

December 7, 1941

Luper Thought Noise Was Just Air Force Practice Maneuver

By JACK ADAMS

"The Air Force must be practicing again," Jesse Luper thought to himself that crisp Sunday morning 22 years ago.

It was shortly after 7 a.m., and Luper had slept only three hours.

He slipped out of bed, yawning, and walked to the back porch to watch the noisy planes, confident this was the start of another normal day at Schofield Barracks.

"We all noticed those planes were getting a little reckless," Luper said. "They sure were flying low."

Weren't Playing

Luper, dressed in shorts and a T-shirt, suddenly realized that "those guys weren't playing. Their bullets were bouncing off the sidewalk near us and the MP's were hugging the ammunition cartsheds."

No, they weren't American pilots practicing. They were Japanese fighter planes, and this was the start of an infamous attack in Pearl Harbor.

It was December 7, 1941.

Luper, a mechanic at Murphy Body Works, and Bolden Cummings, a farmer in the Gardners area, both were stationed at Schofield Barracks that fateful morning. They were approximately 20 miles from Pearl Harbor.

The two Wilson County men, who had enlisted in the Army together, were in the same battalion, but different companies.

Closer and Closer

"I was in bed when I first heard the bombing and machine guns," Cummings said. "I didn't think much of it at first, but it kept coming closer and closer."

Cummings said he went to the window of the barracks to



Sgt. Cummings In Uniform

we just took them without signing."

Shot At Planes

Once armed Cummings said his company ran outside and started shooting at the Japa-

"We brought down two planes and only had one injury," he said.

The injured soldier didn't even know he had been shot, until someone pointed out that his leg was bleeding.

airplanes, five midget submarines and less than 100 persons.

With its power in the Pacific strangled, an indignant United States, under President Roosevelt, declared war against Japan the following day.

By a congressional vote, there was just one dissenting ballot, that coming from a Montana Congresswoman.

"We didn't know this was the start of the war," Cummings said. "It was hard to tell what had happened. There was a lot of excitement and nobody knew exactly what was going on."

The attitudes of the men were varied according to Cummings, "It was sad and funny at the same time. After most of us realized what had happened, there was a lot of ugly talking."

Sudden Realization

A sudden realization of the impact of the attack came to Cummings when his group drove past Pearl Harbor to set up defense at the shore.

"We could see all the bombing and strafing on the ships," he said.

Cummings said that the water near the shore was filled with bodies of sailors. "They looked like cordwood floating in with their white uniforms."

Luper, whose group had gone straight to its defense post when the bombing started, recalled the scene at Pearl Harbor as being "a lot of smoke and fire. Some of the ships were sinking, many had gone down."

Better Prepared

and that these groups were better prepared for an attack a few weeks before December 7.

"We had been alerted to set up defense," Cummings said, "and someone thought the attack would be earlier."



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Luper said it started.

"It was a funny all seemed to be to leave their businesses and rush fields out of date. "They did think that they must do something."

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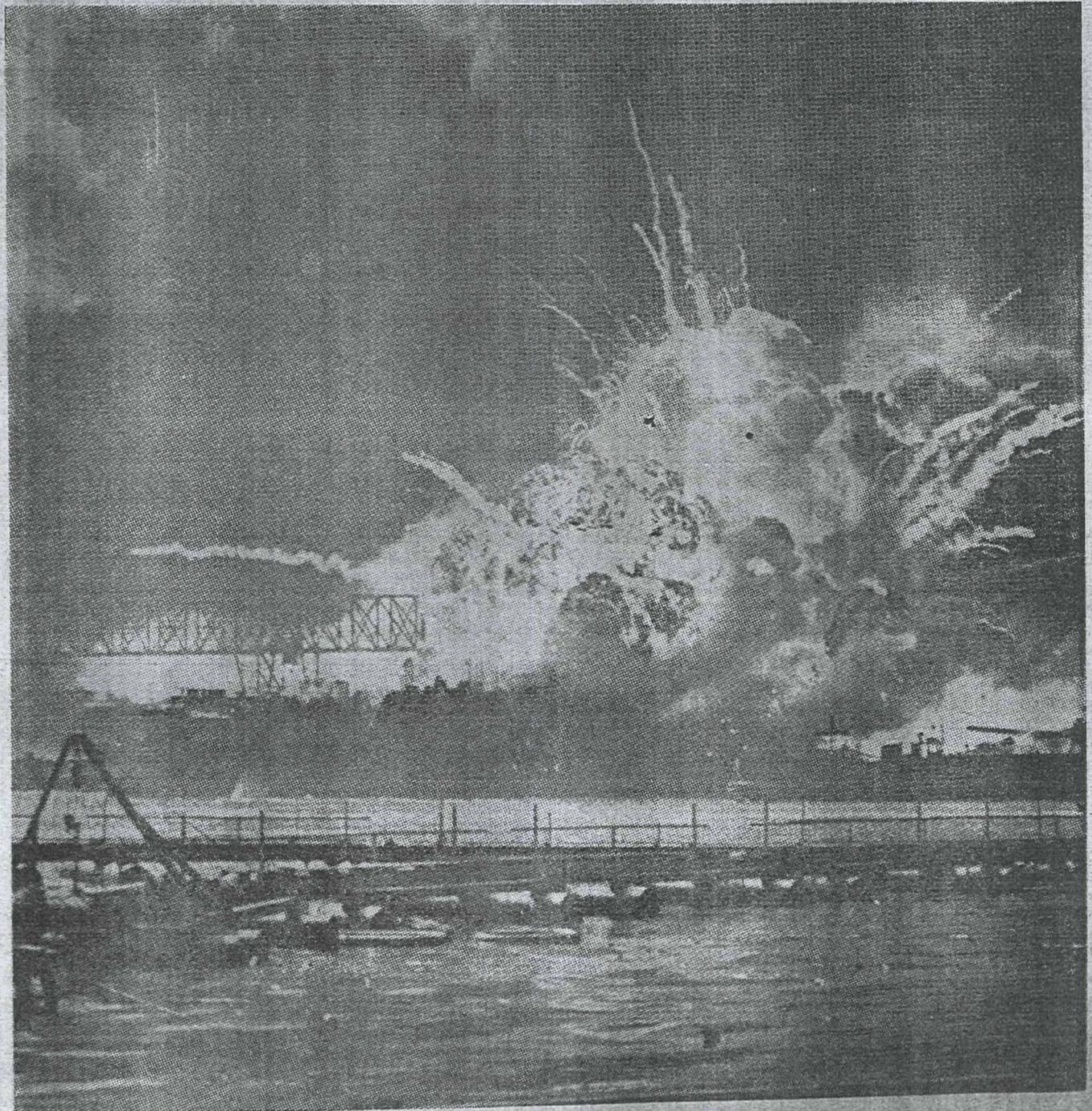
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Luper said that he thought
the machine on the
deck of the attack ship
it started.

"It was a funny feeling. They
all seemed to have been able
to leave their homes and busi-
nesses and rush to the cane
fields out of danger," he said.

"They did this so quickly
that they must have known
something."



Bombing

TOP PHOTO: The bombing
of Pearl Harbor is shown in
this U. S. Navy photograph.
The large explosion is oc-

Cummings said, "I didn't think much of it at first, but it kept coming closer and closer."

Cummings said he went to the window of the barracks to see what was happening.

"The Jap machine guns were mowing down our boys like a lawn mower cutting down grass," he said.

When an attack was suddenly realized, the companies of which Luper and Cummings were members scrambled to get their weapons.

Cummings recalls complete chaos at the supply room, where a sergeant was trying to get each of the men to sign for his rifle.

"This was taking too long. I yelled for everyone to grab a rifle and get out there, and

signing."

Shot At Planes

Once armed Cummings said his company ran outside and started shooting at the Japanese planes.

Some of the men were dressed, some were wearing only shorts and T-shirts. "Even in the winter it was warm there," Luper said. "You could sleep comfortably under one blanket."

Cummings had managed to dress in shirt and pants, but he rushed outside shoeless.

"We were shooting everything we had," Cummings said, "including pistols, rifles and machine guns."

Cummings' group scored a fairly good won-loss record against the invaders.

and only had one injury," he said.

The injured soldier didn't even know he had been shot until someone pointed out that his leg was bleeding.

"He caught a bullet in the calf, but it wasn't serious."

But the Japanese fared much better for the whole attack, which resulted in crippling the U. S. Navy.

Within two hours, they destroyed or severely damaged eight battleships, three light cruisers, four miscellaneous vessels, 188 airplanes and important shore installations.

There were 3,435 American casualties, about half of them fatal.

Lost Less Than 100

The Japanese force lost 29

better prepared for an attack a few weeks before December 7.

"We had been alerted to set up defense," Cummings said, "and someone thought the attack would be earlier."

Luper said, "We were ready for an attack earlier. I don't know who got mixed up, but it sure was crazy."

"After being on alert about four or five days, they pulled us in. Apparently the danger had subsided," he said.

Did anyone really know that the attack would be held December 7, as some historians believe?

"I don't know," Luper said. "We heard a lot of rumors right after the attack."

Told He Was Drunk

"I even heard that one young officer on guard radioed in that he had picked up the Japanese fleet, but he was told he was drunk. I also heard that he was court martialed afterwards," Luper said.

There were many other rumors, Luper said, but no one knew the real answer as to whether the U. S. was alerted of the attack.

Some historians have advanced the theory that the White House knew the Japanese were going to bomb Pearl Harbor, but withheld the information to draw the United States into war with Japan.

No Followup

One of the great mistakes of the Japanese invasion of Pearl Harbor, strategically, was failure to follow up the attack.

"We were able to set up our defenses quickly," Cummings said, "but we were low on ammunition. If they had landed a force, they might have been able to take over."

Luper said that the rush to set up defenses in pill boxes on the shore was so helterskelter that he was unable to pack his barracks bag with necessary clothing.

"I was rushing to pack my bag with an extra change of clothes," Luper said, "and filled it with socks and underwear instead."

No Clean Clothes

"It turned out that we were out on the shore about two weeks before I could get back in to get some more clothes."

"The first four or five days we stayed in our pill boxes, scared to move. In fact, they wouldn't let us move. After that, we got to get out on the

all seemed to leave their messes and fields out of

"They did that they in something."

Offered

Cummings, a field commander fighting in, eventually re-staff sergeant came a corp

Recalling years ago was as some m

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In August bombs dem dreams of cific empire

This crisp Dec. 7, 1941, a somewhat can people.

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Bolden Cummings Looks Through Scrapbook

They did this so quickly that they must have known something."

Offered Commission

Cummings, who was offered a field commission during later fighting in the Philippines, eventually reached the rank of staff sergeant while Luper became a corporal.

Recalling that fateful day 22 years ago was not as difficult as some might think.

"It's still pretty vivid," said Cummings. "It was such a shock, so sudden."

It was just the beginning of a shock, however, as U. S. forces entered a global war that was to last until 1945.

In August of 1945, two atomic bombs demolished Japan's dreams of conquest and a Pacific empire.

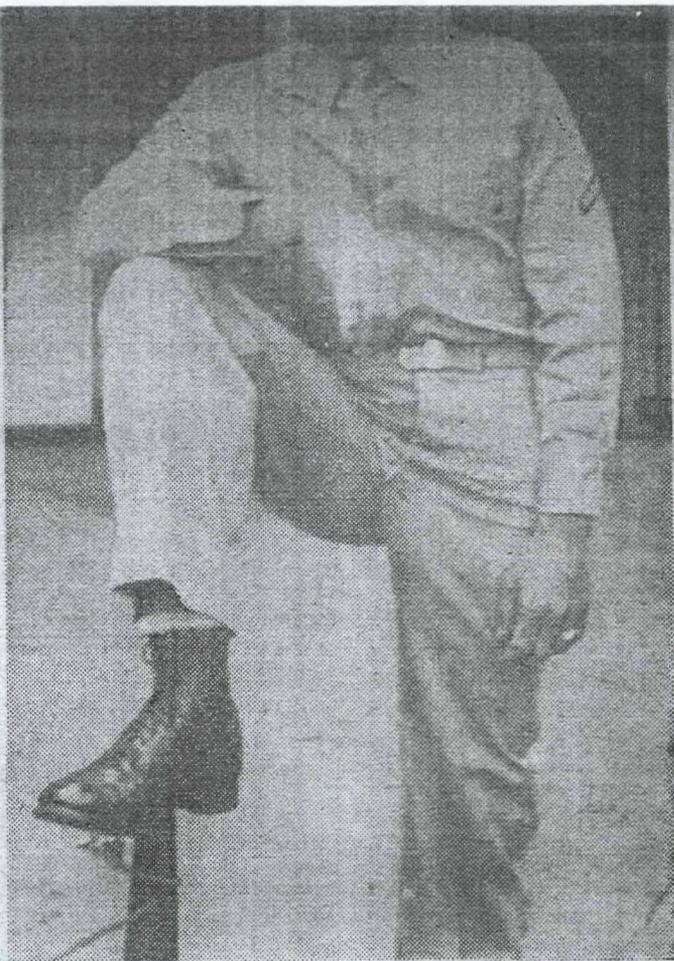
This crisp Sunday morning, Dec. 7, 1941, raised the ire of a somewhat indifferent American people.

Pearl Harbor was an almost defenseless shooting gallery, but the lesson learned was one of preparation. Never since has the United States been caught in such pants-down embarrassment.

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that we were about two days to get back to our five days in fact, they move. After



TOP PHOTO: The bombing of Pearl Harbor is shown in this U. S. Navy photograph. The large explosion is occurring aboard the U. S. Shaw.

LEFT PHOTO: Jesse Luper is shown in uniform shortly before the attack on Pearl Harbor.

LOWER PHOTO: Luper at The Wilson Daily Times' office checks 1941 edition for an account of the bombing. The edition, an extra, was put out on Sunday. The Daily Times, then as now, was a six-days-a-week newspaper, and normally did not publish on Sundays.



This World War I scene was snapped at Le Faux Bois after members of the Old Hickory division dismantled a railroad the Germans used to carry supplies over a rugged terrain. The infantry and artillery combined to destroy the facility and erase pockets of resistance.

After the arrival of the
 Army was mobilized at
 Jackson, South Carolina
 April 7, 1919.

120th Infantry, was organized in Wilson on April 1, 1921, under the command of Capt. Carl F. Batts.

In the years which followed, members of Company M saw riot duty in their home county in the fall of 1922; in Nash County, 1925; Halifax County, 1926 and 1928; Bertie County, 1929; Hertford County, 1930; and in Alamance County, 1934.

The company was mobilized and placed on active duty in September, 1940. The unit had 113 men at that time and the ranking officers were Lts. Oakley B. Beland and Joseph Adkins.

Beland subsequently became a lieutenant colonel and in the spring of 1944, with arrangements made with the Army by W. E. (Billy) Barnes, area war bond chairman, the Wilsonian brought 1,500 men from various 30th Division units to stage fire-power demonstrations and other maneuvers at a giant rally in Fleming Stadium.

Several thousand persons attended the program, and many local people still say it was one of the biggest shows ever staged in the area.

The contingent headed for Europe in the fall of 1944.

There were some personnel transfers, but members of the 30th Division, predominantly, were in the battles across France — and by the time

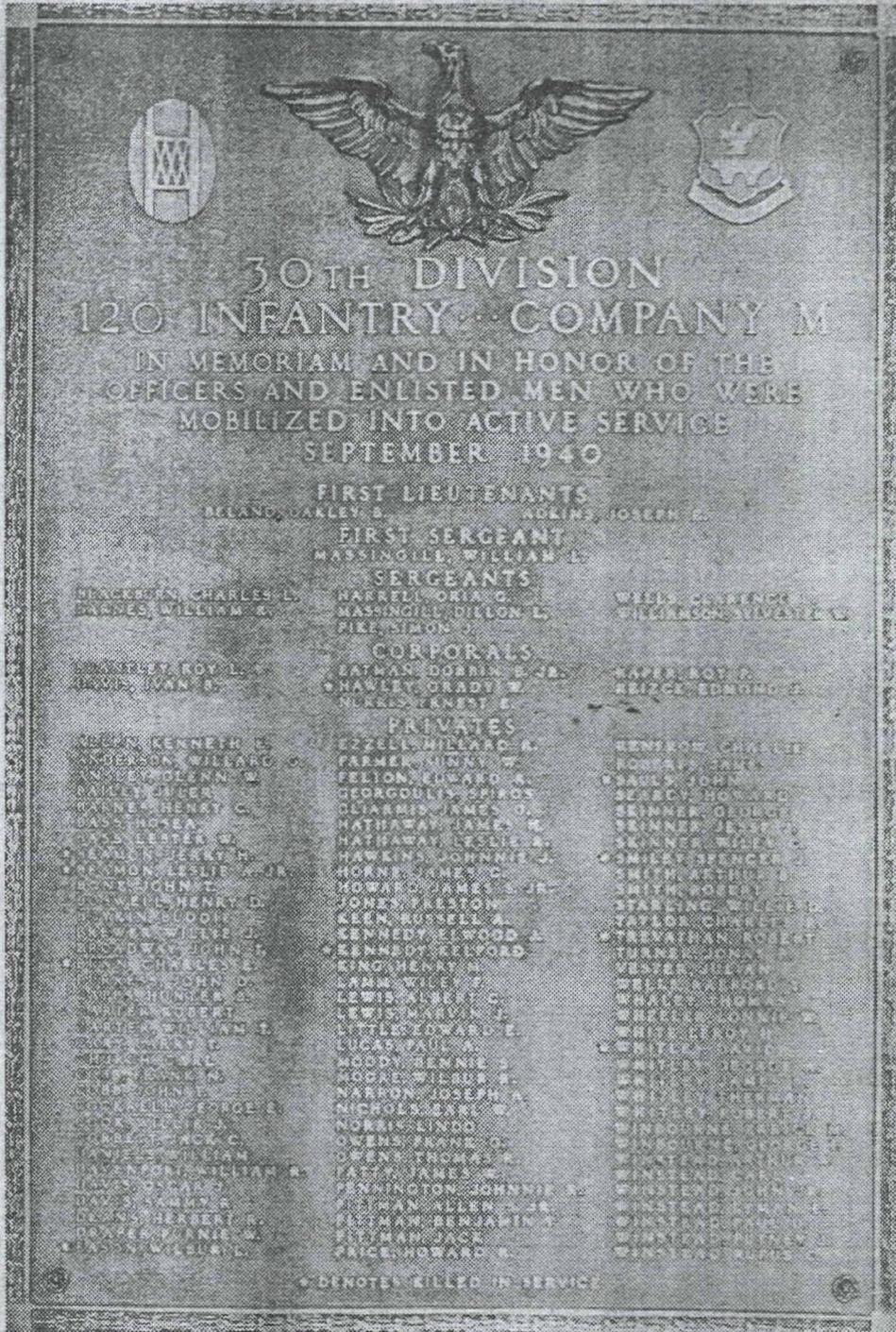
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World Wa group will reunion at May 24-26. combat ex Vets of W present.

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This plaque is located in foyer of the Wilson County Courthouse. It lists those area servicemen taking part in World War II. It gives the date of the activation of Company M, Sept. 1940. A four-year training period followed before the unit saw action in the European Theatre.

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our finding that the 30th had
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merit the presidential citation.

"It was further found that
the division had in no single
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ETO. We had to keep looking
at the ballance of things al-
ways — and we felt that the
30th was the outstanding in-
fantry division in the theatre."

This spring and summer,
members of the division will
have opportunities to get to-
gether and rehash old memo-
ris.

World War I members of the
group will gather in a social
reunion at Fontana Village on
May 24-26, 50 years after their
combat experience in France.
Vets of WW II will also be
present.

Broadus Bailey, past presi-
dent of the WW I contingent,



For those who look askance when the National Guard is mentioned, U. S. Army officials are quick to point out that some of the finest fighting units, such as Old Hickory, had their origins in the guard lineup. National Guard and reserve units train today as, perhaps, never before under battle conditions. Photo shows infantry men advancing to a new position by pulling their machine gun over a ridge.



Here's a photo taken of a portion of Company M personnel prior to company mobilization. Some of the members were screened out because of age—but they all made a contribution to efficiency of the unit. Shown in photo, first row, left to right, C. L. Blackburn, E. R. Felton Jr., E. M. Moore, S. J. Pike, J. F. Stancell, R. L. Hayes, O. G. Harrell, and P. W.

Barnes; second row, W. E. Bass, W. L. Hooks, W. A. Barnes, T. E. Norris, E. F. Casey, J. M. Waters, H. J. Jones, L. C. Carpenter, A. A. Wells, W. F. Lamm, and R. D. McIntosh; third row, P. Craft, B. F. Bass, J. R. Bissette, G. W. Hawley, R. P. Raper, R. F. Forbes, G. P. Williamson, Z. H. Ezzell, G. M. Warrick, B. S. Barnes, and J. B. Ellis.

Pride Felt, Courage Remembered When 'Old Hickory' Unit Meets

By CLINT FARIS

It has been a half century since U. S. World War I servicemen last "parlez-vous-ed with the mademoiselles from Armentieres"

It has been over 22 years since U. S. World War II servicemen fraternized with the frauleins along the Rhine and those bluebirds returned to the White Cliffs of Dover.

However, time cannot dim

some memories — and when those stirring things happened — why, it was only yesterday!!

As a case in point, just pick out any member of the famous 30th the Old Hickory Division, pose a question — and you'll get a prideful answer from the men who belonged to the outfit which fought across both great wars and added a deeper definition to the word "courage" in the process.

As history proved, soldiers

of the 30th Division earned the right to be called "Old Hickory," the name by which General Andrew Jackson was best known to his pioneer soldiers.

Both Carolinas and Tennessee are called "Jackson Country," since the general was born near the state line between North and South Carolina — but rose to military fame as a resident of Nashville, Tenn.

The Wilson area has deep

roots in 30th Division history — but let's go back to the beginning:

After the lull following the War of the Confederacy, Wilson resumed its military history in 1885 as Company F, Second North Carolina Regiment, was founded.

This organization was succeeded in 1898 by Company K, the Second North Carolina Regiment, which stayed in existence until 1916 when it was mobilized and sent to the Mexican Border. It was later transferred as Company K to the newly organized 119th Infantry. As a part of this group, Wilsonians in Company K helped write World War I history.

Created on July 18, 1917, of National Guard troops from the Carolinas and Tennessee, the 30th Division proceeded to build for itself one of the finest battle histories of the first World War.

The boys of Old Hickory won undying fame on Sept. 29, 1918, at Bellicourt, France, when they smashed through the famed "Hindenburg Line" and hastened the end of the conflict.

Prior to the climactic activity at Bellicourt, men of the 30th participated in the Flanders campaign, Ypres-Lys, and the Somme offensive.

After the armistice, the company was demobilized at Camp



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Other Company M personnel just prior to unit mobilization included, l to r, first row, W. L. Massengill, G. W. Harrell, J. W. Patty, E. F. Williams, C. I. Wells, W. H. Kemp and H. M. Joyner; second row, C. A. Bridgers, C. L. Brantley, J. C. Daniels, R. L. Meeks, W. S. Wynn, P. M. Overman, E. J.

Reisch, B. F. Barnes, L. D. Blalock and W. H. Norris; third row, L. R. Jacobs, W. E. Parris, W. D. Strud, H. M. McIntosh, R. T. Wells, R. J. Hinnant Jr., S. W. Williamson, D. L. Massingill, J. Whitehead, C. B. Bridgers, and D. Taylor.

hostilities ceased in May of 1945 they had pushed to the Elbe River, not many miles from Berlin, and in the process had earned the reputation of being "Workhorse of the Western Front." On the Elbe, men of the 30th met with advanced units of the Russians.

Gen. S. L. A. Marshall, official historian for the European Theatre of Operations, wrote, "At the request of Gen. Eisenhower, we were instructed to draw up a rating sheet on the divisions, infantry and armor and report which divisions we considered had performed the most consistent and efficient battle ser-

estimates that only a few hundred men have survived. He points out that the average age of survivors from the 1916-1918 conflict is over 70.

Host group for the reunion will be the Tar Heel Chapter of the 30th Division Association which is composed predominantly of World War II veterans from the organization's greater North Carolina area.

Then, in August the Old Hickory National convention will be held in Reno, Nevada, for those division members scattered across the nation by the tides of time.

Yes, deep are the roots —



When Company M, Third Battalion, 120th Infantry, was activated the ranking officers were, on left, 1st Lt. Oakley B. Beland and, right, 2nd Lt. Joseph E. Adkins. During the four-year training period which followed Beland became a lieutenant