central High. Initially they augmented the 101st soldiers in the halls and offices. During this time the Guardsmen were involved in no incidents inside the school. Those tasked outside had the usual problems with verbal harassment of the students but throughout this period they only took one white male student into custody. He was delivered to the interior guard and turned over to school authorities. On another day three white students followed the guard to the school building steps but without major incident.²⁰

As incidents decreased in number and hostility the Guard force was further reduced. On November 9th, the alert force was reduced from 1800 soldiers to 900. Evening and non-school day shifts of Guard personnel were also reduced to a 13-man strength. On November 27th, the 101st pulled the remainder of its troops from Central and for the rest of the

school year the only regular Army personnel was the high command of General Walker and his staff. From that day until graduation on May 29th, the troops at Central High were an all Guard force.²¹

As with any prolonged action during civil disturbances, incidents will occur. The first day after the 101st left Central High on November 27th, a Guardsman on hall duty had a rock thrown at him

by a student. A small element of students still made an outward show of defiance towards the Guardsmen through conversation that could be overheard in the hallways and on the grounds. This defiance seemed aimed at the military

in general and not the Guardsmen specifically. For the most part, however, the Guardsmen carried out their daily duties and school activities occurred normally.²²

Arkansas Guard leadership knew they were under close scrutiny by local citizens. Through their efforts, disciplinary problems were almost non-existent throughout the entire eight months. Perhaps this was due to a fact sheet distributed to Guard troops that they were there to



¹⁹ Op Ark I, Anx C, App 5, 6-14.

²⁰ Ibid., 16-25.

²¹ Op Ark II, 24 Oct-30 Nov, 1; McGlasson, 22.

²² Op Ark II, Anx C, 5.

assist authorities in maintaining order and protecting private property. In no way were they to interfere with civil authorities in their attempts to enforce the orders of the courts. Guard leadership further stated that they (the Guardsmen) should always conduct themselves with that in mind. It was further addressed that they should not allow individual feelings towards the court orders influence the execution of the mission. Gen Clinger stated "Our personal conduct while performing the mission would be exemplary, and

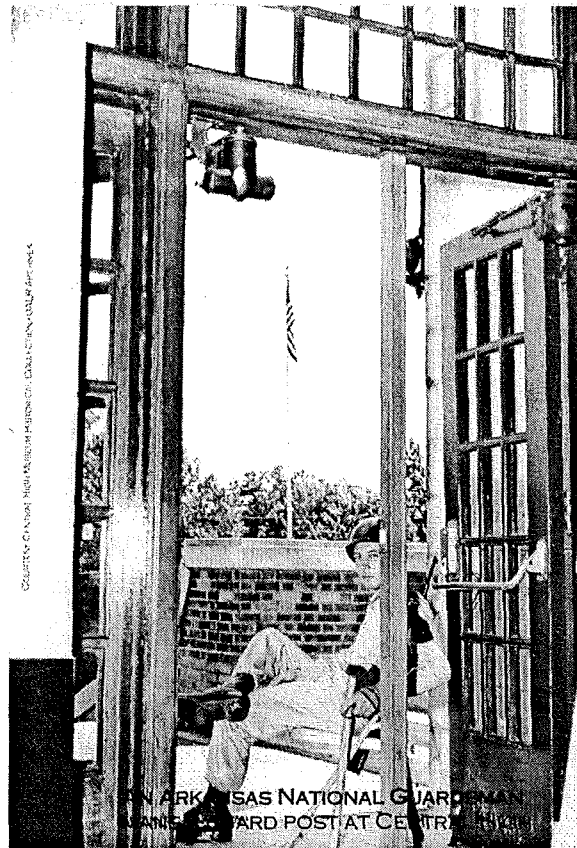
oppression of those with whom we deal or unlawful damage to or destruction of property is strictly prohibited." In pressing home the point Gen Clinger concluded with the admonitions that "the future of the National Guard in Arkansas and possibly that of the Guard nation wide will be materially

effected by our conduct in accomplishing the mission."²³

Overall the Guard carried out its mission but not without some incidents. On October 2nd an incident occurred where claims by some of the black students that the Guardsmen did not perform their duty to protect all students.

Evidently a group of white students pushed and kicked some of the black students inside the school. An investigation at the time revealed that the vice-principal for girls took immediate control of the situation and the white students were properly disciplined. No action was taken against the military personnel. Another incident occurred when a lieutenant, while acting as an escort officer for the black students, made

statements which were detrimental to the mission. Exactly what the statements were are not recorded but the officer was punished under the provisions of Article 15 Uniform Code of Military Justice resulting in loss of some pay.²⁴



²³ Op Ark I, Anx C, App 2, Table A, 5.

²⁴ Op Ark I, Anx G.

The majority of information regarding the daily routine and activities of the Guardsmen is found in the official report and the article by McGlasson. A key aspect that must be taken into consideration is the fact that both were produced within a year of the event. Desegregation efforts were still in early stages and controversy still raged. While Reed's efforts show a somewhat different angle, with some negative events occurring regarding the Guard's role, these events were very small in number. The article by McGlasson gives excellent advice to both Army and Guard leaders for future considerations if such mobilization should occur again. As far as the evaluation of the Arkansas Guard is concerned, he stated that "the citizens of Arkansas never lost support for their Guardsmen despite their link to an unpopular cause." He further felt this was a lesson in lasting community relations.²⁵

For the most part these sources accurately give an account of the Arkansas National Guard. If other incidents occurred they were not reported. This in itself lends support to the successful performance of the Guardsmen. With the large number of media present, who constantly searched for stories, any small infraction by

the Guard would have made front-page news nationwide. The absence of any such stories or incidents gives evidence that the troops understood their mission, its importance and their duty to obey, disregarding their own personal convictions on the matter. A statement made by Major Douglas Shelton of the Arkansas Air National Guard during the time the Guardsmen were under state control shows the mindset needed to complete the mission. Shelton said, "The Guard is on duty to preserve the peace. How they feel as individuals about integration (or about any particular issue) is not important. They are not on duty to either enforce integration or to maintain segregation. They are working for the Governor of their State (or for the President as it later transpired) as dictated by their oath, and orders to maintain the peace. We have been ordered to maintain peace and that is what we intend to do."²⁶

An obvious solution would have dictated that the Guard be used to uphold the federal court order to integrate Central High but fear of violence (whether founded or unfounded) changed the mind of Faubus (along with political ramifications if he willingly went along the integration). Exactly what might have occurred is only

²⁵ McGlasson, 25.

²⁶ Ibid.

wild speculation. Perhaps Little Rock would not be known for its role in the integration crisis. However, if events had occurred as Faubus feared the image of Little Rock and the Arkansas National Guard could have been clouded in bloodshed and death of its citizens. Only through an extensive oral history project might the attitudes and activities of the Arkansas Guardsmen be fully understood and documented. Only through individual and unit discipline, and their willingness to uphold their oath to defend the Constitution, would a violent incident be avoided. The Arkansas Guard proved they could be relied upon not only in combat, but also in volatile domestic incidents where they also had personal and emotional opinions to overcome. The Guard performed well and credit is due their efforts in assisting desegregation to occur as ordered. Gen Clinger made an appropriate summarization when he stated that "only by the passage of time can it be determined whether this operation will have an adverse effect on the National Guard."²⁷ However, it is evident that lessons were not learned regarding use and integration of U.S. National Guard units during civil disturbances. While the Central High incident attached no serious negative images to the

Guard as a whole, a short decade later the image and the role of the National Guard would be clouded forever at a place called Kent State University. With more and more Guard personnel augmenting U.S. forces overseas it is imperative that U.S. military leadership continues to remember lessons from the past.

²⁷ Op Ark I, Anx B, 4.

