

# Chapter VII

## Military

### Arkansas National Guard, Conway<sup>1</sup>



*Conway National Guard Sharpshooters, 1935. Front row, left to right: Dean Southerland, Jack Hickerson, Capt. Arvor M. Ledbetter, Lt. Alton Williams, Hubert Futrell, and Arlo Smith. Back row: Edwin Moore, Ralph De Jarnett, Harry Stevens, Dan Estes, Sam Brown, Red Hickman, Herman Bivens, Royce Hall, and J.D. Martin.*

The Conway unit was organized and federally recognized on April 21, 1921 in the Arkansas National Guard as Headquarters Company, 5th Regiment of Infantry at Conway. On October 25, 1921, it was redesignated as Headquarters Company, 153rd Infantry; and on December 1, 1923, as Company G. 153rd Infantry.

The unit was inducted into federal service on December 23, 1940 at Conway, and inactivated June 30, 1944 at Camp Shelby, Mississippi.

Conway guardsmen were ordered into active federal service on September 24, 1957 (during the integration crisis at Central High School in Little Rock), and were released from active federal service on October 24, 1957.

For most of its history the Conway unit had its headquarters on Caldwell Street. For several years the location was 1400 Caldwell (where the unfinished woodworks store and the Wren firm are now located). In 1929 the unit moved across the street, where in the mid-1930s an armory building was constructed by the WPA at a cost of \$23,500. In 1949 the south and second story southwest sections were added. The cornerstone on the northeast corner lists the governor and the adjutant general of Arkansas at the time, along with pictures, documents, and a roster of the

unit members at the time of the building's dedication. The Conway unit remained at this location for the next 53 years. (The building is now the McGee Center.)

On January 23, 1982, the Conway unit moved to its current location, the SELBY/ROSS Arkansas National Guard Armory, 300 Exchange Avenue, in the Conway Industrial Park. The Armory was named for SFC Thomas N. Selby and SSG Larry J. Ross who passed away while members of the Troop E. 151st Cavalry.

Following is a list of commanders of the Conway unit since it was federally recognized in 1921: CPT Girard S. Mc Henry, 1921; CPT Arvor M. Ledbetter, 1921-40; CPT William L. Browning, 1946-49; CPT Charles G. Ray, 1949-50; CPT John P. Bumpers, 1950-52; CPT Hubert L. Ferguson, 1952-55; CPT Neal S. Floyd, 1955-61; CPT Joseph H. Siebenmorgan, 1961; CPT W.C. Swaffar, 1961-63; CPT James H. Clark, 1963-66; CPT Alton R. Lackie, 1966-71; CPT Travis H. Acklin, 1971-73; CPT Frederick A. Kearney, 1973-75; CPT Travis H. Acklin, 1975-76; CPT Harrell E. Clendenin, 1976-78; CPT David P. Reinold, 1978-83; CPT George E. Baker, 1983-85; CPT Stephen A. Womack, 1985-present.

<sup>1</sup>Source: Wayne T. Sellers.

# Mobilization of the 153rd Infantry, ANG — Preparation for War<sup>1</sup>

“153rd Infantry, ANG, Formally Mobilized into Fed'l Service; Headquarters Here 10 Days.”

That was a *Log Cabin Democrat* headline Monday, December 23, 1940.

Under the command of Colonel Heber L. McAlister, then president of the Arkansas State Teachers College, the regiment of 90 officers and approximately 1,850 enlisted men in 17 Arkansas cities was mobilized. Colonel McAlister had been given a year's leave of absence by the ASTC board of trustees.



*Colonel Heber Lowery  
McAlister.*

When the new regular soldiers assembled for the first time, they heard the presidential order of November 30 read which changed them to regular army status. Physical examinations and inoculations for typhoid, smallpox, etc. were next, scheduled in their home cities. After a ten-day stay at their home stations they were to move to Camp Joseph T. Robinson to be attached to the Thirty-Fifth Division, consisting of 20,000 national guardsmen from Kansas and Missouri, for 13 weeks of intensive training. Their next destination after that period was unknown.

Colonel McAlister had received a personal letter from Major General John F. Williams, chief of the national guard bureau, which read as follows:

“I desire to congratulate you and, through you, the officers and men of the 153rd infantry whose tour of duty with the federal government will soon begin.

“You are fortunate in commanding one of the finest regiments of the army and particularly fortunate at this time in being assigned to serve at Camp Robinson, within your own state. Your government expects great things from the 153rd, and I have no hesitation in predicting that that regiment will be a distinct addition to the nation's defense forces.”

A four column, four page edition of the regimental newspaper had been printed at the *Log Cabin Democrat* office and was distributed to the men when they assembled for the first time.

Units of the 153rd infantry were located in the following towns in Arkansas: Conway, Russellville, Pine Bluff, Little Rock, North Little Rock, Hot Springs, Hope, Magnolia, Prescott, Clarksville, Dardanelle, Arkadelphia, Beebe, Forrest City, Walnut Ridge, Batesville, Blytheville, and Searcy.

Seven months after this mobilization Colonel McAlister resigned as president of ASTC. He stated it appeared his service as commander of the 153rd would not be limited to the one-year period for which he was called and might be indefinite. The personnel committee of the board reluctantly accepted his resignation July 26, 1941. Colonel McAlister later attained the rank of brigadier general of the army.

Pearl Harbor was attacked December 7, 1941. The men of the 153rd who had survived the war years were released from active service at Camp Shelby, Mississippi, June 30, 1944.

## **Rosters of Company G and Headquarters Company of the 153rd Infantry of the Arkansas National Guard That Were Inducted Into Federal Service December 23, 1940<sup>1</sup>**

Regimental Commander of the 153rd Infantry — Colonel Heber L. McAlister. Roster of Company “G” 153rd Infantry (rifle):

Officers — Captain, Arvor M. Ledbetter, Sr.; First Lieutenant, Gail S. Robbins; Second Lieutenant, Grover J. Butler; and second lieutenant, Coy W. Gentry.

Sergeants — Thurman Frederick Clendenin, Alvin Martin Doster, Austin Griffith, Liston Junius Hager, Aubrey Gaar Pate, and William Leon Russell.

Corporals — Ernest Ball, Jr., Sherbert Cabot Benton, William Robert Hinkle, John Lee Kelton, Jr., Arvor Maurice Ledbetter, Jr., Charles Guthrie Ray, Edgar Harrison Stevens, John Hamilton Stevens, and Howard Lewis Stewart.

Privates First Class — Donald Brooks Bearden, Harry Lee Beazley, Edgar Jarrell Bivens, Jubal Early Ethridge, Jr., Arthur Dencan Flurry, Jr., Thomas Norwood Foster, Jr., Wade Hampton Garton, James Alvin Hamlett, Jack Lavert Holmes, Marion William Lamb, Edwin Dwight Ledbetter, Winfred Amos Ledbetter, Daniel Monroe Loomis, Garvin

<sup>1</sup>Source: Corinne H. Robinson.

<sup>1</sup>Source: *Log Cabin Democrat*.

Jackson McCutcheon, Joseph Stephens Robinette, Walter Franklin Sawrie, Spencer Hilton Sweeney, Charles Madison Williams, William Albert Williams, and Henry Lee Yarbrough.

Privates — Hugh Bennie Anderson, Johnney Clayton Andrews, Harold Douglas Armstrong, Elijah Jethro Bailey, Harry Kenneth Baldrige, Jack Bettis Baldrige, Harley Thomas Barlow, Homer Burl Bennett, Walter R. Biggers, Gilbert Sherrell Brinkley, Lewis Gray Butler, Raymond Arnold Carlock, Kincheloe Joe Deason, Doy Dean DeBoard, Paul Page Douglas, Roy Everett Dunbar, Magor Wayne Duncan, Audrous Ward DuPree, Earl Clarence Elkins, Leroy Jesse Evatt, Ezra Delmar Fisher, Riefford Brown Flood, Ralph Irving Gardner, William Earl Gentry, Weldon DeWitt Glover, Hurlis Vondale Graham, James Cecil Greer, Euel Hazel, Leroy Hazel, Thomas Harry Hazel, Hubert Douglas Henry, Seth Elmo Henry, William Coy Hicks, Norman Godfrey Horn, Faber Lyle Irby, Charles Thomas Jones, Eddie William Jones, Robert Earl Jones, Olsen Kennedy, James Woodrow Lane, John Elbert Latimer, Jr., Myrl Venoy Lawrence, Hermon Joseph Lienhart, Hayden Henry Loveless, Luther Abner Loveless, Jr., Robert Abner Loveless, Melton Johnnie Mahan, Fred Edward Medlock, William Clyde McMahan, Herbert Hartry Newman, Howard Rufus Noggle, Glyness Lawrence Purtle, Ingram John Purtle, Charles Milton Ramer, Arlice Bryan Robinson, Elder Franklin Rosamond, James Autry Rushing, Lawrence Marion Rushing, Robert Marx Saye, Claud Wesley Shaw, Alva C. Shillings, Lionel Javan Shock, Dannis Parker Simmons, Paul Morris Smith, Thomas Jefferson Smith, Jr., Oliver Wendell Tackett, Bryant William Tapley, Benjamin Edward Taylor, Benjamin Lafayette Taylor, Jr., Orvie Basil Taylor, Winfred Amiel Taylor, Edwin Keith Tester, James Hosea Thacker, Howard Arnold Tipton, David James Tucker, Glenn Paul Vann, James Doyle Vic-

tory, John Walter Welch, Jr., Troy Truman Williams, Felix Floyd Wills, and Kitchell Frederick Wilson. Roster of Headquarters Detachment 2nd Battalion:

Sergeants — William L. Browning, Bertrue M. Tilley, and Elbert R. Tarlton.

Corporals — Joe B. Carmical, Jim D. DeJarnatt, Peter C. Favre, Patrick E. Gillespie, and George O. Jackson.

Privates First Class — Arthur H. Allen, Jr., John W. Holt, Jack D. Ingram, Garlon R. Morgan, and Diederich Walter.

Privates — Carl Bartlett, Raymond L. Cordell, Emil J. Enderlin, Carl F. Grummer, Udell H. Hill, Julius L. Hughes, Arnold J. Lachowsky, Charles A. McDonald, Daniel D. Maddox, Oscar D. Maddox, Thomas H. Reeves, and Ben E. Young.



*At Toyko's Haneda Airport, April 16, 1951, Justin Williams, Faulkner County Native, identifying individually for General MacArthur. Japan's political leaders assembled to bid him good-bye five days after his dismissal by President Truman.*