

v 26 A.H.Q.

CONTENTS (Cont.)

Book Reviews

RALPH C. KENNEDY, JR. AND THOMAS ROTHROCK,  
*John Brown of Arkansas*,  
 by Walter L. Brown .....194

LEON CLAIRE METZ, *John Selman, Texas Gunfighter*,  
 by Walter L. Brown .....195

JOSIAH H. SHINN, *Pioneers and Makers of Arkansas*,  
 by Walter L. Brown .....195

# The Arkansas Maneuvers, 1941

By B. FRANKLIN COOLING III

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.<sup>1</sup>

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 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.<sup>2</sup>

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

<sup>1</sup>Cited in Maj. Bell I. 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.

<sup>2</sup>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. I. All records cited in this article are in GSA, National Archives and Records Service, World War II Division, Alexandria, Virginia, unless otherwise noted.

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 the 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. 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.<sup>3</sup>

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.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*

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 non-existent. 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 required in order to build suitable exercises without use of excessive time in shifting troops between exercise sites.<sup>4</sup>

The VII Corps completed its initial concentration dur-

<sup>4</sup>Rept. of ACofS, 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.

ing 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 large 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.<sup>5</sup>

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.<sup>6</sup>

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.<sup>7</sup> Throughout 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

<sup>5</sup>Little Rock *Arkansas Gazette*, August 13, 1941, p. 1.

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

<sup>7</sup>Directive for Operations No. A (Blue), August 1, 1941, Field Order No. 1, August 2, 1941 in Appendix 5, *ibid.* Also Little Rock *Arkansas Democrat*, August 20, 1941, p. 1.



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.<sup>8</sup>

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.<sup>9</sup> 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;

. . . was to get out of those trucks and set up their

<sup>8</sup>Red Scenario, C-1, C-2, August 13, 1941, Appendix 6 to VII Corps Report, *Op. cit.*

<sup>9</sup>Synopsis of Corps Exercises for August 17-28, Appendix 5, *ibid.*



Lt. Gen. Ben Lear Commanding General 2nd Army 1941 (US ARMY PHOTO).



Maj. Gen. (later Lt. Gen.) Robert C. Richardson, Commanding General, VII Corps in 1941 (US ARMY PHOTO).

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.<sup>10</sup>

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.<sup>11</sup> 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.<sup>12</sup>

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

<sup>10</sup>Little Rock *Arkansas Democrat*, August 19, 1941, pp. 1, 2.

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

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

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 junior leadership as being so important at that stage of the training.<sup>13</sup>

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 prob-

<sup>13</sup>See Lear's comments in Critique on Exercise C-1, C-2, *Op. cit.*, p. 9 particularly.

lems. 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.<sup>14</sup>

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:

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.<sup>15</sup>

August 23 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

<sup>14</sup>Scenario for Umpires G-3, Appendix 7, VII Corps Rept. *Op. cit.*

<sup>15</sup>Critique of G-3, August 22, 1941, Appendix 7, VII Corps Rept. *Op. cit.*



sent in its last reserves about this time, however the Red reinforcements had driven to the town of Hope by night-fall.

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 illfated force decided to go on fighting. This display of grit and determination in the youthful American soldiers greatly pleased Corps observers and umpires.<sup>16</sup>

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.<sup>17</sup>

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 Okolona-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

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

<sup>17</sup>Lt. Gen. Ben Lear, Critique on Exercise C-5, *ibid.*

army 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 that same evening 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.<sup>18</sup>

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.<sup>19</sup>

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 Corps

<sup>18</sup>Critique of Exercise C-6, August 28, 1941, Appendix 9, VII Corps Rept. *Op. cit.*

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

of National Guardsmen remained under General Richardson.<sup>20</sup>

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 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.]"<sup>21</sup> 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 shore line had merely delayed the withdrawal for several days, rather than helping

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

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



block the pursuing "enemy."<sup>22</sup>

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.

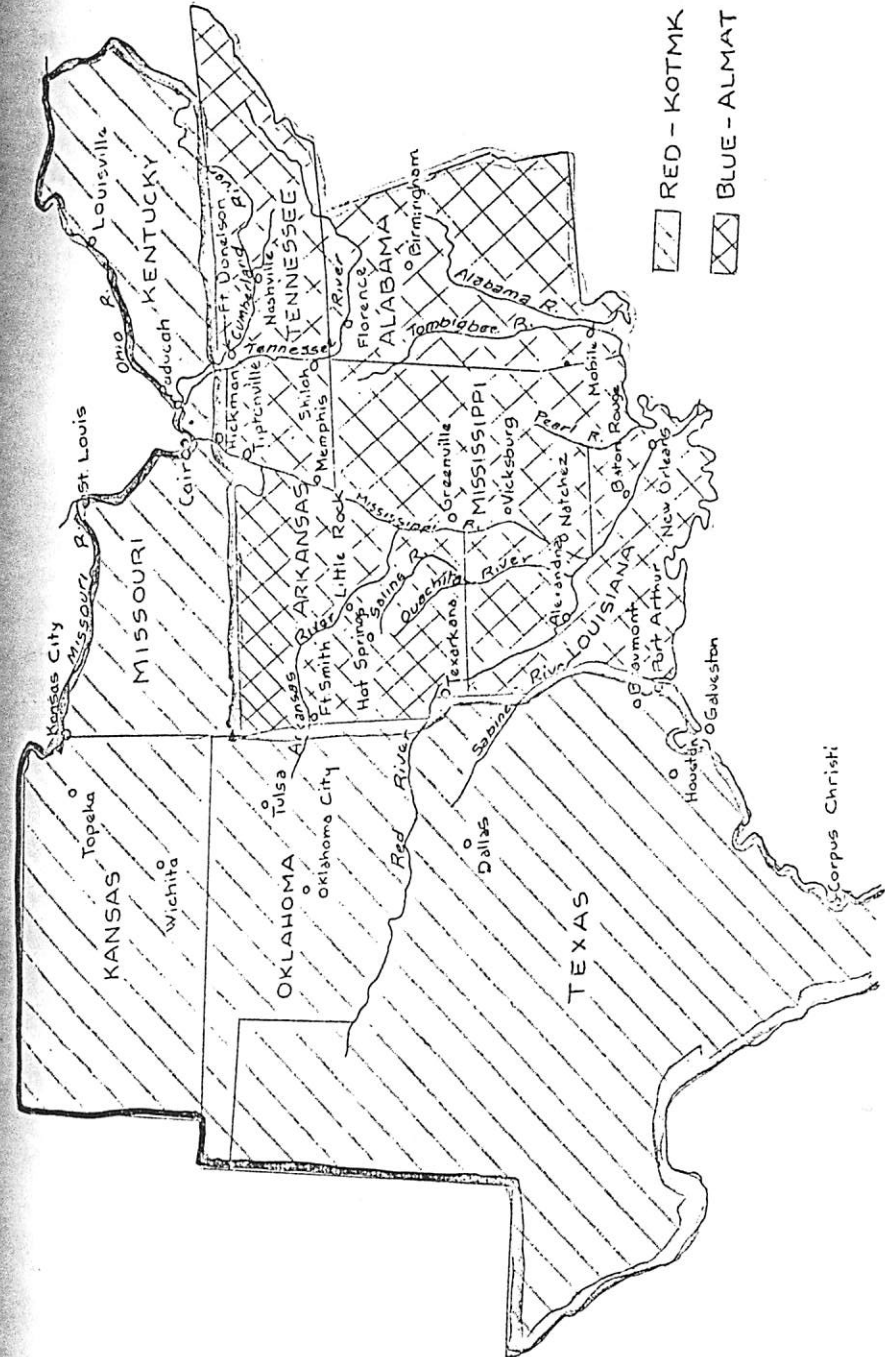
Starting shortly after dawn, the Reds and Blues fought from house to house through the town and nearly every front yard could boast a machine gun nest. Garages were turned into lookout posts. So hot was the action that one soldier was captured under a porch and others were cornered in stores and garages. As the day drew on the Blues were outsted 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.<sup>23</sup>

By the 7th of September, Blue forces had virtually completed the evacuation of Arkansas. Two days later the

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

<sup>23</sup>Little Rock, *Arkansas Gazette*, September 7, 1941, p. 9.



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 stream lines in the Gibsland-Shreveport-Alexandria area of Louisiana. 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.<sup>24</sup>

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.

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

<sup>24</sup>Report of VII Corps G-3, October 20, 1941, Appendix 3 VII Corps Rept. *Op. cit.*

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.<sup>25</sup>

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] <sup>26</sup>

Deficiencies in weaponry and equipment plagued the Arkansas maneuvers as it did all the exercises in 1941.

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

<sup>26</sup>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.*

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 more bitter, perhaps, about workers in distant factories who denied them the equipment by striking for higher wages.<sup>27</sup>

Undoubtedly these same kind 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.<sup>28</sup> 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.<sup>29</sup>

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:

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

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

<sup>29</sup>Critique on Exercises C-1, C-2, *Op. cit.*



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.<sup>30</sup>

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

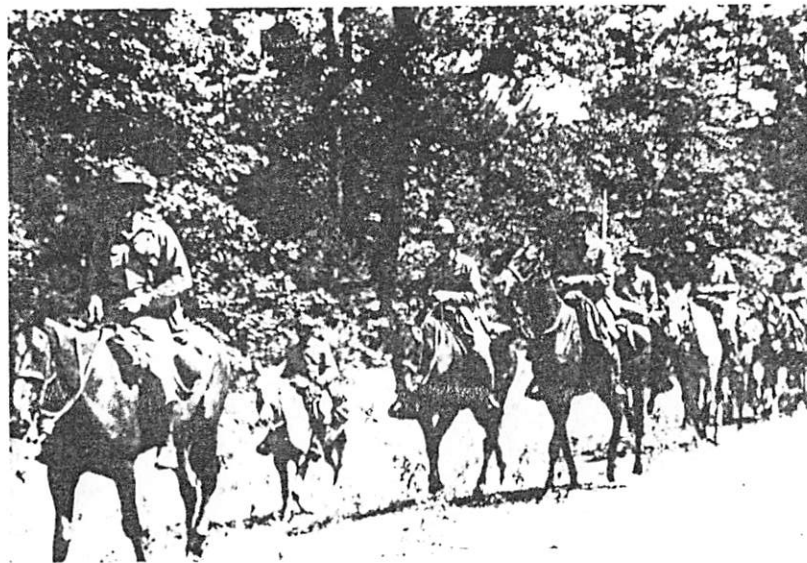
These maneuvers were of value to the young American army of pre-World War II days. But what meaning could these exercises have held for the inhabitants of Arkansas whose lives were often disrupted, whose towns were overrun, and whose ways of life were temporarily, if not permanently altered?

Arkansans residing in the vicinity of the maneuvers certainly 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



Anti-Aircraft gun crew during 1941 Arkansas-Louisiana maneuvers (US ARMY PHOTO).



Field Artillery on the march during 1941 Arkansas-Louisiana maneuvers (US ARMY PHOTO).

<sup>30</sup>Critique on Exercises C-5 and C-6, *Op. cit.*

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.<sup>31</sup>

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.<sup>32</sup>

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.

<sup>31</sup>Little Rock, *Arkansas Gazette*, August 20, 1941, p. 6.

<sup>32</sup>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).

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.<sup>33</sup>

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 door-yards, 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."<sup>34</sup> 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.

<sup>33</sup>Little Rock, *Arkansas Gazette*, September 2, 1941, p. 5.

<sup>34</sup>Edmund G. Love (Capt.) *The 27th Infantry Division in World War II* (Washington, 1949), p. 13.

## The Federals Ra Van Buren and Threaten Fort Sm

By EDWIN C. BEA  
Vicksburg National Military Park

MAJOR GENERAL THOMAS C. HINDMAN AT third week of August 1862 boarded a F steamboat at Little Rock. In accordance from Major General Theophilus H. Ho on August 24 disembarked at Fort Smith a mand of the newly constituted District that time the Confederates held the line Mountains to the Arkansas border, and w controlled the area south of the Arkansas of Arkansas and the Indian Territory nor held by the Rebels were "overrun by m of jayhawkers, Tories, and hostile Indians, coming depopulated." Adjacent to the te by the Southerners, the countryside had

<sup>1</sup>General Holmes, who during his service in the " many years on the Arkansas frontier, had been named mand the Trans-Mississippi Department. He was to to Little Rock, Ark., and establish his headquarters at judgment the interest of the service may demand." At Holmes issued a general order formally assuming com Mississippi Department. Twelve days later, Holmes where he announced his headquarters would be until *War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official I and Confederate Armies* (128 vols., Washington, 1880 XIII, 855, 860, 876. (Cited hereafter as *O. R.*)

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, 46, 877. Holmes on August 20 had divided three districts. "The District of Arkansas, composed of sas and Missouri and the Indian country" would be u man.