

1941-1950

Two local residents document Wilson's Greatest Generation

John Hackney, Jr. and Betty McCain already have thousands of pages of history and are still asking for more

By Bradley Hearn
Special Sections Editor

Betty McCain says it all started three or four years ago, when she, John Hackney, Jr., and others in the Wilson County Historical Association decided to put on a seminar featuring some of Wilson's World War II veterans.

Tom Brokaw's popular book, "The Greatest Generation" had sparked a lot of people's interest in the subject, including these two who had actually lived through it.

"We just opened the flood gates when we had that seminar," said McCain of the small event the Association held at Barton. Since then, McCain and Hackney have collected upwards of 3,000 pages of World War II materials — and that is just about Wilson County.

Hackney says that for decades the War was just not something their generation dwelled on, discussed, or bragged about. "It's really just in the last few years that people are starting to open up about their experiences," said Hackney.

And they are determined to get the experiences and personal histories of as many

local residents as they can. While some people are still unwilling to discuss their experiences, Hackney is thankful that many have.

"It's a piece of first-party history that will be lost," he said. "We're all disappearing."

Nationally, 1,000 World War II veterans die each day. Hackney, 86, is a veteran of World War II himself, and said that he began his timely search with his old high school athletic teammates and friends from the 1930s. From there, it has grown.

He still keeps office hours at the John Hackney Agency on Nash St. The line of white binders behind his desk continues to grow longer and thicker.

McCain and Hackney make each other copies of documents and photos they get, to ensure that they both will have the same stack of huge white binders should anything happen to the collection. Everything — from a two-page discharge document to personal histories ranging from 10 to over 100 pages — has been brought to them. Some things type-written, some journals scrawled

across the page in almost illegible handwriting.

In Hackney's binders, he has pages and pages of formerly classified documents, detailing bombings and other tactical maneuvers. There are open letters to the troops from Gen. Jimmy Doolittle and Dwight Eisenhower. And, of course, there are plenty of photos.

McCain notes that for such a small town, Wilson's war history is really pretty remarkable.

From Edgar Boone "flying the Hump" in a single-engine plane carrying wounded soldiers to Dr. William Stone receiving a Commendation from the King and Queen of England for his achievements in sanitation in military quarters in England, this area has so many stories that are waiting to be told.

The goal, they say, is to one day get all their materials edited and compiled together into a book they can distribute to four libraries in the area: the Wilson County Public Library, the Barton College Library, the Wilson Community College Library, and the last to Raleigh's historical archives that

make up part of the Department of Cultural Resources.

A paperback version of the book was discussed — and still very much hoped for — but publishers estimate that it will cost them around \$20,000.

"It's a great gift to our community," said Perry Morrison, a local attorney and president of the Wilson County Historical Association.

Because of the diminishing number of resources in living World War II veterans, coinciding with a renewed interest in the subject, Morrison believes the timing for their project is perfect.

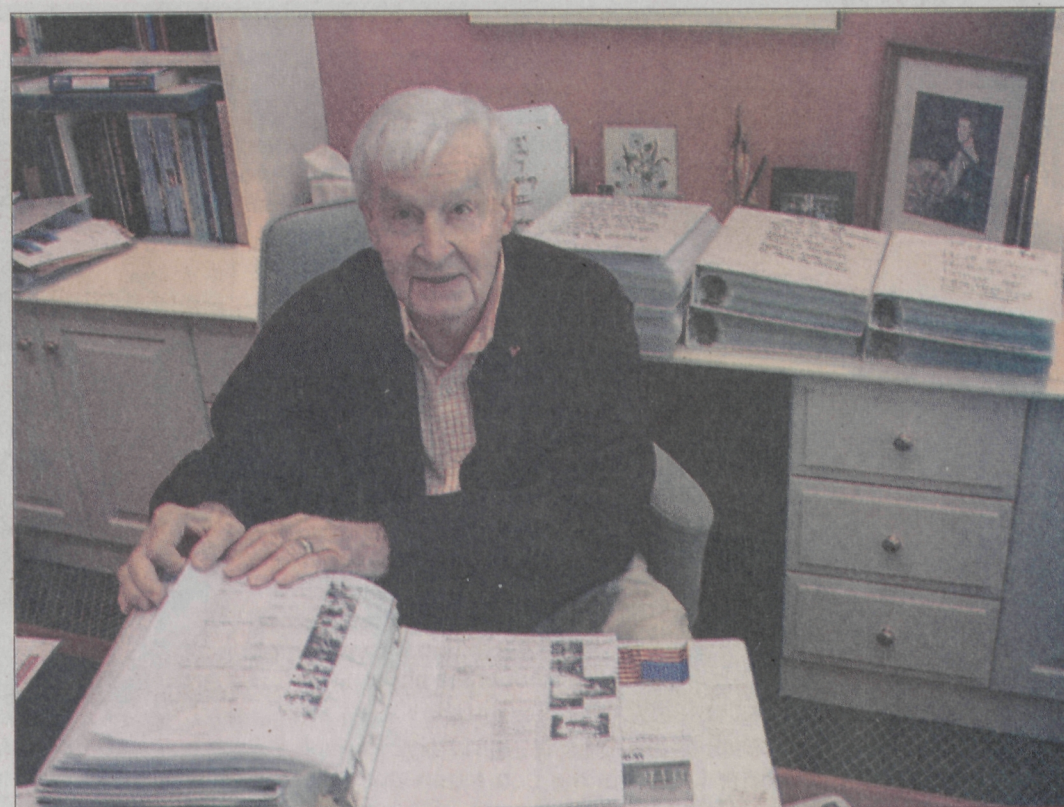
"It's right place, right time," he said. "It is really important that we do it right now."

Apart from keeping local history alive, Hackney feels that it equally is about honoring the veterans and what they were able to do over 60 years ago.

"I think everybody wants to do a part. And, well, they did."

But more than anything, McCain and Hackney are just having a good time doing it.

"We've really enjoyed it," said McCain.



Keith Barnes | Daily Times

John Hackney, Jr. sits at his desk at the John Hackney Agency on Nash Street, flipping through one of his many large binders containing Wilson's World War II history. Hackney and Betty McCain still welcome any personal histories, stories or artifacts that can be provided for their book.

Send your World War II histories, photos, documents, or artifacts to either John Hackney, Jr. or Betty McCain:

John M. Hackney, Jr.
The John Hackney Agency, Inc.
3700 Nash St.
Wilson, NC 27896

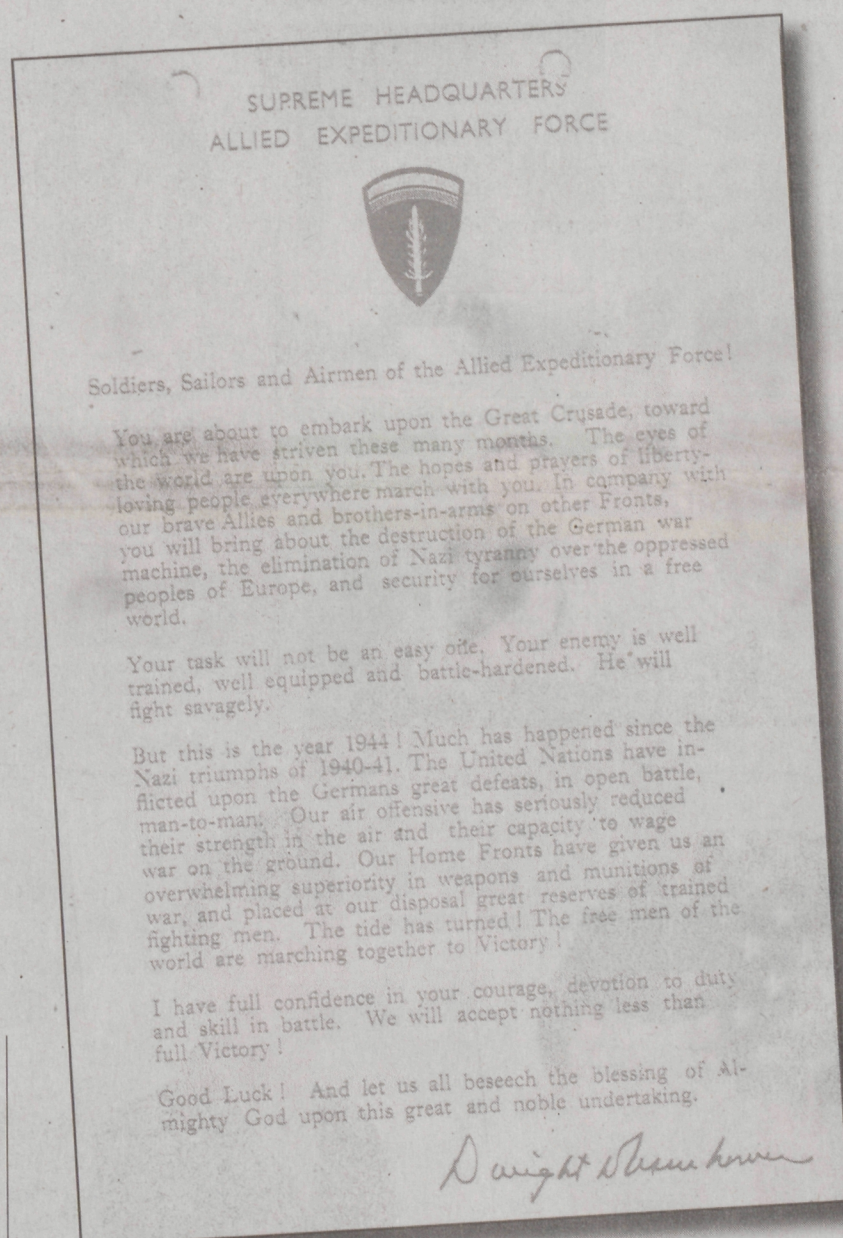
Betty McCain
1134 Woodland Dr.
Wilson, NC 27893



James C. Dempsey, Jr., of Wilson (seated second from left on the second row with sunglasses), listens to a briefing of the 97th Bomb Group on June 1, 1943 in North Africa prior to a bombing raid on Pantellaria Island. At 22, Dempsey was the youngest Major in the history of the Army Air Corps (before it became the United States Air Force).

Seated straight ahead (with the cane and white hat) is Sir Winston Churchill, Prime Minister of Great Britain. To Churchill's right sit Sir Anthony Eden, Asst. Prime Minister, and General George Marshall, Chief of Staff of the United States Armed Forces.

Standing in the back left corner are, left to right, Marshall Tedder, Chief of R.A.F. in England; General James Doolittle, America's most famous pilot and Commander of Strategic Air Command; and General Carl Spatz, Commander General of all Allied Air Forces in Europe.



This letter courtesy of John M. Hackney, Jr.

Above, the letter from Dwight D. Eisenhower sent to the armed forces before the invasion of France — D-Day — on June 6th, 1944.



Staff Sgt. Richard D. Gliarmis, of the 309th Inf. Rg., 78th Inf. Div., was killed during the Battle of the Bulge in the winter of 1944-45. One of 19,000 U.S. casualties, the battle was the longest and most brutal of World War II. Pictured to the right is his gravestone in the Netherlands American Cemetery & Memorial, located in Margraten, Holland.



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WW II

Gunny Sgt. Pennell Burnette and his wife Hildred — parents of Dr. J.P. Burnette in Wilson — at Camp LeJeune, where Burnette was based. He served in Guadalcanal as well as other posts during World War II.



1941



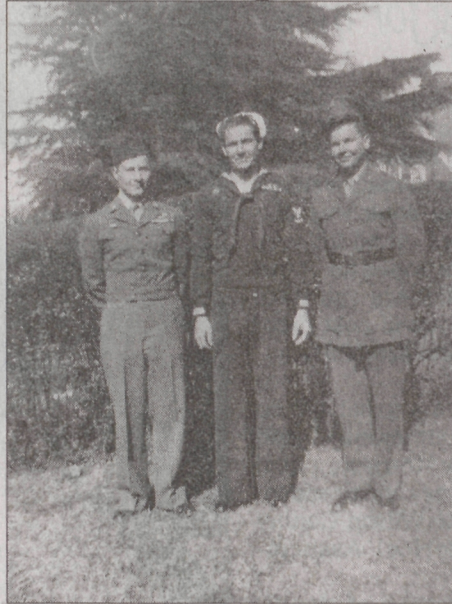
Staff Sergeant Lannis B. Watson, above, relaxing in a chair in Villa Lilly, Bad Schalbach, Germany in April of 1946. Watson served in the Army from 1944-46.

To the right: the Bottoms brothers: Ernest E. Bottoms (left) served in the Army from 1939-46 and was at Pearl Harbor during the Japan attack. He also spent time stationed in New Guinea.

Reese N. Bottoms (center) served in the Navy in the Pacific from '42-'46.

Donahue Bottoms, Sr. (right) served as a Marine from 1944-45 and was stationed at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Wilson's First United Methodist Church is in the upper-right corner of the photo.



1942

Today In Wilson Times History: December 8, 1941

U.S. DECLARES WAR ON JAPAN

Request for Declaration Passed Through Congress with Unprecedented Speed

Washington, Dec. 8 — (AP) — The text of President Roosevelt's war message to Congress follows:

To the Congress of The United States: Yesterday — December 7, 1941 — a date which will live in infamy, the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the empire of Japan.

The United States was at peace with that nation and, at the solicitation of Japan, was still in conversations with

its government and its emperor, looking toward the maintenance of peace in the Pacific.

Indeed, one hour after Japanese air squadrons had commenced bombing in Oahu, the Japanese ambassador to the United States and his colleague delivered to the Secretary of State a formal reply to a recent American message. While this reply stated that it seemed useless to continue the existing diplomatic negotiations, it contained no threat or hint of war or armed attack.

It will be recorded that the distance of Hawaii from Japan makes it obvious that the attack was deliberately planned many days or even weeks ago...

To read the full, original text of this article, go to www.wilsontimes.com.

Albert H. Finch	Anderson Ferrell, Jr.	Charlie R. Ferrell, Sr.	Claude Lamm	Brame Morrison	Clifton Thomas Eason	Robert Pittman
Daniel Whitley, Sr.	Donahue Bottoms, Sr.	Buddie E. Morris	Charlie Crowder, Jr.	Cornelius J. Deans	Arthur E. Ferguson	Roman Sharpe, Jr.
John Pershing Downing	Joseph Paul Denton	S/Sgt. Donald Stehley	Columbus Ward	Arthur Matthews, Jr.	Rudolph Holloman	
Junior Littleton Skinner	Kenneth Auston Dew	Larry J. Turner				

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WW II



John "Red" Jones, of Lucama, began serving with the Marine Corps in 1942 and continued until 1946. He deployed and fought for his country at Guadalcanal, Tarawa, Saipan, and Okinawa. Until his death in 2003, Jones lived by the slogan, "Once a Marine, Always a Marine."

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1942



Lester L. Johnson, left

1942



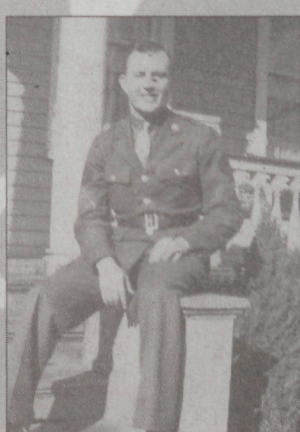
Pictured above, Edward E. "Dick" Little posing for a photo. Little would later serve in France with Wilson's famous Company M from 1943-45. At right, Little and some fellow soldiers use a makeshift washing machine they cam across in France during a short period of rest.



E. Bruce Ford
Army, 1945-47



Earl A. "Jack" Gay



Earl Jerry McFarlane



Earl Winstead
Navy, GM1, 1942-45



Edward Pipkin



Elmer I. Joyner
Army, 1942-46



Elton Barnes



Ernest "Ed" Smith
Army, 1943-46



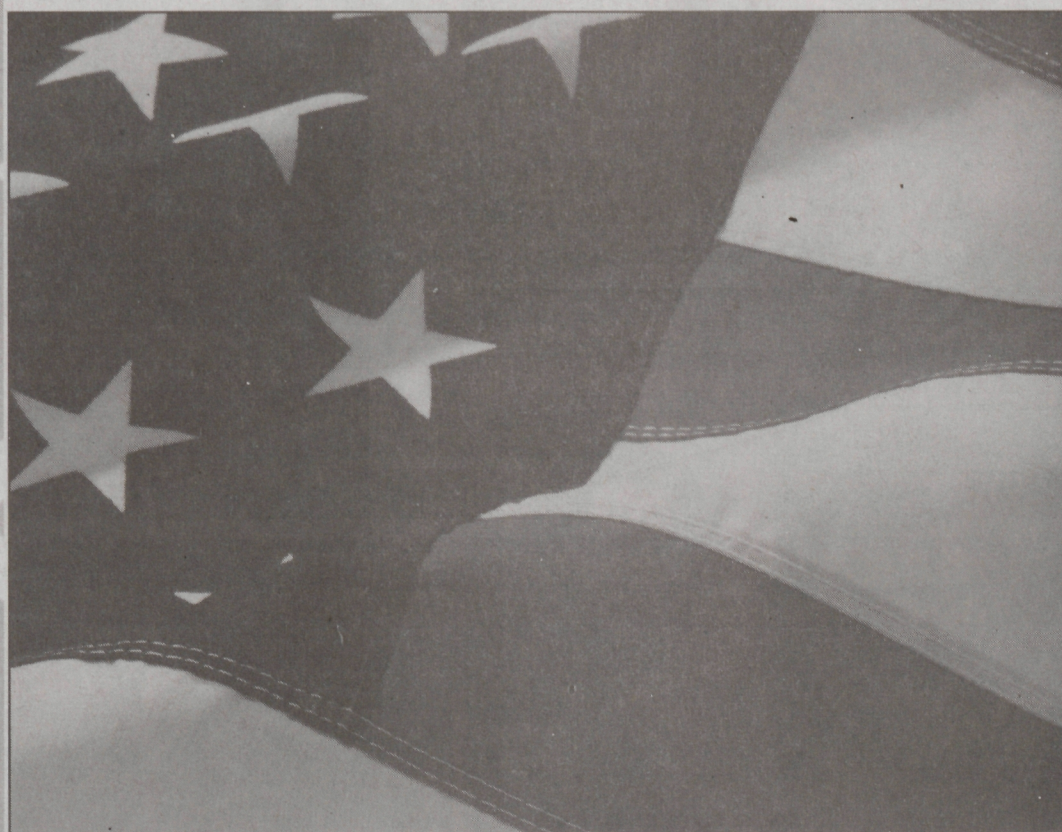
Emmett L. Matthews
Army, PFC



Lawrence Brett
Navy, Lt.



Leonard T. Owens
Army, Corp., 1942-45



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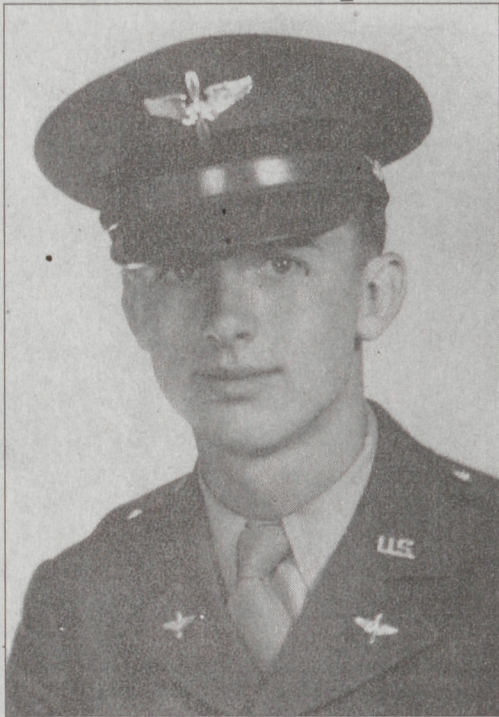
WW II

Morgan P. Dickerman, II, served as a Lieutenant, junior grade in the Navy from 1942-45, predominantly aboard the USS Cowpens (CVL-25) in the Pacific Theater. The Cowpens was awarded twelve Battle Stars and a Navy Unit Commendation during the War.

Upon returning to Wilson, Dickerman served as the Asst. Publisher of The Wilson Daily Times from 1957-1974.



1943

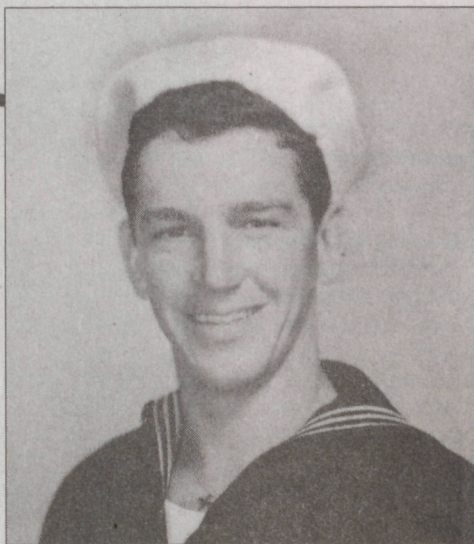


At left, Cpl. Milton H. Rogerson, in 1943, fresh out of the U.S. Army Parachute School. He served through 1945 with the 513th PI Regiment, Company C. After fighting in the Battle of the Bulge, Rogerson participated in Operation Varsity, a dangerous mission with the 17th Airborne behind German lines.

Sgt. Lewis C. Wilson served from 1943-1946 with the 405th Bombardment Squadron, 38th Bomb Group, 5th Air Force. He flew as a tailgunner on a B-25 that was stationed on Okinawa and Japan.



1944



Oakley B. Beland, Jr. graduated from Coon High School in 1944. He declined college football scholarships and a tryout with the St. Louis Cardinals in order to join the Navy, in which he served until 1946. His tanker in the Pacific was hit by the Japanese but not sunk.



Ethel Virginia Downing, Army



Farris Lucas Army, 1Lt., 1942-45



George B. Miller Navy



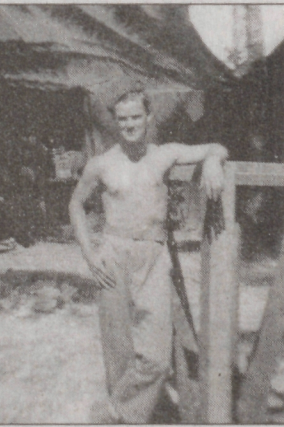
George Beamon Navy



George Clifton Jordan Army



Gorge W. Dail, Jr. Army, KIA



Prentice R. Whitman



Glenn E. Stutts Navy, 1944-45



Graham Forcette



H.L. Roy Leach Army



Harold R. Dail Navy



Henry C. Ford



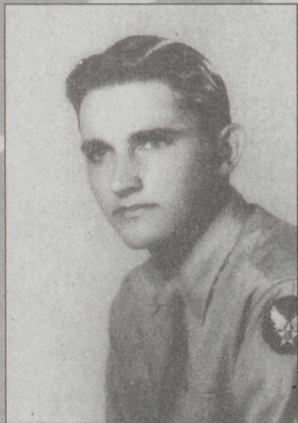
Henry C. Winstead Army, SGT, 1942-46



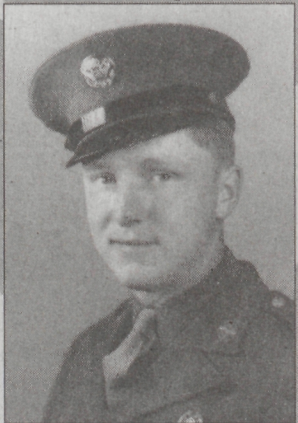
Sidney Bud Turner Navy



Herbert M. Jeffries, Jr. Army, 1942-43



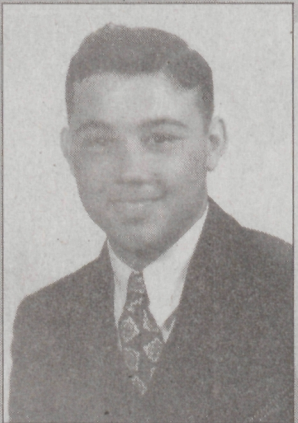
Horace Goff Army Air Corp., 44-46



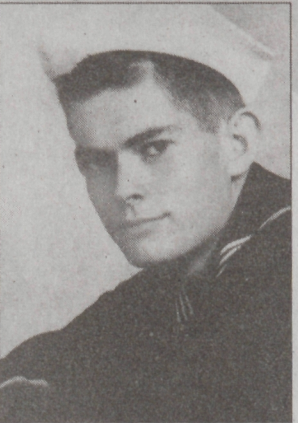
Horace W. Jordan Army



Matthew E. Rose Army, PFC, 1944-45



Matthew M. Watson Army



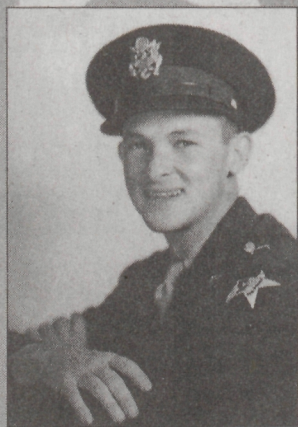
Merle H. Davis Navy, USS Boxer



Joseph Edward Downing, Army



Milford J. Howell Army



Brame Morrison Army

HONORING OUR EMPLOYEES & FRIENDS THAT HAVE SERVED OUR COUNTRY

- ★ James Palmer
US Marines 71-76
- ★ Bill Alsup
Air Force WWII 41-45
- ★ Alton Barnes
Air Force WWII 41-45
- ★ Greg Hayes
Coast Guard 85-present
- ★ Brian Bartholomew
Navy 90-94
- ★ William McNeil
US Army E7 66-79
2 Tours Vietnam
- ★ Kid Jackie Barnes
US Army 55-75
2 Tours Vietnam
- ★ William Price
US Army WWII 41-46
- ★ John W. Wiggins
US Army 53-55
- ★ W.R. Jones
US Army 64-77
- ★ Jerry Charles Parker
US Army SP4 71-77
- ★ Richard Bledsoe
Navy 78-81
- ★ William Summerlin
US Army 69-73
- ★ Kirby Abila
US Army 73-93
- ★ Doug Joyner
US Marines 66-71
- ★ Donald Dale
Air Bourne WWII 41-45

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Today In Wilson Times History:
November 11, 1918



To read the full, original-text of this article, go to
www.wilsontimes.com.

Allies Invade France

American, British, and Canadians land at dawn

June 6- (AP)- American, British, and Canadian troops landed in Northern France this morning, launching the greatest overseas military operation in history with word from their supreme commander, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, that "we will accept nothing except full victory over the German masters of the continent."

The invasion, which Eisenhower called "a great crusade," was announced at 7:32 a.m. Greenwich time (3:32 a. m. EWT) in this one sentence communique No. 1: "Under the command of General Eisenhower, Allied Naval forces supported by strong air forces began landing allied armies this morning on the northern coast of France."
It was announced moments later that Britain's General Sir Bernard L. Montgomery, hero of the African desert, was in charge of the assault...

We will
always
remember ... *Veterans Day*

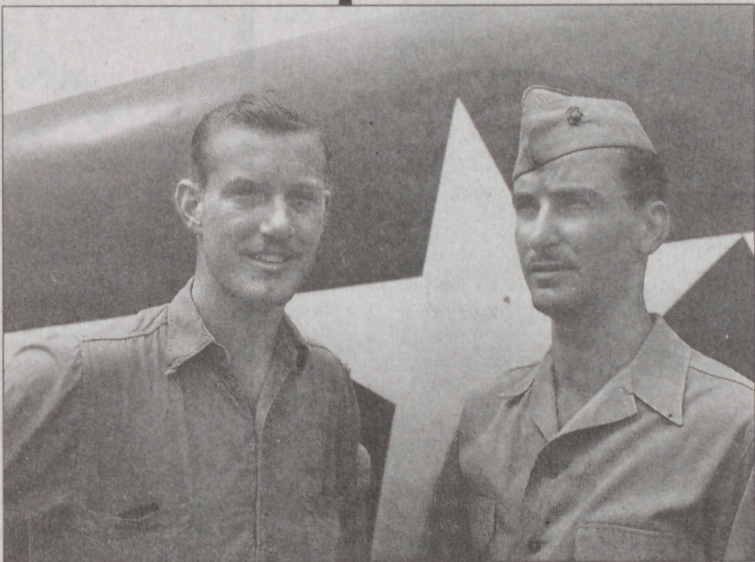
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1944



James F. Downing, Jr.



Guy Cox (left), noted Wilson photographer, served from June, '42 until Dec. '45, much of that time as a Photographers First Mate. Harold Price (right), also from 1942-45, served as a Sergeant in the Marines in the Pacific. The two men are standing in front of a fighter plane on the USS Bunkerhill, home to 3,000 men.

1944



July 29, 1944 - Private Jessie C. Carver, Jr., a combat soldier, was killed in action at a battle in St. Lo, France.



Isaac Lester Bass
Army



J. Paul Turner



Jack H. Liles
Army, T5, 1944-46



James "Ed" Petway



James "Fat" Sauls
Army, 1944-46



James Atlas Skinner
Army, 1944-46



James Carson
"J.C." Lamm, Jr.



James D. Barnes



Raymond Ray Brown
Army



James Frederick
Downing



James H. White
Army



James L. Lee
Navy



Ralph L. Dail



James M.
Fitzgerald, Jr.
Navy, Lt.



Jesse R. Narron
Army, PFC, 1942-45



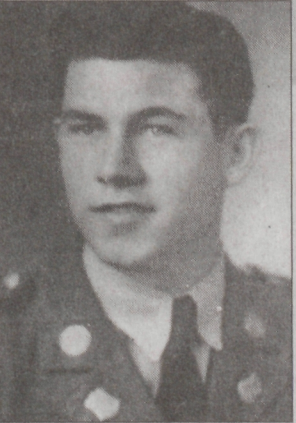
James E. Gardner
Navy, 1943-45
Army, 1946-47



Robert Bruce Poole, Jr.
Army



Paul B. Moore
Army, PFC, 1944-46



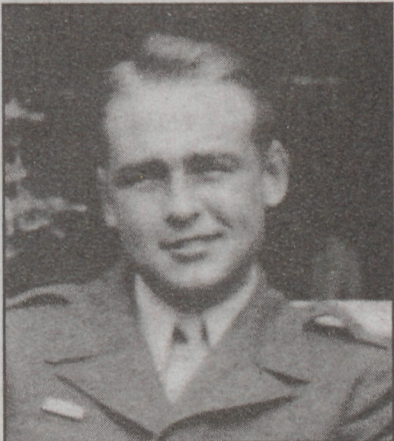
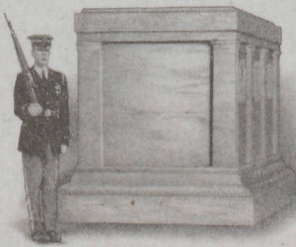
Paul A. Lucas
Army



Randolph Lamm
Army

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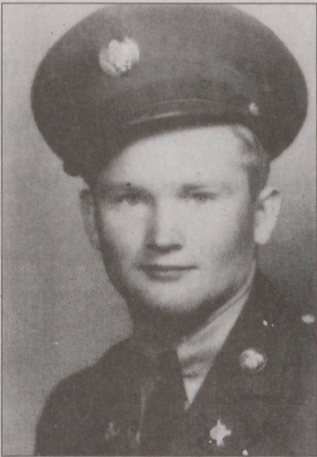
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WW II

S/Sgt. Paul H. White served in the U.S.A.F. from 1940 until he was honorably discharged on Oct. 6, 1945. White served in New Guinea and Luzon and received three Bronze Service Stars, a Good Conduct Medal, and an American Defense Service Medal.

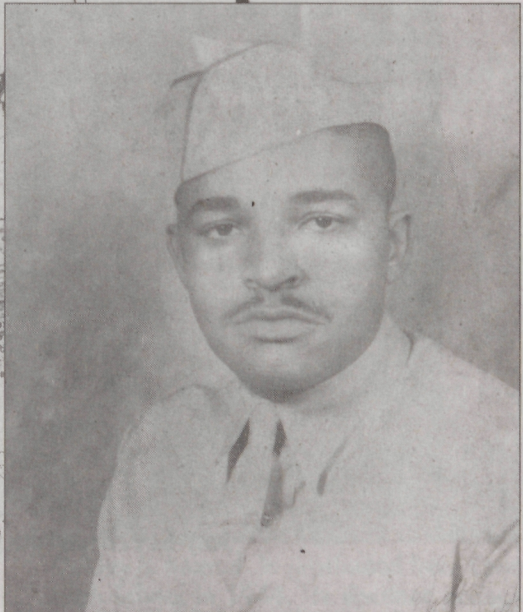
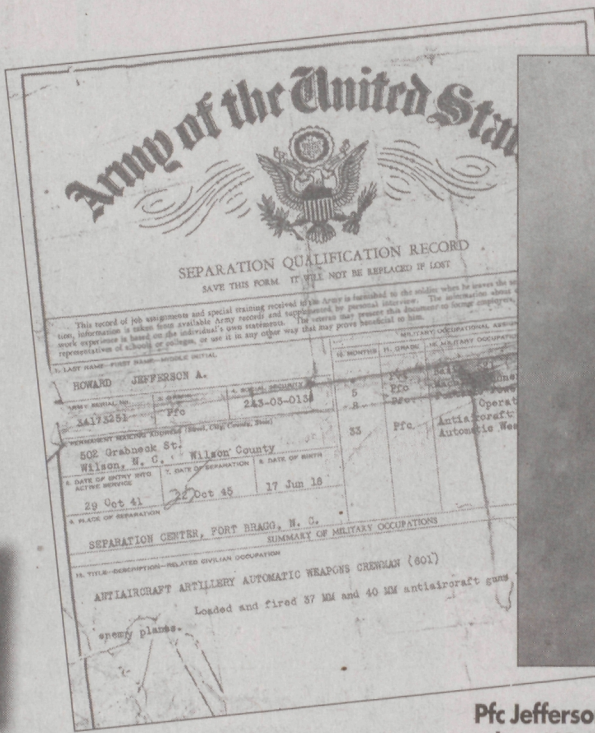


1945

A Quartermaster in the Navy, Woodrow Wilson Downing served in the Pacific Theater during World War I. The photo shows him relaxing at his headquarters on New Hebrides Island.



1945



Pfc. Howard Jefferson A. Howard served in the Army from October, '41 until October of '45. In the latter part of his service, he was an automatic weapons crewman.

February 19, 1945

THE WILSON DAILY TIMES WEATHER

U.S. Marines Take Two Beachhead



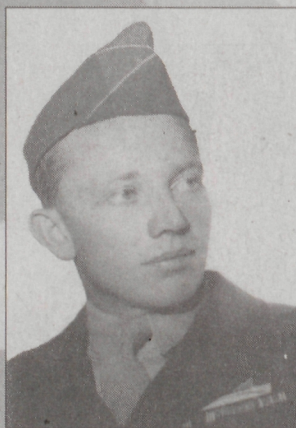
John G. Lamm
Army, PFC



Thad O. Petway
Army, POW



Thomas Newby
Army, PVT



Thurman H. Owens
Army



Thurman I. Edwards
Army, PVT, 1941-45



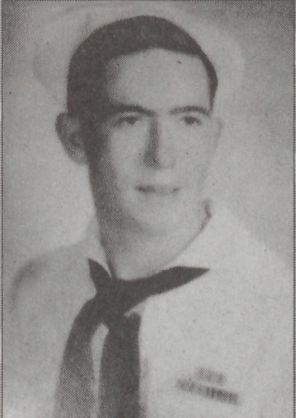
Luther "Buster"
Ralph Johnson, Navy



Arthur Mooring, Jr.
Army



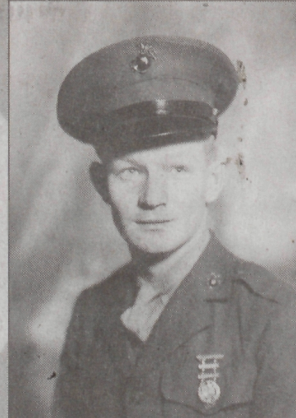
B.C. Wiggs
Navy



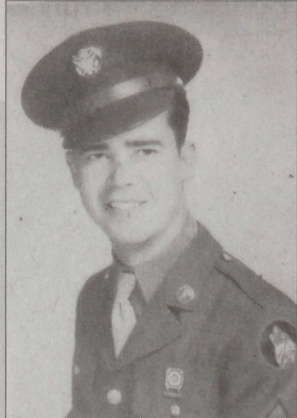
E.L. "Buster" Thigpen
Navy



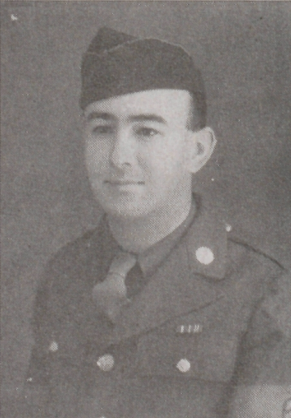
Herbert L. Jones, Jr.
Army



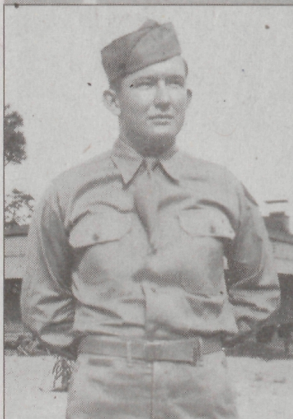
Huland B. Gardner
USMC



Joseph P. Weaver
Army



Lawrence W. Tuttle
Army



William E. "Tink"
Hayes, Army, PFC



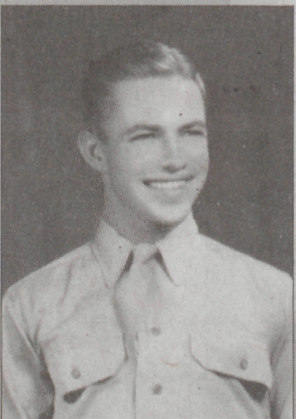
Norman Williams
USMC



Richard Pridgen
Army



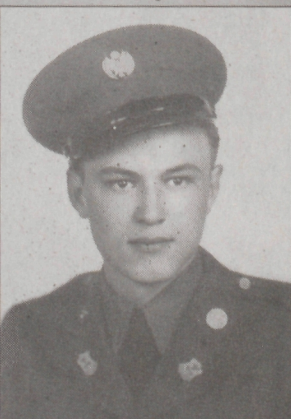
Virgil Harold Moore



William H. Barnes, Sr.



Willie M. Summerlin
Army



Wilbur Lloyd Eason
Army, KIA 1944



William C. McKeel



Marvin H. Thompson



William Earl Dail
Army

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At left, James L. Lee, posing by a truck in Guam in 1946, just before returning home to an honorable discharge. Lee joined the Navy in 1943 at the age of 20 and served 26 months in Guam in the South Pacific.



Louise Gay, at right, served in the Army during World War II.

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1946



George C. Wainright, far right, served in the Army Technician 5th Grade, Reconnaissance Company, 692nd Tank Destroyer Battalion.

1948



Leonard Price, left



Joseph M. Baker served as a member the Seabees, the Construction Battalions of the Navy, from 1945-1947. He helped build the air base on Guam, where he was stationed in the Pacific.

					
Wade D. Barnes	William Earl Owens Army	William H. Harrell Army	William J. Fant, Jr. Army, PFC	William M. Sharpe Army	William T. Barttes, Jr. Army
					
Fred M. "Don" Pridgen, Army	G. Howard Phillips Navy, 1943-53	James G. Bartlett Navy	Marvin Dew Winstead Army	W. E. "Bill" Flowers	



Milton Barnes

*Special thanks to
Dr. James B. Rounder
and his wife Sara Rounder
for their dedication &
service to our country!*

Dr. James B. Rounder
Army Captain 1970-1985
M.A.S.H. Unit Reserve

Sara Rounder
Army Captain 1976-1982
Brook Army Burn Unit
M.A.S.H. Unit Reserve

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WW II

Lannis B. Watson drives a jeep
around Paris, France after the
war has ended.



1949



Jesse Junior Baker, Army, in Elm City, circa 1945.



George C. Wainright, back center, hangs around with some friends after the War.

1950

Friends Hazel Little (wife of
Dick Little of Company M) in
Fort Jackson, SC. with friend
and fellow Army wife Rosa
Lee Sawls. The two women
supported each other far from
their home of Saratoga, NC.



Clem Kilburn, who served all over the
Pacific during World War II, used to
write his new wife poems while he was
away. Kilburn's daughter found this letter
from her mother to Clem around the
same time. Since her mother died of
Leukemia when she was a baby, her
mother has always been a mystery.
This letter, the envelope "sealed with
a kiss," is all she has to remember her
mother and the brief marriage her par-
ents shared.

In the letter, Minnie Kilburn quotes one
of the poems Clem once wrote her.
Clem and his daughter now live to-
gether in Sims



Letter to Minnie the yr. they married.
Lord will let that day come soon.
and dearest what a grand and glorious
day that will be for both of us.
I just got your valentine tonight
it expresses thoughts I could
never have put into words myself.
I hope the verse means as much
to you as it did to me.
Honey remember last Nov. when
you wrote in my autograph book.
you wrote a poem that goes some-
thing like this:
When hills and rocks divide us
and we are far apart
Remember your name is written
in golden letters and stamped
upon my heart.
and clemson darling I often think
of it and think just how true it
really is.
You were the only one who
really understood me and loved
me. Even Mom & Dad never could



Clem Kilburn as he looks today living in Wilson County.

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