

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Nat. Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

### 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Walnut Ridge Army Airfield Access Road  
Other names/site number: LW0191, Walnut Ridge Basic Flying School Access Road, Walnut Ridge Army Flying School Access Road  
Name of related multiple property listing:

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

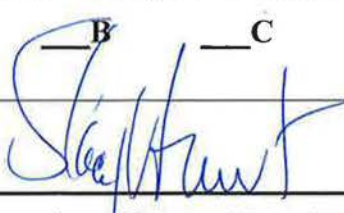
### 2. Location

Street & number: Roughly bound by US Highway 67 on the West and the intersection of Fulbright Avenue and Stafford Lane on the East  
City or town: College City State: Arkansas County: Lawrence  
Not For Publication:  Vicinity:

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_ national \_\_\_ statewide X local  
Applicable National Register Criteria:  
X A \_\_\_ B \_\_\_ C \_\_\_ D

		<u>4-4-16</u>
Signature of certifying official/Title:		Date
<u>Arkansas Historic Preservation Program</u>		
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government		
In my opinion, the property meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.		
Signature of commenting official:		Date
Title :	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

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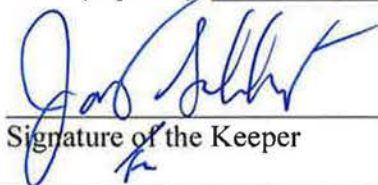
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#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register *automatic*  
 determined eligible for the National Register  
 determined not eligible for the National Register  
 removed from the National Register  
 other (explain:)

  
Signature of the Keeper

*6.7.2016*  
Date of Action

#### 5. Classification

##### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:   
Public – Local   
Public – State   
Public – Federal

##### Category of Property

(Check only one box.)

- Building(s)   
District   
Site   
Structure   
Object

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**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
_____	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
3	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
3	_____	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

TRANSPORTATION: road-related

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

TRANSPORTATION: road-related

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Concrete

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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### Summary Paragraph

The Walnut Ridge Army Airfield Access Road, along the current alignment of Fulbright Avenue is a two-lane concrete highway constructed under the National Defense Highway Act of 1941. It follows a straight alignment from the west, off of US 67 North, to the intersection of the Walnut Ridge Army Air Field Access Road (Fulbright Avenue) and Stafford Lane. In addition, the Walnut Ridge Army Airfield Access Road alignment that is being nominated retains two original culverts, one slab-top box culvert crossing Coon Creek at Station 9+80 and a 30" x 40' NRC pipe culvert located at Station 31+89. The highway retains its original 1942 concrete pavement throughout, although small portions have been patched. The highway retains its original roadway width.

### HIGHWAY

This section of access road constructed in 1942 through the use of National Defense Highway Act Funds is approximately .738 miles long and begins at the intersection of US Highway 67 and Fulbright Avenue and proceeds in an easterly direction before terminating at the middle of Fulbright Avenue and Stafford Lane. A small portion of the original roadbed is still partially visible beneath broken asphalt that starts near the middle of the intersection of the Walnut Ridge Army Air Field Access Road (Fulbright Avenue) and Stafford Lane, and would have ended at what was the western gate into the Army Air Field. The length of this altered section at the eastern boundary of the access road is roughly 0.02 miles or 80 feet. A second potentially disturbed area is located at the western boundary of the access road. In construction drawings from 1942, it shows a small rounded median at the intersection of US 67 and the Walnut Ridge Army Air Field Access Road. It is unknown when this was taken out or if this detail was ever actually constructed, though it could have happened when US 67 was widened.

The 1942 Walnut Ridge Army Air Field Access Road has a width of 20 feet for two lanes of travel. This section of roadway is currently designated Fulbright Avenue and has gravel shoulders on both sides of the roadway. (For comparison, the current American Association of

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State Highway and Transportation Officials Green Book indicates that a lane width of 11 feet 9 inches is desirable.) Each section of concrete pavement is 10 feet wide, laid with an 8" uniform thickness and has a 1 1/2" circular crown. either 36, 50, or 54 feet long, and is composed of a tan stone aggregate mixed in with cement from the Marquette Cement Company of Cape Girardeau, Missouri, and cement from O.K. Cement, of Okay, Arkansas, to create the concrete base.

### Culverts

The 1942 Walnut Ridge Army Air Field Access Road contains two non-reinforced concrete (N.R.C.) culverts, one slab-top box culvert crossing Coon Creek at Station 9/80 and a 30" x 40' NRC pipe culvert located at Station 31/ 89. The designs of the two culverts are the different, due to the need for the culvert to function differently. The first culvert is the slab-top box culvert crossing Coon Creek at Station 9/80. During initial planning this was supposed to be a Reinforced Concrete (R.C.) Box Culvert, but those plans were discontinued in order to "reduce the amount of reinforcing steel required for the structure to the absolute minimum necessary for structural integrity."<sup>1</sup> Both culverts have excellent integrity.

### INTEGRITY

The 1942 Walnut Ridge Army Air Field Access Road retains its original dimensions, while the two culverts that were constructed in 1942 also remain. Additionally, the part of Lawrence County where the highway is located retains its rural and small town settings, and the surroundings still reflect the period of significance from 1942.

The pavement of the highway towards the eastern and western ends has been repaved, though the repaving of the eastern end is deteriorating and allowing for a great visual of the original roadbed. However, since the initial review of the nomination, action has been taken by the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department to mill the roadbed surface altering the red aggregate, to a now white color with patches of red aggregate still visible. This alteration to the roadbed surface does negatively affect the visual integrity of the roadbed, while also affecting the original texture of the pavement because it introduces a grooved texture and appearance to the surface that also wasn't there originally.

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<sup>1</sup> J.A. Elliott, District Engineer for the Federal Works Agency Public Roads Administration District Six, to Mr. W.W. Zass, Chief Engineer in Little Rock, July 16, 1942, microfilm, Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department, Records Management, Microfilm roll C.28, Department Office Engineer, Construction Job Files 10260-10268.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Military

Transportation

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1942-1943

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1943

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Builder: Weymouth Construction Company,

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The 1942 Walnut Ridge Army Air Field Access Road in College City, Arkansas, is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with local significance under **Criterion A** for its significance in the areas of Transportation and Military. The 1942 Walnut Ridge Army Air Field Access Road is a well-preserved example of a National Defense Highway Act of 1941 in College City, Arkansas, constructed as part of a national movement to construct adequate motor-truck transportation routes for the defense and military industries to adequately move goods, people and materials from location to location in the case of the United States' entrance into war. With World War II already raging in much of Europe, the United States was already planning defense strategies as early as the late 1930s. As part of these national defense strategies, the United States was watching and learning from the successes and failures associated with Britain's involvement on the ongoing war. One of the successes that the United States rushed to capitalize on was the use of the road system to best move materials and personnel from place to place. By being able to see how the British were able to utilize both the transportation routes, but also the trucking industry to move "military supplies, to assist in the evacuation of cities and the removal of debris following raids, and to avoid un-co-ordinated[sic] demands by local and central government authorities"<sup>2</sup> if an attack on the main land were to happen in the forthcoming years. Though the ability to move supplies, materials and personnel throughout the country is in not a new idea, the National Defense Highway Act of 1941 was used to bolster the highway system and other methods of motor-vehicle transportation during this trying time surrounding the advancement into World War II.<sup>3</sup> Yet, it cannot be understated that these roads were essential to the security of the military installations that military supplies, materials and personnel move to and from on a daily basis between 1942 and 1945. This idea about critical the roadways were to security is clearly illustrated by Charles Quattlebaum, who wrote an article for the publication *Military Affairs*, where he opened by saying...

The present war, emphasizing mobility of movement through the wide employment of mechanized and motorized forces, once again has demonstrated the significance of military highways in the conduct of war. Today, as in the past, a good commercial thoroughfare in peace time may become a military highway of great strategical importance in war time.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> L.C. Sorrell, "Transportation and National Defense," *The Journal of Business of the University of Chicago*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (July 1941): 255.

<sup>3</sup> Though the National Defense Highway Act of 1941 helped strengthen the motor vehicle transportation routes in the United States, this would not be the last time the Defense Highway Act would be revised and extensively used. In 1956, revisions were made to the National Defense Highway Act to better meet the needs of the Cold War.

<sup>4</sup> Charles B. Quattlebaum, "Military Highways," *Military Affairs*, Vol. 8, No. 3 (Autumn 1944): 225.



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Though the 1942 Walnut Ridge Army Air Field Access Road may never become, what Quattlebaum calls a good commercial thoroughfare, it has and can continue to illustrate the need for the buildup of infrastructure in advancement of a potential entrance into World War II.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

“Transportation generally has been a vital aspect of preparedness and war, and it has probably gained in importance as such conflicts have increasingly become struggles in which rapidity of movement has matched the mounting speed of vehicles and the continuous flow of large volumes of equipment and supplies is imperative. War has taken on the characteristics of the industrial system, which also recognizes its absolute dependence upon transport.”<sup>5</sup>

These words were written just months before the bombing of Pearl Harbor by the Japanese Navy on December 7, 1941. It is in these words that one can already hear and see the need for better transportation infrastructure to help in the movement of supplies, materials and personnel from training centers to points of embarkation. Though discussions about the preparedness of both the military and the country was an ongoing topic in both chambers of the United States Legislature, the ground work for the implementation of any such infrastructure dealing with the countries preparedness came just months before the United States’ entrance in to World War II, in legislation like the National Defense Highway Act of 1941. In the few short months after the passage of such legislation very little progress had been made in construction of such projects. It was not until the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, that infrastructure improvements such as the Walnut Ridge Army Air Field Basic Flying School and the 1942 Walnut Ridge Army Air Field Access Road were pushed in to action.

The National Defense Highway Act of 1941 was not first of such infrastructure improvements made in advance of large armies. For centuries the large armies and those that lead them into battle have recognized the great importance of “military highways.”<sup>6</sup> It is noted in Charles Quattlebaum’s article that the Carthaginians developed wonderfully constructed roadways to hold off the Greeks and Romans. The Romans then utilized the methods of road construction while pushing toward the Carthaginians in North Africa, to perfect their own road systems upon concurring land in Britain, France, parts of Northern Africa and parts of the Middle East. Due to vast amount of land conquered by the Roman Empire and the superior nature of the roadways used by the military and thus the settlements along those roads, the need for more advanced military roads would dwindle until the advent of the Napoleonic Era. It is during the Napoleonic Era that many of the Roman military roads were reconstructed and more advance routes were added to the roadway system in order to rapidly move his army. It is also during his reign as Emperor of France that he established a “uniform system of highway administration, dividing the roads into imperial and departmental routes and fixing administrative responsibilities upon the

<sup>5</sup> Sorrell, 235.

<sup>6</sup> The term “military highways” in this context refers to solid transportation routes

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Federal Government.”<sup>7</sup>

Following the construction of the vast roadways constructed under Napoleon as early as 1811, foot and horse travel drastically declined due to the evolution of the train and its ability to move supplies, materials and personnel faster to a location. Though foot and horse travel never faded out entirely until the early 1900s, this method of transportation began to wane from this point forward. Though the method of travel changed the need for roadways did not change and only grew to be more important through the creation of the motorized automobile in the early 1900s.

Though railroad transportation was hitting its stride for use by the military in the late 1800s and early 1900s, Germany and the Third Reich were resurrecting the use of roadways for military purposes in 1933. It is at this time that Adolf Hitler and the Third Reich proposed the Autobahn highway. In the original plan the Autobahn would cover 4,300 miles of roadway, but it was later expanded to take in 6,250 miles instead.<sup>8</sup> The Autobahn would be designed for fast military transportation purposes.<sup>9</sup> “As developed by the Genius of the German Engineer Fritz Todt, the Autobahn system enables motor vehicles to travel at high speed from north, south, east and west across Germany without passing through a single village or meeting at a crossroads.”<sup>10</sup>

Though these Empires, Countries, and Political Organizations have been highly idealized in creating these military roadways because of their success and failure of using them, the United States has also used similar road building process long before the National Defense Highway Act of 1941. Many of the early American roadways were carved in to the countryside for use during the American Revolution, followed by the Cumberland Road in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Still it was the Army Engineers, or current day Army Corps of Engineers who were responsible for road construction. By the outset of the American Civil War and the Great War (World War I) the military was using existing roads and very few new military roads were constructed until the entrance into World War II. Even with the use of pre-existing roadways, Arkansas was able to have experienced its boom of military roads pre- American Civil War. The military roads that were constructed included routes between Memphis, Tennessee, and Little Rock, Arkansas, and then Little Rock, Arkansas, to Fort Gibson, Oklahoma, going through Fort Smith, Arkansas, a key military installation on the western frontier. Other military roads located in Arkansas include the Southwest Trail.

The military has a long history in Arkansas. The area surrounding Fort Smith, Arkansas, has had military occupation since 1817. It was influential in the peace between the Cherokee and the Osage,<sup>11</sup> during the Mexican War as a supply outpost and during the Civil War. Other areas such as Arkansas Post were gaining notoriety during the Civil War for the Confederate-built Fort

<sup>7</sup> Quattlebaum, 226.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 227.

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

<sup>11</sup> Jeremy Lynch, “Fort Smith National Historic Site,” *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture*. <http://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=4522>. (accessed September 1, 2010).

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Hindman, which was later destroyed by Union Troops in January 1863. Though Arkansas has had a long history of military occupation, it was not until World War II that Arkansas's role became even more prevalent as the US military branches, especially the Army Air Force, could be found in all corners of the state. The Army Air Force would construct seven new Army Air fields throughout Arkansas: Newport, Blytheville, Helena, Pine Bluff, Camden, Stuttgart, and Walnut Ridge.

Following the end of World War I, the United States military, including the Army Air Force went through a drastic demobilization. Between 1919 and 1938, all of the armed services went through lean budgetary years. However, "through various means and to various degrees they survived the lean years of the early 1920s and the Great Depression"<sup>12</sup> only to grow stronger and leaner in the 1930s. As part of that stronger and leaner mentality that grew out of the 1920s and 1930s, the airplanes that were manufactured were heavier and more powerful. This led to less new construction and more upgrades of existing facilities with more limited funding. However, in 1926 with the passage of the Air Corps Act of 1926 funding for ground facilities expanded greatly from \$500,000 in FY28 to nearly \$5.4 million in FY30. It is also during this time, that standardized hangars would begin to be used as part of the "Five-Year Plan." Early on in organizing this standardized plan attempt, all hangars had to "measure about 110 x 120 or 240 ft."<sup>13</sup> It was also during this period that the plans for the "1929-A and -B, and 1930-A, -B, -D, and -E designs all had a gable roof and substantial piers at all four corners."<sup>14</sup> It is also at this time that a new standardized layout of base and airfields was designed by the Building and Grounds Office to replace the World War II standard.<sup>15</sup> Though the Five-Year Plan was slow to take off, the final two years of the Five-Year Plan brought two new bases and extensive improvements to three existing bases.<sup>16</sup> Yet, it was the beginning of a slow process in rebuilding the air arm of the US Army.

The Second World War marks an immensely important period in the history of the U.S. Air Force. During the 6 short years of declared war in Europe, from 1939-1945, the U.S. Army Air Corps evolved from a second-tier air service, operating as an underappreciated subsidiary of the army, to a premiere air power of the World.<sup>17</sup>

Until mid-1939, the United States made a conscious decision that it would maintain its neutrality as Germany began to rearm itself for what would be the occupation of Czechoslovakia in March of 1939 and then attack on Poland in September of 1939. Between September 1939 and March 1940, a period known as the "phony war" because there were no major hostile acts or no land

<sup>12</sup> Julie Webster, *Historical and Architectural Overview of Military Aircraft Hangars* (Champaign, IL: United States Army Construction Engineering Research Laboratory, 2001), 3-1.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, 3-9.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, 3-11.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, 4-1

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operations attempted during this period<sup>18</sup>, the United States government was already beginning to “[anticipate] a major emergency, [and began] to [press] for further rearmament.”<sup>19</sup> It was during this time that it became “quite clear to American political and military leadership that the Army Air Corps was substantially under-strength in comparison to other global powers.”<sup>20</sup> The Chief of the Air Corps had stated in January 1939 that the United States Air Corps was fifth or sixth rate. When Germany invaded Poland in September 1939, the Air Corps had only about 800 first line combat aircraft and 25,000 men, while the German Air Force had 4,000 planes and 500,000 men.

It is at this time, that troop preparation was beginning to increase. It was also beginning to increase in the Air Corps as well. By the time tanks rolled through Poland in 1939, the US Congress had already authorized the expansion of the Air Corps to a 24-group strength of 6,000 planes. As Adolf Hitler’s *blitzkrieg* crumbled much of France in the mid-1940, President Roosevelt called for an additional 50,000 planes per year. Aircraft production soared from 3,611 in 1940 to peak at 96,270 per year in 1944. All told, the U.S. produced some 296,000 airplanes for WWII.<sup>21</sup>

In order to fulfill this need Congress responded with the First Aviation Objective of 54 combat groups. However, by the time it passed congress there was a Second Aviation Objective, which called for 84 combat groups. In order to achieve these levels both personnel and equipment the Army Air Corps was supported by new funding levels.<sup>22</sup>

As seen above, the lag in military preparedness caused the United States to go in to a flurry of activity between 1939 and 1941 in order to meet the demands of a potential entrance into what would become World War II. Like the Air Force, the other military braches including the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guards began to slowly ramp up war preparedness beginning in 1939. Yet, while the military branches began to “gradually accelerate during the pre-Pearl Harbor period,” so did large and small operators and businessmen. Still even with the gradual escalation of munitions, personnel, and supplies, it took two more years for essential infrastructure to be built to move these items to the newly constructed base camps, mustering stations and training facilities, through the passage of the National Highway Act of 1941.

Although World War II began for the United States in December of 1941, Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Department of War had been preparing for war since early 1939. By the summer of 1940, the Army Air Corps planned for an enormous expansion of combat aircraft training facilities. By September 1940, the President’s Advisory Commission to the Council of National

<sup>18</sup> "Phony War." *Encyclopædia Britannica*. 2010. Encyclopædia Britannica Online.

<<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/457343/Phony-War>>. (accessed Sep. 01, 2010).

<sup>19</sup> Lenore Fine and Jesse A. Remington, *The Corps of Engineers: Construction in the United States* (Washington D.C.: Center for Military History, U.S. Army, 2003), 108.

<sup>20</sup> Webster, 4-1.

<sup>21</sup> Harold Johnson, “The Massive Buildup,” *Wings of Honor*, <http://www.wingsofhonor.org/Pages/Task.aspx> (accessed June 11, 2012).

<sup>22</sup> Webster, 4-2.

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Defense had begun collecting information about potential sites for locating air-training facilities.

A number of factors dictated where the AAF would locate any given training airfield. Climate, topography, population, access to railroads, distance from coasts and ease of land acquisition all came into play. In Arkansas, the efforts of the Governor, and U.S. Senators and Representatives were also instrumental.

The immensity of scale and rapidity of completion of WWII facilities nationwide is very difficult to overstate. All over the nation, land was acquired for the construction of industrial, military and support facilities meant to train and arm a vast armed force necessary to fight a land, sea and air war on two fronts. The construction of Air Corps airfields illustrates the spectacular feat of construction and organization on the American home front. In 1939, the Army Air Corps had seventeen airfields in the entire United States. By late 1945, the AAF had nearly *eight hundred* airfields in the continental United States. Many of these airfields were immense. The Walnut Ridge Army Air Field in Arkansas covered 3,096.22 acres; its five auxiliary fields combined covered another 2,623.9 acres.

As the United States moved closer to combat readiness, so did many of the towns located throughout Arkansas including Fort Smith (Camp Chaffee), North Little Rock (Camp Robinson) and Oakhaven (Southwestern Proving Grounds).<sup>23</sup> These areas were either already escalating their preparedness or were being pushed to be completed in early 1942 especially with the need for munitions which would be arriving via the Southwestern Proving Ground in Hempstead County, Arkansas. With the need for munitions, there was also going to be a need for pilots to fight in combat or escort bomber runs. This area was also beginning to escalate its production as early as June of 1940 as part of the larger 273-combat group plan.

By 1940, the State of Arkansas had a non-college civilian pilot training unit in Pine Bluff, with at least the hope of another unit in the Hot Springs, Arkansas, area.<sup>24</sup> Yet, there was also a larger contingent of college-level pilot courses being taught throughout the state in 1940. Colleges such as Henderson State, Hendrix, Ouachita, and the University of Arkansas already had at least 10 students taking the course, which included “72 hours of ground instruction and from 35 to 45 hours in the air - sufficient to qualify students for private pilot’s licenses.”<sup>25</sup>

The military also took notice of the program by early 1941, as military engagement into World War II became imminent. By July 6, 1941, the War Department had already approved a proposal

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<sup>23</sup> Arkansas was home to its share of WWII facilities. A short, incomplete list of the largest includes the Naval Ammunition Depot outside Camden, Jacksonville Ordnance Works outside Jacksonville, Southwestern Proving Ground near Hope, civilian operated Primary Flying Schools at Camden, Helena, and Pine Bluff, Basic Flying Schools at Newport and Walnut Ridge, and Advanced Flying Schools at Blytheville and Stuttgart. Each of these flying schools had from three to five auxiliary airfields. The Army operated huge training camps at Camp Chaffee near Fort Smith and Camp Robinson near North Little Rock. Adams Field at Little Rock served as an Air Transport Command (ATC) Air Freight Terminal, was home to the 12th Ferrying Service Detachment, and hosted AAF Glider Training in 1943.

<sup>24</sup> “Air Training Unit for Pine Bluff,” *Arkansas Gazette*, 28 June 1940, 1.

<sup>25</sup> “180 Arkansas Students in Pilots Courses,” *Arkansas Gazette*, 1 August 1940, 5.

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for a pilot training program in Helena.<sup>26</sup> The new training school would be able to administer to 100 men with the expectation that enrollment would reach 200 cadets. This flying school would also have “two auxiliary fields [that] will be made available in a radius of from five to seven miles of the base.”<sup>27</sup>

This system of creating airplane-training facilities throughout the United States, with one or two auxiliary fields, was typical of the pre-World War II build up. It became an even bigger system once the war was brought to the shores of Hawaii on December 7, 1941, with the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Arkansas would become “one of the army’s major centers for the basic training of aviation cadets.”<sup>28</sup> To meet these goals set out by the Army Air Corps, for training new pilots, the Air Corps would have to have more new airfields.

By the middle of May, Arkansas had already had two contract schools in Pine Bluff and Helena for training cadets, with a third one under construction in Camden. At this same time the filing of condemnation proceedings were taking place to acquire land north of Stuttgart, Arkansas, as well as area between Tuckerman and Newport and then another site near Lake Village, to be used for new army flying schools.<sup>29</sup>

On February 28, 1942, a new Primary Flight School was authorized at Camden and on March 14, 1942, a new Basic Flight School was authorized at Dyersburg, Tennessee, and on March 30, 1942, an Advanced Twin-Engine School at Blytheville, Arkansas. On April 30, 1942, a new Advanced Twin-Engine School was authorized at Stuttgart, Arkansas, and on May 1, 1942, a new Basic Flight School was authorized at Newport, Arkansas.

This rapid expansion continued, and ultimately, the three Flight Training Commands established fifty-six Contract Primary Flight Schools, twenty-six Basic Flight Schools, forty-four Advanced and Specialized Schools, and one hundred fifty-one College Training Detachments for WWII aircrew training.

Meanwhile, as the survey for the Dyersburg Basic Flying School was nearing completion, it was determined five-million cubic yards of dirt would have to be moved to build the airfield there. With this amount of work needed to have the site ready for construction, Washington quickly moved to find a new site.<sup>30</sup>

In early April 1942, a Board of three Army Air Forces Officers, Lt. Col Burton Hovey, Jr., Lt. Col. John R. Cume, Jr., and Capt. Blanton Russell took off in search of a new location. Their

<sup>26</sup> “Pilot School at Helena Approved,” *Arkansas Gazette*, 6 July 1941, 2.

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

<sup>28</sup> “Arkansas to be Center of Flier Training,” *Arkansas Gazette*, 15 May 1942.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> Johnson, Harold “The Role of Walnut Ridge.” *Wings of Honor*.

<http://www.wingsofhonor.org/Pages/WRAAF.aspx> (accessed June 12, 2012).

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flight brought them over an area just northeast of Walnut Ridge, Arkansas, which looked promising. Returning by car the next day, the Board, along with the Army Corps of Engineers from Little Rock, looked over the site, and checked on the schools, housing, utilities and transportation.

The Board was favorably impressed with the Walnut Ridge location, and on April 15, 1942, recommended it be substituted for the Dyersburg site. As the recommendation moved through the chain of command, planning and surveying continued for the site at Walnut Ridge. The Board's recommendation was approved, and construction work on the Walnut Ridge Army Air Field (WRAAF) began on June 20, 1942.

With the passage of the National Defense Highway Act in 1941, and the quick selection of sites for new military camps and training facilities, the Arkansas Highway Department<sup>31</sup> began being asked to provide access roads into and out of each of the previous selection military locations, including camps and training facilities. In most cases, the training bases or installations were "off the beaten path, so to speak, and existing road networks will doubtless[ly] have to be improved and supplemented."<sup>32</sup> In the case of the Walnut Ridge Army Airfield, the base was located away from US 67 therefore needing an access road to enter the installation.

Though transportation funds had been very limited through the 1930s and into the 1940s, the new National Defense Highways Act of 1941 provided the funding for thing specifically noted in the report given to the Senate Committee entitled *Highways for the National Defense: A Report to the Administrator, Federal Works Agency, Mr. John M. Carmody by the Public Roads Administration* that defines highways of national defense into two categories: road programs primarily required for defense operations, ie: access roads and road programs used to improve inadequate sections of the strategic network ie. large roadways connecting large metropolitan areas.<sup>33</sup> It is also noted in the report that "our highways and streets are inadequate for the national defense in definite particulars."<sup>34</sup> Access roads were given a very high priority in the report to on Highways for the National Defense. As noted in the report, an access road ...

include[s] numerous roads, each of short mileage, that are required to give local access from main highways, railroads and waterways, to Army and Navy reservations, and industrial plants engaged in the defense-production program.

<sup>31</sup> The Arkansas Highway Department officially changed its name to the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department in February 1977 by Arkansas Act 192. (Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department. *Historical Review: Arkansas State Highway Commission and Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department Vol. 2, 1913-2003* (Little Rock: Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department, 2004), 108.)

<sup>32</sup> United States: Public Roads Administration, *Highways For The National Defense: A Report to the Administrator, Federal Works Agency. Mr. John M. Carmody* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1941), 3.

<sup>33</sup> Richard F. Weingroff, "Clearly Vicious as a Matter of Policy: The Flight Against Federal- Aid," United States Department of Transportation, Federal Highways Administration.  
<https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/infrastructure/hwyhist06d.cfm> (accessed January 11, 2016).

<sup>34</sup> United States: Public Roads Administration, 5.

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Also included are certain roads and streets that connect with rail terminals and airports and that may be used to a considerable extent by traffic generated by the defense program. In many cases, the usage of this class of roads by normal civil traffic is small and the necessary improvements are required primarily by defense usage.<sup>35</sup>

The report also states that the access roads that are presented in the report are dynamic in nature because of the growing need “from day to day as the general defense programs mature”<sup>36</sup> and expand to include new facilities. It further states that due to the new installations or “reservations” that are being established due to the escalation of war tensions, are being located “on land previously occupied by very small populations.”<sup>37</sup>

With the federal government able to supply the much needed funding through the authorization of the National Defense Highway Act on November 19, 1941<sup>38</sup>, in order to supply access roads to and from camps and training facilities, the Arkansas Highway Commission in February 1942 “approved a tentative \$2,500,000 highway building program consisting of regular and secondary Federal aid funds, strategic highway funds and access roads to defense areas.”<sup>39</sup> With the highway program approved by the Arkansas Highway Commission, it needed to be approved by the Federal Works Administration (FWA) and the War Department (WD) before taking effect.

Upon the approval of the highway program by both the FWA and the WD, the access roads into the camps and training facilities was added to the list of awaiting roads that would be constructed through the use of the Defense Highway Act funds. Yet, in order to even be added to the list of Defense Highway fund projects, “one of the three major defense agencies- the Army, the Navy, and the Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense,” had to have designated the projects in the report entitled *Highways for the National Defense: A Report to the Administrator, Federal Works Agency, Mr. John M. Carmody by the Public Roads Administration*. Of all of the Defense Highway Funds that were authorized between 1942 and 1946, all but two of the Army Air Corps training facilities and auxiliary fields received gravel access roads off the corresponding main road to the training facility. The only training facilities to receive a surface other than gravel at the outset of planning were the Stuttgart Air training school (Bituminous Surface) and the Blytheville Air School (Concrete).<sup>40</sup> Many of these projects which were using National Highway Defense Act authorization were all passed by the Arkansas Highway Department within weeks of each other, for instance the Blytheville Training School access road

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*, 8.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, 10.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>38</sup> “Funds at the Disposal of the Highway Department,” microfilm, Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department, Records Management, Microfilm roll C.28, Department Office Engineer, Construction Job Files 10260-10268.

<sup>39</sup> “50-Mile Limit Made Permanent,” *Blytheville Courier News*, 6 February 1942, 1.

<sup>40</sup> At this time research and not been done corroborate why these two locations were chosen to have road surfaces that differ from the other air training locations in Arkansas. (Arkansas State Highway Commission, *State of Arkansas: Seventeenth Biennial Report of the Arkansas State Highway Commission* (Little Rock: Arkansas Highway Commission, 1946), 61-62.)



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was authorized around the end of July 1942 and Walnut Ridge, Stuttgart, and Helena were all authorized at or near this same time.<sup>41</sup>

However, with those locations in the pipeline, that left the Walnut Ridge Army Air Field, which was quickly pushed through the war department, to quickly petition for Federal Aid fund to “pave” access roads to the main training facility and the auxiliary fields in Biggers, Arkansas; Beech Grove, Arkansas; Bono, Arkansas; Pocahontas, Arkansas; and Walcott, Arkansas. It is noted in the Biennial Report for 1945-1946, that the surfaces for the auxiliary fields would be gravel, however there is no discussion regarding the main access road into the Army Air Field.<sup>42</sup> The Auxiliary field access roads were given an Arkansas Highway Department project number of 10271, while the Walnut Ridge Army Airfield Access Road, was later given the Arkansas Highway Project number of 10262 and Federal Aid project number DA-WR-8 (1). This partially because of the early problems that arose out of the Lawrence County Court pertaining to the unsettled nature of the right-of-way along the Walnut Ridge Army Airfield Access Road. This issue of the right-of-way was already starting to come to the surface before the project was ever let.<sup>43</sup> Under ordinary circumstances this right-of-way issue would go through the court systems slowly with the judge making a judgement.

This is all highlighted by the fact that when the Air Corps came into Lawrence County looking for an alternate location for the Dyersburg, Tennessee, location, it would use any of three methods of acquiring property including condemnation, eminent domain, or paying for the land outright. With the acquisition of the land for the main training base and the auxiliary fields, the major land acquisition was complete. However, because the future Walnut Ridge Army Airfield Access Road was original a Lawrence County Road, it was up to Lawrence County to acquire the proper right-of-way for the access road. In the case of federal aid funds there is usually a percentage of the total cost that is not funded by the federal aid, and though it is unconfirmed at this point, the counties responsibility to the projects was acquiring the right-of-way long the access road due to the need to change and widen the future access road.<sup>44</sup> That is why in this case due to the advancement of the war and the need for the training base to be constructed and open, the Lawrence County Judge was rushed a petition by the Arkansas Highway Department to seize the right-of-way from surrounding properties. In the need to start the project moving the Lawrence County Judge “refused to enter the order to condemning the road as requested”<sup>45</sup> by the Arkansas Highway Department. Up until the order refusing to condemn the right-of-way, the Arkansas Highway Department was under the impression that the condemnation would go

<sup>41</sup> “Will Let Contract For Air Base Road,” *Blytheville Courier News*, 13 July 1942, 1.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> W.E. Ford, Principal Highway Engineer Plans and Surveys, to Mr. W.W. Zass, Chief Engineer in Little Rock, June 15, 1942, microfilm, Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department, Records Management, Microfilm roll C.28, Department Office Engineer, Construction Job Files 10260-10268.

<sup>44</sup> Mr. W.W. Zass, Chief Engineer in Little Rock, to J.A. Elliott, District Engineer Public Roads Administration For Worth, Texas, July 1, 1942, microfilm, Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department, Records Management, Microfilm roll C.28, Department Office Engineer, Construction Job Files 10260-10268.

<sup>45</sup> Neill Bohlinger, General Counsel, to Mr. J.M. Page, Senior Highway Engineer, July 16, 1942, microfilm, Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department, Records Management, Microfilm roll C.28, Department Office Engineer, Construction Job Files 10260-10268.

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through and that they could/would suspend the awarding the contracts, though the request for bids had yet to go out to the public, until the right-of-way issue was cleared up.

Yet, the Arkansas Highway Department had another quick method of handling the rushed nature of acquiring the right-of-way, they would use a revolving fund that the Highway Department had to advance funds to pay for acquiring the right-of-way. After taking this option back to the Lawrence County Judge, he ordered that the revolving fund that the Highway Department had and was willing to use to acquire the right-of way...

be deposited in the registry of the chancery court...to cover the cost and damages occasioned by the acquisition of privately owned lands, it is therefore further ordered that any land owner who is affected by this order who feels himself aggrieved or damaged by reason of any changes, in whole or in part, of the road over his land must present his claim to this court within one year....<sup>46</sup>

With the right-of-way settled on July 17, 1942, the Arkansas Highway Department was set to send out the requirements for the bids on the project. In a letter to J.W. Page by W.W. Mitchell, he states that the proposal had already been advertised in the *Arkansas Democrat, Arkansas Gazette*, and the *Construction News* between July 15 and July 23, 1942, and that all bids would need to be received by 10:00a.m., July 30, 1942.<sup>47</sup> As part of the contract for the bidding companies to analyze, the state also sent out the approximate quantities and items that would be involved in the project. Though this initial list make specific request, these may not have been actually used due to changes as the project moved along. They are listed as:

- 1 Acre Clearing
- 1 Acre Grubbing
- 8,327 Cubic Yards Common Excavation
- 186 Cubic Yards Dry excavation for Structures
- 60 Cubic Yards Wet excavation for Structures
- 7,117 Sta. Yards Overhaul
- 406 Rods Fence moved and reconstructed
- 2 Each Pulling and Redriving Wells
- 3 Buildings Moving Buildings, Class V
- 3 Buildings Reconstructing Foundations & Appurtenances, Class V
- 7,847 Cubic Yards Special Compaction of Earthwork
- 1,170 Cubic Yards Gravel Shoulders (Class S-9 or S-10)
- 8,729 Square Yards Portland Cement Concrete Pavement (Type 14-A)
- 74 Cubic Yards Class "A" Concrete

<sup>46</sup> In the Matter of Petition of the State Highway Commission as Agent of the Federal Government for Changes of Highways Walnut Ridge Flying School Road. Lawrence County Court. 17 July 1941. Filed May1, 1974 with Circuit Clerk, Book Vol. 31, page 612.

<sup>47</sup> W.W. Mitchell, Director and Chief Engineer, to Mr. J.M. Page, Senior Highway Engineer, July 23, 1942, microfilm, Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department, Records Management, Microfilm roll C.28, Department Office Engineer, Construction Job Files 10260-10268.

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21 Cubic Yards Class "B" Concrete  
8,160 Lbs. Reinforcing Steel  
120 Linear Feet 18" Non-reinforced Concrete Pipe Culvert  
80 Linear Feet 30" Non-reinforced Concrete Pipe Culvert  
18 Linear Feet Relaying Culvert Pipe  
90 Linear Feet Concrete Headers<sup>48</sup>

The contract for the project then goes on to say that the contractor must complete the contract within 90 working days of the signing of the contract.<sup>49</sup> Yet, even before the bids were able to come into the Arkansas Highway Department, changes to culverts were already being made to help in reducing the valuable steel, by about one ton (2,000 lbs), which would be needed to reinforce the box culverts.

With the arrival of July 20, 1942, the contracts were read publicly, with Weymouth Construction Company of Nashville, Tennessee, winning the bid with a figure of \$38,730.39. The next to closest bids came in at \$43,000.10 and \$46,669.74, by Graves Brothers of Hamburg, Arkansas and Pioneer Construction of Malvern, Arkansas.<sup>50</sup> Yet, there were already questions regarding the Weymouth Construction Company due to the fact that they did not have an auditor's certification and were not seeking to have a Certified Public Accountant in their office.<sup>51</sup> Though this seems to be a provision required by the Arkansas Highway Department, it apparently did not weigh heavy enough to not push ahead due to the importance placed on it by the military, because only thirteen days later word was given within the Arkansas Highway Department that the contract could be let to the to the Weymouth Construction Company.<sup>52</sup> However, even with permission to go ahead, the official documents allowing for the contract were not approved or issued until October 6, 1942, with the 90 day time limit starting on October 9, 1942.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> J.H. Crain, Arkansas State Highway Commission, "Notice to Contractors: Job No. 10262," microfilm, Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department, Records Management, Microfilm roll C.28, Department Office Engineer, Construction Job Files 10260-10268.

<sup>49</sup> The contract also lays out the pay for the employees that work on the job. Skilled labor received 65 cents, intermediate grade labor received 40 cents, and unskilled labor received 35 cents an hour. (*Ibid.*)

<sup>50</sup> W.W. Mitchell, "July 30, 1942: Job No. 10262," microfilm, Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department, Records Management, Microfilm roll C.28, Department Office Engineer, Construction Job Files 10260-10268.)

<sup>51</sup> It is also quite possible that they were able to hire a public accountant in the office to fulfill that requirement set by the Arkansas Highway Department or by the Public Roads Administration. It is unclear which agency was demanding the need for a certified public accountant. (W.W. Mitchell, Director and Chief Engineer, to Mr. J.A. Elliott, District Engineer, Fort Worth, Texas, July 31, 1942, microfilm, Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department, Records Management, Microfilm roll C.28, Department Office Engineer, Construction Job Files 10260-10268.)

<sup>52</sup> J.A. Elliott, District Engineer, to Mr. W.W. Mitchell, Director and Chief Engineer, July 31, 1942, microfilm, Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department, Records Management, Microfilm roll C.28, Department Office Engineer, Construction Job Files 10260-10268.

<sup>53</sup> W.W. Mitchell, Director and Chief Engineer, to Mr. J.M. Page, Senior Highway Engineer, Little Rock, Arkansas, July 31, 1942, microfilm, Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department, Records Management, Microfilm roll C.28, Department Office Engineer, Construction Job Files 10260-10268.

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By the time that the contract was officially let, Weymouth had already moved a temporary office on the Walnut Ridge Army Air Field. Only eleven days after the issuance of the contract, Weymouth had already begun clearing and grading the path of the access road, which included the relocation of a couple of houses and outbuildings and reconstructing them in other locations on the owner's property, as well as reconstructing fences and grading the new lot.<sup>54</sup> By November 12, 1942, the road was 21% completed and though to be 30% completed, or at least have the roadbed completely graded by the first day of December.<sup>55</sup>

Only nine days after the last inspection report it is noted that the cement from Marquette Cement in Cape Girardeau, Missouri, was already being tested and passed a 24 hour test. With the cement passing most of its test, Weymouth began pouring concrete by November 24-25, 1942. Consequently, the contractor was trying to pour the concrete roadbed beginning a dusk with the only light being located on the mixer and not on those finishing the concrete, which when reviewed on November 25, and was found to be in poor condition due to inadequate lighting and that the mix contained too much water. The operation was shut down on the 25<sup>th</sup> when water from the mix began pooling on the surface. In discussions with the site superintendent for Weymouth Construction it was learned that they were being pushed by the company to finish the job and move all the equipment to another job site outside of Arkansas.<sup>56</sup> In the days following, the errors on the job site had been corrected and the larger project continued on with night finishing no longer an option. What is interesting is the method of curing the concrete during the cold winter months that the construction of the access road was in operation. It is believed that a plastic membrane was placed over the concrete, but in order to keep the concrete from freezing at night, it also placed cotton mats over the newly poured concrete.<sup>57</sup> By December 21, 1942, it is noted in the inspection report that the .783 mile of pavement is complete except for the placing of gravel shoulders, but that there may be a longer delay in acquiring a gravel of "satisfactory quality."<sup>58</sup>

Due to the rainy weather in Northeast Arkansas the following week, no traffic was able to move into or out of the Walnut Ridge Army Air Field. With this noted by officials in both the Arkansas

<sup>54</sup> "Construction Inspection Report: Walnut Ridge Flying School Access," October 20, 1942, microfilm, Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department, Records Management, Microfilm roll C.28, Department Office Engineer, Construction Job Files 10260-10268.

<sup>55</sup> The estimates for the amount that would be completed by December 1, 1942, were all dependent on the weather in area. ("United States Department of the Agriculture: Bureau of Roads, Construction Inspection Report 2," November 12, 1942, microfilm, Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department, Records Management, Microfilm roll C.28, Department Office Engineer, Construction Job Files 10260-10268.

<sup>56</sup> "United States Department of the Agriculture: Bureau of Roads, Construction Inspection Report 3," November 24 & 25, 1942, microfilm, Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department, Records Management, Microfilm roll C.28, Department Office Engineer, Construction Job Files 10260-10268.

<sup>57</sup> "United States Department of the Agriculture: Bureau of Roads, Construction Inspection Report 4," November 27 & 28, 1942, microfilm, Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department, Records Management, Microfilm roll C.28, Department Office Engineer, Construction Job Files 10260-10268.

<sup>58</sup> "United States Department of the Agriculture: Bureau of Roads, Construction Inspection Report 5," December 21, 1942, microfilm, Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department, Records Management, Microfilm roll C.28, Department Office Engineer, Construction Job Files 10260-10268.

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Highway Department and the Bureau of Public Roads, a letter was sent to Weymouth Construction Company stating that it was “impossible for traffic to reach the Walnut Ridge Flying School unless arrangements can be made to use the new access concrete road.”<sup>59</sup> At this point in time the base was becoming more active since the base started construction in July 1942<sup>60</sup> and was actively taking in cadets before the Walnut Ridge Army Airfield Access Road even began construction. The Air Field was activated on August 15, 1942, with the arrival of the initial contingent of key military personnel. Ten days later, 100 troops arrived, but there was no housing available on the air field, so these troops were transported to and from the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp, located at five-mile springs, north of Pocahontas for the first 30 days.<sup>61</sup>

Meanwhile the first three classes of Aviation Cadets programmed for Walnut Ridge were sent to Blytheville, which was being built as an Advanced Twin Engine School. Blytheville was scarcely any better prepared than Walnut Ridge. Circus tents were utilized for operations headquarters and classrooms. The runways were not ready, so flying was done from oil-coated dirt strips.

Finally, near the end of September 1942, the Southeast Training Command at Maxwell Field clarified the situation by announcing 102 Aviation Cadets and 3 Student Officers from Decatur, Alabama, and 20 Aviation Cadets from Camden, Arkansas, would be sent to Walnut Ridge for Basic Flight Training. The first Student Officers and Aviation Cadets in Class 43-B began training at Walnut Ridge at 1:00 P.M on October 12, 1942.

With this amount of traffic already active on the base, the access road constructed in the months that followed, during a harsh cold, rainy winter, the concrete was bound to begin spalling and cracking due to the weather condition. It was already noted by the inspectors that the roadway was all but complete except for sloping, shoulders and ditches, and these projects could not be completed in rainy weather. Therefore, the highway department and other agencies overseeing the project asked Weymouth if the access road could be opened to allow traffic to move into and out of the Air Field. They also note that they would use the new pavement...

during periods that are too wet to do finishing work with the understanding that while you are doing finishing and dressing work no traffic will be allowed on the pavement except such as you choose to permit.

Of course, the project belongs to you until it is completed and accepted by the state, but it is our understanding that you are anxious to cooperate to the fullest

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<sup>59</sup>W.W. Mitchell, Director and Chief Engineer, to Weymouth Construction Company, December 28, 1942, microfilm, Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department, Records Management, Microfilm roll C.28, Department Office Engineer, Construction Job Files 10260-10268.

<sup>60</sup>“Work Proceeding On Basic Air Training Base Near Here,” *Pocahontas Star Herald*, 4 June 1942 and 2 July 1942.

<sup>61</sup>Captain Charles D. Baylis, *Wings Over America: Basic Flying School Class Book* (Baton Rouge, LA: Army and Navy Publishing Co., Inc., 1943), 1.

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extent in making it possible for the school to continue to serve its useful purpose, provided you are not held responsible for damage done to the pavement by opening the road to unrestricted traffic at this time.<sup>62</sup>

Though a response letter is not found in the file for this project, it is believed that a response was given to the state and the traffic was allowed to travel on the new pavement.

Still by December 29, 1942, 91% of the project was complete except for those items mentioned above, but only 61% of the time allowed for the project had passed.<sup>63</sup> Between December 29, 1942 and January 14, 1943, the Weymouth Construction Company was able to fully complete the access road project, as the State of Arkansas Highway Department accepted the work on January 16, 1943. In the final inspection of the access road, the inspector gave the roadway a completed status, but made a caveat that the contractor must mortar the joints of one concrete pipe.

Though the project was officially complete, continual maintenance on the access road was just beginning. Only months after the completion of the access road, the highway department was called out by Captain Richard E. Morris, Corps of Engineers Post Engineer because of the need to repair the roadway because of spalling concrete, and the ditches eroding. Captain Morris' suggestion to sod the drainage ditches was supposed to help keep the ditches from further eroding. It would not be until late September when an inspection team could come out to the access road to evaluate it. At that time, the pavement was spalling worse than previously mentioned but was particularly bad at expansion and contraction joints. In the letter regarding the spalling the author writes about the reasons for the spalling and the careless workmanship performed by the contractor's force.<sup>64</sup> Though the dispute over who was at fault was never really worked out, the completed project was able to allow for traffic from US 67 to the Walnut Ridge Army Air Field Training School through rain, sleet, and snow. As previously explained the area in which the base was/is located does not drain particularly well, causing vehicles, especially large military personnel carriers like the GMC CCKW 353 6x6<sup>65</sup>, to cause damage to the access roads paved with a hard surface or with gravel. With multiple vehicles weighing roughly 8,800

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> United States Department of the Agriculture: Bureau of Roads, Construction Inspection Report, "December 29, 1943, microfilm, Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department, Records Management, Microfilm roll C.28, Department Office Engineer, Construction Job Files 10260-10268.

<sup>64</sup> In retrospect, hindsight is always 20/20. In previous letters the highway department gushes about the process and the construction company and then only months later they are writing about what a horrible job they did. In a response letter, Mr. Mitchell states that Mr. Page is making a snap judgement from his office chair. (J.M. Page, Senior Highway Engineer, to W.W. Mitchell, Director and Chief Engineer, September 24, 1942, microfilm, Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department, Records Management, Microfilm roll C.28, Department Office Engineer, Construction Job Files 10260-10268. And W.W. Mitchell, Director and Chief Engineer, to J.M. Page, Senior Highway Engineer, September 24, 1942, microfilm, Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department, Records Management, Microfilm roll C.28, Department Office Engineer, Construction Job Files 10260-10268.

<sup>65</sup> This style of vehicle would become the backbone of military transport with the CCKW ceasing production in 1945, but was picked up again with the M35 2 ½ ton cargo trucks, which in various forms has been used up through the present day.

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pound to 16,000 pound each transporting cargo and personnel between the Walnut Ridge Army Air Field Training School and the City of Walnut Ridge, the road was able show that it was able to take the abuse applied to it during the military's occupation of the base. The access road would have been able to accommodate the traffic of vehicles like the GMC CCKW 353 6x6 and the nearly 4,000 air pilots every ten weeks which would be training at the base.<sup>66</sup>

The Walnut Ridge Army Airfield Access Road is one of very few surviving original hard surface or gravel roads associated with the National Defense Highway Act of 1941 in the State of Arkansas and stands as a proud reminder of the significant role Walnut Ridge – and Arkansas – played in training pilots and securing that the access roads and the ability to get traffic to them, were “in the main requirements of the defense program.”<sup>67</sup> These access roads were crucial in “provid[ing] adequate highway connections for the reservations and industrial areas with nearby main highways and railroads or other transportation services, and from neighboring towns and cities.”<sup>68</sup> The Walnut Ridge Army Airfield Access Road and other access roads on other properties associated with the defense program between 1941 -1945 played an integral role in contributing “greatly to the elimination of serious traffic congestion... handicapping the defense operations in these areas. Between 1941 and 1945, the funding for projects associated with the National Defense Highway Act of 1941 was used on twenty-four other defense related projects. Of those twenty-four defense related projects, eleven of them only required gravel surfaces, seven required bituminous surfaces, four concrete surfaces, which includes the Walnut Ridge Army Airfield Access Road, and the remaining two projects and funding were used to construct bridges. Of those with hard surfaces, the Walnut Ridge Army Airfield Access Road contain the most integrity and is therefore being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with local significance under **Criterion A** for its association with military history in Arkansas and transportation.

<sup>66</sup> “Air training Base May Be Located Near Pocahontas,” *Pocahontas Star Herald*, 23 April 1942, 1.

<sup>67</sup> United States: Public Roads Administration, 6.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid*, 10.

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Lynch, Jeremy. "Fort Smith National Historic Site." *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture*. <http://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=4522>. (accessed September 1, 2010).

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Quattlebaum, Charles B. "Military Highways." *Military Affairs*, Vol. 8, No. 3 (Autumn 1944): 225-238.

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Walnut Ridge Army Airfield Access Road

Lawrence County,  
Arkansas  
County and State

Name of Property

Webster, Julie. *Historical and Architectural Overview of Military Aircraft Hangars*. Champaign, IL: United States Army Construction Engineering Research Laboratory, 2001.

Weingroff, Richard F. "Clearly Vicious as a Matter of Policy: The Flight Against Federal- Aid." United States Department of Transportation, Federal Highways Administration.  
<https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/infrastructure/hwyhist06d.cfm> (accessed January 11, 2016).

United States: Public Roads Administration. *Highways For The National Defense: A Report to the Administrator, Federal Works Agency. Mr. John M. Carmody*. Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1941.

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository: AHTD

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** LW0191

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreege of Property** 3.582

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

Walnut Ridge Army Airfield Access Road

Lawrence County,  
Arkansas  
County and State

Name of Property

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |              |            |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

**Or**  
**UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or  NAD 1983

- |             |                 |                   |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zone: 15 | Easting: 683912 | Northing: 3999840 |
| 2. Zone: 15 | Easting: 685044 | Northing: 3999780 |
| 3. Zone:    | Easting:        | Northing:         |
| 4. Zone:    | Easting:        | Northing:         |

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Located at the west entrance to the Walnut Ridge Army Airfield (Walnut Ridge Municipal Airport and the current main entrance in to College City, Arkansas and the Williams Baptist College campus) is the Walnut Ridge Army Airfield Access Road (Fulbright Avenue). The boundary on the west side Walnut Ridge Army Airfield Access Road is located at UTM 15 S. 683912 E. 3999840. The eastern boundary is located at UTM point 15 S. 685044 E.3999780.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary contains all of the roadway and culverts associated with the Walnut Ridge Army Access Road.

Walnut Ridge Army Airfield Access Road

Lawrence County,  
Arkansas  
County and State

Name of Property

### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Travis Ratermann (Survey Historian)

organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

street & number: 323 Center St. Suite 1500

city or town: Little Rock state: Arkansas zip code: 72201

e-mail Travis@arkansasheritage.org

telephone: 501-324-9874

date: April 4, 2016

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

### Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### Photo Log

Name of Property: Walnut Ridge Army Airfield Access Road

City or Vicinity: College City

County: Lawrence

State: Arkansas

Photographer: Ralph Wilcox

Date Photographed: July 23, 2015 and February 17, 2016

Walnut Ridge Army Airfield Access Road

Lawrence County,  
Arkansas  
County and State

Name of Property

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Photo #1 (AR\_LawrenceCounty\_ Walnut Ridge Army Airfield Access Road \_0001)  
Street view of the Walnut Ridge Army Airfield Access Road near the intersection of US Highway 67 and the Walnut Ridge Army Airfield Access Road. Camera facing East.

Photo #2 (AR\_LawrenceCounty\_ Walnut Ridge Army Airfield Access Road \_0002)  
Street view of the Walnut Ridge Army Airfield Access Road looking back at the intersection of US Highway 67 and the Walnut Ridge Army Airfield Access Road. Camera facing West.

Photo #3 (AR\_LawrenceCounty\_ Walnut Ridge Army Airfield Access Road \_0003)  
Street view of the Walnut Ridge Army Airfield Access Road near the midway point. Camera facing East.

Photo #4 (AR\_LawrenceCounty\_ Walnut Ridge Army Airfield Access Road \_0004)  
Street view of the Walnut Ridge Army Airfield Access Road near the midway point looking west. Camera facing west.

Photo #5 (AR\_LawrenceCounty\_ Walnut Ridge Army Airfield Access Road \_0005)  
Street view of the Walnut Ridge Army Airfield Access Road near the eastern edge of the access road facing west. Camera facing West.

Photo #6 (AR\_LawrenceCounty\_ Walnut Ridge Army Airfield Access Road \_0006)  
Street view of the Walnut Ridge Army Airfield Access Road near the midway point looking east after the milling of the roadway. Camera facing East.

Photo #7 (AR\_LawrenceCounty\_ Walnut Ridge Army Airfield Access Road \_0007)  
Street view of the Walnut Ridge Army Airfield Access Road near the midway point looking west at the box culvert, after the milling of the roadway. Camera facing West.

Photo #8 (AR\_LawrenceCounty\_ Walnut Ridge Army Airfield Access Road \_0008)  
Street view of the Walnut Ridge Army Airfield Access Road looking at another one of the culverts. Camera facing Northwest.

Photo #9 (AR\_LawrenceCounty\_ Walnut Ridge Army Airfield Access Road \_0009)  
Street view of the Walnut Ridge Army Airfield Access Road near the eastern edge of the proposed boundary looking west, after the milling of the roadway. Camera facing West.

Photo #10 (AR\_LawrenceCounty\_ Walnut Ridge Army Airfield Access Road \_0010)  
Street view of the Walnut Ridge Army Airfield Access Road near the eastern edge of the proposed boundary looking down and up close, after the milling of the roadway. Camera facing down.

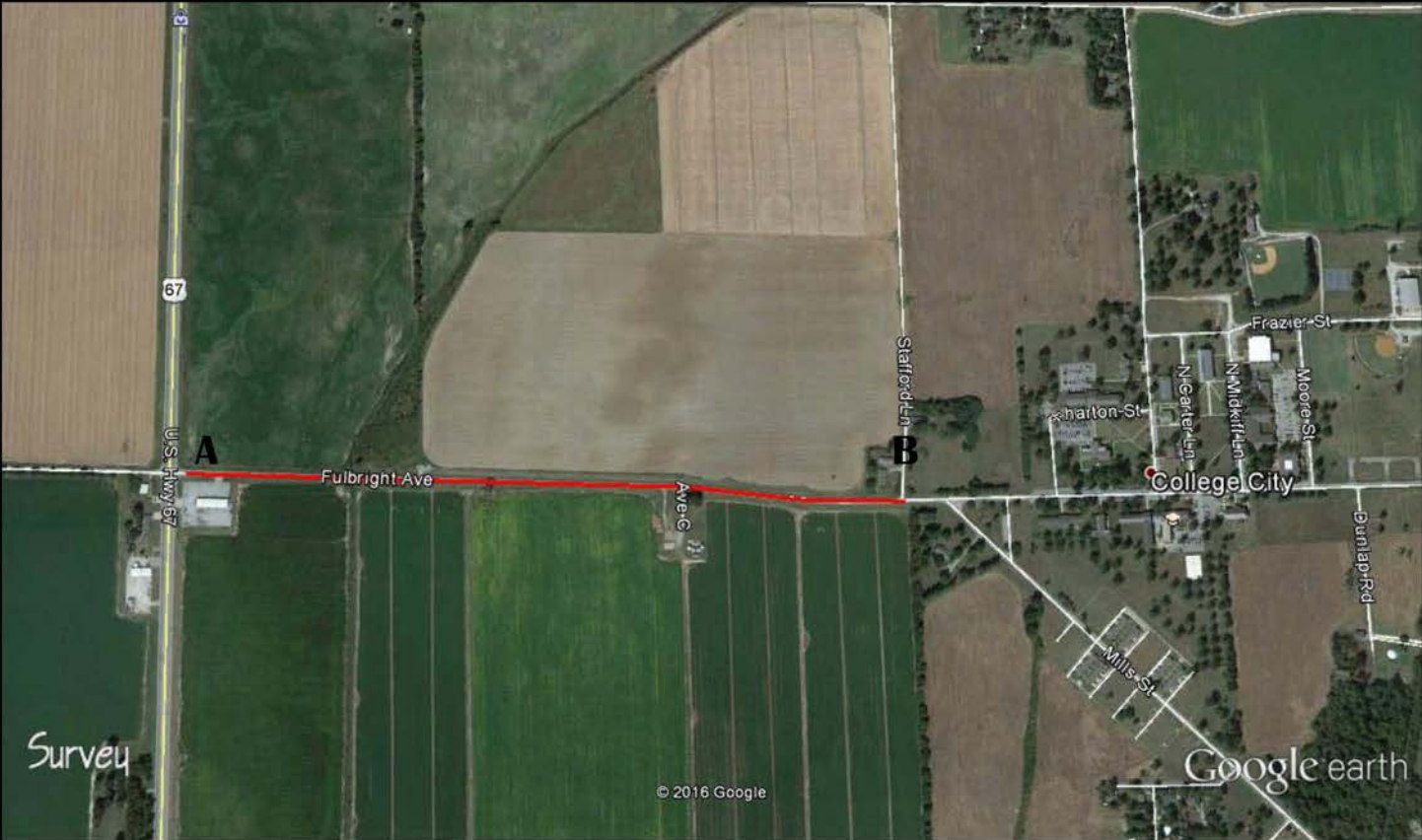
Walnut Ridge Army Airfield Access Road

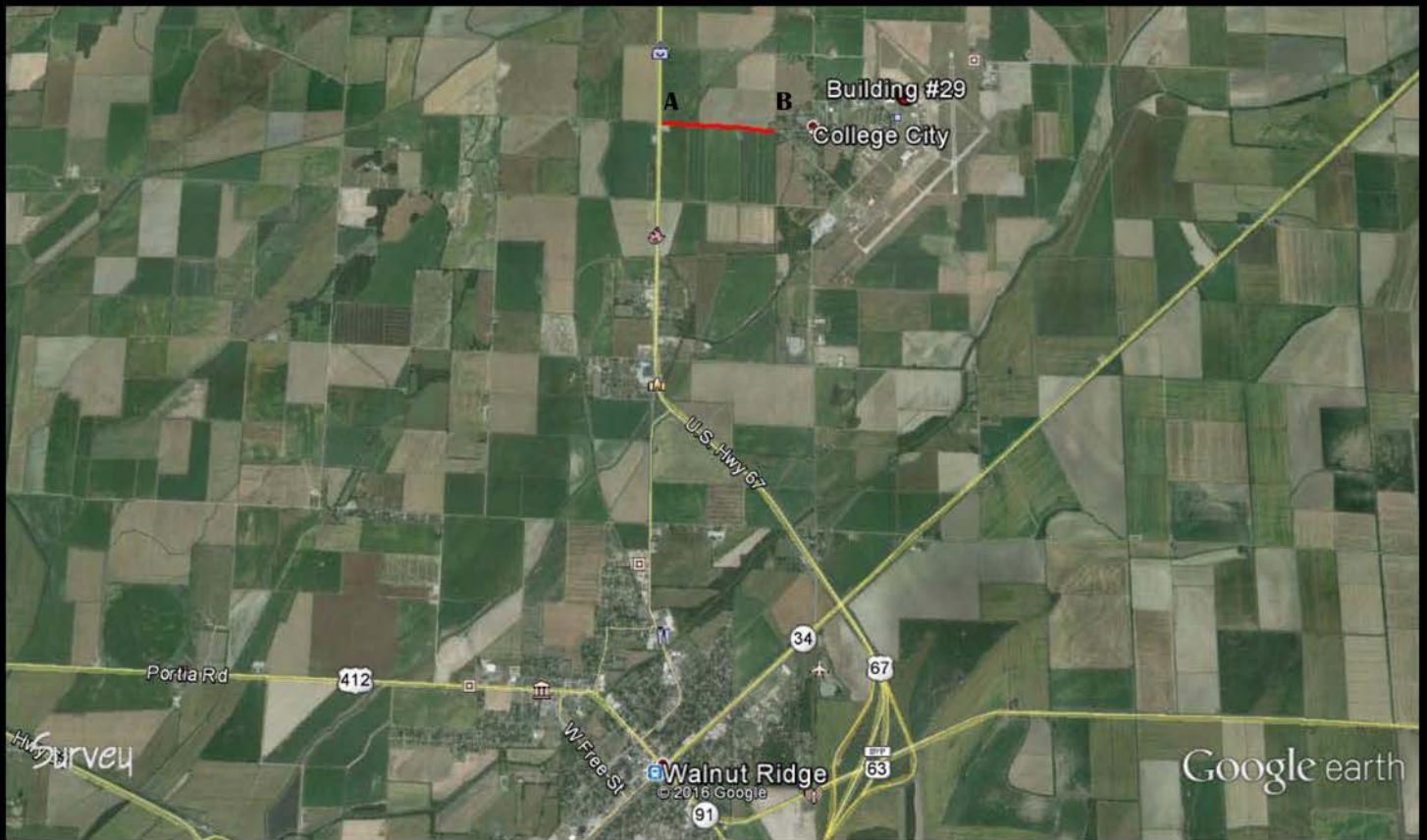
Lawrence County,  
Arkansas  
County and State

Name of Property

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.





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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Walnut Ridge Army Airfield Access Road

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: ARKANSAS, Lawrence

DATE RECEIVED: 4/22/16      DATE OF PENDING LIST: 5/25/16  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 6/09/16      DATE OF 45TH DAY: 6/07/16  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 16000318

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N    DATA PROBLEM: N    LANDSCAPE: N    LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N    PDIL: N    PERIOD: N    PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: Y    SAMPLE: N    SLR DRAFT: N    NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT     RETURN     REJECT    6.7.2016 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

*Automatic Listing due to delayed Federal Register notice*

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept A

REVIEWER J. Gubler      DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/~~N~~ see attached SLR Y/~~N~~

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



THE DEPARTMENT OF ARKANSAS  
**HERITAGE**

Asa Hutchinson  
*Governor*

Stacy Hurst  
*Director*

Arkansas Arts Council

Arkansas Natural  
Heritage Commission

Delta Cultural Center

Historic Arkansas Museum

Mosaic Templars  
Cultural Center

Old State House Museum



ARKANSAS HISTORIC  
PRESERVATION PROGRAM



National Historic  
Preservation Act 1966-2016



323 Center Street, Suite 1500  
Little Rock, AR 72201

(501) 324-9880  
fax: (501) 324-9184  
tdd: 711

e-mail:

[info@arkansaspreservation.org](mailto:info@arkansaspreservation.org)

website:

[www.arkansaspreservation.com](http://www.arkansaspreservation.com)

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Nat. Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service

April 6, 2016

J. Paul Loether, Deputy Keeper and Chief  
National Register and National Historic Landmark Programs  
National Register of Historic Places  
1201 Eye St. NW, 8th Fl.  
Washington D.C. 20005

RE: Walnut Ridge Army Airfield Access Road – College City,  
Lawrence County, Arkansas

Dear Mr. Loether:

We are enclosing for your review the above-referenced nomination. The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the documentation for the Walnut Ridge Army Airfield Access Road. The Arkansas Historic Preservation Program has complied with all applicable nominating procedures and notification requirements in the nomination process.

If you need further information, please call Travis Ratermann of my staff at (501) 324-9874. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

Stacy Hurst  
State Historic Preservation Officer

SH:rsw

Enclosure