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## "Thank God It's Only Maneuvers!:" Tennessee and the Road to War

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“Thank God It’s Only Maneuvers!.” Tennessee and the Road to War

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A thesis  
presented to  
the faculty of the Department of History  
East Tennessee State University  
in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree  
Master of Arts in History

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by  
Joshua G. Savage  
May 2014

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Dr. Stephen G. Fritz, Chair  
Dr. Emmett Essin III  
Dr. John M. Rankin

Keywords: Maneuvers, 1941, June, Armor, Second Army, 2d Armored Division, 30<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, 27<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, 5<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, George Patton, Ben Lear, George C. Marshall, Leslie McNair, Adna Chaffee

## ABSTRACT

“Thank God It’s Only Maneuvers!.” Tennessee and the Road to War

by

Joshua G. Savage

*“Thank God It’s Only Maneuvers!.” Tennessee and the Road to War* offers the reader a comprehensive explanation of the importance of the Tennessee Maneuvers of June 1941 to American preparation for World War II. Beginning with pre-war changes in the infantry, followed by the inception of the Armored Force, and continuing through the testing of both during the 1941 Maneuvers, the reader will gain an appreciation of the significance of these actions to overall American preparation before and during the Second World War. This work also presents a look at how these extensive combat actions influenced the people of the State of Tennessee throughout their existence.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

George Washington's 56<sup>th</sup> Rule of Civility states, "Associate yourself with Men of good Quality if you Esteem your own Reputation; for 'tis better to be alone than in bad Company." Fortunately, I have had the honor of surrounding myself with people of good quality who have encouraged and supported me throughout my life and academic career. Firstly, I would be remiss if I did not thank the two men who inspired me on the path that ultimately resulted in the writing of this thesis, my grandfathers, Billie O.G. Savage and Roger Ewing McMurtry. Both of them pushed me towards this goal in various ways. When I was a child, I spent many summer days with my Grandpa Savage, travelling around the Upper Cumberland and listening to stories of days gone by while learning numerous facets of our family history. Though he is gone, the memories remain, and I am forever grateful for the time I had with him. He instilled in me a love for history that sustained me throughout the writing process and propelled me towards completion of this project. The honor of inspiring the actual project, however, rests with my Grandpa McMurtry, who witnessed the Tennessee Maneuvers firsthand as a young boy in Sumner County, Tennessee. For years, I heard him tell the story of Larry Clendening's fence being run over by GIs on maneuver and of being awoken in the middle of the night by the sound of troops rumbling through his front yard. The stories piqued my interest, and the lack of a definitive study of the actions prompted the creation of this project.

Throughout the writing process I was fortunate to have the help of eminent historians who motivated and advised me throughout the project. Firstly, I must thank Dr. Stephen Fritz. Dr. Fritz's contributions as my Committee Chairman cannot be understated. He read numerous drafts, offered careful and considerate advice, and kept me on my toes throughout the process. His feedback was always ridiculously quick and concise, which is amazing considering his considerable workload. His seminars were always enlightening and eye opening and broadened

my horizons on numerous subjects. I must also thank Dr. Emmett Essin III, who put up with my constant annoyances throughout the past two years and ultimately agreed to serve on my committee. I realize that I only mentioned mules a few times throughout the paper, but I hope that he found their mention both prudent and enjoyable. I would also like to thank Dr. John Michael Rankin. Though my thesis did not relate to the British Empire, he graciously agreed to serve on my committee and offered constant support and advice throughout the writing process. I am forever grateful for all your help. I would also like to thank Dr. Jeffery Roberts, Dr. Michael Birdwell, Dr. George Webb, Dr. Patrick D. Reagan, Dr. Kent Dollar, and Dr. Phillip Campana of Tennessee Technological University for their invaluable assistance throughout my undergraduate career. Without you all, none of this would have been possible.

I would also like to thank my parents, Glen and Shirley Savage. Without their constant support and encouragement, it is doubtful this project would have ever reached completion. Since childhood, they have always encouraged me to pursue my goals to fruition and never settle for less. Throughout my undergraduate and graduate career, they have constantly done everything in their power to assist me in achieving my goals, and for that I am truly grateful. I also want to thank my grandmothers, Jane McMurtry and Loretta Savage. Like my grandfathers, they have constantly helped to propel my interest in history and supported me in the pursuit of my goals as few others could. I would be remiss if I did not also mention my uncle, Daniel L. McMurtry Esq., and my aunt, Betty Bernardo. They constantly encouraged me in the pursuit of my goals and to further my education beyond the undergraduate level. Without the support of my family, this work would simply not exist.

As the old adage goes, you can choose your friends, but you cannot choose your family. Fortunately, I have been lucky enough to have both a wonderful family, as well as amazing

friends. Since my time as an undergraduate, I have had the pleasure of knowing several exceptional individuals who have helped me along the way. Firstly, I'd like to thank Mr. J.R. Brown who gave me a piece of advice that has served me well throughout my academic career. During my first semester at Tennessee Tech, he said, "Just because Dr. Reagan's paper is due in November doesn't mean you should wait until then to get it done. Do it now." That advice has ensured that I have never missed a deadline, and always finished my projects ahead of schedule. I would also like to thank Mr. J.A. Wilkerson for the encouragement along the way, encouragement that was always mixed with colorful and antiquated metaphors. I must also thank Mr. Niklas Trzaskowski for his invaluable assistance throughout the Graduate School application process, as well as his extensive assistance throughout the program itself. Nik helped me to refine my writing, produce better drafts, and ultimately become a better writer. He read numerous drafts, offered extensive critiques, and constantly encouraged me to do better. Further thanks go to my fellow graduate students, but specifically Derrick Angermeier and Jason Phillips. Both Derrick and Jason helped me acclimate to the climate of the Graduate School, and ultimately helped me succeed therein.

Without all of you, what follows would not exist.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

“The damned city hall was not on the map!” were the iconic words issued by General George S. Patton Jr. following the collision of one of his tanks with the Bell Buckle, Tennessee, City Hall. Like that city hall, the 1941 Tennessee Maneuvers have long been off the map in regards to academic historical study. Later eclipsed by the much larger and more heavily studied Louisiana and Carolina Maneuvers of the same year, the Tennessee Maneuvers of 1941 have fallen by the wayside, left to exist as mere footnotes to its larger successors. As the sands of time have washed away many memories of these invaluable maneuvers, few recall the significant contributions that these war-games made to the U.S. Army.

Historians often mention the Tennessee Maneuvers in passing, with the maneuvers themselves barely receiving mention in larger works. Without examining the Tennessee Maneuvers, the narrative of the American military in World War II remains incomplete. Most historians agree that the training received in the United States prior to and during the war contributed greatly to the Allied victory, but the Tennessee Maneuvers remain largely ignored, despite their inherent value to the overall narrative of pre-war preparation. No work has comprehensively examined pre-war developments in American infantry and armor in relation to the Tennessee Maneuvers of 1941. Indeed, as Carlo D’Este notes in *Patton: A Genius for War*, the Tennessee Maneuvers only receive extensive mention in the history of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored “Hell on Wheels” Division.<sup>1</sup> The Tennessee maneuvers remain largely neglected despite their vital role in the history of the U.S. Military. This is an oversight this thesis hopes to rectify.

Historian Christopher Gabel’s *The U.S. Army GHQ Maneuvers of 1941*, published by the Center of Military History in 1991, focuses exclusively on the maneuver period of 1941 but only

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<sup>1</sup> Carlo D’Este, *Patton: A Genius for War*, (New York: HarperCollins, 1995), 881.



mentions the Tennessee component of these maneuvers in passing. The work attributes a paltry page and a half to the contributions of the maneuvers to pre-war preparation, with extensive focus falling on pre-war developments, followed by entire chapters devoted to the Louisiana and Carolina Maneuvers. Gabel briefly mentions developments in anti-tank and armored doctrine brought about by the Tennessee Maneuvers, as well as the various problems encountered by the units in Tennessee, but provides only a brief summation of the action and its contributions. He does mention, however, the importance of the maneuvers in the formation of armored doctrine.

Woody McMillin's work, *In the Presence of Soldiers: The 2<sup>nd</sup> Army Maneuvers and Other World War II Activity in Tennessee*, published in 2010, currently stands as the only work almost exclusively focusing on the Tennessee Maneuvers from 1941-1945. The maneuvers conducted in Tennessee would test the army on a corps vs. corps level, providing an evaluation tool that would prove critical in evaluating officers, troops, and equipment, as well as the development of military tactics that became standard practice throughout the war. McMillin's work is the first attempt at describing the maneuvers in detail and provides a solid chronological timeline of the maneuvers while incorporating them into the history of the state during the period.

*Hell on Wheels: the 2d Armored Division*, by Donald Eugene Houston, focuses on the history of one of the first two armored divisions in the history of the United States Army. Houston notes, "Historians of armor stress that in the two decades following World War I, petty branch jealousies and conservative, almost reactionary, leadership in infantry and cavalry prevented the creation of a mechanized or armored force before 1940."<sup>2</sup> The facts are undeniable. Army leadership refused to acknowledge the value of armor during the interwar period and resisted the adoption of armored divisions until 1940. General Marshall only

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<sup>2</sup> Donald Eugene Houston, *Hell on Wheels: the 2d Armored Division*, (San Rafael, CA: Presidio Press, 1975), 31.

authorized the creation of the Armored Force following successful demonstrations from Armored Force proponent Adna Chaffee in Louisiana during the summer of 1940 and after witnessing the rapid successes enjoyed by Hitler's panzer divisions in Europe in 1939 and 1940. Houston's work details the history of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Division, as well as the complicated background of armor in the United States. Houston's work offers a critical evaluation of the unit during the Tennessee Maneuvers and focuses on the benefits of pre-war preparation for war. According to Patton, the 2d Armored learned valuable lessons and realized that the mistakes made during the maneuvers justified their existence. He knew, "the tanks' vulnerability must be recognized. It was folly to think of charging antitank guns with the intention of crushing them beneath their tracks."<sup>3</sup> Armored tactics developed during the maneuvers would prove vital in winning the war.

A comprehensive study of these war-games will restore the Tennessee Maneuvers to their proper place in the historical context. To understand the importance of the maneuvers, a number of developments necessitate mention. The infantry branch of the U.S. Army underwent extensive changes and subsequently transformed during the interwar years, with most changes occurring in the years immediately preceding the Second World War. The armored branch, meanwhile, did not even exist until the year prior to the outbreak of the war. The changes enacted during this period revolutionized the U.S. Army and precipitated further reforms that would enable it to fight the Second World War effectively, without relying on outdated technology and tactics from the Great War. These changes were first tested on a large scale during the Tennessee Maneuvers of June 1941. The lessons learned in the state ultimately led to the implementation of corrective measures before deployment overseas, thus saving American lives. Furthermore, the maneuvers not only influenced changes in the military but in the State of Tennessee as well. The presence of

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<sup>3</sup> Houston, 69.

the military and its personnel in Depression Era Tennessee changed the lives of local Tennesseans throughout the maneuver period. Understanding the economic and social impacts of the maneuvers will allow the reader to gain a comprehensive understanding of the impact of the maneuvers on the military, state, and people as a whole.

This thesis presents a comprehensive examination of the Tennessee Maneuvers in a manner that incorporates military, social, and economic events into one cohesive unit. In chapter two, the evolution of the infantry during the interwar period, including the shift from square to triangular divisions, training, and outfitting are explained thoroughly throughout this chapter. The reader is introduced to key figures in the pre-war Army, including the Army Chiefs of Staff during the 1930s, including Douglas MacArthur, Malin Craig, and George C. Marshall. Their reforms and preparatory measures taken during the interwar period laid the framework for the Army that took the field in World War II. The reader is also introduced to the leader of GHQ (Army General Headquarters), General Leslie McNair, and 2<sup>nd</sup> Army Commander, General Ben Lear. This chapter thoroughly details the first half of the June Maneuvers that focused exclusively on infantry actions. Many of these actions were theoretical in nature, with the enemy existing only on paper. This period allowed the infantry to learn in the field what it could not learn in basic training, such as movement, maneuver, and concealment in a real environment. All their training, however, was geared toward preparing for the second phase of the maneuvers, the arrival of Patton's 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Division.

Chapter three focuses almost exclusively on the armored branch of the U.S. Army with special emphasis on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Division and the second half of the Tennessee Maneuvers. Beginning with the struggle for the creation of the Armored Force under General Adna Chaffee during the interwar period, this chapter details the struggle for an independent Armored Force

following World War I, as well as the eventual creation, training, and subsequent field testing of, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Division which participated in combat maneuvers for the first time in mid-June 1941. The primary importance of the Tennessee Maneuvers rested with the field-testing of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Division. Many in the military were still unconvinced as to the soundness of armored doctrine, especially those clinging to the antiquated armored theories held over from the Great War. The performance of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored in Tennessee proved, undeniably, that the doctrine developed by Chaffee and implemented by Patton in the field in Tennessee would be the doctrine that won victory for the armored forces of the United States in World War II.

The fourth chapter switches focus from the strictly military emphasis of the previous two chapters and analyzes the socioeconomic impact of the military on the State of Tennessee. From 1941 onward, the presence of the military profoundly affected the state's populace, bringing a massive influx of resources into the state and affecting the daily lives of thousands within the maneuver area. Throughout the maneuver period, locals lived in a simulated warzone, with numerous roads shut off to civilian access, bridges crushed under the weight of American armor, and fences and other property destroyed by military equipment. Troops swarmed local towns and cities while on leave, and local establishments struggled to keep pace with demand. Not all the effects of the maneuvers were negative, however, as innumerable businesses prospered with the influx of new customers. Even locals not previously in business for themselves began entrepreneurial pursuits in an effort to capitalize on the new market. Many local shopkeepers sold more goods during this period than in most of the previous year. Indeed, with troops desiring creature comforts, locals eagerly acquiesced by providing home cooked meals, fresh produce, fresh water, and evening entertainment in the form of square dances and festivals. The maneuvers proved to be a crucial boom for a stagnant state economy.

Through this work, readers should be able to grasp the immense importance of the 1941 Tennessee Maneuvers and the effects of this operation on both the military and the state it occupied. General Marshall and his predecessors as Army Chief of Staff enacted structural and doctrinal reforms to prepare the U.S. Army for the looming conflict throughout the 1930s. The Army staged its first large-scale field-test of these changes in Tennessee throughout June 1941 and learned valuable lessons that would prepare it to face the Axis Powers in Europe and Asia. The presence of the Army also had a profound effect upon the people of the state as well, altering the lives of native Tennesseans throughout the maneuver period. The strategies, tactics, and lessons learned in the fields of Tennessee ultimately helped the U.S. Army prepare for the coming conflict and gave its forces the tools it needed to accomplish its goals overseas. Through this work, readers will hopefully begin to understand the reasons why these pivotal maneuvers cannot, and should not, be forgotten.

## CHAPTER 2

### GIVE US THE TOOLS AND WE'LL FINISH THE JOB

With the Tennessee Maneuvers soon to begin, Heinz L. Werle of River Grove, Illinois, moved into Tennessee in June 1941 along with over 50,000 of his fellow servicemen. Werle, like his compatriots, expressed his disdain at the state of affairs in the Army throughout the maneuvers. While on a twenty-mile march into the state, he complained about the rations given to the troops, lambasting the “horse-cock” (bologna) and “clog-ass” (cheese) sandwiches that comprised their mess kits.<sup>4</sup> For Werle, the maneuvers were a nuisance. Rations were poor, sanitation was questionable, and the oppressive Southern climate made for difficult living conditions. He expressed his disdain for his “glorious leader, the general, sitting in his command car in the shade, sipping his ice-cold Coca-Cola as he reviewed his men struggling down the road.”<sup>5</sup> Hardships aside, Werle carefully observed the poor state of affairs in the army at the time. Supplies were short, and equipment was scarce or non-existent. Describing the weaponry available to men at the time, he writes, “Grenades (beer cans filled with sand) were thrown at quarter ton trucks which had signs on their sides which read ‘I am a tank’. We, the U.S. Army, were sorta [sic] low on equipment and vehicles in those days.”<sup>6</sup> The army that took to the field in Tennessee during the summer of June 1941 suffered from numerable hardships and supply shortages but was a drastic improvement from the force that existed during the interwar period. Though by no means a modern Army, the lessons learned by enlisted men and officers during the Tennessee Maneuvers would prove invaluable in the coming conflict.

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<sup>4</sup> Heinz L. Werle, *Heinz Werle Papers*, unpublished manuscript, Box 13, Folder 215, US Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, PA, 3.

<sup>5</sup> Werle, 4.

<sup>6</sup> Werle, 4-5.

With war consuming the European continent, it became increasingly apparent that the United States would prove unable to avoid the conflagration. With that in mind, top officials in the United States Army began to realize that its forces were in no shape to defend the country let alone fight the fascists in Europe or Asia. This realization led many in the Army, including Chief of Staff George C. Marshall, to conclude that the situation required immediate rectification. Marshall chose to take immediate action to bring the Army up to fighting strength by authorizing the expansion, training, and outfitting of a modern military. In order to reach the goals established by General Marshall, conscription would be implemented, and military maneuvers would be scheduled across the country to augment the training programs already in place. Once the troops completed basic training, they would be put to the test in the field.

The first of these large-scale military maneuvers came to Tennessee in June 1941. Though small in comparison to later maneuvers, these corps level exercises tested many elements of the new army for the first time. The maneuvers would expose, the Army hoped, the strengths and weaknesses of its infantry training programs, as well as test the men in the field. In addition to these objectives, the maneuvers would also expose weak links in the chain of command, allowing abler officers to advance and those deemed unsatisfactory to be removed. The first half of the Tennessee Maneuvers would test the infantry and its ability to operate in the field. The second half of the maneuvers, however, would test the infantrymen against a full armored division, the first ever fielded by the United States Army.<sup>7</sup> Through these crucial war games, the Army learned the lessons needed to perfect its training programs and prepare its men for the coming war. Without these war games, the Army's first experience in combat would have been overseas rather than at home. Overseas the bullets would be real, but at home they were

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<sup>7</sup> Associated Press, "Army is Ready for Long Test in Maneuvers," *Chattanooga Daily Times*, June 2, 1941.

only blanks. Mistakes at home could be corrected easily, but mistakes abroad could cost men their lives.

With war looming, it became apparent to the U.S. Military that the peacetime army was woefully unprepared to protect the United States from outside aggression. “We didn’t know how soon war would come, but we knew it was coming. We didn’t know when we’d have to fight, but we knew it might come at any time, and we had to get together *something* [sic] of an Army pretty darn fast.”<sup>8</sup> As historian Christopher Gabel notes in his landmark work *The U.S. Army GHQ Maneuvers of 1941*, “Twenty years of inadequate funding and skeletonized units had made the U.S. Army little more than a token establishment.”<sup>9</sup> The unpreparedness of the military necessitated the rapid transition from a peacetime to a wartime footing and the immediate training and equipping of a modern military.

Following the German attack on Poland in September 1939 that demonstrated the success of new Blitzkrieg tactics and weapons, the U.S. Army moved swiftly to implement a long projected program of modernization.<sup>10</sup> Anticipating the necessity for such a move already in the early 1930s, Army Chief of Staff Douglas MacArthur and his successor Malin Craig drafted the Protective Mobilization Plan (PMP).<sup>11</sup> The PMP called for a series of programs that would bring the U.S. Military to a firm footing in the event of war with Japan, the only potential foe seen as a threat at the time. This plan proved instrumental in the rapid military buildup that took place preceding American entry into World War II.

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<sup>8</sup> Christopher R. Gabel, *The U.S. Army GHQ Maneuvers of 1941*, (Washington D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1992), 8.

<sup>9</sup> Gabel, 5.

<sup>10</sup> Carlo D’Este, *Patton: A Genius for War*, (New York: HarperCollins, 1995), 393.

<sup>11</sup> Allan R. Millett and Peter Maslowski, *For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States of America*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994), 397.



The dilapidated state of U.S. forces produced a difficult situation. The goal of this ambitious project called for the hasty mobilization of a small, combat effective army in a little under eight months. This small force, Army commanders believed, would be able to successfully defend the United States from hostile action. The PMP called for the raising of an Army consisting of 1,224,357 men trained and equipped with modern doctrines and armaments. With this new force, the Army believed it could successfully carry out its national duty.<sup>12</sup>

Army Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall began the task of revitalizing the United States Army, then the 17<sup>th</sup> strongest military in the world, just behind Romania when Marshall took over as acting Chief of Staff on July 1, 1939.<sup>13</sup> He inherited a practically non-existent Army, and in his report upon taking office, Marshall writes, “On July 1 the active Army of the United States consisted of approximately 174,000 enlisted men scattered over 130 posts, camps and stations. . . Within the United States we had no field army. There existed the mere framework of about three and one-half square divisions approximately fifty percent complete as to personnel.”<sup>14</sup> By the beginning of 1940 the situation was little better, as the U.S. Army consisted of around 243,095 men, while the National Guard possessed a meager 226,837 men.<sup>15</sup> Preparing the military for war would be difficult, but with Marshall’s guidance the country set about the task with renewed vigor. To bolster the ranks and give Marshall the troops necessary to implement the PMP, Congress prepared to pass the first peace-time draft in U.S. history by debating the Burkes-Wadsworth Bill (Selective Service Act) during the summer of 1940.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Gabel, 9.

<sup>13</sup> Gabel, 8.

<sup>14</sup> George C. Marshall, Henry H. Arnold, and Ernest J. King, *The War Reports of General of the Army George C. Marshall, General of the Army Henry H. Arnold, and Fleet Admiral Earnest J. King*, (Philadelphia and New York: J.P. Lippincott Company, 1947), 16.

<sup>15</sup> Kent Roberts Greenfield, Robert R. Palmer, and Bell I. Wiley, *The Army Ground Forces: The Organization of Ground Combat Troops*, (Washington D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1987), 2-3.

<sup>16</sup> Ronald G. Van Tyne, “Congress Votes First American Peacetime Draft: Ready for President’s Signature; Bund Protests,” *The Sunday Morning Star*, September 15, 1940.

General Marshall pleaded with Congress to enact the draft for months prior to its eventual passage. The entire application of the PMP relied on the immediate influx of men and materiel into Federal Service, and without this the plan would falter. On August 5, 1940, Marshall was quoted by the *New York Times*, “It was expected that in the process of obtaining authority for these various measures, there would be, of necessity, a period of discussion and debate, particularly with relation to a Selective Service Act; however, the passage of weeks-this loss of time-is a constantly growing embarrassment to the War Department.”<sup>17</sup> He went further, “Time-and let me repeat-time is our pressing necessity today, and our man power is the only thing which can be provided on short notice. We must train men immediately against the possibilities of the next few months, which may be the most critical in the history of this country.”<sup>18</sup> Marshall fumed at the delays in Congress and feared that defending the country without the draft would be impossible. Indeed, in 1939 following Roosevelt’s Emergency Proclamation Marshall wrote, “The urgent necessity for Army maneuvers involving large units was manifest. For the past five years field training had been limited to the assembly of the four paper organizations, called field armies, once every four years, and then only for a two-week period, of which about five days could be devoted to very limited action due to lack of motor transportation and the unseasoned state of the National Guard personnel.”<sup>19</sup> Marshall continued his pleas to Congress throughout the month of August 1940, saying that it was “urgently necessary to have selective service as quickly as possible.”<sup>20</sup> The New York National Guard Maneuvers, Marshall knew, would provide the evidence necessary to conclude the debate and enact the draft.

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<sup>17</sup> Staff, “Marshall Urges Speeding of Draft: Staff Chief Says Delay Puts the Preparedness Program in Serious Jeopardy,” *The New York Times*, August 6, 1940.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Marshall, et. al., *War Reports*, 18.

<sup>20</sup> Frank L. Kluckhorn, “Marshall Warns of Big Army Need,” *The New York Times*, August 17, 1940.

Congressional deliberations regarding the draft quickly concluded with the passage on September 9<sup>th</sup>, 1940, of a Selective Service Act, due to concerns regarding the National Guard. National Guardsmen and reservists gathered in the summer of 1940 to prove to the Army that they could defend the nation if called upon to do so. The 200,000 men of the National Guard's so-called "combat ready" units assembled in camps across the country and prepared to stage maneuvers to display their state of readiness. In an "off the record" speech to the National Guard Association on October 27, 1939, General Marshall remarked, "The knowledge that has been common in the Army for generations, that the only way to learn how to do things properly is to get out on the ground and actually do them."<sup>21</sup> Though the exercises would prove him correct, they did so in a manner most disconcerting.

The ensuing debacle only helped prove Marshall's argument that the National Guard must fall under Federal control, and that the Army must completely reevaluate its training program. Troops frequently collapsed from exhaustion in the field, discipline proved practically non-existent, officers failed to issue coherent orders, division and brigade commanders proved unable to coordinate weapons and units under their command, communications failed, and logistical failures often left Guardsmen without food.<sup>22</sup> When President Roosevelt visited the troops in mid-August, his soldiers reported to him, "that they were so handicapped by lack of equipment that in some instances they were drilling with drain pipes instead of regular trench mortars and broomsticks instead of machine guns. . . (and) during his inspection trip the President saw trucks which had been used to simulate tanks during the manoeuvres. He also saw lines of converted taxicabs pressed into service for motor transport."<sup>23</sup> Indeed, this complete

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<sup>21</sup> Larry Bland, ed. *The Papers of George Catlett Marshall: We Cannot Delay July 1, 1939-December 6, 1941*, (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 97.

<sup>22</sup> Marshall, et. al., 13.

<sup>23</sup> Kenneth Campbell, "Army is Inspected by the President," *The New York Times*, August 18, 1940.

failure by the National Guardsmen to demonstrate the most basic proficiencies alarmed Army leaders in Washington. As Marshall later stated, “Americans who had opposed conscription in the belief that the National Guard represented a combat-ready force were rudely shaken. The 1940 summer encampments demonstrated beyond dispute that, in terms of ground forces the nation was virtually defenseless.”<sup>24</sup>

To complement the proposed draft, the Senate authorized the President to “mobilize the National Guard and Organized Reserves for a year’s training.”<sup>25</sup> Though the army increased in size numerically, most of its divisions existed only on paper. New recruits and draftees soon gave flesh to these skeleton divisions, but they remained inferior to European forces in composition, equipment, and training. Due to the passage of the Selective Service Act a month later, the regular army swelled to 1.2 million men, comprised of some 300,000 National Guardsmen, 600,000 draftees, and 300,000 regular army troops by the time the United States entered the war in 1941.<sup>26</sup> Still, according to the Victory Program put forth by the Army in September 1941, the war would require “some 8.7 million men, divided into a ground army of 6.7 million capable of fielding 213 divisions (half armored or motorized) and an Army air force of 2 million and 195 air groups.”<sup>27</sup>

Though the army increased substantially in size under the PMP, the stockpiles of modern equipment called for under the plan, however, were unavailable. As the 1940 maneuvers indicated, supplies of weaponry, be it modern or antiquated, simply did not exist. Congress considered the stockpiling of such supplies unfeasible and did not authorize funding for new weaponry until President Roosevelt declared a National Emergency on 8 September 1939. The

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<sup>24</sup> Marshall, et. al., 14.

<sup>25</sup> Staff, “Guard Bill is Sent to the President,” *The New York Times*, August 23, 1940.

<sup>26</sup> Millett and Maslowski, 417.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, 418.

supplies were in production, but stockpiles were dangerously low. Only the army's regular divisions would be outfitted first, with the National Guard and draftees to follow. Without the new weaponry the troops required, defense of the homeland would prove a difficult, if not impossible, task. New weaponry would be disbursed to the troops once it became available, but until that occurred, troops would make do with what they possessed or could manufacture themselves. Despite this setback, General Marshall pushed forward with his implementation of the PMP and began to reform the infantry divisions, that then existed as relics of the First World War.<sup>28</sup>

Due to limited funding the Army received from Congress during the interwar period, modern equipment and training remained sparse. The army suffered from a shortage of weapons, "starting with rifles and ending in tanks and adequate 1940-era artillery."<sup>29</sup> Indeed, the lack of Congressional appropriations led the Army to make the best of what it had available. This led the Army to reevaluate its usage of equipment and technology. Standard equipment in 1939 still included the M-1917 pie-plate helmets, as well as the 1903 Springfield rifle.<sup>30</sup> The Army sought to apply knowledge gained during World War I to implement the changes necessary to fight the coming war. New equipment, while not yet ready, would play a vital role in the coming conflict.

One of the first steps in structural modernization involved moving from a "square" division to a "triangular" division. The square division was a relic of World War I. The square division consisted of 28,000 men, divided into two brigades, four regiments, and twelve battalions along with artillery, cavalry, engineers, signal corps, and machine gunners.<sup>31</sup> The square divisions possessed twice as many men as any German, French, or British units in World

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<sup>28</sup> Gabel, 9.

<sup>29</sup> Eric M. Hammel, *How America Saved the World: the Untold Story of U.S. Preparedness between the World Wars*, (Minneapolis, MN: Zenith Press, 2009), 185.

<sup>30</sup> Millett and Maslowski, 399.

<sup>31</sup> Jerold Brown, ed., *Historical Dictionary of the US Army*, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2008), 449.

War I, and used this mass of manpower to engage the enemy for extended periods without needing reinforcement. The square division's downfall resided within its sheer mass; the size of the unit made it unwieldy and difficult to coordinate, as well as making rapid movement virtually impossible. The numbers required to operate these divisions also proved impractical. During World War I, the Army struggled to staff its divisions. To fully flesh out its 58 divisions oftentimes required the cannibalization of other units, resulting in many understrength divisions. The square division proved ideal for the style of warfare practiced in World War I, with its artillery regiments firing rolling barrages, and the infantry battalions advancing in waves afterwards. By 1940, these tactics, like the division itself, proved hilariously obsolete.

During the interwar period, the transition from the square to the triangular division structure proved a difficult task. Officers who fought in the trenches in World War I held to the belief that the division must be able to support itself for long periods without reinforcement. Forward thinking officers, like George C. Marshall, however, believed the exact opposite. The United States must mobilize hastily, rendering the training of such a large division incredibly difficult if not impossible. Developments during the interwar period also made the square division functionally obsolete. As the Axis powers rolled across Europe, the American military took notice of the success of the triangular division structure employed by the Germans. With this in mind, the U.S. Army moved to shed infantry divisions of heavy supporting elements in favor of mobility and maneuver. Fortunately, the move towards the triangular division was well underway, as General Marshall had ordered its implementation immediately after becoming Chief of Staff. The smaller divisions composed of numerous combat teams and specialized units

offered the Army a way to quickly mobilize for war and maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of the United States' fighting forces.<sup>32</sup>

After the dismantling of the square divisions, the Army turned its focus to training and equipping its units for modern warfare. Even General Pershing, once an ardent supporter of the square division and its tactics, realized the need for change as early as 1919. Taken under review by the Superior Board, composed of many of the Allied Expeditionary Force's best minds, it was determined that "Trench warfare has produced unwieldy and somewhat immobile units . . . Situations of that character will, in the future, as in the past, provide their own solution affording the time needed to bring special weapons and to make necessary changes in organization."<sup>33</sup> Despite the board's findings, however, they did not implement these changes. The board believed that the success of the division structure in World War I warranted the continuation of tactics and policy despite obvious tactical superiority enjoyed by the Germans in the Michael Offensive at the end of the war. Confronted with the intransigence of command as well as budgetary restrictions imposed by Congress, the Army faced a deplorable shortage of weaponry. New weapons were needed, most notably the M1 Garand, 60mm, and 80mm mortars, and a 105mm howitzer; however, limited funding kept these prototype weapons out of soldiers' hands until the outbreak of the Second World War.<sup>34</sup>

By 1941, with Europe solidly under control of the Third Reich, and the British fighting on alone, the American military realized that war with the Axis Powers was a distinct possibility. President Franklin D. Roosevelt steeled the nation for the coming struggle and in addressing the people on May 27, 1941, he stated, "Your government has the right to expect of all citizens that

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<sup>32</sup> Dan C. Fullerton, *Bright Prospects, Bleak Realities: The U.S. Army's Interwar Modernization Program for the Coming of the Second World War*, (PhD Diss., Wichita State University 2006), 135-137.

<sup>33</sup> Fullerton, 139.

<sup>34</sup> Millett and Maslowski, 399.

they take part in the common work of our common defense.”<sup>35</sup> It was clear to everyone that the United States could not remain neutral indefinitely. Even though the military possessed the manpower to fight, it still lacked the training that General Marshall demanded. To train the new million-man army, General Marshall chose General Leslie McNair as Chief of Staff of the Army General Headquarters (GHQ).<sup>36</sup> McNair’s task would prove a difficult one; the draft brought in hundreds of thousands of raw recruits and each of these men would require extensive training to prepare him for combat.<sup>37</sup>

The GHQ had existed on paper since 1932 when General Douglas MacArthur, then Chief of Staff, ordered that the First, Second, Third, and Fourth Armies would be placed under a single command for training purposes during a national emergency. These four armies would form the basis of the U.S. Army in wartime, with its cadre of officers and men forming the skeleton that would shape the formation of the wartime army. The general plan called for the individual Army commands to train their own men during peacetime, a policy that was centralized under the GHQ in 1940. The plan, which General MacArthur drafted in 1932, would be the one that led the United States Army into war in 1941. It called for an eight-step process to bring the army up to fighting strength. Initially, existing divisions would be brought up to full strength as quickly as possible, followed by inducting the National Guard into Federal Service. After that point, the training of the new divisions would be conducted by officers drawn from the divisions already in existence, while the men used to create the new divisions would either be volunteers or draftees. Following the filling out of the Army, field training would be conducted by the armies created in

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<sup>35</sup> David M. Kennedy, ed., *The Library of Congress World War II Companion*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2007), 152.

<sup>36</sup> Gabel, *The U.S. Army GHQ Maneuvers of 1941*, 14.

<sup>37</sup> Perret, 39.



skeleton form in 1932. Following the implementation of these steps, the GHQ would be activated to command the new force.<sup>38</sup>

As recruits and draftees flooded the ranks of the regular army, training became a major problem. Traditional military education could not supply the training necessary to prepare American troops to fight overseas. During the interwar years, each branch of the Army maintained and used its own training schools. These schools provided professional training, developed doctrine and training literature and tested equipment before it became available to the troops. They supplied specialized training to the troops in their respective branches, training that was augmented by the general Army schools at West Point, the Army Industrial College, the Command and General Staff School at Fort Leavenworth, and the Army War College in the District of Columbia.<sup>39</sup> While the schools functioned effectively during the interwar period, they strained to provide the same services to the huge influx of troops inducted under the Selective Service Act.<sup>40</sup>

Training for the average soldier entering the army in 1940 and 1941 usually began with a thirteen-week training program. According to General Marshall, “Trained, disciplined manpower is the fundamental requirement of any army. Our training program has been designed to build a seasoned body of men who have the basic knowledge and skill to handle any job that may be assigned to them.”<sup>41</sup> During basic training, soldiers engaged in physical conditioning, learned the basics of military knowledge, as well adhering to rigid discipline and obeying orders from superior officers. It was during this time that the new recruits learned basic skills such as map reading, proper hygiene, and first aid. Basic training taught essential skills that would serve them

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<sup>38</sup> Greenfield, et. al., 3-5.

<sup>39</sup> Gabel, 18.

<sup>40</sup> Greenfield, et. al., 2.

<sup>41</sup> Marshall, et. al., 38.

throughout their time in the armed forces. In the second half of basic training, infantrymen received training in their specialized disciplines. For example, if a soldier received the designation of rifleman he would learn to “fire his weapon and to fulfill his role in squad, platoon, and company tactics.”<sup>42</sup> Indeed, General Marshall’s wanted training that would prepare the men, “to act intelligently in an emergency, and that toughen him physically to withstand the rigors of modern warfare.”<sup>43</sup>

Once initial basic training was complete, the soldiers moved into the combined arms phase of their training. Troops only proceeded to this stage once it was determined that they had mastered the basics of minor tactics and command skills. This phase of training emphasized the performance of soldiers as a part of a division, rather than the small scale unit tactics emphasized in basic training. During this phase, “infantry units learned to request, and artillery units to deliver, timely and accurate artillery fire. Engineers performed repairs and demolitions for the other arms, and supply echelons gained experience in sustaining the combat units.”<sup>44</sup> The focus of this period of training largely emphasized the importance of the regimental combat team, that comprised a regiment and a battalion of artillery reinforcing it. Troops would conduct most of this training in the field, learning to fire and maneuver in unison until the unit functioned cohesively. During World War I, no unit received further training beyond the combined arms phase of divisional training, but this would not be the case during the Second World War. Under the tutelage of the GHQ, divisions would be assembled into Corps, and Corps into Armies, during the field maneuvers of 1941.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Gabel, 18.

<sup>43</sup> Marshall, et. al., 38.

<sup>44</sup> Gabel, 18.

<sup>45</sup> Gabel, 19.

The creation of GHQ officially occurred on 26 July 1940, as the nucleus of the command staff came into being. It assumed an intermediary position between the War Department and the four field armies then in existence in the continental United States, the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> Armies, respectively. GHQ's purview extended beyond these armies as well, giving General McNair control over GHQ Aviation, the Armored Force, and all other reserves. Essentially, all training initiatives in the continental United States moved from direct control of General Marshall to his subordinates at the GHQ, freeing him to serve better in his capacity as Army Chief of Staff.<sup>46</sup>

General McNair visited a unit in training shortly after assuming command in September 1940. He remarked, "They were simply at 'drill'-blind leading the blind."<sup>47</sup> This proved especially troublesome for McNair on whose shoulders this burdensome task of training an army fell. In simulated battle situations, these men failed to protect ammunition dumps, evacuate wounded, use anti-tank guns in proper fashion, and showed a complete lack of understanding of mechanized warfare, specifically the use of motor vehicles in combat. To correct these deficiencies, the military sped up graduations at the military academies, mobilized reserve officers, and authorized small-scale military maneuvers in the Carolinas, Louisiana, and Washington for autumn 1940.<sup>48</sup> General Marshall's goal was to "enlarge and convert the army into a force that could successfully challenge the mobility and mechanization of the German army. . . ."<sup>49</sup> He possessed a keen awareness, knowing that the value of maneuvers rested with their ability to "sharpen the skills of the individual soldier, add interest and drama to training, put officers under intense pressure, give good units a chance to flaunt their excellence and expose

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<sup>46</sup> Greenfield, et. al., 6.

<sup>47</sup> Kennedy, 164.

<sup>48</sup> Kennedy, 164.

<sup>49</sup> Carlo D'Este, *Patton: A Genius for War*, (New York: HarperCollins, 1995), 393.

bad units to merciless scrutiny.”<sup>50</sup> These maneuvers would provide numerous opportunities for critique and evaluation of all aspects of military operations.

Initially, GHQ separated the command of corps areas from those of the four field armies, but commanders soon realized this to be folly. General McNair emphasized the necessity for realism in training that included the organization of the army. Rather than allowing corps to train independently inside the United States, they were placed in a hierarchy similar to those that would govern theaters of operations overseas. According to McNair, “The establishment of GHQ amounts in principle to superimposing a theater of operations on the Zone of Interior.”<sup>51</sup> Units were organized, trained, and administered in the proper military hierarchy from the Army level downwards. Under this plan army officers and soldiers alike received the opportunity to function in peacetime as they would in war. Units were to function as they would in the field and execute their training with the utmost realism possible.<sup>52</sup>

McNair’s task as Commander of the GHQ required that he facilitate the training of this new army, “GHQ had the twofold task of completing the imperfect training of the forces in being and at the same time of using such experience and military skill as these had to train for imminent war the mass of units and fresh recruits that were then being mobilized.”<sup>53</sup> GHQ assumed the task of training all tactical units within the U.S. Army and the responsibility to “prepare units to take the field on short notice at existing strength, ready to function effectively in combat.”<sup>54</sup> This would prove an incredibly difficult task to execute, considering that the Army

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<sup>50</sup> Perret, 39.

<sup>51</sup> Greenfield, et. al., 7.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid*, 7.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid*, 10.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*, 33.

only possessed three functional infantry divisions at half strength, and six other skeletal divisions.<sup>55</sup>

General McNair emphasized deficiencies to General Marshall shortly after taking command of GHQ. His role required him to take over “direct supervision of the huge task of organizing and training the field forces within the continental United States.”<sup>56</sup> According to McNair, initial army maneuvers staged in 1940 indicated that the Army suffered from a plethora of problems. The major problems observed during the maneuvers included: “deficient training of small units and minor tactics. . .faulty employment of the infantry division and of its combat teams. . .failure fully to appreciate the purpose of motor vehicles and exploit their capabilities. . . and inadequate reconnaissance and lack of contact between adjacent units.”<sup>57</sup> According to Army Chief of Staff George C. Marshall, “Basic training culminates in field maneuvers designed to weld individuals into seasoned, efficient combat teams and to develop the command leadership and staff technique necessary for the handling of large units on the modern battlefield.”<sup>58</sup> This culminating experience would begin for many men in the field exercises of 1941.

GHQ policy dictated that units be tested as soon as they completed training. These “tests” took the form of maneuvers directed by higher headquarters at the Corps and Army level. Through these exercises, McNair and the staff at GHQ hoped to uncover and correct remaining deficiencies in the army before it entered the war. One of the first organized activities took place at Monterey Bay in California, with the U.S. 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry “Big Red One” Division staging an amphibious assault on the California coast. It was hoped that the field actions would expose the rampant deficiencies that plagued the new army. One of the largest deficiencies, McNair noted,

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<sup>55</sup> Gabel, 8.

<sup>56</sup> Greenfield, et. al., 5.

<sup>57</sup> Greenfield, et. al., 33.

<sup>58</sup> Marshall, et. al., 38.

rested with the officer corps. McNair fully briefed his officers on the most modern tactics and doctrines, but many proved unable to use the information in the field. In addition to providing a proving ground for equipment, upcoming GHQ Maneuvers, such as those in Tennessee, would provide a test for the officer corps as well.<sup>59</sup>

The problem of ineffective leadership was so pervasive that General Benjamin Lear even deemed the cleansing of the officer corps to be of greater importance than the lack of modern weaponry. General Lear, Commander of the US 2<sup>nd</sup> Army in Tennessee, stated, “If and when we are drawn into war, the people of the United States will insist that the leadership of their sons in battle be entrusted only to the most competent commanders of all ranks that we can obtain.”<sup>60</sup> Army Chief of Staff George C. Marshall emphasized this point in his commencement address to the 1941 graduating Class of William and Mary, stating that an officer’s worth depends upon his teaching ability, and that “our greatest problem of preparation involves the matter of teaching.”<sup>61</sup> Educating the officers how best to command would be a moot point if they could not pass on the information to the men under their respective commands.

General McNair wanted to create the best army the United States had ever seen and set forth an incredibly detailed training program for achieving this goal. McNair’s plan called for a rigid period of training to create a battle ready force capable of protecting the United States. Training would begin at the individual level, with soldiers studying combat skills such as map reading and combat formations, all the while participating in close order drill to achieve both discipline and order. From the individual level, training would then progress to successively

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<sup>59</sup> Greenfield, et. al., 41-43.

<sup>60</sup> Paul Mallon, Associated Press, “Leadership of Army Will Be Cleaned Up: Fighting Field Officers of Old School Being Replaced,” *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, June 2, 1941.

<sup>61</sup> Associated Press, “Army Chief Emphasizes Instruction,” *Knoxville Journal*, June 10, 1941.

larger units up to the Corps and Army level. These steps, McNair believed, were “the foundation of military efficiency.”<sup>62</sup>

During the Great War, American units received only basic training in the United States before deployment overseas. General McNair refused to allow this to occur under his command. Under an order issued by him on 4 January 1941, units would receive an additional thirteen to sixteen weeks combined training beyond that received during basic training. Once the troops learned the basics of warfare, they would test their skills in the field while partaking in combined arms exercises. Maneuvers were to be free exercises, with commanders receiving detailed objectives that they would achieve through their own methods using all weapons and opportunities at his disposal. These exercises would be performed as army maneuvers, maneuvers that came to Tennessee in June 1941.<sup>63</sup>

General Benjamin Lear’s Second Army undertook its first maneuvers in the State of Tennessee under the purview of the GHQ. Compared to the previous exercises, the Tennessee operation proved unprecedented in scope. The Tennessee Maneuvers would not only test units individually, but also as a part of a larger whole. Each division would be required to move, coordinate, attack, and defend its position under a unified command for the first time since the Great War. The skills practiced in Tennessee, GHQ hoped, would provide the test that the Army needed to prepare for the coming conflict.

This test would be a shakedown for the new recruits and one of the first field tests for the New Army. The first troops assigned to the Tennessee Maneuvers arrived early in spring 1941, with the Fifth Infantry Division moving into Lebanon, Tennessee, just off the campus of

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<sup>62</sup> Gabel, 17.

<sup>63</sup> Greenfield, et. al., 40.

Cumberland University.<sup>64</sup> General George S. Patton Jr., commander of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored “Hell on Wheels” Division realized the benefits of training in terrain similar to that he witnessed in France during the Great War. Tennessee possessed numerous geographical analogues that resembled Western Europe in various ways. The Cumberland River presented the same crossing difficulties that American GIs would experience in 1944/45 when crossing the Rhine, Tennessee forests resembled the Belgian Ardennes where the 101<sup>st</sup> would spend the Christmas of 1944, and the gentle rolling hills resembled the French Vosges.<sup>65</sup> The terrain was not conducive to mechanized warfare, but the Germans had crushed France by fighting through similarly difficult terrain in 1940. To defeat the Axis, the U.S. Army would not only have to learn to fight, but to fight in terrain inhospitable to combat operations.

One of the first issues confronting the army as it moved into Tennessee revolved around logistics. Supply depots were opened in Murfreesboro and Chattanooga, accumulating some 505,000 rounds of .30 caliber blank rifle ammunition, 9,000 smoke anti-tank mines, 30,000 dummy anti-tank mines, 120,000 blocks of dummy T.N.T. as well as innumerable food stuffs and fuel for the mechanized divisions.<sup>66</sup> Army directives emphasized that troops not take aid from local farmers in order to make their training as accurate as possible. GHQ divided the mock campaigns into various Problems, Exercises, and Operations that would provide the structure for the maneuvers to operate.<sup>67</sup> Red and Blue forces would engage in offensive and defensive actions against one another; command assigned objectives for each army and umpires remained

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<sup>64</sup> Eugene H. Sloan, *With the Second Army: Somewhere in Tennessee*, (Murfreesboro, TN: Middle Tennessee State College, 1956), 3.

<sup>65</sup> Sloan, 3.

<sup>66</sup> Woody McMillin, *In the Presence of Soldiers: The 2nd Army Maneuvers and Other World War II Activity in Tennessee*, (Nashville: Horton Heights Press, 2010), 36-37.

<sup>67</sup> McMillin, 40.



in place to judge the results of each problem.<sup>68</sup> Following each exercise, critiques examined the flaws of the maneuvers; review sessions sought to examine the successes and failures of the exercises, and commanding officers strove to correct deficiencies within their units.<sup>69</sup> Four divisions would participate in the maneuvers: The 5<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, the 27<sup>th</sup> Division (New York National Guard), the 30<sup>th</sup> Division (Tennessee, North & South Carolina, and Georgia National Guard), and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Division.<sup>70</sup>

The Tennessee Maneuvers, conducted as corps level exercises, served as a proving ground to examine the modifications implemented by Generals Marshall and McNair. The value of these war games resided within their ability to provide a field test for evaluating officers, examining tactics and equipment in the field, and giving the men a realistic simulation of what they would experience overseas.<sup>71</sup> According to Hilliard Wood of the *Nashville Banner*, “The primary objective of the maneuvers will be to test the fighting efficiency of armored troops both with and against infantry.”<sup>72</sup> Governor Prentice Cooper, a veteran of World War I, while visiting Camp Forrest, (then the largest Army facility in the state) compared the troops in Tennessee to his compatriots in the Great War, saying that they were “not near so far advanced as the Forrest troops.”<sup>73</sup> Though the nation was still at peace, simulating war was the only way to examine how these changes affected U.S. readiness for war. The war games would test all branches of the tactical army, including the air corps, anti-aircraft units, mechanized units, artillery, infantry, engineers, cavalry, and units from the chemical warfare service.<sup>74</sup> During movement into the

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<sup>68</sup> *Ibid*, 40.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid*, 40-41.

<sup>70</sup> William N. Haskell, Commanding, *The Central Tennessee Maneuvers of the Second Army: June 1941*, (Washington, D.C.: 27<sup>th</sup> Division, 1941), 2.

<sup>71</sup> McMillin, 24.

<sup>72</sup> Hilliard Wood, “83,000 Men Head for Forrest Area To Stage War Maneuvers,” *The Nashville Banner*, May 24, 1941.

<sup>73</sup> Leslie T. Hart, “Forrest Troops Far Advanced, Cooper Says,” *The Nashville Banner*, May 15, 1941.

<sup>74</sup> Haskell, 2.

area, troops were expected to practice cover and concealment as if under threat of air attack. Training directives stated, “Never stop thinking about whether or not hostile planes can see you.”<sup>75</sup>

One of the first issues to arise, even before the maneuvers began, involved the size of the armored division. While the infantry division scaled back from its World War I size, the armored division remained large and unwieldy, mostly due to the unknowns of armored warfare. When the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Division left Fort Benning, Georgia, bound for the maneuver area, its two columns stretched for nearly sixty miles.<sup>76</sup> The 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored initially comprised of, “three tank regiments, two field artillery organizations, an infantry regiment, a reconnaissance battalion, an engineer and ordnance, a quartermaster, a medical battalion, and a signal company.”<sup>77</sup>

Apparently, Army brass tried to cling to the square division in the composition of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored. This problem of being overweight never occurred again thanks to the downsizing of the division shortly thereafter.

Phase One of the June 1941 maneuvers involved two and a half weeks of “theoretical” combat between infantry units, meaning that all troops would be on the same side and the enemy largely existing only on paper.<sup>78</sup> This first period of action took place under the watchful eye of General Frederick H. Smith and his U.S. Seventh Corps. It was during this time that the soldiers would have their first field opportunity to test what they had learned in camp and on the drilling field. According to the Army, these two weeks were designed to, “illustrate and apply the principals of command and staff functioning. Estimation of battle situation, supply and communication, principles of night movement, assembly and deployment and daylight attacks,

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<sup>75</sup> Haskell, 1.

<sup>76</sup> Donald Eugene Houston, *Hell on Wheels: the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Division*, (San Rafael, CA: Presidio Press, 1977), 63.

<sup>77</sup> Editorial, “What is the Second Armored Division?” *Nashville Banner*, May 22, 1941.

<sup>78</sup> Jerry Baulch, Associated Press, “Many Umpires Assigned to Army Units,” *Nashville Banner*, May 23, 1941.

secrecy, surprise, preparation of fire, reconnaissance, and flexibility of defensive action are typical of the problems to be studied during this phase of the maneuvers.”<sup>79</sup> General Lear’s headquarters would act in an observatory capacity during this period, judging the efficiency and success of phase one. Following the conclusion of this phase on June 13, General Lear would assume personal command and split the 2<sup>nd</sup> Army into Red and Blue forces for simulated combat operations. During this latter period, GHQ command ordered that the maneuvers should be conducted to be as real as possible, with sounds and smells created to resemble actual battlefield conditions. Commanders were ordered to use “klaxons to simulate battle noises, rattles to represent small arms fire, a suspended metal bar struck with a hammer to simulate artillery, blank ammunition, smoke puff charges, TNT blocks or appropriate substitutes, and tear gas.”<sup>80</sup> Realism, army commanders believed, would prove vital to the success of the war games.

This first exercise opened on June 2, 1941, with a theoretical Red Force attempting to divide the opposing Blue Force aiming to halt its advance. The first problem required the Blue forces to halt the advance, while the second problem called for a counteroffensive designed to throw the attacking Red Force back towards Nashville. This first action allowed troops to practice “concealment from air observation, movement of artillery and rear-guard actions which slow enemy advancement.”<sup>81</sup> Over 55,000 men moved into the woodlands of Middle Tennessee, attempting to conceal themselves from aerial observation. Every vehicle in the 5<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup>, and 30<sup>th</sup> Divisions, from 10-ton artillery prime movers, to the new Jeep, had to be hidden in the undergrowth.<sup>82</sup> The units themselves were so well hidden in the woods that signposts had to be

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<sup>79</sup> Hilliard Wood, “Plans Forming for Troop Maneuvers,” *Nashville Banner*, May 27, 1941.

<sup>80</sup> Associated Press, “Army Orders Battle Sounds, Smells Used,” *Nashville Banner*, May 28, 1941.

<sup>81</sup> McMillin, 47.

<sup>82</sup> Associated Press, “Three Army Divisions Hide from ‘Enemy’ In Tennessee,” *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, June 1, 1941.

erected for the men to locate their units.<sup>83</sup> Harold Larson of the 5<sup>th</sup> Division described the situation in a letter to home dated June 5, 1941, “I got your nice long letter Tues. boy [sic] I don’t see how I got it. I was way back in the woods in an old creek bed. I didn’t know there were such wild places outside of Michigan.”<sup>84</sup> Cover and concealment were a high priority for the men of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Army.

The first shooting phases of the exercise surprised everyone, soldier and civilian alike. The Red Forces launched a surprise attack on June 2<sup>nd</sup> with fifty armored scout cars comprising the spearhead of a southward thrust, “hypothetical Red forces were in command of Nashville, sweeping east through Cookeville, Livingston, Smyrna, and Alexandria, seeking to divide Blue forces near Murfreesboro. The 30<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Divisions (Blue Forces under the Command of Gen. Smith) moved in darkness and twilight to prepare for the advance and to defend a line running approximately from Deason in Bedford County to Big Springs in Rutherford County.”<sup>85</sup> Defending Blue Forces were so startled by machine gunners assailing their positions (with blank ammunition), that a Blue Battalion Commander and his adjutant were ruled killed in action after their position was overrun by the enemy. Knowing that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Division was to participate in the maneuvers later in the month, division commanders assumed, wrongly, that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored was preparing a massive strike against Blue Forces. Blue Command responded to the shock by placing anti-tank guns, machine gunners, and massed infantry in the streets of Shelbyville, Wartrace, and Fairfield to guard vital road junctions, much to the amusement of the local population.<sup>86</sup> Harold Larson recalled the excitement about the impending arrival of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Division in a letter dated June 11, 1941, “We are in a farmers pasture today. And are

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<sup>83</sup> Rice Yanner, Associated Press, “55,000 Men Poised for Army Test,” *Knoxville Journal*, June 2, 1941.

<sup>84</sup> Harold O. Larson, *Letters from a Soldier 1941-1945*, (Victoria, British Columbia: Trafford Publishing, 2002), 37.

<sup>85</sup> McMillin, 46-47.

<sup>86</sup> Associated Press, “Blue Army Units Sent Into Jitters As ‘Foe’ Opens Fire (With Blanks),” *Knoxville Journal*, June 3, 1941.

supposed to pull out some time this afternoon. On the 16<sup>th</sup> of this month, they are going to turn loose 800 tanks, boy will we get some excitement then!”<sup>87</sup> Though the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored had not yet arrived, anticipation of their arrival weighed on the minds of enlisted men and officers alike.

On June 4, 1941, the Blue Army launched a massive counteroffensive to counter the attack of the invading Red Army. The 55,000 men of the Second Army launched a pincer movement to envelop the opposing forces and turn their flank. According to the *Nashville Banner*, “The Fifth Division, motorized for quick movement, struck north-eastward at the enemy flank, while twenty-five miles to the east the Thirtieth Division tried to penetrate the Red front for a drive northwestward. The Twenty-seventh Division, completing the Seventh Corps defending Blue Army, meanwhile, attempted to engage the enemy in a frontal attack and lend assistance to the Fifth Division’s encirclement.”<sup>88</sup> The 30<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> Divisions succeeded in pushing back the Red forces along a 15-mile front by nightfall. The 30<sup>th</sup> advanced nearly 30 miles throughout the day, thanks to coordinated artillery and machinegun fire. The 5<sup>th</sup> Division, meanwhile repelled a counterattack by the Red Forces that had been unexpectedly reinforced with a unit of fast moving scout cars from Camp Forrest. Throughout the course of the day, troops practiced concealment from aerial observation by moving through thick woodland areas and successfully evaded detection throughout the attack.<sup>89</sup>

On June 6<sup>th</sup>, however, the fortunes of war reversed as the Blue forces were placed on the defensive during the Third Problem. The theoretical size of the Red Forces compelled the Blue Forces to retreat, as they could no longer sustain a counter attack against the overwhelming numerical superiority of their fictitious enemy. “The purpose of the action, officers said, was to

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<sup>87</sup> Larson, 39.

<sup>88</sup> Jerry T. Baulch, “55,000 Troops Launch Pincer Drive in Games,” *Nashville Banner*, June 4, 1941.

<sup>89</sup> Randolph Tucker, “Imaginary ‘Reds’ Pushed Back as Defenders Stage Swift Drive,” *Nashville Tennessean*, June 4, 1941.

give the soldiers training in coordination of units, concealment from enemy planes, and rapid movement of artillery from emplacements on the retreat gathered speed, and in harassing rear-guard actions which delays the enemy but avoids pitched battles.”<sup>90</sup> The 30<sup>th</sup> Division pulled back within eight miles of Manchester, while the 27<sup>th</sup> Division withdrew in support.

By June 9<sup>th</sup>, both Reds and Blues had gained significant experience in attacking and retreating in adverse conditions. Their skills were tested yet again during a dangerous nighttime withdrawal as the 55,000 men of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Army began their move under blackout conditions. “The retreat, which began in mid-afternoon became more difficult during the night as thousands of trucks flipped and turned over narrow dirt roads guided only by ‘blackout lights’ – dim blue light that cast no rays to betray convoys to airplane pilots.”<sup>91</sup> The movement concluded on June 13 when the forces again divided into Red and Blue units in preparation for the next Problem. Since the maneuvers began, the combat exercises had largely been theoretical, with the actual strength of the enemy being determined on paper rather than in the field. The 30<sup>th</sup> “Old Hickory” Division, 153<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Regiment, and 108<sup>th</sup> Observation Squadron would comprise one force, while the 5<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> Divisions would comprise the other. Second Army command declared, “The divisions would take turns working with and against the Second Armored ‘Hell on Wheels’ Division during the last two weeks of the games to give them training in various tactical situations.”<sup>92</sup> The second phase of the maneuvers, the arrival of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Division, would test every aspect of their training to date.

Following the conclusion of the first Phase, umpires and officers evaluated the performance of the units. One high-ranking officer, who requested that his name not be used, told the Knoxville Journal, “If the troops didn’t learn anything else during the past two weeks,

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<sup>90</sup> Associated Press, “Blue Army Tests Its Ability to Retreat as Reds Surge In,” *Nashville Tennessean*, June 6, 1941.

<sup>91</sup> Associated Press, “Soldiers Practice Retreat Fighting,” *Chattanooga Daily Times*, June 9, 1941.

<sup>92</sup> Associated Press, “Army Will Start Two-Sided Games,” *Chattanooga Daily Times*, June 11, 1941.

they were impressed with the importance of hiding from the enemy. When the maneuvers first started, they would jam the highways so that one well-placed shell would have killed hundreds in actual warfare. They would park their vehicles in the open, and wouldn't bother to put their tents under cover nor camouflage their artillery pieces." He continued, "But as time went on and these mistakes were corrected as they were found, it became more and more difficult to spot the troops."<sup>93</sup>

These first two weeks were also important as a "field test of such of the Army's new equipment as available and the ability of the men to endure long hours and bruising sweaty teamwork."<sup>94</sup> While the umpires and officers debated the outcome, they began to prepare for their next task: defeating General George Patton and his "Hell on Wheels" Division.<sup>95</sup> The exact time of the arrival of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored was a strict secret, so as to test the ability of the infantry commanders to counter a surprise armored attack.

Patton understood that the Tennessee Maneuvers would prove crucial to the development of U.S. wartime strategy and tactics. He stated, "I want to bring to the attention of every officer here the professional significance which will attach to the success or failure of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Division in the Tennessee Maneuvers . . . There are a large number of officers, some of them in high places in our country, who through lack of knowledge as to the capability of an armored division are opposed to them. . . ."<sup>96</sup> He went further, "Think of this as war . . . that is the only chance, men, that you are going to have to practice. The next time, maybe, there will be no umpires, and the bullets will be very real."<sup>97</sup> The second half of the June 1941 operation would

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<sup>93</sup> Associated Press, "War Games Teach Army How to Hide," *Knoxville Journal*, June 13, 1941.

<sup>94</sup> Associated Press, "'War of Tennessee' Will Start Monday: 77,000 Men to Participate in Maneuvers," *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, June 1, 1941.

<sup>95</sup> McMillin, 51.

<sup>96</sup> McMillin, 51.

<sup>97</sup> D'Este, 394.

prove to the army that armor must play a pivotal role in U.S. war strategy. It also proved, however, that the infantry still had much to learn in regards to combating armor in the field.

Patton's 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Division entered the maneuver area on June 15, 1941, and began their offensive the next day. According to an AP report, "This is expected to give the Army a picture--as true as it can be sketched short of war itself--of how hard and deceptively an armored division can hit and the efficiency of present anti-tank defense."<sup>98</sup> The first problem called for friendly Red Forces to hold a line against a Blue Force attack, while the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Division moved against the Blue forces' flanks. Patton's troops attacked from four directions, halting the Blue advance and forcing them into a defensive posture. Armored forces attacked the weak points and exploited breakthroughs, rapidly slashing through rear areas to great success. Tankers used Nathan Bedford Forrest's old motto, "Get 'em skerred and keep 'em skerred."<sup>99</sup> According to Patton, "surprise and fear were armor's greatest assets."<sup>100</sup>

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored's first attack, however, proved extremely costly. Though it succeeded in achieving its objectives, Patton's tankers bloodied themselves against heavily entrenched anti-tank positions established by their infantry opponents.<sup>101</sup> His tanks mistakenly rushed the positions, suffering numerous "casualties" as declared by the officiating umpires. Harold Larson wrote of his unit's experience going up against Patton's tanks on June 21, 1941, "We went up in front of the infantry [sic], and were dropped [sic] off them with our 75mm gun on the bend of a road. So when tanks came around [sic] the corner we could see them. We had waited about 20 min or so when here they came there must have been about 50 tanks & armored cars. We got 3

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<sup>98</sup> Rice Yanner, Associated Press, "55,000 Men Poised for Army Test," *Knoxville Journal*, June 2, 1941.

<sup>99</sup> Houston, 65

<sup>100</sup> Houston, 65.

<sup>101</sup> D'Este, 394.



tanks & 2 armored cars then the umpire ruled [sic] us out & we were supposed to be dead.”<sup>102</sup> Colonel Marion S. French, Chief Umpire of the maneuvers, stated that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Division had not failed, but that it had merely, “bitten off more than it could chew in calculating such a quick and decisive end to its enemy.”<sup>103</sup> Though they eventually succeeded in taking the position, rulings from the umpires proved unfavorable. Concentrated use of anti-tank guns enabled infantry units to possess the firepower necessary to counter any armored thrust that dared attack their strongpoints. Only by outflanking the less mobile infantry could the armored units manage to rout their opponents. General Lear, providing a statement the following day, praised the defending troops who had opposed Patton. He stated, “I am convinced that with the use of favorable ground features, an intelligence system which will permit all elements of the defending forces to receive immediate and complete warning of an approaching armored force, and with suitable weapons to overcome light and medium tanks, our forces the ‘Blues’ will be able to give a decidedly fine account of themselves frequently completely breaking up such an attack.”<sup>104</sup> He went on to praise the tenacity of the armored attack but stressed that there was still much to be learned.

The next exercise tested the ability of armor to turn the tide of battle. Now a part of the Blue forces, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Division sought to break a stalemate between the Blue and Red Forces. On June 20<sup>th</sup>, the 67<sup>th</sup> Armored Regiment attacked through the friendly 30<sup>th</sup> Infantry “Old Hickory” Division, a Tennessee National Guard unit, while the remainder of the unit conducted a three-pronged advance towards the city of Manchester. From his staff car, Patton urged his

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<sup>102</sup> Larson, 45.

<sup>103</sup> Alex Radin, “2<sup>d</sup> Armored Division Fails to Knock Out Foe: Defending “Blue” Forces Are Saved by the Bell When Battle is Ended-Anti-Tank Guns Slow Mechanized Unit Advance,” *Chattanooga Daily Times*, June 18, 1941.

<sup>104</sup> Alex Radin, “2<sup>d</sup> Armored Division Fails to Knock Out Battle Foe,” *Chattanooga Daily Times*, June 18, 1941.

troops on and ended the battle less than four hours after having entered the fray.<sup>105</sup> Soon thereafter, the third exercise provided a further test for what Patton dubbed the “hold em’ in the nose and kick em’ in the ass” approach. Red forces would attempt to hold the Blue forces on a line from Hillsboro to Tullahoma. GHQ estimated that this exercise would require twenty-four hours to complete; however, Patton’s tanks slashed through the enemy lines so quickly, that the umpires declared the exercise complete in a little less than three hours.<sup>106</sup>

The results of the exercises proved the viability of armored and infantry tactics while exposing critical flaws that would prove fatal overseas. According to the chief umpire, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Division’s actions “were rapid, coordinated, and decisively effective.”<sup>107</sup> Patton, however, was not so enthusiastic, noting, “It was folly to think of charging antitank guns with tanks with the intention of crushing them beneath their tracks.”<sup>108</sup> Patton immediately issued new directives for his men. Tanks would no longer attack enemy emplacements directly; instead, they would exit roads within 1,000 yards of gun emplacements, outflank them, and attack from behind. The involvement of armor changed the outcome of battles, “each exercise ended the same day that the division entered it, usually twelve to twenty-four hours before the problem was scheduled to end.”<sup>109</sup> The armored forces of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Division thoroughly thrashed its infantry opponents in the closing days of the maneuvers, clearly evidencing the changes necessary to protect infantry divisions from destruction in real warfare.

Thanks to their experiences in the field, infantrymen and their commanders learned valuable lessons that would be vital to the success of the war effort. Their units learned valuable lessons, most notably how to combat armored thrusts effectively. When questioned by the press

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<sup>105</sup> Houston, 66-67.

<sup>106</sup> Houston, 68.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>108</sup> Houston, 68.

<sup>109</sup> Houston, 71.

during the early stages of the maneuvers, Commanding General Benjamin Lear remarked, “We don’t profess to have a fully trained combat force in the field here. When all the equipment is ready, the men will be. Our equipment is incomplete, but I have every confidence that the nation will get it to the field armies as rapidly as possible. We have enough for training purposes, but not enough to fight with.”<sup>110</sup> The information learned through the conducting of the maneuvers would prove vital in the coming war.

Infantry units learned valuable lessons that would protect American troops throughout the war. German armored advances destroyed the British and French armies in the field with astonishing rapidity in the summer of 1940, but the lessons learned in Tennessee lessened the likelihood that the U.S. Army would suffer the same ignominious defeat. Through concentrated use of anti-tank weaponry and sound tactical decisions in the field, infantry units could halt an armored thrust. Opponents to this would argue that the Battle of Kasserine Pass proved that American units were still not up to par with their opponents; however, this argument proves unsound. When the American Army engaged the Germans in Tunisia, a near total rout ensued. The defeat was not due to the U.S. Army’s strategy and tactics; however, but due instead to the lack of implementation thereof. Historian John T. Hoffman claims in his work *History of Innovation: U.S. Army Adaptation in War and Peace*, the US 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division that participated at Kasserine largely consisted of replacement troops, having received less than five months of hurried training and almost no unit exercises.<sup>111</sup> The troops who had participated in the maneuvers back in the states performed far better than their fellow troops and were called upon to complete the task that the replacements could not.

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<sup>110</sup> Rice Yahner, Associated Press, “New U.S. Troops To Be World’s Greatest Fighters, Says General,” *Knoxville Journal*, June 8, 1941.

<sup>111</sup> John T. Hoffman, ed., *History of Innovation: U.S. Army Adaptation in War and Peace*, (Washington D.C.: Center of Military History United States Army, 2009), 57.

Without the modernization efforts of men like MacArthur, Craig, and Marshall, the U.S. Army would have been woefully ill equipped and under-strength to fight the Second World War. The U.S. Army of 1939 could never have defeated the forces of the Axis in open battle, even with the improved equipment and larger army outlined by the PMP. The vital link between planning and implementation came during the Army Maneuvers of 1941. In Tennessee, the thrashing that Patton unleashed on the infantry forced the Army to reevaluate and alter its tactics in the field. Infantry units discovered methods for defeating armored thrusts, and mistakes made by both sides were corrected before American units reached foreign soil.

## CHAPTER 3

### “THE DAMN CITY HALL WAS NOT ON THE MAP”

During the second phase of the June 1941 Tennessee Maneuvers, General George S. Patton Jr.'s 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored “Hell on Wheels” Division rumbled through the backroads of Tennessee, seeking to outflank the opposing “Red” forces of General Frederick H. Smith’s VII Corps. Patton’s famous “hold ‘em by the nose and kick ‘em in the pants”<sup>112</sup> tactics that would win him fame in the European campaigns were put to the test in the rolling hills of the Volunteer State. While the US 5<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division along with the 153<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Regiment held Smith’s VII Corps at the front, Patton’s 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored would swarm the flanks and defeat the enemy with an armored thrust from the city of Cookeville.<sup>113</sup> During this operation through quiet Tennessee towns, one of Patton’s tanks ran into trouble. Whilst trying to avoid crushing a farmer’s truck in the town of Bell Buckle, the tank driver took evasive action, leading to the creation of an impromptu drive through City Hall. When asked by the press, Patton placed no blame on his tank commander, saying, “the damn city hall was not on the map!”<sup>114</sup> The army soon discovered that the new army going through its paces in Tennessee proved to be a massive improvement from the derelict fighting force it replaced; however, it still required further modifications before it could challenge Axis forces in Europe and Asia.

As the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Army Maneuvers drew to a close, commanders began to prepare for the beginning of the second half of the exercises. From the outset of the maneuvers on June 2<sup>nd</sup>, news of George S. Patton’s 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored “Hell on Wheels” Division’s arrival tugged at the minds of infantry commanders already present in the midstate. Every whisper of a

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<sup>112</sup> Woody McMillin, *In the Presence of Soldiers: The 2nd Army Maneuvers and Other World War II Activity in Tennessee*, (Nashville: Horton Heights Press, 2010), 54-55.

<sup>113</sup> McMillin, 55.

<sup>114</sup> McMillin, 55.

breakthrough, rapid advance, or rapid retreat elicited fears of the arrival of Patton's tankers. For the first time in its martial history, the United States fielded a full armored division in the field. The arrival of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored "Hell on Wheels" Division brought a taste of the European War to the Tennessee countryside. The soldiers learned to fight the same sort of war that ravaged Europe in 1939 and 1940, and the lessons learned in Tennessee ultimately helped bring the U.S. Army up to par with its rival nations in World War II. The war games confirmed to army commanders that armored warfare would prove decisive in the coming war, showed some army commanders were unfit for command, and revealed the outdated tactics of World War I would not lead to success in the coming conflict.

The war came to Tennessee due in part to its unique geography, as well as concerted efforts from state politicians and General Patton. In 1937, Governor Prentice Cooper surveyed the situation in Europe in person and upon his return set about improving Tennessee's infrastructure for a possible outbreak of hostilities by constructing a number of new armories and weapons depots to supply the Army in a time of war.<sup>115</sup> With infrastructure in place, and suitable military installations throughout the state, Tennessee became the site of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Army Maneuvers in June 1941.<sup>116</sup> George Patton also spent some of his formative years at his grandmother's home in Watertown and was familiar with the local terrain.<sup>117</sup> Patton's intimate knowledge of the Western Front in World War I and the similar topography of the Volunteer State also contributed greatly to Tennessee receiving the 2<sup>nd</sup> Army Maneuvers.

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<sup>115</sup> George Butler, *The Military March of Time in Tennessee*, (Nashville, TN: Office of the Adjutant General, 1944), 24.

<sup>116</sup> <http://www.tennessee.gov/tsla/history/guides/guide11.htm> (accessed: November 11, 2012)

<sup>117</sup> G. Frank Burns, Kelly Sergio, and Rex Bennett. "Somewhere in Tennessee: The Cumberland in Wartime, 1940-1947." In *Rural Life and Culture in the Upper Cumberland*, edited by Michael E. Birdwell, and W. Calvin Dickinson, 227-245. (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2004), 229.

Tennessee possessed numerous features with analogues similar to that of Western Europe. The winding Cumberland River and its numerous tributaries presented similar difficulties in crossing that would plague the Allies attempting to traverse the mighty Rhine in 1944. By practicing crossings of the Cumberland River, the Army Corps of Engineers gained valuable experience that they put to use in crossing the Rhine.<sup>118</sup> The rolling hills and thick forests of the state also provided a similar obstacle that would present itself in Western Europe. When the Nazis destroyed the French and British Armies in the field, they used rapid armored thrusts through the heavily forested Ardennes region of Eastern Belgium, traversing a difficult terrain considered unsuitable for armored operations by the Allies. Tennessee possessed such a terrain, and if the American Army could duplicate the achievements of the German armored thrusts, it could use these same maneuvers against them in the field.<sup>119</sup>

In addition to operational considerations, the Tennessee Maneuvers would also provide a valuable testing tool in the evaluation of equipment, officers, tactics, and training programs. Earlier maneuvers suffered from a deplorable lack of modern equipment, with most weapons dating from the First World War, and precious few modern weapons available to troops.<sup>120</sup> A few pieces of experimental prototypes were available to the troops in Tennessee, reflecting the efforts of the Army in modernizing its forces; however, numerous shortages and supply issues still plagued these maneuvers.<sup>121</sup> Reflecting the focus on speed and maneuver, one of the newest items in the Army's arsenal received its first field test in Tennessee. Unsure of what to call this new contraption, the local press dubbed it "The Blitz Buggy," although it became known as the

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<sup>118</sup> Donald Eugene Houston, *Hell on Wheels: the 2d Armored Division*, (San Rafael, CA: Presidio Press, 1975), 61.

<sup>119</sup> Houston, 68.

<sup>120</sup> Eric M. Hammel, *How America Saved the World: the Untold Story of U.S. Preparedness between the World Wars*, (Minneapolis, MN: Zenith Press, 2009), 185.

<sup>121</sup> Allan R. Millett and Peter Maslowski, *For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States of America*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994), 399

Jeep.<sup>122</sup> Furthermore, this focus on mobility manifested itself in the debate between the infantry and cavalry schools of the military regarding the use of armor. During the course of the Tennessee Maneuvers, the problems encountered clarified the problems inherent in Army doctrines, making the war games of 1941 a vital step in American preparation for war.

During the winter of 1939/1940, it appeared as though the military would have plenty of time to modernize, as the “Phony War” stabilized the situation in Europe. According to General Marshall, “Poland had been conquered but the situation in Western Europe was to all intents stabilized. There was a feeling by many that the field fortifications established in France and Belgium furnished ample security to those nations. Requests for further increases in the armed forces of the United States were regarded in many quarters as mere warmongering.”<sup>123</sup> Following the German Blitz in the spring of 1940, public opinion reversed completely,

Following the German annihilation of the British and French forces in June 1940, the U.S. Congress moved immediately towards massive expansion of the U.S. Military.<sup>124</sup> The crushing blow dealt against the Low Countries and France in 1940 emphasized the need for this move. German panzers slashed through the armies of Britain and France, doing what the forces of the Kaiser had been unable to do in four years in a little under thirty days. The Germans used armor to an effect previously unseen in the annals of warfare. “Spearheading Germany’s seemingly invincible military machine was her panzer divisions. These were powerful, mobile formations that exemplified the principles of speed, surprise, and shock. Henceforth, any nation with pretensions of military greatness must come to terms with mechanization-the large-scale

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<sup>122</sup> Editorial, “Tennesseans Ride ‘Blitz Buggy,’” *Nashville Banner*, June 11, 1941.

<sup>123</sup> George C. Marshall, Henry H. Arnold, and Ernest J. King, *The War Reports of General of the Army George C. Marshall, General of the Army Henry H. Arnold, and Fleet Admiral Earnest J. King*, (Philadelphia and New York: J.P. Lippincott Company, 1947), 19-20.

<sup>124</sup> Christopher R. Gabel, *The U.S. Army GHQ Maneuvers of 1941*, (Washington D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1992), 12.



employment of armored fighting vehicles.”<sup>125</sup> The rapid defeat of the free countries in Europe alarmed many in Washington. This further emphasized the need to move forward with a program to modernize the nation’s military. “On May 16, 1940, in a special message to Congress, the President recommended the appropriation of approximately \$1,000,000,000, of that amount \$732,000,000, was for equipment and to increase the Army by 28,000 men. . .On May 31, the President recommended an additional appropriation of approximately \$1,000,000,000.”<sup>126</sup> During this time, the Congress authorized federalizing the National Guard to help bolster the ranks of the regular army. Troops began to pour in to Army camps across the nation, including several camps in the State of Tennessee.

With troops swarming into the nation’s military posts, the army faced another crisis of epic proportions. The military equipment necessary to fight the coming war practically did not exist. “Virtually every type of equipment was obsolete, or scarce, or both. Guardsmen reported to their encampments with World War I tents, webbing, shoes, and blankets in various stages of decay. . .A shocked public read about trucks with “TANK” painted on the sides, Springfield rifles labeled “.50 CALIBRE,” and simulated anti-tank guns constructed of drainpipe.”<sup>127</sup> With troops ill equipped to defend the nation, armed with equipment to fight the Kaiser, the United States stood on the precipice of annihilation if war were to come to its shores. To correct the deficiencies in training, George Marshall assigned General Leslie McNair to the post of Chief of Staff, Army General Headquarters (GHQ).<sup>128</sup> General McNair faced innumerable difficulties in coordinating the training operations of this new army, with one of the largest and most difficult being the implementation of a standardized, army-wide, training program. “Training had

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<sup>125</sup> Gabel, 22.

<sup>126</sup> Marshall, et. al., 20.

<sup>127</sup> Gabel, 14.

<sup>128</sup> Gabel, 14-15.

previously been the province of field army commanders. . . McNair, as a staff officer, had only indirect authority over the lieutenant generals who commanded the field armies.”<sup>129</sup>

The daunting obstacles facing McNair never slowed him down, and his policies constructed a military virtually from nothing. According to General Mark Clark, “At GHQ the small staff immediately became busy preparing programs that would enable all units to conduct their training along similar lines (as the earlier Michigan 2<sup>nd</sup> Army Maneuvers). Our goal, of course, was to integrate and speed up training in order to develop an army for combat in the shortest possible time.”<sup>130</sup> McNair’s training started with “the individual soldier, progressed to integrating individuals into small units, and then turned to training successively larger units uniformly, step by step.”<sup>131</sup> With the army rapidly expanding, McNair’s training programs would prove vital in readying the army for war. As commander of the GHQ, McNair would oversee the conduct of all combat maneuvers within the United States, including the Tennessee Maneuvers of 1941.

One of the vital elements of the GHQ mobilization and training program centered on the United States’ fledgling Armored Force. Prior to the outbreak of the Second World War, the United States possessed no full armored divisions whatsoever and only a handful of ramshackle mechanized brigades. At the end of the Great War, the Armored Corps found itself at odds with the old infantry and cavalry officers, much to the chagrin of its champions, the young George S. Patton Jr. and Dwight Eisenhower.<sup>132</sup> According to Geoffrey Perret, “Dwight Eisenhower and George S. Patton Jr. nearly wrecked their careers on the rock of high-ranking displeasure.”<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Gabel, 15.

<sup>130</sup> Mark Clark, *Calculated Risk*, (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1950), 13.

<sup>131</sup> Gabel, 17.

<sup>132</sup> Dwight Eisenhower, *At Ease: Stories I Tell to Friends*, (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1967), 173.

<sup>133</sup> Geoffrey Perret, *There’s a War to Be Won: The United States Army in World War II*, (New York: Random House, 1991), 39.

Dwight Eisenhower, who would eventually become Supreme Allied Commander in World War II, recalled in his memoirs, “I was told that my ideas were not only wrong but dangerous and that henceforth I would keep them to myself. Particularly, I was not to publish anything incompatible with solid infantry doctrine. If I did, I would be hauled before a court-martial.”<sup>134</sup> Patton lamented the destruction of his beloved Tank Corps and withdrew back to his cavalry branch.<sup>135</sup> Although armor proved its worth in the waning days of World War I, the intransigence of the General Staff stymied development of armor and armored tactics for the next two decades.

During the interwar years, heated disputes between the infantry and cavalry branches resulted in a stagnation in the development of American armor and armored tactics. Both branches desired that armor fall under their purview. The 1920 National Defense Act placed tanks exclusively under the control of the infantry, removing their wartime independence. This comprised one of the factors that drove cavalrymen like Patton out of the Tank Corps. “To the infantry generals who ran the Army, tanks and tank believers were upstarts. The only good tank was one that rumbled along at two or three miles an hour and supported the infantry.”<sup>136</sup> The victorious Allies all fell into the same slump, entrusting the control of armor to their infantry branches. Marshal Petain stated, “Infantry will in fifty years’ time perhaps be carried in tanks, but for the present the tank is an infantry arm working in the midst of infantry.”<sup>137</sup> General Pershing testified before the House Committee on Military Affairs in 1919 stating, “The Tank Corps should not be a large organization; only of sufficient numbers, I should say, to carry on investigations and conduct training with the infantry, and I would place it under the infantry as

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<sup>134</sup> Eisenhower, 173.

<sup>135</sup> Martin Blumenson, *The Patton Papers: 1885-1940*, (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1972), 741

<sup>136</sup> Perret, 40.

<sup>137</sup> Mildred Gillie, *Forging the Thunderbolt: A History of the Development of the Armored Force*, (Harrisburg, PA: Military Service Publishing Company, 1947), 18-19.

an adjunct of that arm.”<sup>138</sup> This misguided doctrine found itself pervasive amongst the Allied Powers of the Great War but not so with the defeated Germans. “The irony of the defeat of Germany was that her weakness became her strength. By the Treaty of Versailles, Germany was forbidden to manufacture tanks. Thus while the Allies were encumbered with thousands of obsolete tanks. . .the Germans were free to evolve tank tactics to suit their purposes and later to build the tanks to fit them.”<sup>139</sup>

American armored development languished during the 1920s until the creation of the Experimental Mechanized Force at Camp Meade in July, 1928. “While the official infantry position was that tanks were auxiliary weapons to aid the foot soldiers’ advance, a few people foresaw mobile war. These spokesmen argued that tanks would be a principal weapon used with supporting infantry, artillery and engineers.”<sup>140</sup> These visionaries eventually created a force dubbed the “Gasoline Brigade” by the press. This unit used equipment leftover from World War I, but following numerous mechanical breakdowns during an attempted maneuver in September 1928 the unit hastily disbanded. Despite its impressive failure, this debacle had not been entirely in vain. The experiment persuaded the army to reconsider the concept of armor. The great leap for American armor came not from George S. Patton or Dwight Eisenhower, but from Adna Romanza Chaffee, later dubbed Father of the Armored Force. As a member of the Army Training Section, Chaffee recognized the need for a modern mechanized force. He rejected the infantry idea of tying the tank to slow moving infantry and believed that fast moving, light tanks should be an independent arm. Chaffee submitted his proposal in writing on December 5, 1928, and declared to his wife, “Well, today I turned in a paper at the War Department. When I come

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<sup>138</sup> Houston, 4-5.

<sup>139</sup> Gillie, 19.

<sup>140</sup> Houston, 6.

back, they'll either meet me with a brass band, or St. Elizabeth's funny wagon."<sup>141</sup> As fate would have it, the War Department chose the former route, and Chaffee received command of the new Mechanized Force.

The force under Chaffee's command would be an experiment, much like the "Gasoline Brigade," but with far different results. According to Chaffee, the Armored Force must "operate as a combined arms force designed for rapid offensive operations, especially against enemy flanks. Rather than support infantry units in breaching prepared positions, armored units would exploit such penetrations, moving decisively to crush units in the enemy rear through shock, mobility, and firepower."<sup>142</sup> As the country sank into the Great Depression, however, funding for this project soon evaporated. Concerted attempts by the infantry to reassert control over the unit also chipped away at the independence of the Mechanized Force. The cooperation between branches in developing the unit had long since dried up along with its funding. The infantry regarded the role and mission of the force as distinctly "un-infantryish," with the force resembling cavalry in character.<sup>143</sup> Infantry officers claimed jurisdiction over the force under the National Defense Act of 1920 and disliked seeing their resources appropriated by any other arm.

Chaffee recognized the threat to his force, as well as that of the cavalry. According to Mildred Gillie, Chaffee realized, "Under the strictures of depression economies in the War Department budget, he foresaw its eventual disbandment through lack of funds, and the return of the tanks to infantry control."<sup>144</sup> He therefore proposed that control of the Mechanized Force, if it must be under the control of one branch, fall under the control of the cavalry with whom it shared common philosophies. General MacArthur agreed and assigned the Mechanized Force to

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<sup>141</sup> Gillie, 31.

<sup>142</sup> Jon T. Hoffman, ed. *A History of Innovation: U.S. Army Adaptation in War and Peace*. (Washington D.C.: Center of Military History, 2009), 55.

<sup>143</sup> Gillie, 44.

<sup>144</sup> Gillie, 45.

the Cavalry Branch. Use of the tank experienced similar difficulties within the cavalry that it had experienced under the infantry. Cavalry officers, like George S. Patton, held to a belief that the horse cavalry and mechanized force would work side by side. The years since World War I had seen Patton revert to his cavalry mindset, and in 1934 he stated that in his opinion, operations such as the use of mechanized cavalry independently, “will be the exception rather than the rule and that, in general, mechanized and horse cavalry will operate together.”<sup>145</sup> Earlier in 1927, however, Patton stated somewhat more favorably, “Tanks are in reality a version of heavy cavalry, as that arm was first understood by the first Napoleon. When satisfactory machines are available, they should be formed into a separate corps and used . . . for the delivery of the final shock in some great battle.”<sup>146</sup> Patton’s views largely stemmed from the lack of reliable machinery. Patton justified his beliefs by analyzing the infantry/tank combination as having failed due to a difference in pace, with cavalry being able to match the speed of armor.

The attitude of the infantry and horse cavalry advocates proved too much for Chaffee to handle. He informed his fellow officers, “They seemed blind to the possibilities of a mechanized cavalry, I believe that mechanization and horses will not greatly mix within the cavalry divisions, and I believe we have a place for mechanized cavalry brigades, and that they must develop each along its own line to carry out the mobile mission of the army.”<sup>147</sup> Chaffee could not understand why the men of the infantry clung to the antiquated belief that tanks were merely blunt objects that could be used to bash the enemy into submission. Furthermore, he could not understand why the cavalry would not abandon the horse to the clearly superior mechanized unit. For Chaffee, independence could provide the only solution to this conundrum.

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<sup>145</sup> Gillie, 65.

<sup>146</sup> Martin Blumenson, *The Patton Papers: 1885-1940*, (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1972), 833-834.

<sup>147</sup> Gillie, 68.

The debate endured for the remainder of the decade as the infantry and cavalry battled back and forth. Each branch attempted to secure control over rights to the military's limited supply of armor. Both arms, however, secured the opportunity to develop armor according to their own needs. According to 2d Armored Division historian and veteran Donald Houston, "Cavalry mechanization developed along lines that increased mobility, beyond that of horse cavalry. The great value of mechanized cavalry, as seen by the War Department, was its ability to conduct distant reconnaissance and create initial successes which could form the basis for further action by high commands."<sup>148</sup> In regards to the infantry, "mechanization moved along lines that would increase the foot soldiers ability to overcome strongly organized resistance . . . Most tanks were to be used at that portion of the front where the decisive effort was to be made."<sup>149</sup> Compared to the tactics that the Germans would use to great success in conquering Europe, American mechanized cavalry units were remarkably similar. During a visit by Col. Adolph von Schnell of the German Wehrmacht in 1938, von Schnell remarked that American light tanks were faster and more powerful than any in Europe.<sup>150</sup> Both von Schnell and Chaffee realized that combined arms offensives would be required to win the war. When Germany rolled over Poland in 1939, American armor advocates were sure they had it right.

As the Second World War neared, General Marshall devised a method to test which branch used armor more effectively. Marshall ordered the infantry's tankers to fight a mock battle against Chaffee's mechanized cavalry in the swamps of Louisiana in the spring of 1940. Chaffee's outnumbered force used mobility and superior maneuver to thrash the infantry tanks. On July 10, 1940, less than three months after this episode, General Marshall created the independent Armored Force that Chaffee had advocated for so long, with none other than Adna

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<sup>148</sup> Houston, 24.

<sup>149</sup> Houston, 25.

<sup>150</sup> Houston, 28.

Chaffee himself as its commanding officer.<sup>151</sup> The force would initially comprise two armored divisions, with George S. Patton Jr., having been an umpire in the Louisiana exercise, eventually commanding one of them. The Armored Force had its champion in Adna Chaffee and a devoted pupil in George S. Patton.<sup>152</sup> Though the cavalry minded officers won round one, the infantry would seek revenge in the upcoming Tennessee Maneuvers of June 1941.

Even before the summer 1940 maneuvers, during an informal conference in the basement of a high school in Alexandria, Louisiana on May 25, 1940, a meeting of Brigadier General Adna Chaffee, Assistant War Department Chief of Staff Frank M. Andrews, Bruce Magruder, and Col. George S. Patton Jr. decided that, “an armored force was needed at once.”<sup>153</sup> They went further, “the far ranging discussion concluded that the present infantry-cavalry mechanization concept was inadequate, that time to correct the situation was short and that tankers had so far received second-class treatment.”<sup>154</sup> Chaffee and Andrews took that decision to Washington, and secured the creation of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Divisions, with the 1<sup>st</sup> being stationed at Fort Knox under Magruder, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> stationed at Fort Benning under Brigadier General Charles Scott. Chaffee would assume command of the I Armored Corps and overall command of the independent Armored Force.<sup>155</sup>

At the outset, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored consisted of 99 officers, and 2,202 enlisted men, with the ultimate goal of achieving a complement around 9,389 enlisted personnel with 530 officers commanding.<sup>156</sup> The 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Division initially fell under the command of Brigadier General

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<sup>151</sup> Steven L. Ossad and Don R. Marsh, *Major General Maurice Rose: World War II's Greatest Forgotten Commander*, (New York: Taylor Trade Publishing, 2003), 119.

<sup>152</sup> Perret, 40-41.

<sup>153</sup> Houston, 34.

<sup>154</sup> Houston, 34.

<sup>155</sup> S.L.A. Marshall, “How is the Army organized to fight the war?” In *America Organizes to Win the War*, edited by Erling M. Hunt, (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1942), 88.

<sup>156</sup> Houston, 35.



Charles Scott. Scott, an old cavalryman, believed that armor functioned essentially like cavalry. According to Scott, “An armored division finds weak spots in enemy defenses, penetrates to the rear and then spreads out to cut communications and supply lines . . . A standard operating procedure, attempting to cover every situation that an enemy or terrain could present, should not be developed. To do so, Scott thought, would result in mental rigidity.”<sup>157</sup> Scott proved himself as the kind of cavalryman Chaffee liked; he accepted the doctrine of rapid attack and movement, without clinging to the horse.

To Scott, armor should perform the role of a powerful offensive weapon, using surprise and maneuver to attack and overwhelm the enemy at the flanks. This is the procedure that Scott’s successor, General George S. Patton Jr. would call, “grabbing him by the nose and hitting him in the pants,” and would use to great success in World War II.<sup>158</sup> Patton, currently commander of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Brigade under Scott, found himself in charge of training for the division, but his efforts stymied by a deplorable lack of equipment and materiel. Scott informed Chaffee of these shortages and received assurances that the equipment would arrive within six months.<sup>159</sup> Patton wrote to General Pershing upon receiving this assignment, “The whole thing is most interesting as most of the tactics have yet to be worked out and there is a great chance for ingenuity and leadership.”<sup>160</sup> General Marshall also wrote to Patton following his appointment, “I thought it would be just the sort of thing you would like to do at the moment. Also, I felt that no one could do that particular job better.”<sup>161</sup> The chance Patton desired in 1920 to develop armored theory had finally been given to him, and he would not squander this second chance.

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<sup>157</sup> Houston, 36.

<sup>158</sup> Houston, 36.

<sup>159</sup> Houston, 39.

<sup>160</sup> Blumenson, *The Patton Papers: 1885-1940*, 957.

<sup>161</sup> Larry Bland, ed. *The Papers of George Catlett Marshall: We Cannot Delay July 1, 1939-December 6, 1941*, (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 272.

Following Scott's promotion in November 1940 and Patton's assumption of overall command of the Second Armored Division, Patton set about rectifying major training issues within the unit. He recalled a text that he translated as a youngster, "In the winter time, Caesar so trained his legions in all that became soldiers and so habituated them in the proper performance of their duties, that when in the spring he committed them to battle against the Gauls, it was not necessary to give them orders, for they know what to do and how to do it."<sup>162</sup> Patton certainly wanted to make his unit the best in the army and sought to bring his old friend Dwight Eisenhower into the fold. In a letter responding to Patton's invitation dated September 17, 1940, Eisenhower remarked, "I suppose it's too much to hope that I could have a regiment in your division, because I'm still almost three years away from my colonelcy. But I think I could do a damned good job of commanding a regiment."<sup>163</sup>

Patton's first major objective attempted to rectify the issues of the Louisiana exercise of 1940. Critiques determined that inadequate reconnaissance led to unacceptable casualties. Troops in the field must fight back against aircraft or hide when possible. Finally, during blackout conditions, troops should cover all reflective surfaces while using camouflage to avoid detection.<sup>164</sup> The first divisional training exercise required the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored to repel a simulated enemy attack on Fort Benning, an attack they successfully repulsed. Patton informed his men that they would have to learn how the Germans had crushed Poland and emulate that in their doctrine, stressing "You all remember that west Poland sticks into Germany in much same way that Brazil protrudes into the Atlantic. To remove this pimple, the Germans used the oldest plan in the world. It was invented by the cavemen when they surrounded the mammoth to destroy him

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<sup>162</sup> Martin Blumenson, *The Patton Papers: 1940-1945*, (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1974), 12.

<sup>163</sup> Blumenson, *The Patton Papers: 1940-1945*, 14.

<sup>164</sup> Houston, 41.

... a Cannae, a double envelopment.”<sup>165</sup> Though the division looked promising, the old animosities between the branches soon resurfaced over a trivial matter. During a review of the men in September 1940, a General noted the superior look of the tankers in cavalry uniforms, offending many infantry officers. Some infantrymen, like Lt. Norris Perkins, took this personally noting, “the infantry had developed tanks, while the cavalry was noted for its spit-and-shine, impractical and senseless practices based on tradition.”<sup>166</sup> This sentiment represented a widespread animosity persistent amongst infantry officers.

With the division slowly coalescing around its officer corps, General Patton determined that the unit would undertake its first long distance march in December 1940. The plan called for a 600 mile march to Panama City, Florida, that he hoped to use to “perfect march discipline, formations and procedures; bivouacs; ground and air reconnaissance; security, control and communications; and supply and field maintenance.”<sup>167</sup> General Patton reveled in the performance of his unit, especially its march discipline. The unit successfully navigated the entire route to Panama City, encountering only minor issues. The return trip demonstrated another milestone in the development of the armored force, with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored successfully executing a night march and simulated attack on Fort Benning with little to no rest. The unit easily outperformed the infamous “Gasoline Brigade.” The division soon set about perfecting its tactics during the spring of 1941, learning how to coordinate air/ground assaults, traverse rivers, and assault and overwhelm opposing infantry divisions. All their preparations would soon be put to the ultimate test during the Tennessee Maneuvers of 1941.

General Marshall had long advocated the use of maneuvers in preparation for war and proved a staunch proponent of maneuvers as Army Chief of Staff. In regards to the maneuvers in

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<sup>165</sup> Blumenson, Patton Papers: 1940-1945, 11.

<sup>166</sup> Houston, 42.

<sup>167</sup> Houston, 46.

the southern states, including those upcoming in Tennessee, General Marshall could not have been more enthusiastic. In a memorandum to his G-2, dated January 5, 1940, Marshall remarked, “These maneuvers present the first training opportunity for the Army in warfare movement above the division, and on a fairly realistic basis above the brigade, in the peace-time history of the army.”<sup>168</sup> He went further, “We have been forced to base almost all of our conclusions, regarding the tactical organization, supply and leadership of bodies of troops larger than a brigade in warfare movement, on theory or hearsay.”<sup>169</sup> Indeed, “major changes in doctrine, tactics, logistics, command and control, and combined arms doctrine all emerged from these large scale unprecedented field experiments.”<sup>170</sup> These tests would provide the information necessary to conduct American operations in the field during the Second World War. McNair’s task of conducting these exercises would not be easy because “GHQ had the twofold task of completing the imperfect training of the forces in being and at the same time of using such experience and military skill as these had to train for imminent war the mass of units and fresh recruits that were then being mobilized.”<sup>171</sup>

To oversee the Tennessee Maneuvers, the U.S. 2<sup>nd</sup> Army conducted operations on the ground. As one of the four field armies, the U.S. 2<sup>nd</sup> Army received the State of Tennessee as its headquarters and area of operations by the GHQ. To command this Army, McNair chose General Benjamin Lear as its commanding officer in October 1940. The responsibilities of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Army were great. It “was given responsibility for much of the advanced training required to transform many former citizens into soldiers during the World War II years.”<sup>172</sup> As one of the four field

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<sup>168</sup> Bland, 136.

<sup>169</sup> Bland, 136.

<sup>170</sup> Ossad and Marsh, 121.

<sup>171</sup> Kent Roberts Greenfield, Robert R. Palmer, and Bell I. Wiley, *The Army Ground Forces: The Organization of Ground Combat Troops*, (Washington D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1987), 10.

<sup>172</sup> McMillin, 23.

armies activated under the GHQ, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Army played a crucial role in training soldiers called up in the draft, as well as National Guardsmen and Regular Army troops. During the course of World War II, eleven field armies would be created, but only two would remain in the United States for the duration, the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 4<sup>th</sup>.<sup>173</sup> From 1940 until 1942, General Lear would carry out his duty in exemplary fashion. In the words of General Lear, “We are here to toughen men for dirty work.”<sup>174</sup> In this capacity, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Army “would come to be recognized as one of the prime builders of American forces.”<sup>175</sup> Lear declared in an interview with the *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, “We don’t profess to have a fully trained combat force in the field here. When all the equipment is ready, the men will be.”<sup>176</sup> The training undertaken in Tennessee would perfect the training of American troops in the field and hopefully prepare the men for the conflict that was soon to reach American shores.

Lear demanded nothing short of excellence from the troops under his command. A former Olympian, Lear participated as an equestrian and marksman in the 1912 Olympics, and served in the 1<sup>st</sup> Colorado Infantry Volunteers in the Spanish-American War.<sup>177</sup> In October 1940, Lear became a Lieutenant General on the War Department General Staff and received command of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Army less than a month later. Demonstrating his demand for strict military discipline, Lear earned the ire of many soldiers and Congressmen due to an incident that occurred just outside of Memphis in July 1941. While he was playing a game of golf, a convoy of troops returning from maneuvers in Arkansas drove past the golf course. According to reports, some soldiers began shouting “Yoo-hoo” and “Hey Baby” to some of the Memphis belles as they

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<sup>173</sup> McMillin, 23.

<sup>174</sup> Eugene Sloan, *With the Second Army: Somewhere in Tennessee*, (Murfreesboro, TN: Middle Tennessee State College Press, 1956), 3.

<sup>175</sup> McMillin, 23

<sup>176</sup> Rice Yahner, Associated Press, “World’s Best Soldier Envisioned by Lear,” *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, June 8, 1941.

<sup>177</sup> McMillin, 41.

drove by. “Adding insult to injury, one soldier, obviously not recognizing the general sans uniform, shouted at Lear: “Hey buddy, do you need a caddy?”<sup>178</sup> Lear lost his temper.

The 62-year-old general immediately jumped the fence and ordered the column to stop posthaste. He berated the officers for the lack of discipline in the unit, and, as punishment, the men received orders to drive back to Memphis and complete the remainder of their march on foot. With temperatures near 100 degrees, some troopers succumbed to heat exhaustion, creating a publicity nightmare for Lear. When criticized by Congressman Paul Kilday of Texas, Lear responded, “I am responsible for training all elements of this army.”<sup>179</sup> From this incident, Lear earned the nickname General “Yoo-Hoo” Lear, but he also earned the respect of his men. “Later in the war, when soldiers were questioned about their combat experiences in the Pacific and European theaters, a common response was that it was not harder than the maneuvers in Tennessee.”<sup>180</sup>

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Army used an area of Tennessee “stretching from the rolling hills that fringe Kentucky’s southern border to the blackjack and pines of North Alabama.”<sup>181</sup> The troops who trained in Tennessee under the 2<sup>nd</sup> Army received the benefit of training in terrain that would be familiar to them in the battlefields of Europe. The troops “readied for desert combat in the choking dust of a Tennessee August or, rubbed hard and raw by January’s sleet and mud between Stone’s River and the Cumberland, found the battle ground at Bastogne familiar.”<sup>182</sup> The Second Army’s training program attempted to prepare the troops for the realities of war. Until the army could take the field, however, training would be difficult to evaluate.

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<sup>178</sup> McMillin, 43.

<sup>179</sup> McMillin, 42.

<sup>180</sup> McMillin, 42.

<sup>181</sup> Sloan, 5.

<sup>182</sup> Sloan, 5.

When the Second Army began operations in the Volunteer State, it received aid from an existing military establishment in Tullahoma, Tennessee. Camp Forrest, named for Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest, emerged following the passage of the Selective Service Act in September 1940 to train the massive influx of new recruits.<sup>183</sup> By the spring of 1941, Camp Forrest became the largest Army camp in the State of Tennessee and a key outpost during the upcoming Tennessee Maneuvers. At the outset, however, the troops that swarmed the camp were largely civilians in military garb. A common attitude, pervasive amongst the soldiers, proved difficult to extinguish, “put in your year with as little trouble as possible and get out so you can get on with your life.”<sup>184</sup> Their outpost also suffered from the same issues plaguing army camps across the country, “Equipment was in short supply and discipline was imperfect, especially since officers and non-commissioned officers were less than serious. The food was good and regular weekend passes kept life from being too tedious.”<sup>185</sup>

Camp training could teach the basics of soldiering but could not come close to preparing troops for life in the field. Many of Camp Forrest’s troops deployed to Louisiana and Arkansas during the summer of 1941 to practice maneuvering in those states, with the camp serving as a base for operations for troops participating in the Tennessee Maneuvers. Governor Prentice Cooper visited the camp in May 1941 and described the troops as far more advanced than those who had fought in World War I.<sup>186</sup> General Lear reviewed the Forrest Troops in early June 1941,

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<sup>183</sup> Michael R. Bradley, *Reveille to Taps: Camp Forrest, TN 1940-1946*, (Tullahoma, TN: United States Air Force, 1993), 11.

<sup>184</sup> Bradley, 60.

<sup>185</sup> Bradley, 61.

<sup>186</sup> Leslie T. Hart, “Forrest Troops Far Advanced, Cooper Says,” *Nashville Banner*, May 15, 1941.

alongside the granddaughter of General Forrest on Forrest Day, and found himself thoroughly impressed by the quality of the troops.<sup>187</sup>

According to Hilliard Wood of the *Nashville Banner*, “The primary objective of the maneuvers will be to test the fighting efficiency of armored troops both with and against infantry.”<sup>188</sup> In the spring of 1941, General Lear issued Training Directive #15, establishing the purpose and responsibilities of umpires in the maneuvers, “Maneuvers are the highest form of troop training in peace, they can and should approach the conditions of actual warfare more closely than does any other type of training.”<sup>189</sup> General Mark Clark recalled in his memoirs that the importance of the maneuvers rested with giving “commanders a chance to handle large units of troops in the field, and McNair wanted to test the soundness of our logistical doctrines in large-scale maneuvers, where the men could sleep and live and work as near as possible to combat conditions.”<sup>190</sup>

For the June 1941 Tennessee Maneuvers, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Army leased a high school in Manchester, Tennessee, just offsite of Camp Forrest.<sup>191</sup> This exercise would prove to be one of the first major tests of the preparations undertaken during the past year, and the problems encountered during preparations for the maneuvers proved helpful in correcting deficiencies. Logistics became a major headache, with adequate provision of food, fuel, clean drinking water, and mail being of great concern. The maneuvers themselves proceeded in the most realistic way possible, with live artillery fire, blank rifle ammunition, and dummy anti-tank mines and T.N.T.

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<sup>187</sup> Randolph Tucker, “Camp Forrest Stages Colorful Review for Second Army Head,” *Nashville Tennessean*, June 6, 1941.

<sup>188</sup> Hilliard Wood, “83,000 Men Head for Forrest Area to Stage War Maneuvers,” *Nashville Banner*, May 24, 1941.

<sup>189</sup> McMillin, 27.

<sup>190</sup> Clark, 15.

<sup>191</sup> McMillin, 33.



blocks. Actions between a Red and Blue forces required each side to attempt to outmaneuver and defeat the other.

Both sides received clear objectives but were allowed to devise methods to accomplish these goals. The official Umpire Manual, issued by the U.S. Army, indicated that Army maneuvers should be free, continuous, and brief.<sup>192</sup> Units should be free to devise the methods that they would use to complete their objectives, while continuing for a period of no more than forty-eight hours. By ensuring continuous operation during the course of the exercise, the maneuver could achieve its desired level of realism, “an armistice or rest period during a maneuver –for example, at night – lessens realism and training value.”<sup>193</sup>

To officiate of the maneuvers, umpires would be in place to judge the maneuvers based upon a series of pre-determined factors. “These men, all experts in their respective branches of service . . . will serve the same purpose as bayonets and bullets.”<sup>194</sup> The rules enforced by the umpires were set forth in the GHQ Umpire Manual of 1941. The outcome of battles would be determined by a series of outcomes as determined by the umpires. “It follows that realism in maneuvers can be obtained only by painstaking umpiring of the actions at all points of contact. The great mass of umpires should be with or among small units which are or will be in contact with the opposing forces.”<sup>195</sup> Their rulings were often unpopular with soldiers and commanding officers alike leading Patton to issue a cautionary warning to his men, “You will never get anywhere if you make them mad. Do what they tell you and do it promptly, and pretty soon you will find that they err in shading the decisions in your favor.”<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> United States War Department, *Umpire Manual*, (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1941), 1.

<sup>193</sup> U.S. War Department, 1.

<sup>194</sup> Jerry Baulch, “Many Umpires Assigned to Army Units,” *Nashville Banner*, May 23, 1941.

<sup>195</sup> U.S. War Department, 4.

<sup>196</sup> McMillin, 44.

The June 1941 Maneuvers would consist of two “Phases” with the first consisting of theoretical infantry action, and the second being a test of the U.S. 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Division and the effectiveness of the Armored Force.<sup>197</sup> Phase One of the Tennessee Maneuvers officially opened on June 2, 1941. Lear emphasized that he desired the maneuvers not be treated as a contest, and that this first phase should not be considered maneuvers, “preferring the term ‘exercises,’ stating that they were ‘not for the purpose of testing any individual or unit. . .it will be merely a matter of teaching the men how to carry out their mission.’”<sup>198</sup>

The first phase of the maneuvers fell under the command of General Frederic H. Smith, commander of the US VII Corps. These opening exercises of the maneuvers came from General Smith and his staff and should “illustrate the principles of command and staff functioning.”<sup>199</sup> These actions largely took the form of practiced marches to meet a fictitious enemy. On June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1941, the Blue Force practiced a night march to halt the advance of a simulated Red Force advancing on the city of Murfreesboro from the northeast.<sup>200</sup> The following day, these troops launched a simulated pincer counter-offensive against the opposing force.<sup>201</sup> From June 5-6, the Blue Forces staged a pre-planned retreat, focusing on the execution of rapid movement and evacuation, as well as evading detection by airborne reconnaissance aircraft. They also received extensive practice in rear guard actions and slowing the enemy’s advance.<sup>202</sup> General Lear offered his insights on the performance of his troops thus far, “The American soldier of today, with the training we are giving him, will rank with the best in the world.”<sup>203</sup> One of the major

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<sup>197</sup> McMillin, 40-43

<sup>198</sup> McMillin, 43.

<sup>199</sup> Hilliard Wood, “Plans Forming for Troop Maneuvers,” *Nashville Banner*, May 27, 1941.

<sup>200</sup> Editorial, “‘Enemy Advancing from the North’ to Attack Tennessee Defenders,” *Nashville Tennessean*, June 2, 1941.

<sup>201</sup> Jerry T. Baulch, “55,000 Troops Launch Pincer Drive in Games,” *Nashville Banner*, June 4, 1941.

<sup>202</sup> Editorial, “Blue Army Tests Its Ability to Retreat as Reds Surge In,” *Nashville Tennessean*, June 7, 1941.

<sup>203</sup> McMillin, 47.

purposes of these theoretical actions attempted to perfect divisional cooperation in anticipation of the arrival of Patton's 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Division. According to an editorial in the *Nashville Tennessean*, "They will need it to meet the bold, swift tactics of the Second Armored Division from Fort Benning, Georgia, which will be thrown into the war games in the third week."<sup>204</sup>

The three divisions participating in the first phase of the maneuvers learned to cooperate and coordinate their actions effectively during the first phase of the maneuvers. The rapid retreat of the Blue forces ultimately proved successful, with only a few troops losing their way during the action.<sup>205</sup> The troops conducted their retreat in an orderly fashion and managed to evade detection through skillful use of camouflage and maneuver.<sup>206</sup> Anticipation soon began to build for the upcoming involvement of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Division. From Washington, Secretary of War Henry Stimson indicated to General Lear that he would like to view the upcoming battles from the seat of one of the Army's new Jeeps, also referred to as a "Blitz Buggy," or "Army Jack-Rabbit."<sup>207</sup>

The following week saw a first in the history of Tennessee, a total blackout of the town of Shelbyville, as the army simulated an air raid on the troops and the city alike. The 15<sup>th</sup> Bombing Squadron out of Lawson Field, Georgia, simulated an attack on the town, with army trucks rolling down the highways under complete blackout conditions. This blackout became a local spectacle, with many of the town's inhabitants sitting on their doorsteps to observe the proceedings, while "thousands had packed the sidewalks of the downtown sections. Strikingly,

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<sup>204</sup> Editorial, "Enemy Advancing from the North' to Attack Tennessee Defenders," *Nashville Tennessean*, June 2, 1941.

<sup>205</sup> Jerry T. Baulch, Associated Press, "Lost Soldiers Rounded Up for New Games," *Nashville Tennessean*, June 11, 1941.

<sup>206</sup> Hilliard Wood, "War Correspondent Scouts Battle of Tennessee From Air," *Nashville Banner*, June 5, 1941.

<sup>207</sup> Associated Press, "Stimson Wants 'Jeep' to View War Games," *Nashville Tennessean*, June 12, 1941.

during the blackout, not a voice was heard-everyone was acutely tense.”<sup>208</sup> With the first phase ending, command of the maneuvers transferred to General Lear. The troops began to prepare for the true purpose of the maneuvers, the evaluation of the United States’ progress on creation the Armored Force, the evaluation of the U.S. 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Division.

Nothing could have excited the troops, citizens of the state, or the press more than the arrival of Patton’s tanks in the state. Since the opening of the maneuvers, the local press had been enthralled with the impending arrival of the tanks. Every major state newspaper including the *Nashville Banner* ran articles on a daily basis relating to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Division. On May 15, 1941, the *Banner* ran an article titled “What is the Second Armored Division?”<sup>209</sup> They pronounced the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored as a “lightning-striking little army-a completely mechanized force capable of carrying on a small war all alone. All it needs is an enemy.”<sup>210</sup> They went further, describing the composition of the unit, the equipment, the men, and the commanding officers. The *Nashville Banner* carried an article in May, 1941, declaring, “This grim monster (referring to a cover photo of a tank), with sisters in her evil brood, soon will come snarling through the quiet glades of Middle Tennessee, whose last experience with striking power, the best in the world at that time, was when Nathan Bedford Forrest’s troops swept through, a blend of gray shadows and hoofbeats.”<sup>211</sup>

Rumors of impending armored attack excited the troops in the maneuver area. Once rumors of armored attack reached the units, troops immediately sprang into action. “The heavy weapons of the division (27<sup>th</sup>) and its anti-tank guns were wheeled around to meet the threat from the rear. So great was the excitement, that many of the commanders were kept so busy that

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<sup>208</sup> Randolph Tucker, “Blackout, Drone of Bombers, Antiaircraft Fire, Brings Sinister Reality of ‘War’ to Shelbyville,” *Nashville Tennessean*, June 13, 1941.

<sup>209</sup> Editorial, “What is the Second Armored Division?” *Nashville Banner*, May 22, 1941.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>211</sup> Editorial, “Hell on Wheels Division Heads for Tennessee,” *Nashville Banner*, May 31, 1941.

they missed the scheduled critique of the problem they were completing.”<sup>212</sup> The rumored power of the tank truly created a sense of fear in those opposing it.

Patton found himself equally excited, although for different reasons. He desired to prove to the army that the tank would be the crucial weapon in winning the upcoming war. In an address to his men in May 1941, Patton stated, “An armored division is the most powerful organization ever devised by the mind of men . . . an armored division is that element of the team which carries out the running plays. We straight-arm, and go around, and dodge, and go around.”<sup>213</sup> He went further, “One of the greatest qualities we have is the ability to produce in our enemy the fear of the unknown. Therefore we must always keep moving, do not sit down, do not say ‘I have done enough,’ keep on, see what else you can do to raise the devil with the enemy. . .”<sup>214</sup> The 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored left Fort Benning on June 14, 1941, and arrived in the maneuver area by 6 PM on June 15. “When the Division strikes in Tennessee, it will be the first time in United States military history that a full armored division has participated in war maneuvers and will be a crucial American defense test.”<sup>215</sup> For the press, the stakes in this maneuver were clear, “This is expected to give the Army a picture-as true as it can be sketched short of war itself-of how hard and deceptively an armored division can hit and the efficiency of present anti-tank defense.”<sup>216</sup> For Patton, the opportunity that eluded him in 1920 would finally be his.

Before the action began on the 16<sup>th</sup>, Patton’s competitive nature led him to completely disregard Lear’s warning not to treat the maneuvers as a contest. He offered a \$50.00 bounty to each soldier in the unit who captured the commander of the opposing force, General William

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<sup>212</sup> Jerry T. Baulch, “Tank Rumors Excite Troops at War Games,” *Nashville Banner*, June 7, 1941.

<sup>213</sup> Blumenson, *Patton Papers: 1940-1945*, 32.

<sup>214</sup> Blumenson, *Patton Papers: 1940-1945*, 32.

<sup>215</sup> Randolph Tucker, “Hell on Wheels’ Division Poised for Sweep Into State in First Crucial Defense Test,” *Nashville Tennessean*, June 15, 1941.

<sup>216</sup> Rice Yanner, “55,000 Men Poised for Army Test,” *Associated Press*, June 2, 1941.

Haskell, who previously offered a \$25.00 bounty to his men for the capture of Patton.<sup>217</sup> The first problem called for a holding action to be staged by the 5<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division and the 153d Infantry Division against a hostile Blue Force, until they could be reinforced by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Division. Patton's attack tested his "hold em' by the nose and kick em' in the pants" theory. While the friendly Red Force held the Blue Force on its front, Patton's tanks would attack on the flanks, seeking to overwhelm the defenders and drive enemy force back. The tankers moved into position during a night march that the umpires described as "the most magnificent ever made by tanks."<sup>218</sup>

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored launched its attack on June 17<sup>th</sup> and made significant progress despite a tenacious anti-tank defense staged by opposing infantry forces. According to a report published in the *Nashville Tennessean*, "a crashing thrust through the Blue Forces by the 'Hell on Wheels' Division failed to go off on schedule today as the 30<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> Divisions threw a stymie in the onrush of tanks."<sup>219</sup> Without proper air support, the tank advance suffered unacceptably high casualties. The *Tennessean* quoted Lear as saying, "there is much to fear from a mechanized force and that a well-planned attack prepared by heavy aircraft bombardment will be difficult for the defense to overcome."<sup>220</sup> After breaking through enemy defenses, Patton and his tankers flew down highway 70N, "Shortly after midnight, the tank column with Patton in the lead tank enthusiastically waving his pistol, reached the intersection of Highway 10 and whipped into a 90 degree turn leaving rubber on the pavement."<sup>221</sup> After routing the defenders, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored moved through the town of Bell Buckle, where one of Patton's tankers crashed through the city

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<sup>217</sup> Associated Press, "Armored Unit Tunes For Tennessee 'War,'" *Nashville Tennessean* June 14, 1941.

<sup>218</sup> Houston, 64.

<sup>219</sup> Randolph Tucker, "30<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> Stymie Onrush of Tank Unit," *Nashville Tennessean*, June 18, 1941.

<sup>220</sup> Randolph Tucker, "30<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> Stymie Onrush of Tank Unit," *Nashville Tennessean*, June 18, 1941.

<sup>221</sup> Burns, et. al., 231.

hall whilst trying to avoid hitting a civilian truck. Patton placed no blame on his men, saying “the damned city hall was not on the map.”<sup>222</sup>

The lessons of the first problem were extensive on both sides. Infantry units learned how to arrange their anti-tank guns to the greatest effect, and the tankers learned how to avoid casualties by bypassing the strong points and attacking where the enemy front was weakest. If the American tanks could not endure the barrage, they would simply avoid it. General Chaffee noted while visiting the battlefield that “the tank used by the United States Army is superior to the German tank in mobility, but inferior in firepower.”<sup>223</sup> Mobility, Chaffee knew, was the key. One problem not anticipated by either side resided within the sheer wonder of armored warfare. Many soldiers on the opposing force threw down their weapons upon sighting the enemy tanks, not to flee, but to grab their cameras and photograph these mechanized wonders.<sup>224</sup>

The second problem called for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored to join the Blue Force and launch an attack on the Red Forces defending the city of Manchester. Patton’s tankers entered the fray at 7:00 AM on June 19 and advanced within two miles of their objective by 8:45. From the southeast, another element of Patton's 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored launched an all-out assault on the city of Lynchburg, routing the defending forces within an hour. Following the capitulation of the city, Patton’s troops followed a messenger plane and captured the opposing commander, General Cortland Parker, at 9AM.<sup>225</sup> A jubilant Patton awarded each man in the unit \$25 dollars for their achievement. At 11:00 AM, just four hours after having entered the fray, umpires declared the

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<sup>222</sup> Houston, 65.

<sup>223</sup> Associated Press, “US Tanks Said More Mobile, Less Powerful Than Germany’s” *Nashville Tennessean*, June 19, 1941.

<sup>224</sup> Houston, 65.

<sup>225</sup> Randolph Tucker, “Armored Outfit Annihilates Fifth Division, Proving Blitz Power, Giving Natives Grim Show,” *Nashville Tennessean*, June 21, 1941.

action over, awarding Patton the decisive victory he desired.<sup>226</sup> The shock of this massive onslaught stunned opposing soldiers, “Thank God it’s only maneuvers”<sup>227</sup> said Private Robert A. Hamlin following the simulated annihilation of his unit, the 165<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment of the 69<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. After suffering nearly 1,000 simulated casualties, the soldiers of the Regiment were just glad the mayhem had reached its end. One of the opposing tankers remarked, “I felt very near to the real war in the turret of the last tank as the columns fanned out, roaring and pitching through field and wood.”<sup>228</sup> The desire of Lear and the GHQ to create the feel of war had come to fruition. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored flourished in its second problem, annihilating the opposing forces with minimal casualties and thoroughly impressing military observers.

The third problem constituted another test of Patton’s nose-and-pants theory, with the 66<sup>th</sup> Armored Regiment launching an attack on the east flank of the Red Forces at 11:00, while the 8<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron launched an air raid on the opposing 5<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division’s headquarters. The flawless execution of the attack led to the 66<sup>th</sup> Armored reaching its restraining line by 12:15. The main assault on the enemy center kicked off at 13:30 and was so successful that the enemy center broke, allowing the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored to rapidly advance on the Elk River. By 14:10, the umpires declared the exercise over, citing the overwhelming successes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Division. For an exercise estimated to take 24 hours to complete, Patton’s tankers required only three.<sup>229</sup>

During the final maneuver, Secretary of War Henry Stimson visited the maneuvers area to observe the “War of Tennessee” for himself. As he had requested weeks earlier, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Army

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<sup>226</sup> Houston, 67.

<sup>227</sup> Rice Yahner, Associated Press, “Texas ‘Suicide Squad’ of Tanks Rips Fighting Irish in War Games,” *Nashville Tennessean*, June 20, 1941.

<sup>228</sup> Rice Yahner, Associated Press, “Texas ‘Suicide Squad’ of Tanks Rips Fighting Irish in War Games,” *Nashville Tennessean*, June 20, 1941.

<sup>229</sup> Houston, 67-68.



provided the Secretary with a Jeep from which he could view the games. He commented, a “war of movement is much more exciting than static war.”<sup>230</sup> He had the opportunity to view a pincer attack of 300 armored vehicles against the 27<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> Infantry Divisions defending the Elk River.<sup>231</sup> This attack quickly resulted in the end of the final problem in nine hours, rather than the prescribed twenty-four.<sup>232</sup> Thoroughly impressed by the power of the armored division, the Secretary congratulated the commanding officers and departed for Washington after lunch.

The men succeeded due in part to their unorthodox tactics. Through misdirection, false information, and unexpected movements, the “Hell on Wheels” Division fully used Forrest’s motto of “get em’ skerred and keep em’ skerred.”<sup>233</sup> While the tanks had stayed on main roads during the earlier problems, they changed their route on the final maneuver, “According to Strickland and Tackitt, the tanks and half-tracks roared through forests and over fences and fields. Previously the vehicles had largely stayed on the roads, causing little damage.”<sup>234</sup> Praise of the division followed the conclusion of the maneuvers, with the chief umpire remarking that the division’s actions were “rapid, coordinated and decisively effective.”<sup>235</sup> However, the division also received a fair share of criticism as well, especially the commanding officers. According to Lieutenant Colonel Grow, “division headquarters was terrible and control was nonexistent because of personality differences . . . the men in the division were fine, but the unit got progressively worse up the organizational ladder.”<sup>236</sup>

As the maneuvers indicated, the army still had much to do before the military would be ready for war; however, the performance of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Division proved nothing short of

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<sup>230</sup> Editorial “Stimson sees Last Day of War Games, Leaves Unexpectedly,” *Nashville Tennessean*, Jun 27, 1941.

<sup>231</sup> McMillin, 63

<sup>232</sup> McMillin, 63.

<sup>233</sup> Editorial, “Forrest Would Like Ferocity of Second Armored Division,” *Nashville Tennessean*, June 15, 1941.

<sup>234</sup> Houston, 68.

<sup>235</sup> Houston, 68.

<sup>236</sup> Houston, 69.

exemplary. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Army issued Training Directive #23 following the completion of the Maneuvers on July 11, 1941.<sup>237</sup> The directive contained the critique of the June Maneuvers in two pages. Major criticisms included deficient combat intelligence, overreliance upon static defensive positions, and improper use of motor transport.<sup>238</sup>

When Lear met with commanding officers to discuss the critique, he was candid in his remarks. “During these maneuvers,” Lear remarked, “I carefully watched the behavior of both the officers and soldiers in several divisions . . . and I regret to say that our chain of command is weak – weak to the extent that if this condition is allowed to continue, the chain, at its weakest link will break.”<sup>239</sup> Lear especially regarded officers who failed to inform their non-commissioned officers of operational planning as having failed in their duties. In addition to the criticisms, however, great praise emerged regarding the successes of the maneuvers, “It was pointed out tank commanders had learned how to avoid anti-tank guns, and to use mortars and other weapons to destroy these installations. Some officers, most notably Patton, earned overall high marks for their work and initiative.”<sup>240</sup>

Another added benefit of the maneuvers resided within the weeding out of the officer corps. Lear’s demand for perfection did not stop with the enlisted men. If a commanding officer proved incapable of performing his duties, Lear would have him removed. By the end of the maneuvers, many high-ranking officers, including two brigadier generals, and two lieutenant colonels, were relieved of command.<sup>241</sup> Others, like George S. Patton Jr. would leave the maneuvers only to climb higher in the ranks of the army. Indeed, Patton would lead his 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Division through the Louisiana Maneuvers in late Summer, 1941, and during the

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<sup>237</sup> Donald A. Robinson, *Training Directive #23*, (Memphis, TN: U.S. 2<sup>nd</sup> Army, 1941), 1-2.

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid*, 1-2.

<sup>239</sup> McMillin, 64.

<sup>240</sup> McMillin, 65.

<sup>241</sup> McMillin, 65.

invasion of North Africa in 1942 before being promoted to command of the 7<sup>th</sup> Army during the remainder of the North Africa and Sicily Campaigns.

Armor proved its viability during the Tennessee Maneuvers and clearly showed the value of armored independence. The utter thrashing dealt upon its enemies proved that speed, mobility, firepower, and maneuver were the tools necessary to win the war. Patton took personal offense at the criticisms levied against him during the maneuvers; he “was not making excuses but rather pointing out what I consider to be misconceptions . . . as to the principal functions of an armored division.”<sup>242</sup> Indeed, Patton took most of the criticisms of the maneuvers personally and attributed the division’s losses to outdated conceptions of armored warfare. When criticized by umpires for leaving his command post, Patton simply replied, “Were the commander of an armored division to sit anywhere with information three hours old, his units might well be 15 to 25 miles from the point indicated on the map.”<sup>243</sup> Patton preferred to command from the front and did so throughout the maneuvers. Indeed, Patton’s forward command presence got him declared dead on at least one occasion throughout the maneuvers when the umpires stated that he had driven through a simulated artillery bombardment. He dismissed this criticism offhand, “Hell, you know what’s being shot up in war.”<sup>244</sup> Reporters present noted that Patton would know, as he was shot up in the last war.

Though his superiors chastised him for his supposed carelessness, Patton’s men seemed to love him for it. As reported by the *Knoxville Journal*, “He exposes himself to danger as casually as a strip teaser does to the front row orchestra. In the first attack of the division against the Blue Army here in the wilds of Tennessee it was his tank that was first to hit the road to

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<sup>242</sup> Blumenson, *Patton Papers: 1940-1945*, 37.

<sup>243</sup> Blumenson, *Patton Papers: 1940-1945*, 37-38.

<sup>244</sup> Rice Yahner, “Mechanized Warfare is bringing Generals Back to Front Lines,” *Nashville Tennessean*, June 23, 1941.

contact the enemy . . . his soldiers, all of whom respect him as a general who is a man rather than as a man who is a general have dubbed him General ‘Flash Gordon’ and ‘the Green Hornet.’”<sup>245</sup> The report goes on to say, “I am convinced that in actual warfare he (Patton) would wear an Uncle Sam suit and stick his head out of the tank turret to be sure he was the first to draw fire.”<sup>246</sup> In a letter written to a personal friend following the maneuvers, he wrote, “You would be surprised, at the profound ignorance in higher places as to the use of tanks. People are still obsessed with the belief that tanks are invulnerable and try to send them head-on into prepared positions.”<sup>247</sup> One of the most common critiques levied against the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored stated that it did not conduct concentrated or mass attacks, harkening back to the massed attacks at Cambrai in World War I. Patton regarded this criticism as “the greatest compliment possible.”<sup>248</sup>

Since the end of World War I, the development of mechanized divisions in the United States Army had been a long and arduous task. Despite numerous setbacks due to funding and inter-branch rivalries, the armored branch came of age in the Tennessee Maneuvers. The force that Adna Chaffee developed from a poorly funded, experimental unit became the leading force of power projection within the United States Army. Without these military maneuvers, it is unlikely that armor would have evolved into the branch that it ultimately became. The maneuvers proved that, “armor could be used swiftly and decisively with powerful precision . . . and that the Cumberland River, a river as swift and wide as the Rhine, could be crossed even under adverse weather conditions.”<sup>249</sup> The small exercise in Louisiana in 1940 gave the independent Armored Force a chance at life, and the Tennessee Maneuvers of 1941 secured a long and healthy existence for that branch that continues today. With the Tennessee Maneuvers

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<sup>245</sup> Henry McLemore, “At War (Somewhere in Tennessee),” *Knoxville Journal*, June 26, 1941.

<sup>246</sup> Henry McLemore, “At War (Somewhere in Tennessee),” *Knoxville Journal*, June 26, 1941

<sup>247</sup> Blumenson, *Patton Papers: 1940-1945*, 38.

<sup>248</sup> Blumenson, *Patton Papers: 1940-1945*, 37.

<sup>249</sup> Burns, et. al., 229.

at an end, the army prepared to move on to the Louisiana and Carolina Maneuvers scheduled for later that year. The citizens of the State of Tennessee, however, were still coping with the effects of the maneuvers upon their state. Like the Army that transformed itself inside the state, the people of the state also underwent a dramatic transformation.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE WAR AT HOME

As military operations unfolded in Tennessee throughout the early days of June 1941, they increasingly began to effect the civil population of the state. On June 12, 1941, the city of Shelbyville became a focal point of the mock war. Civilians gathered throughout the evening in anticipation of a pending air raid by the 15<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron out of Lawson Field, Georgia. The city prepared its residents for this attack in advance, ordering complete blackout conditions, which included a ban on smoking cigarettes, cigars, and pipes. Most of Shelbyville's 6,500 residents crowded onto the streets to observe the event, with WSM Radio out of Nashville, (famously home to the Grand Ole Opry) providing live coverage of the event from the local courthouse. The National Broadcasting Company carried WSM's broadcast of the event nationwide, and simultaneous blackouts were in effect in other sections of the country on the same evening. As the citizens of Shelbyville watched in awe, the men of the 27<sup>th</sup> Division moved through the town, practicing movement in blackout conditions. Civilians in the town heard the echo of machinegun fire as troops guarding the town fired blanks at the aircraft overhead. While the reality of war would not reach American shores for another six months, the people of Shelbyville and their fellow Tennesseans experienced a near approximation of the coming conflict during the summer of 1941.<sup>250</sup>

Throughout the Tennessee Maneuvers, the United States Military was not the only entity occupying the twenty-one counties of the Tennessee Maneuver area. As the men of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Army honed their skills and practiced for war, they began to lay the foundation for the Army that would fight its way through the Second World War. The people of the State of Tennessee,

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<sup>250</sup> Woody McMillin, *In the Presence of Soldiers: The Second Army Maneuvers and Other World War II Activity in Tennessee*, (Nashville, TN: Horton Heights Press, 2010), 48.

meanwhile, tolerated the presence of the troops and sometimes found their presence to be both enjoyable and amusing. With the rustic areas of the state turning into a mock battlefield, and an influx of resources, men, and most importantly, money, Tennesseans began to embrace the presence of this military “invasion.” Soon, men from faraway states like New York, Michigan, Ohio began to pour into the mid-state, bringing with them innumerable resources that would benefit the people of the state. While the maneuvers sought to affect change upon the military, they inadvertently affected the lives of the state’s populace as well.

From 1941 to 1944, the United States’ Military used Tennessee in an ongoing effort to prepare its fighting men for combat overseas. Twenty-one counties across the mid-state witnessed the war-games firsthand, with simulated combat taking place under the watchful eyes of GHQ as well as the people of the state. Tennesseans attempted to continue their normal routines as best they could but found their lives increasingly impacted by the maneuvers in numerous ways. Private and municipal property destruction, construction of military infrastructure, and the influx of capital from across the country all brought great change to the State of Tennessee.<sup>251</sup>

As the maneuvers began and the military presence in the state increased, so too did their impact on the state. According to war correspondent Eugene Sloan, “civilians in the 21-county Middle Tennessee area became familiar with equipment and nomenclature. They learned about Jeeps, 6x6 trucks, TD’s (tank destroyers) command cars, convoys, pontoon bridges, liaison planes and barrack bags.”<sup>252</sup> The troops permeated every region of the midstate, digging into positions both in rural and urban areas, in farmers’ fields, and sometimes near their houses. Whether in the cities, towns, or countryside, the presence of the troops could not go unnoticed.

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<sup>251</sup> McMillin, 70-71.

<sup>252</sup> Eugene Sloan, *With the Second Army in Tennessee*, (Murfreesboro, TN: Middle Tennessee State College Press, 1956), 3.

The sheer mass of the 77,000+ troops participating in the maneuvers made everyday contact between citizens and soldiers unavoidable.

During the course of the exercises, it proved inevitable that some property destruction would occur. From farmers' fences, to state roads and highways, and even one public courthouse, many would experience damage in one form or another during the course of the maneuvers. As a standing order during the 1941 exercises, property damage was explicitly discouraged, so much so that the realism of the maneuvers themselves suffered. In an article published in the *Nashville Banner* on May 28, 1941, the Associated Press reported, "the Army went in today for assorted sounds and smells of the battlefield to give its draft Army realistic preparation for the first shock of battle."<sup>253</sup> They continued, "Personnel will be subjected for the first time to the shock of hostile fire and to the nerve-wracking sights and sounds of combat."<sup>254</sup> With directives like this in hand, the Army attempted to recreate the battlefield as realistically as possible. However, worries over the destruction of property seemed to take precedence in the June 1941 maneuvers. Army commanders earnestly sought to avoid destroying civilian property to preserve good will between the Army and the indigenous population. Before the maneuvers began, the Army sent representatives across the maneuver area to survey the proposed maneuver site. They covered nearly 600 square miles and met with all landowners in the area to receive permission to use their land.<sup>255</sup>

One of the major critiques of the June 1941 maneuvers expressed concern regarding the excessive loss of tanks in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Division. Some losses, however, were not the fault of military tactics or strategy, but rather the policy regarding destruction of property. Rather than bulldozing through farmers' fences and pastures, tankers were instead ordered to use gates.

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<sup>253</sup> Associated Press, "Army Orders Battle Sounds, Smells Used," *Nashville Banner*, May 28, 1941.

<sup>254</sup> Associated Press, "Army Orders Battle Sounds, Smells Used," *Nashville Banner*, May 28, 1941.

<sup>255</sup> Jerry T. Baulch, "Detailed Plans Precede Army Maneuvers," *Nashville Banner*, May 30, 1941.



Training directive #14, issued on June 14, 1941, gave three explicit orders regarding the cutting of fences. According to the directive, “When necessary to cut or remove fences, the following rules will be observed: A. No more fencing will be opened than is necessary to accommodate the passage of the troops. B. A guard will be stationed at the fence opening to prevent the escape of stock. C. The cut or opened fence will not be repaired by the unit cutting or opening the fence. Material (not tools) required will be available at the Army Engineer Depot.”<sup>256</sup> Tankers would lose valuable time avoiding farmers’ fences and dismounting tanks to open and close gates as they passed through the area. Soldiers who did not properly close gates allowing livestock to escape were often reprimanded for their carelessness.<sup>257</sup>

The order to avoid unnecessary destruction of property clearly influenced the outcome of several engagements but did succeed in protecting the integrity of farmers’ property on numerous occasions. Henry McLemore recalled one such instance in his column for the *Knoxville Journal*, “I saw tanks plunge recklessly through almost impenetrable woods to come suddenly to a halt while the assistant driver carefully opened a cow pasture gate in order to avoid damaging personal property. This meticulous procedure was often watched by the ‘enemy’ sometimes no more than 75 yards away.”<sup>258</sup> He continued, “Then, when the gate was closed and the tanks charged again, the damndest argument would set in. The enemy would claim the tanks were out of commission, having been destroyed while the gate was being opened. The tank crews would say it wasn’t fair to shoot while they were opening the gates. Then they would all

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<sup>256</sup> Second Army, Training Directive #14, 14 June 1941, Folder 16, Box 1, US Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle Barracks, PA.

<sup>257</sup> McMillin, 70.

<sup>258</sup> Henry McLemore, “At War (Somewhere in Tennessee),” *Knoxville Journal*, June 29, 1941.

relax and wait for an umpire to happen along and the umpires sometimes don't happen along for several hours.”<sup>259</sup>

When property damage did occur, however, the Army provided a streamlined process for locals to file claims with the Army for reimbursement, with pre-addressed postcards being sent to landowners within the maneuver area. Landowners would fill out the cards and return them to the Army. If they had sustained damage during the maneuvers, the Army would evaluate the claim and reimburse the claimants for the damage.<sup>260</sup> In future maneuvers, increased concerns regarding property destruction due to the larger size of the maneuvers led to a change in this process, where the Army would send its own forces to repair private property immediately after it was destroyed in action.

Tanks initially kept to the roads as per their orders, but the sheer mass of men and materiel created great interest among the people of the state. According to an article written by Randolph Tucker in the *Nashville Tennessean*, “Middle Tennesseans had their chance to see and hear the tanks sweep through the countryside, and it was a sleepless night for many as the 350-horsepower airplane motors roared along. Town squares were packed with spectators who strained inquisitive eyes on the scene, new not only to Tennesseans, but to all Americans since this is the first practice of the nation's ‘Hell on Wheels’ blitz babies.”<sup>261</sup> The tanks were a source of great interest to the public as well as the infantrymen, as neither had witnessed previously an armored attack. Indeed, soldiers and civilians alike found themselves awestruck by the sheer

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<sup>259</sup> Henry McLemore, “At War (Somewhere in Tennessee),” *Knoxville Journal*, June 29, 1941.

<sup>260</sup> McMillin, 71.

<sup>261</sup> Randolph Tucker, “Armored Outfit Annihilates Fifth Division, Proving Blitz Power, Giving Natives Grim Show,” *Nashville Tennessean*, June 21, 1941.

sight of the onrush of tanks, prompting soldiers to drop their guns and pick up their cameras, while civilians looked on with awe.<sup>262</sup>

With the sheer mass of men and materiel using Tennessee's limited infrastructure, it became inevitable that damage would be done to antiquated roads and highways. On June 17, 1941, one such incident involved one of George Patton's light tanks of the 2d Armored Division. The tank crashed through a steel and concrete bridge near Alexandria, Tennessee, taking thirty-five feet of the span with it while plunging twenty-five feet into Smith Fork Creek. The driver suffered a broken leg, and the remainder of the division was forced to find an alternate route, as it took several days to repair the bridge.<sup>263</sup> Crashes like this one proved commonplace throughout the maneuvers. On the same day, another tank driven by Private Melvin L. Mills and Private Walter C. Pittman crashed through another bridge near Liberty, Tennessee, plummeting thirty feet and severely injuring Pittman.<sup>264</sup> Another incident occurred when a tank from the 66<sup>th</sup> Armored regiment crashed through a bridge railing under blackout conditions, destroying the tank and severely injuring the driver.<sup>265</sup>

During the third problem, another tank from the 66<sup>th</sup> Armored Regiment managed to fall eight feet off a wooden bridge. With the tank immobilized, curious locals emerged to survey the situation. With help miles away, the locals attempted to devise various methods to pull the tank out of the gulley. One man offered to use his mule team to extract the tank from its resting place, while another man suggested towing it using his Model A Ford. While stranded, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Joe Moore, commander of the stricken tank, began to eat his emergency rations while waiting for aid. With the swarm of locals at the crash site growing, a local woman decided to treat the tank

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<sup>262</sup> Donald Eugene Houston, *Hell on Wheels: the 2d Armored Division*, (San Rafael, CA: Presidio Press, 1975), 65.

<sup>263</sup> Associated Press, "Army Tank Falls Through Creek Bridge," *Nashville Banner*, June 17, 1941.

<sup>264</sup> Editorial, "Soldiers Hurt in War Games," *Nashville Tennessean*, June 18, 1941.

<sup>265</sup> Houston, 66.

crew with genuine Southern hospitality, providing a platter of biscuits, butter, honey, and a pot of coffee. The experience proved memorable for the tank crew and locals alike.<sup>266</sup>

Most famously, however, one of Patton's tanks caused significant damage when it took evasive action to avoid crushing a farmer's truck in the town of Bell Buckle, Tennessee. The tank driver managed to avoid hitting the truck but instead drove straight through city hall. The tank plowed through the wall, causing one side of the building to collapse on top of the steel monster. It took several hours to clear the debris before the tank could reverse and rejoin the action.<sup>267</sup> Besides the building, the only casualty came from the turret gunner whose, "helmeted head stopped a falling brick."<sup>268</sup> Bell Buckle's city hall sustained some of the heaviest damage of any public building during the maneuvers. The road system, however, suffered extensive damages due to the numerous tank accidents as well as normal wear and tear. Tennessee Highway Commissioner C.W. Phillips calculated initial damages to Tennessee roads and highways at \$18,987.50. This estimate only covered state owned property, as county and city officials filed separate statements.<sup>269</sup>

Damage to property, however, was not limited to civilian and municipal interests. One problem that persistently annoyed the military involved the destruction of their lines of communication. The lines were not cut by enemy combatants or careless civilians but by the livestock adjoining the headquarters of units such as the 53<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Brigade in Shelbyville. According to Sgt. Francis Gardner of Schenectady, New York lamented, "I don't know what

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<sup>266</sup> Houston, 68.

<sup>267</sup> McMillin, 55.

<sup>268</sup> Randolph Tucker, "Soldiers' Departure Leaves Natives Saddened," *Nashville Tennessean*, June 29, 1941.

<sup>269</sup> McMillin, 72.

there is about our wires that the cows like.”<sup>270</sup> The cows found the insulation of the phone lines to be rather appetizing and kept the wire crews busy replacing lines throughout the maneuvers.

Problems persisted in the area of traffic control as well. Rather than ceding the right of way to military vehicles, civilians and military personnel shared the roads on several occasions, resulting in congestion and slowed advances. In an article published on June 7, 1941 in the *Nashville Banner*, Associated Press Correspondent Hilliard Wood writes, “As the unsuspecting motorist passes this flag on a southward journey he fills the sight of a Blue 50-caliber anti-tank mechanized gun hidden in the rank undergrowth of an untended fence row. The gun crew won’t shoot him, but just over the hill he will get into one of the largest masses of motorized equipment, trucks, weapon carriers, and command cars he will ever hope to get out of.”<sup>271</sup> In most cases, however, corridors were shut off to civilian access for their protection as well as operational considerations. Officers reported to command that, “civilian traffic has been no deterrent to the shuttling motorized columns.”<sup>272</sup>

Civilians, however, reported great consternation while trying to reach areas impacted by the maneuver zones. According to an Army report published in the *Chattanooga Times*, “Tactically, officers say the soldiers have yet to find any great civilian problem enmeshing the widespread army movements.”<sup>273</sup> Military Police and local authorities managed to close off most arteries to prevent civilian traffic from entering the war zone. Stories such as these were all too common as civilians and military personnel alike inhabited the same areas of the state. While one was training for war, the other was merely going about their daily lives.

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<sup>270</sup> Editorial, “Battle of Beer Cans Small Worry as Cows Nibble Wires,” *Nashville Banner*, June 12, 1941.

<sup>271</sup> Hilliard Wood, “Motorists in Maneuver Area See Tactics of Modern War,” *Nashville Banner*, June 7, 1941.

<sup>272</sup> Rice Yahner, “War Games Bring Woe to Civilians,” *Knoxville Journal*, June 7, 1941.

<sup>273</sup> Associated Press, “Soldier Throngs in War Problems Make Life a Problem to Civilians,” *Chattanooga Daily Times*, June 7, 1941.

Newspapers were responsible for announcing road closures to the public and advising alternate routes and possible viewing opportunities of the maneuvers themselves. With many roads occupied by Army equipment, the *Nashville Banner* ran an advisory article suggesting alternate routes between Nashville and Chattanooga. According to the paper, “The traffic problem has become more acute in the war maneuver area between Nashville and Chattanooga with the closing of the Manchester-Monteagle span of road for improvements along U.S. Highway No. 41. However, the motorist, if he desires to see the Army in action, may take the Murfreesboro-Manchester-Tullahoma-Winchester route of 161 miles to Chattanooga.”<sup>274</sup> Many civilians took advantage of the opportunity to witness the war games for themselves.

In many instances, civilians did not have to travel to witness the maneuvers. Fast moving advances and retreats, field encampments, and defensive positions placed many troops in close contact with local citizens. One such case involved local farmer Earl Warren of Coffee County, Tennessee. Warren’s 145-acre farm found itself repeatedly overrun by Red and Blue Forces battling back and forth throughout the maneuvers. Though he admitted some frustration with the Army, he found their presence to be a welcome diversion. His interview with Hilliard Wood of the Associated Press provides an excellent account of a farmer caught up in the middle of the action. “Those soldiers,” Warren said, “they’re as nice a bunch of fellows as I ever met.”<sup>275</sup> Mr. Warren reported enjoying having conversations with the men on his farm as he harvested his crops, claiming it to be a good diversion from a hard day’s work. He expressed frustration following the destruction of his orchard, however, “I do think they might have been more careful with their trucks around the fruit trees but this was just one bunch of them. Most of them are all

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<sup>274</sup> Editorial, “Alternate Routes Either to See or Miss War Games Marked,” *Nashville Banner*, June 7, 1941.

<sup>275</sup> Hilliard Wood, “Tennessee Farmer Finds Army Men ‘Nice Bunch of Fellows,’” *Nashville Banner*, June 19, 1941.

right. I complained to the captain and he told me that the Government would pay for the orchard but you know it's hard to tell when a thing like that has been paid for."<sup>276</sup>

Mr. Warren also reported on numerous guests that visited his house while the Army was camped nearby. "I guess my wife feeds more than 200 of them. The first night they came here she stayed up till 1 o'clock cooking and then she wanted to wash the dishes before she went to bed . . . She fed about forty more the next day. You know they all seem to want ham and eggs." He continued, "We charge most of them but a couple of soldiers were in the other night whose home is just about two miles away and offered to pay for their meal. You know I couldn't charge those boys anything. I've got two sons who are signed up for the draft, one of them received his questionnaire just last Saturday. I'd hate to think they couldn't go to my neighbor's house if they were hungry and get something to eat."<sup>277</sup> Warren enjoyed having the troops around and stated that their damage to his property, minus the orchard, was minimal, although they did leave his gates open regularly, allowing his cattle to escape. He chuckled recalling some of the questions the men asked, which mostly revolved around operating the farm. Many of them had never been to the country before and were highly inquisitive regarding farm operations.

Like Mr. Warren, James Clemons of Granville, Tennessee recalled his frustration with escaping livestock caused by the maneuvers. He recalls, "It was frustrating chasing hogs and cows all over the place. About the time you'd get them back where they belonged, another Army unit would come through and tear the fence down again and off they'd go. And off I'd go chasing after them." He continued, "We all knew it was for a good cause, and everyone got along really well. When we'd get the cows back, the soldiers would love to watch us milk them. Many

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<sup>276</sup> Hilliard Wood, "Tennessee Farmer Finds Army Men 'Nice Bunch of Fellows,'" *Nashville Banner*, June 19, 1941.

<sup>277</sup> Hilliard Wood, "Tennessee Farmer Finds Army Men 'Nice Bunch of Fellows,'" *Nashville Banner*, June 19, 1941.

of the soldiers had never seen a cow milked before so it was great entertainment.”<sup>278</sup> Like James Clemons and Earl Warren, many Tennesseans experienced discomforts associated with the close proximity of Army units but tolerated them with a gentle good humor as they understood the purpose of their presence.

Not all troops visited the locals willingly. It was common practice for “prisoners of war” to be detained on local farms. Privates Cecil Ray and Milton White enjoyed the hospitality of their hosts after being captured during the maneuvers. “As prisoners of the ‘blue’ army these soldiers enjoyed their period of captivity probably more than they would during actual warfare, for the owners of the farmhouse where they were detained treated them with candy and lemonade.”<sup>279</sup> Many POWs enjoyed their brief stays in captivity, especially considering the hospitality of their captors.

Indeed, whether at work or play, the troops influenced the lives of civilians. “On weekends, after a siren in a Piper Cub sounded the end of a problem, streets were crowded in every town in the area. Soda fountains, movie houses, and USO recreation centers were packed.”<sup>280</sup> Interactions between soldiers and civilians often became a point of contention between the two sides but also offered numerous opportunities for businesses in the state. Local businessmen would capitalize on the needs of the soldiers, from selling merchandise in stores, produce/meals from farmers, to patronage bestowed upon local establishments during limited leave time.

With nearly 80,000 troops inhabiting the state during the maneuvers, it soon became apparent that their presence would be a boon for businesses of all sorts throughout the month of June. Many local citizens took advantage of the opportunities presented by the sheer mass of new consumers in the area. Nine year old Loyd Johnson of Beech Grove, Tennessee, started his own

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<sup>278</sup> McMillin, 71.

<sup>279</sup> Editorial, “Fortunes of War’ Enjoyed by Soldiers on Maneuvers,” *Chattanooga Daily Times*, June 23, 1941.

<sup>280</sup> Sloan, 3.



courier business. With nothing but a pushcart, Loyd purchased candy bars for a nickel apiece and sold them to the troops for a quarter. He excitedly told a local reporter, “I’ve got more nickels and dimes than I ever had before. I sure like the soldier boys. See, I’ve got a flag and a pistol on my cart!”<sup>281</sup> Johnson made a healthy profit during the 1941 maneuvers, and continued his success with later maneuvers.

Another boy, Jack Cato, one of the future founders of the Cracker Barrel Restaurant chain, also partook in this lucrative trade. He recalls, “I used to buy candy bars and soft drinks for a nickel, and the soldiers would pay me a dime for them, sometimes a quarter. They were glad to get them, and I suspect they felt good about helping a kid make a little money. . .By the time the maneuvers finished, I had a better appreciation for business , and for soldiers who sacrificed so much.”<sup>282</sup> Like Jack and Loyd, many local boys found the troops to be a good way to make a little money.

Not all business success was limited to amateurs, however, as local shopkeepers recorded record profits. Dee Baker, a Manchester druggist reported, “One day alone we sold more than 400 milk shakes. We would have sold more if we could have got milk. And ice cream cones- plenty of times I never wanted to see a dipper again. Soap, I never knew there was so much soap. Why, I sold it faster than I could get it!”<sup>283</sup> He continued, “I’d have sold \$1,000 worth of mirrors if I could have got them in. Boy, the rush was nearly too much. If they have maneuvers here again this store is going to be widened 20 feet. They couldn’t all get in.”<sup>284</sup> Baker claimed to have sold more ice cream in one week during the maneuvers than he did any month in 1940.

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<sup>281</sup> Randolph Tucker, “Soldiers’ Departure Leaves Natives Saddened,” *Nashville Tennessean*, June 29, 1941.

<sup>282</sup> McMillin, 65.

<sup>283</sup> Randolph Tucker, “Soldiers’ Departure Leaves Natives Saddened,” *Nashville Tennessean*, June 29, 1941.

<sup>284</sup> Randolph Tucker, “Soldiers’ Departure Leaves Natives Saddened,” *Nashville Tennessean*, June 29, 1941.

Local businesses made a handsome profit from the presence of the troops throughout their time in the region.

Businesses in every area of the warzone boomed with the patronage of thousands of troops. According to Jerry Baulch of the Associated Press, “Every one of the dozen or so towns and villages-the largest had a 7,000 population-in the maneuver area saw its streets filled almost nightly throughout June with fun-hunting soldiers. Most of the stores in the villages and along the roadsides had sold out many times their stock of refreshments, candies, and tobacco. Some of them did as much business one day as they ordinarily do in an entire year.”<sup>285</sup> The presence of the troops provided a huge boost to local economies. The local economy thrived on the presence of the soldiers. With around 80,000 present during the maneuvers, 120,000 stationed at Camp Forrest, 10,000 at the Smyrna Airfield, and 14,000 at the Army Air Force Classification Center in Nashville, Tennessee was in an ideal position to capitalize on the needs of the soldiers. The maneuvers, coupled with the presence of large numbers of soldiers stationed around the region propelled the economy of the state to heights not seen since the beginning of the Great Depression.<sup>286</sup>

On the last weekend of May, the city of Nashville saw nearly 4,000 soldiers stream into the city for their last weekend break until the end of combat actions. The city was not entirely prepared for the influx, as civic organizations had not planned activities to entertain the soldiers. However, they entertained themselves by exploring the city, visiting movie theaters and dance halls, taverns, and restaurants. Rooms in hotels, however, soon ran out. Many soldiers ended up sleeping all over the city, “it was estimated that more than 1,000 were sleeping on lawns all over the downtown section-Memorial Square, at the post office, the Customs House, Hume-Fogg

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<sup>285</sup> Jerry Baulch, “Army Ends War Game in Middle Tennessee,” *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, June 30, 1941.

<sup>286</sup> Robert G. Spinney, *World War II in Nashville: Transformation of the Homefront*, (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1998), 20.

Technical School, the Nashville Public Library, and some 200 were said to have covered the lawn in front of the Polk Apartments on Seventh Avenue, North.”<sup>287</sup> The Nashville police also reported that at least 41 soldiers spent the night as their guests on charges of drunk and disorderly conduct.

Thanks to an Army Chaplain of the 115<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery, some troops and locals were able to view movies courtesy of the Army. He “set up the movie projector on his jeep to give troops a respite from the action.”<sup>288</sup> Inviting the locals to attend his shows helped to engender good feelings between the Army and the civilians as well. According to Lucy Stoner of Wilson County, Tennessee, “One Sunday night, they were camped next to the Greenvale Cemetery, not far from our house. They invited all of us in the area over to see a movie. My father and I went, along with my two sisters. I don’t remember the movie, but I’ll always remember that night. We all had a good time and everyone was very friendly. We got to know some soldiers really well.”<sup>289</sup> Though this was done on an ad hoc basis during the 1941 maneuvers, the USO would continue the process during later actions.

If the June maneuvers proved anything to locals and military officials alike, it was that recreational opportunities for troops stationed in the state were sorely lacking, and that troops needed diversion during downtime. It was with this in mind that the Second Army created the Community Services and Recreational Activity Program to oversee recreational activities for the soldiers. Executive Order No. 8890 established the Office of Defense Health and Welfare Services to meet the needs of communities arising from the defense program and to coordinate the activities of service organizations during emergencies. The Recreation Section of the program “was responsible for stimulating and coordinating recreational programs in

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<sup>287</sup> Editorial, “4,000 Soldiers Visit City, Home Service Opens,” *Nashville Tennessean*, June 2, 1941.

<sup>288</sup> McMillin, 49.

<sup>289</sup> McMillin, 49.

communities of the Tennessee Army Maneuver Area and assisting such communities to secure supplementary recreational facilities.”<sup>290</sup> These facilities could include anything from a swimming pool, officer/enlisted lounges, formal and informal dances (including square dances), United Service Organization (USO) movies and shows, as well as shower and bath facilities should the troops require them.<sup>291</sup> However, these changes would not be implemented until the 1942 maneuvers at the earliest, and the soldiers of the June 1941 maneuvers had to make do with what they had.

Not all R&R (rest and relaxation) took place in the cities of the state, however, as many soldiers decided to spend their time in the country. Nearly 24,000 soldiers took Greyhound buses into the country during the first week of the month. *New York Times* Correspondent Hanson W. Baldwin penned an article on June 23<sup>rd</sup> detailing the exploits of the 27<sup>th</sup> Division (New York National Guard) interacting with the locals at a local dance. According to Baldwin, “They played ‘Turkey in the Straw’ and Uncle Charley did the calling. The hill-billy band sat in the front of what used to be Jim Bean’s law office and the music of the fiddle and the plunking strings was carried to Lynchburg through loud-speakers atop the dry goods emporium.”<sup>292</sup> He continued, “It was one of the biggest nights in Tennessee hill country history as Lynchburg, population 390 at the last census, entertained those 18,000 ‘damyankees’ (it’s all one word down here) of New York’s Twenty-Seventh Division at an old-fashioned square dance in the village square last night.”<sup>293</sup> The men of the 27<sup>th</sup> reveled in the rustic nature of their hosts and laughed at the “whooping and hollering” exhibited by their newfound friends.

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<sup>290</sup> Recreation Section, Office of Defense Health and Welfare Services, Federal Security Agency, *Final Report of the Community Services and Recreational Activity Program in the Tennessee Army Maneuvers*, (Second Army, Region VII, November 1942), 4.

<sup>291</sup> *Ibid*, 18-20.

<sup>292</sup> Hanson W. Baldwin, “Men of 27<sup>th</sup> Join Hill Billy Dance,” *New York Times*, June 23, 1941.

<sup>293</sup> Hanson W. Baldwin, “Men of 27<sup>th</sup> Join Hill Billy Dance,” *New York Times*, June 23, 1941.

Though Lynchburg enjoyed the presence of the soldiers on this occasion, not all communities were as thrilled at the sudden influx of guests. Towns that had small populations soon found themselves overrun with the khaki clad troops, “In their rest hours, soldiers have been overrunning restaurants and stores, sometimes exhausting stocks within a few hours. Tents have been pitched on farmers’ doorsteps, guns set up in main streets.”<sup>294</sup> Even Chattanooga, one of the largest cities in the state, found its facilities taxed by the massive influx of visitors to the city with 10-15,000 men swamping the city from Camp Forrest and Fort Oglethorpe. Hotels ran out of rooms, restaurants ran out of food, and stores ran out of stock and supply. A Service Men’s Club was set up by the city to aid in accommodating these men, and the local YMCA set up 125 cots to help with overcrowding.<sup>295</sup> Despite their best efforts however, the ad hoc measures taken during the 1941 maneuvers could not accommodate the massive influx of troops. Only the creation of the Office of Defense Health and Welfare Services following the maneuvers would allow for the creation of adequate recreation and rest facilities for G.I.’s in the midstate. These changes, however, would come too late for the 1941 exercises.

The massive influx of troops proved to bring both positive and negative effects to the state of Tennessee during the short duration of the 1941 Maneuvers. From traffic disruptions to property destruction, from economic boom to overwhelming local establishments, the 1941 maneuvers had a huge impact on the state and its populace. Like the effects of the maneuvers on the military itself, the maneuvers affected profound changes on the indigenous people of the state. Beginning in 1941 and continuing until the termination of the maneuvers in 1944, the presence of hundreds of thousands of American troops drastically changed the economic and social makeup of Tennessee. Men from across the country converged on the midstate, bringing

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<sup>294</sup> Associated Press, “Soldier Throngs in War Problems Make Life a Problem to Civilians,” *Chattanooga Daily Times*, June 7, 1941.

<sup>295</sup> Associated Press, “Soldier Visitors Fewer This Week,” *Chattanooga Daily Times*, June 8, 1941.

with them different customs and perspectives. Their Army paychecks provided a well needed boost to the state's economy, with local merchants often struggling to keep merchandise on their shelves when the troops came to town. They created a market for consumer goods, providing the impetus for children and adults alike to capitalize on their needs. As J.M. McCullough of Coffee County stated, "I'm sorry they're leaving because we never had a show around here like this before. They were fine looking boys and sure did themselves up proud. When they were camping on my property, I told them to take the last drop of water out of my well if they wanted it. They all treated us nice too."<sup>296</sup> Like McCullough, many Tennesseans found themselves saddened by the departure of the troops but eagerly looking forward to their eventual return. Though their presence could sometimes be an irritant, their contributions endeared them to the local populace and far outweighed the negative aspects of their occupation.

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<sup>296</sup> Randolph Tucker, "Soldiers' Departure Leaves Natives Saddened," *Nashville Tennessean*, June 29, 1941.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

While the June 1941 Tennessee Maneuvers were eclipsed in the months following its conclusion by larger successors in Louisiana and the Carolinas, the contributions of the war games cannot be discounted. Numerous interwar developments and modifications in both the infantry and armored branches of the U.S. Army found themselves put to the test in the fields of middle Tennessee. The infantry branch made the switch from the square to the triangular division structure in the years preceding the maneuvers but only received extensive field-testing of this configuration on a mass scale for the first time in the June 1941 maneuvers. Likewise, the arduous struggle to create an independent armored branch led to a massive developmental delay in U.S. armor and armored tactics. The theoretical ideas and concepts surrounding the armored division appeared to indicate success on paper but could not be evaluated critically until the theories were put to the test in the field. The Tennessee actions proved to many in the armed forces that the units taking the field in Tennessee were a huge improvement from the forces that had existed during the interwar period but still required extensive modifications to prepare themselves for the looming conflict.

The military was not the only entity to benefit from the effects of the maneuvers, however, as local Tennesseans found their lives dramatically changed by the presence of the U.S. Army in their state. The citizens may have been apprehensive about the military “invasion” at first, but soon discovered that the benefits of their presence far outweighed the costs. Many understood the purpose of these actions and realized the importance attached to the maneuvers by the military. They endured nearly a month of mock-war in which the front lines snaked their way across farms, roads, and even town squares. Local businesses took advantage of the presence of the soldiers, making record profits in numerous lines of business. Indeed, even local

children found the entrepreneurial spirit too much to resist and carried wagonloads of candy, drinks, and other assorted items to the troops in return for an oftentimes 100-200% return on their investment. Though some property damage did occur, most Tennesseans were willing to excuse the inconveniences. Indeed, many found the presence of the troops to be a source of great excitement, and an amicable local populace made civil/military relations much easier.

This thesis provides a critical study of the 1941 maneuvers as well as the prewar developments that necessitated them. It fills a void in the study of prewar preparation, covering an often-overlooked exercise that was of immense importance to the United States Military in its preparations for the Second World War. The Tennessee Maneuvers were critical in the development of both infantry and armored doctrine that the Army would take into the field following the outbreak of war in December 1941. Prior to the maneuvers, no U.S. force had engaged armor in the field since the Great War, and indeed, no U.S. Armored Division had ever taken the field prior to the June 1941 Maneuvers.

Though later Louisiana and Carolina Maneuvers of the same year would eclipse the Tennessee Maneuvers in both size and scope, the Tennessee actions provided the first glimpse of how the U.S. Army would function in a modern war. The 1941 maneuvers taught the infantry how to combat concentrated armored thrusts successfully by demonstrating the effectiveness of concentrated anti-tank positions. Moreover, it taught the Army how to use its armored forces effectively in the field. General Patton's first attack in Tennessee demonstrated the effectiveness of the infantry's massed anti-tank defense tactics, but his further attacks demonstrated the true striking power of the Armored Force. The excessive "casualties" sustained during the first attack led Patton to change his methods. Rather than charging headlong at strongly defended positions, his men would strike at the flanks, while friendly infantry forces would hold the enemy's



attention at the center. By crushing the enemy flanks, the 2nd Armored Division could slash through rear areas and wreak havoc on the enemy. This method would become the prescribed method of armored warfare implemented during later maneuvers and throughout the duration of the Second World War.

The critiques of the war games clearly evidenced the changes that would be necessary to correct deficiencies discovered throughout the maneuver period. Deficiencies in small-unit leadership were obvious to all those involved. Defensive positions were considered too static, and combat intelligence was found to be sorely lacking. Armored units absorbed unnecessarily high casualties due to attacks against enemy strongpoints. The essence of the Tennessee Maneuvers provided the information that the Army needed to correct deficiencies endemic throughout its forces.

When the 2<sup>nd</sup> Army took the field on June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1941, few could have anticipated the significance these maneuvers would hold. The Tennessee Maneuvers proved the soundness of armored doctrines espoused by men like Adna Chaffee, Charles Scott, and George S. Patton and the validity of reformed infantry formations and tactics created by George C. Marshall and Leslie McNair. The maneuvers provided the grounds to remove officers who proved incapable of adapting to the rigors of modern war and allowed abler officers to advance into positions of authority. The lessons learned in Tennessee would be tested and improved upon in later maneuvers, but many fundamentals emerged from the June 1941 actions. The vital importance of these war-games necessitate that the 1941 Tennessee Maneuvers not be forgotten or omitted from current and future studies. Indeed, the Tennessee Maneuvers laid the foundations of military tactics that would guide U.S. Forces to victory in World War II, and provided the impetus necessary to turn the United States military into the world's premier fighting force.

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