

Dear Mr. Hackney,

May 8, 2007

I was glad to see another article in the paper in regards to Wilson County's contribution to WWII endeavors.

I enclose the history of the Engineers stationed here for a while during those traumatic years. Also enclosed are some pictures from the WPT that I submitted some years ago.

Time passes so quickly and I know that each day more and more of our old soldiers are dying no more to share their stories.

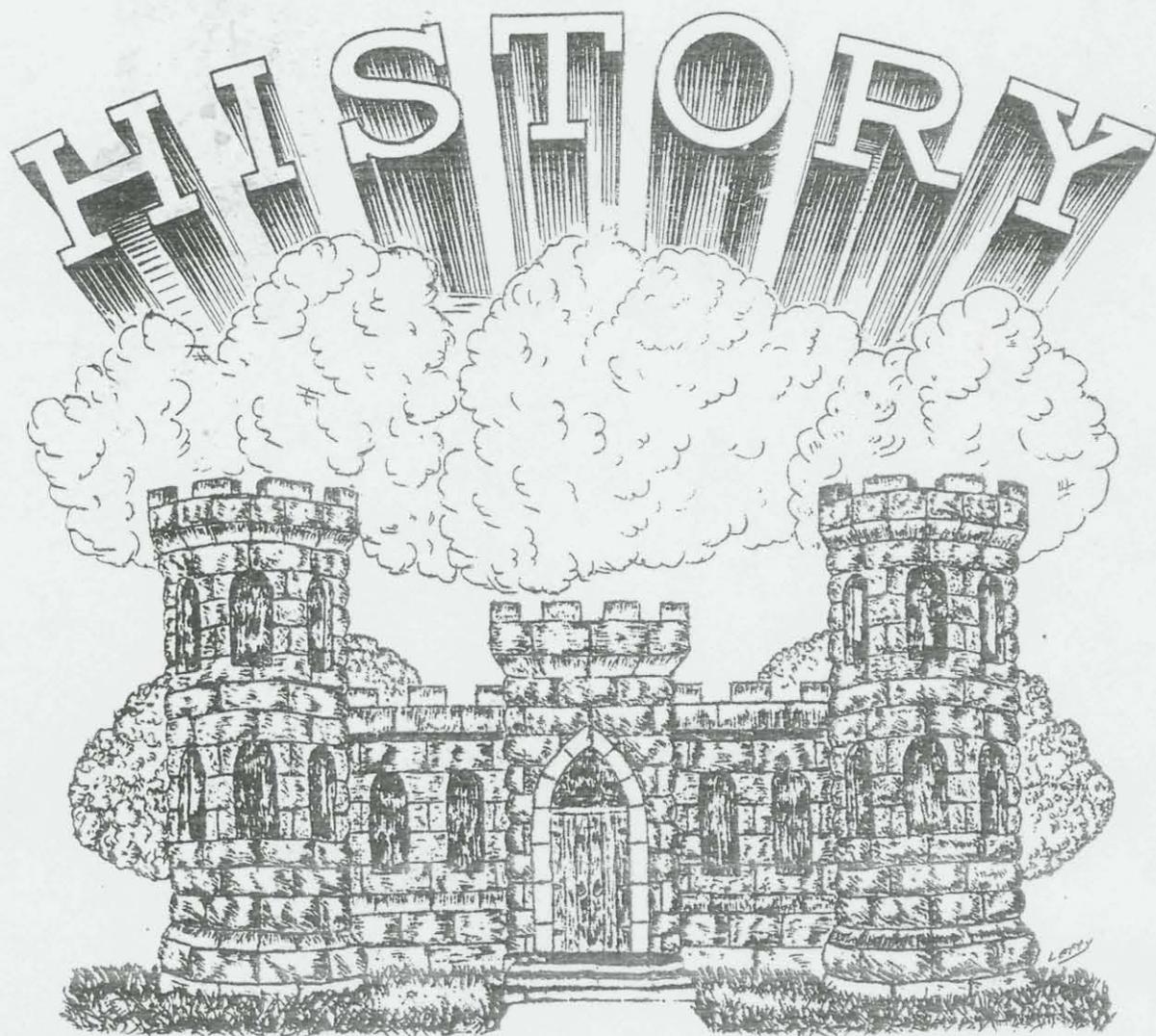
My father died at age 45. He did not share much about those years. He like some of the other engineers came back to Wilson & made it their home.

I also have other pictures, if I can find them & their monthly news that was written during their stay here.

If you would like to contact me my phone #'s are 252 237 7511 ext 265 or home 237-2401.

My thanks to you & whomever is working on this history from Wilson.

Theresa MacLagan Pierce



**COMPANY "A"**  
**30th ENGINEER**  
**TOP. BN. ~ GHQ**

**SEPT. 1, 1939 · DEC. 31, 1942**

## HISTORY

### SURVEY COMPANY "A"

#### 30TH ENGINEER TOPOGRAPHIC BATTALION (GHQ)

On September 1st, 1939 the 30th Engineer Bn (Top) was formed by a cadre from the 29th Engineer Bn (Top); Company "A" of the new battalion formerly being Company "B" of the 29th Engineers, then stationed in the Glenhaven school in Portland, Oregon. At this time the Company was engaged in a topographical survey of the southwestern part of Oregon, with field parties at Silverton and Molalla, Oregon. This work was completed in due time and the Company prepared to move to its new station at Fort Dupont, Delaware. On September 30, 1939 the entire Company, less Staff Sergeant Sherer and Jerry the mascot, under the command of Captain F. S. Tandy, proceeded by rail to San Francisco, California where they embarked for the East Coast via the Panama Canal on October 3rd, 1939 on the "U.S. A.T. Republic". The quarters on G deck in the hold, not being suitable to Captain Tandy, the men were moved up to F deck, to the stern of the ship. Each man was quartered in a space measuring 2 ft. x  $6\frac{1}{2}$  ft. x 3 ft. The second or third day out, 30 men from the Company were on KP duty; but, through the efforts of Captain Tandy, they were relieved at noon. There were no further details from Company "A". All were permitted one day on shore at each end of the Panama Canal, Balboa and Cristobal, Canal Zone. Docking at the Brooklyn Army Base on October 21st, 1939, the Company disembarked and, after spending two days at the Army Base, proceeded by rail to Fort Dupont, Delaware, where temporary headquarters were set up. They were joined at Fort Dupont by Staff Sergeant Sherer and Jerry, who had driven across the continent by private automobile. The remainder of 1939 was spent in getting organized once again into a workable survey unit.

From January 1940 until April 1940 the entire Company remained at Fort Dupont, Delaware for extensive training in surveying, covering both the practice and theory of Geodetic surveying. The instructors for this training were Captain F. S. Tandy and Lieuts. E. H. Williams, A. M. Eschbach, E. J. Gallagher and J. Unverferth. Sergeant Dabney was the instructor in mathematics. On February 2nd, 1940, Master Sergeant L. Mahinske joined the Company after being with the 3rd Engineers at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii for the past 18 years. In April 1940 the two field platoons, under the command of Lieuts. Williams and Eschbach, moved from Fort Dupont to Woodbury, New Jersey to start the field work on the first Mapping Project assigned to the 30th Engineers. Headquarters Platoon, including the Administration and Operations Sections remained at Fort Dupont. While at Woodbury, N.J., the field detachment was joined by two officers from the Phillipine Scouts, Captain Torres and 2nd. Lieut. Viardo, who were attached to Company "A" as observers to obtain information in regards to the methods and procedure of Geodetic Survey work as executed by the United States Army Engineers, with a view of incorporating suitable methods in the newly organized Phillipine Army Engineer units. At Woodbury, N.J. an 8-minute quadrangle was covered by Plane Table to check the accuracy of the existing maps. These maps were found to be of sufficient accuracy for general use, so the remainder of the project was mostly classification and recovery work to bring the maps up to date, by placing the data on the Aerial Photographs.

Having completed the work around Woodbury, N.J., the Field Detachment moved to Egg Harbor City, N.J. about the early part of July to extend the control further south, and also to run some second order lines for the New Jersey Geodetic Survey. On July 2nd, 1940 Captain F. S. Tancy was relieved of his command of Company "A" and Captain R. L. Dean assumed command. A party was given at Egg Harbor City to bid Captain Tandy farewell and to welcome Captain Dean to the organization.

In August, Lt. Gallagher was relieved from Company "A" and assigned to Bn. Hq. at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. The second survey platoon returned to Woodbury, N.J. in September to establish additional control in that area. This was completed in less than one month and the platoon, then under command of Lieut. Unverferth and Staff Sergeant Osborne, moved to Bel Air, Maryland to establish control for the Maryland Project. They were quartered at the National Guard Armory where the quarters were adequate, but unfortunately, too many dances were held by the Guard, on which occasions our men had to move their bunks to the basement. On November 4, 1940 the entire Company, less the Maryland detachment, moved to Wilson, N.C. by motor convoy, stopping enroute at Fort Belvoir, Va., the only time to date that Company "A" has been with the rest of the Battalion. The following day the journey was resumed and the convoy reached Wilson, N.C. about mid-day and set up headquarters in the National Guard Armory. Shortly after its arrival, the Company participated in a pre-Christmas parade and marched to the tune of "Jingle Bells". Needless to say nobody was in step; however, it was a night affair and the mis-steps were not noticed so much. The Bel Air Detachment completed its assigned work around the latter part of December 1940 and moved by motor convoy to Wilson, N.C., to rejoin the Company.

The beginning of 1941 saw the entire company in Wilson for its second school season, which was short lived, for Staff Sgt. Trethow and a party of 22 men were ordered back to Bel Air, Md. on January 13, 1941 to obtain some additional control in the southeast portion of the Gunpowder and Bel Air Quadrangles. However, the remainder of the Company stayed in Wilson, and, under the instructions of Lts. Williams and Unverferth, Mr. Sgt. Mahinske, and Tech. Sgt. Free, carried on the schooling. School ended on January 24, 1941 when the First Platoon, under the command of Lt. E. J. Carr moved to Camp Blanding, Florida, to begin work on the Florida project. On February 7, 1941, while most of the Company was in the field, Capt. R. L. Dean was relieved of his command and Capt. J. J. Danis became the commanding officer of Company "A". St. Sgt. Trethow and his detachment returned to Wilson from Bel Air on January 29, 1941 with some tall tales concerning the severity of the weather which ranged far below zero and the truth. After remaining in Wilson a short time, St. Sgt. Trethow and a detachment, under the command of Tech. Sgt. Free, again left Wilson, this time to Camp Claiborne, La., to run a railroad survey under the direction of Capt. Bagby, C.E., Post Engineer Officer in charge of the railroad location work.

From Camp Blanding, Florida, Sgt. Burchett's survey squad moved to St. Augustine, Fla. to establish the control in that area called the "Twelve Mile Swamp". This area was well named, as the Survey Squad soon found out after working several weeks in water at least knee deep. In the early part of April, 1941 Sgt. Burchett, Sgt. Conner and Cpl. Licursi returned to Wilson to join St. Sgt. Branen who was placed in command of a

detachment and ordered to proceed to Mumford Point, near Jacksonville, N.C., to begin survey work on the Camp Davis Project in North Carolina. The detachment contained the first group of Selective Service men to be assigned to Company "A". These men were readily converted into a workable survey unit and the work progressed very rapidly. During the early part of 1941, a small cadre including Lts. Williams, Unverferth and 11 enlisted men was sent to Fort Belvoir, Va. to form Company "D", 30th Engineers. The First Platoon finished their work in Florida and returned to Wilson on April 26, 1941. After remaining there for about five days, they moved to Mumford Pt., N.C. to join St. Sgt. Branen's party, Lt. Carr assuming command of the entire detachment. In May, 1941 the detachment was split up and part of it moved to Burgaw, N.C., to run the control in that section of the project. 2nd Lt. M. R. Stewart, who reported to Company "A" on February 14, 1941, was ordered to Burgaw to command the detachment.

On May 5, 1941, the newly formed Company "D" of 170 men under command of 1st Lt. Williams stopped and spent the night in Wilson on its motor trip from Fort Belvoir, Va. to its new headquarters in Camden, S.C. St. Sgt. Branen left with a cadre of six men for the 67th Engineer Topographic Company at Camp Claiborne, La. on May 13, 1941.

In the meantime, 1st. Lt. C. M. Duke reported to Company "A" from Battalion Headquarters on April 28, 1941, followed closely on May 1, 1941 by 1st Lts. A. T. Dotson, Jr. and E. A. Sabatelli, both of whom reported directly from civilian life. When Capt. J. J. Danis was transferred to the 36th Engineers on May 15, 1941, Lt. Duke assumed command as the ranking First Lieutenant. However, when Lt. O. G. Benson's promotion to Captain in the Officers Reserve Corps came through, Captain Benson became the Company Commander on June 9, 1941. Lt. Carr was also transferred to the 44th Engineers and left the Company on May 31, 1941, being replaced at Mumford Point by 2nd Lt. H. S. Rudd who had joined the Company on February 3, 1941. About this time, Tech. Sgt. Free was transferred in grade to Company "D" of the 30th Engineers at Camden, S.C., and St. Sgt. Osborne went to the 56th Engineer Topographic Company at Camp Jackson, S.C.

The entire Company was recalled to Wilson in the latter part of June to prepare for maneuvers to be held at Fort Bragg, N.C. with the Air Corps and Field Artillery. The Louisiana detachment finished the railroad survey and moved to Camp Shelby, Miss. to start survey work there on the New Augusta Quadrangle. They were recalled to Wilson arriving here on the 27th of June, 1941 and the next few days were spent in preparing for the maneuvers. On July 7, 1941, the Company, augmented by two squads from Company "D", 30th Engineers, arrived at Fort Bragg, N.C. and set up camp. Late that afternoon, the Platoon Commanders and Platoon Sergeants went on a reconnaissance for the first problem, which was to start that same evening. About 1800 that evening, the 2nd Platoon started working on the first problem, although no starting monuments had been recovered, as most of this existing control was established by the U. S. G. S. about 1918 and the monuments were destroyed. Starting points were assumed and later tied in to other points which were recovered. The survey work was carried on all night and the next day. On the evening of the 8th of July 1941, the field books were turned over to the Computers for completion.

The problem was finally turned in on July 11, 1941, after "bugs" in the computations were discovered. Sgt. Heintz added a little spice to the problem by hanging up a sign in the computing tent which read "THE MIRACLE DEPARTMENT", but, after computing the first line in which an 8000 - yard error existed, he immediately pulled down the sign and substituted the following: "THEY DON'T HAPPEN ANY MORE". The second and third problems were completed smoothly and without any errors being found in either field work or the computations. The greatest handicap on this maneuver was the very crude lighting equipment used on the rods for the night work; most of these contrivances being home-made and ranging from flash-lights to cigar boxes. Sgt. Garren worked up his own device which proved very adequate for night leveling, and it was used by almost all the other squads. The Battalion Commander, Lt. Col. Herrington, visited the Company while on this mapping problem, and observed the men at work, both in the field and in Headquarters. The maneuver ended on the morning of July 18, 1941 and the Company returned to Wilson, arriving at 1800 that day.

On July 21, 1941, the Second Platoon, under the command of Lts. Dotson and Sabatelli, moved to Troy, N.C. to help Company "D", 30th Engineers in surveying the maneuver area for the coming big fall maneuvers. The First Platoon, under the command of Lt. Rudd and Sgt. Trethow, returned to Camp Shelby, Miss. on July 23, 1941 to complete the survey work started there by Sgt. Trethow prior to the maneuvers. After spending the night in Camden, S.C., with Company "D", 30th Engineers, and the next night at Fort Benning, Ga., the convoy arrived at Camp Shelby, Miss. on July 25, 1941. When the Second Platoon completed its work in the vicinity of Troy, N.C., and was relieved from further duty with Company "D", it moved to Wrightsville Beach, N.C. on August 11, 1941 to resume work on the Camp Davis Project.

The camp at Wrightsville Beach was joined for two weeks by the first Platoon of Company "D", who helped in the survey and recovery work. After the First Platoon left, the Second Platoon of Company "D" followed and also spent two weeks at the camp on the beach. During off-duty hours, both men and officers enjoyed excellent swimming, boating and fishing at the famous North Carolina beach resort.

Lt. Stewart was transferred to the 33rd Engineer Topographic Battalion at Camp Claiborne, La. and left the Company on August 26, 1941. His departure was followed by two new officers, 2nd Lt. R. G. Waitt reporting on September 7, 1941 and 2nd Lt. E. W. Ek on October 10, 1941. 1st Sgt. M. Sherer was promoted to Master Sergeant and transferred to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. Staff Sgt. Burchett was then appointed First Sgt. on September 8, 1941, and Sgt. Gay went to the 711th Engineer Railway Battalion at Camp Claiborne, La.

On September 18, 1941 the First Platoon returned to Wilson, having completed the work assigned to it at Camp Shelby, Miss. After remaining in Wilson about two weeks, it again moved out, under the command of Lt. Rudd and St. Sgt. Conner, this time to Edenton, N.C. where the main part of its work consisted of recovery of existing control, classification of photos, a small amount of Transit-Treverse control, and one Three-Point problem. The Bilby steel towers were used for this work, and the station located was named "BELVIDERE". About this same

time, the 2nd Platoon, having finished at Wrightsville Beach, N.C., moved to Wallace, N.C. to complete the Camp Davis Project under the command of Lt. Sabatelli and St. Sgt. E. E. Jones. In November 1941, one squad under the command of Sgt. Wyatt moved to Swansboro, N.C. to establish control on the Plate-Pairs in that area, and to recover some of the existing control along the coast. While at Swansboro, Sgt. Wyatt was joined by Lt. Ek, who took command of the detachment. After a stay of about three weeks, Lt. Ek and his detachment returned to Edenton, N.C., where Lt. Ek later took over the command of the entire First Platoon from Lt. Rudd who was relieved of his command and transferred to Fort Belvoir, Va. on January 5, 1942.

All work in the Camp Davis Project consisting of twelve 15-minute quadrangles completed, the Second Platoon from Wallace, N.C. rolled into Wilson on December 9, 1941, two days after "Pearl Harbor". Under the circumstances, the long convoy was quite imposing, as it proceeded through each town and appeared to be headed for the "front", now that the Nation was at war, with onlookers showing a much greater degree of interest and tenseness than on previous occasions. The townspeople of Wallace were similarly impressed by the departure of "the soldiers".

Capt. Benson was relieved of command of Company "A" and went to the 22nd Engineers at Fort Knox, Kentucky on January 11, 1942; and 1st Lt. C. M. Duke, who later in the year was promoted to Captain, assumed command. On January 10, 1942, the 1st Platoon was ordered back to Wilson and joined the remainder of the Company in an extensive training period for combat duty. On January 20, 1942, Pfc Otto became the first Aviation Cadet to leave the Company, going to Maxwell Field, Alabama. 2nd Lt. E. F. Kulhan joined the Company from Battalion Headquarters on February 2, 1942. After about a month's combat training in Wilson, both field platoons moved to Ahoskie, N.C. on February 16, 1942 to carry on the work in the Edenton Project started by the First Platoon in October 1941. In this work, both Platoons worked as one unit under the command of Lt. Waitt and Lt. Ek. While at Ahoskie the field detachment executed a large 2nd order triangulation net, the first achieved by the Company since becoming Company "A", 30th Engineers. From Ahoskie the entire field detachment moved to Williams- ton, N.C., and after a short stay, the work being completed, moved again to Greenville, N.C. From Greenville, a party of 24 men, under command of Tech. Sgt. Conner and Sgt. Levstone, moved to Dillon, S.C. to run some survey lines, which were necessary for controlling two plate pairs in that area. Work was completed in three weeks and the detachment returned to Greenville.

On March 12, 1942, the first group of candidates from Company "A" departed for the Engineer Officer Candidate School at Fort Belvoir, Va., namely, St. Sgt. Wilson, Pfc Cimicata, and Pvts Waddell, Dunlap, Fyffe, Gale and Stinson. On March 21, 1942, Sgt. Jones, Cpls. Feagins and Wadinger, and Pvt. Spec 3rd Class Stoneburg left the Company at 0030 for the New York Port of Embarkation and Oversea Duty. They were later heard from as being "Somewhere in England".

During April, while the field detachment was still at Ahoskie, a large cadre of 96 men from Company "A" was sent to Roanoke Rapids, N.C., to form a new Company "D", 30th Engineers, old Company "D" having been converted to Company "A", 649th Engineers, effective December 15, 1941.

Among those who went on the cadre to Company "D", 30th Engineers, were 1st Lt. Dotson, 1st Lt. Sabatelli, 1st Lt. Waitt and 2nd Lt. Moore, who had been on detached service with the Company since March 7, 1942. Also during the month of April, Company "A" contributed seven more men to the Engineer Officer Candidate School at Fort Belvoir, namely, Pfc's Jones and Hutchinson, and Pvts Haller, Christensen, Hamill, Morey, and Blake; while Aviation Cadet Eason left for Maxwell Field, Ala. on April 12, 1942.

Lt. Sabatelli, who had been kept on detached service from Company "D" during the month of April to help in the many administrative details incident to the transfer of so many men, finally left for Roanoke Rapids on April 27, 1942. On the same day, Tech. Sgt. Heintz left for the 66th Engineer Topographic Company at Fort Jackson, S.C. The following day, Capt. Duke was relieved of his command and departed for the 374th Engineers at Camp Gordon, Ga., 2nd Lt. R. J. Kroc becoming the new commanding officer of Company "A" a week after he reported on April 20, 1942.

The rapid expansion of our Army in its transition from peace to war was no better demonstrated at that time than in Company "A", when the entire officer personnel consisted of only three 2nd Lieutenants for several months, whereas a short time before, a Captain, 4-1st Lieutenants, and 2 2nd Lieutenants were present.

During the early part of May activities were rather dull, although the regular mapping work was continued on the North Carolina Project. At this time the field detachment was stationed at Greenville, N.C., quartered in the National Guard Armory, with one squad in camp at Trenton, N.C. Work was being carried on in an effort to complete the Rocky Mount Project, one of the three sub-projects that was covered by photos. Many long traverse lines were run and three new triangulation stations were established. Most of the men regretted the fact that the job would soon be completed since Greenville was so hospitable and, of course, the main attraction was the girl's college with some 3000 students. With 1st Sgt. Burchett appointed Master Sergeant and scheduled to leave on cadre, Staff Sgt. Kulpinski became First Sergeant of Company "A" on May 20, 1942. Three men, Sgt. March and Cpls. Klaer and Cooke, left on May the 28th for the Engineer Officer Candidate School at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, and in the early part of June, M/Sgt. Joe Conner and T/Sgt. Phelps went to the 954th Engineers, an aviation topographic company, at MacDill Field, Florida. Two days later a large cadre, consisting of M/Sgt. Burchett, T/Sgt. Levstone, 1st Sgt. Garren, S/Sgts. Sorge and McCluskey, Sgt. Jordan, T/4 Flowers, and Cpl. Davis took off to the wild Michigan Woods to join the 654th Engineer Bn (Top)(Army) at Camp Custer. That same day Pvt. Gilbert A. Hunt, (a ranking Davis Cup tennis player), left for meteorological training at the 2nd Weather Squadron, Patterson Field, Ohio. On June 23rd, Lt. Kroc, who had been commanding Company "A" for some time, was appointed 1st Lieutenant; while on the 22nd, a group of 5 Aviation Cadets, namely, Cpl. Nilo, Pfc Van Guilder, and Pvts McNichol, Woodruff and Yarber, left for Mather Field, Sacramento, Calif.

While Colonel F. L. Simmons, from the Inspector General's Department of 2nd Army Headquarters at Memphis, Tennessee, was making an intensive inspection of the Company personnel, property, and accounts on July 7, 1942, Lt. Sabatelli arrived and assumed command of Company "A", having been trans-

ferred back again from "D" Company at Roanoke Rapids, N.C. As Lt. Sabatelli had previously served with Company "A", this was more of a home-coming day than the taking over of a new assignment. Company "A" was called upon to furnish a firing squad and escort for the funeral, at Bailey, N.C. of a Staff Sergeant from the Air Corps, who had been killed in an airplane accident. Several weeks later we were again called upon to furnish a firing squad and escort for another soldier's funeral, this time at Crisp, N.C.

On July 10th, Lt. Sabatelli was appointed Captain, while Lts. Ek and Kulhan were appointed 1st Lieutenants. During this period two new officers, 2nd Lieuts. W. Macdonald and R. W. Matson, were assigned, reporting on July 14 and 19, respectively. Lt. Matson drew the Mess Officers job while Lt. Macdonald took the field. This brought the officer strength to six, indicating that a cadre was in the making. As always, this assumption proved correct, for Lt. Kroc was the first to go. He was assigned to the 664th Engineer Top Co. at Camp Gruber, Oklahoma on July 22nd. This was a distinct loss to our company, as Lt. Kroc was a very popular officer, a good ball player, and a member of the Company Softball Team which was the best in the Civic League of Wilson, N.C. During the month of July, the company furnished two men, T/Sgt. Wilson, and T/4th Grade Wade, for the Engineer Officer Candidate School at Fort Belvoir, Va. and one man, T/4th Grade Clifford, for the Tank Destroyer Officers School at Camp Hood, Texas.

The field detachment moved from the Armory at Greenville, N.C. to the National Guard Armory at Dunn, N.C. on August the 10th. During this change of stations, a party of nine men was selected to field check and edit three Thirty-Minute Quadrangles, namely Columbia, Plymouth and Roanoke Island. The original ground work and reproduction was done by the 649th Engineers. A weather-forecasting service was initiated by the Company Operations on August 12th with the aid of some short cut tables on " How to Predict Weather " and the valuable help of the " Rheumatics ". It is believed that good guessing will prevail and some weather will be forecast correctly. The present equipment consists of one aneroid barometer, one pocket thermometer, one weather booth and a scratch pad. A weather vane was constructed by Cpl. C. H. Nichols, but the machine had a very short life. A Carolina Zephyr came along and took the weather vane with it, and since then Cpl. Nichols has made no attempt to construct another one. M/Sgt. Mahinske now judges the direction of the wind by the smoke from the nearby chimneys. This Company also conducted a test for the Chief of Engineers on barometric leveling. Results were surprisingly good and barometric elevations were taken on the Barrier Reef of North Carolina to determine the elevations of sand dunes. About the middle of August, the Company started firing small bore rifles and, when all the men qualified, the Springfields were later fired on the range at Fort Bragg.

Capt. Worland, 1st Lieuts. Livingston and Chisholm, and 2nd Lieuts. Hughes, Moore, Kiersch, Brewster, Hash and Watkins from Battalion Headquarters joined the Company, on August 15th for schooling in Operations of a Field Survey Company. They assumed their duties two days later at Dunn, N.C., together with Lts. Kulhan and Matson, who were relieved of their regular company assignments. The all-officer survey party, in addition to running

traverse and level lines, put up one of the Bilby triangulation towers. In its erection, Capt. Worland was the most agile and dare-devilish of the entire crew, perching himself on the very edge of the structure, high above the ground, where even the birds feared to roost. A cadre was formed on August 27th, using six men from Company "D", who were transferred to our Company, and nine of our own men. This cadre, forming Company "A" of the 651st Engineer Topographic Battalion located at Camp Maxey, Texas, consisted of : Lt. Kulhan, M/Sgt Carrier, T/Sgts. Smith, Jackson and Belasco, 1st Sgt. Wood, Sgt. Baker, S/Sgts. Miller, Grauso, Murphy and Eubanks, Cpl. Verriest, T/4th Grade Ryan, Wakeman, and Iwanylo and T/5th Grade Holzman.

The month of September saw other interesting and unusual events take place. Colonel L. S. Arnold, Field Artillery, Commanding the 2nd Army Special Troops, at Camp Pickett, Va. visited this Company on September 3rd, inspecting the Company as well as the recently formed cadre, which he approved and found very satisfactory. That same day, Colonel J. H. Spengler, commanding the Motor Transport District at Fort Bragg inspected the motor equipment and commended the motor section on its excellent condition and efficiency. Later a special letter, in his own handwriting, was received from Colonel Arnold, quote: "As a matter of information, we had lunch at the Cherry Hotel. The waitress spoke about the fine conduct and appearance of your men when on the street. Said she did not know any of them. Praise of this kind, when unsolicited, regardless of the source, is well. It does not hurt. Tell the men." After completing a most successful tour of duty on both surveying and computations, the all-officer party returned to Fort Belvoir on September the 12th. At about this time Company "A" won the Wilson Softball Championship, and later a trophy was awarded to the Company's Ball Club by the Wilson Chamber of Commerce. In the series play-offs, however, we lost. This did not matter as it had no bearing on the coveted cup or the standing in the league, so we are still tops. The Company Team, incidentally, had to play the cream of the crop in the series play-offs as the competing teams, during the regular playing season, had picked their men for these play-offs. This makes us rather proud of our team's accomplishments.

On September 13th, A War Bond Drive program was held at the Wilson Municipal Stadium. The program was opened by the Wilson High School Band, which played several numbers. This was followed by the 194th Field Artillery Orchestra from Fort Bragg which also played several numbers. Company "A" then formed a Guard of Honor from the entrance to the stage for the Gold Star Mothers. After they had been seated, the Guard of Honor formed two squads in front of the stage. The National Anthem was played, after which the Guard marched off the field. Following this, several vocal and instrumental solos were rendered. At about this time, Governor Broughton of North Carolina and John Payne, the movie star, were escorted to the stage. A short address was given by the governor who then introduced Mr. Payne. He gave a short address, in which he explained the absence of two other movie stars, Jane Wyman and Jinx Falkenberg, who had fallen sick because of their strenuous tour for War Bonds. A tobacco auction was then held with Mr. Payne as the auctioneer. The program was brought to completion with the playing of The National Anthem.

The recently formed cadre, who were preparing for their departure to Texas the next day, were guests of honor at a farewell party tendered them by the Company on September the 14th. Short talks were given by various members of the departing group, and the evening was enjoyed by everyone. 2nd Lieut. G. A. Kiersch, who had just undergone schooling at Dunn, was retained at Wilson and attached to this Company on September 15th, being assigned later on the 25th. The same day, Aviation Cadet Dingee departed for San Antonio, Texas. All during this time, the Company continued its mapping project of Eastern North Carolina, the field parties being stationed at Wilson, Dunn and Zebulon, N.C. From September 21st to the 23rd, the entire Company fired the 30 Cal. Rifle for marksmanship at Fort Bragg. Considering the fact that only a few of the men had ever fired the regulation rifle before, the results were very good. As usual, the alibies were plenty, and, if awards were based on these, there wouldn't be enough "Expert" pins to go around. Private Walker, a former member of this Company who had been furloughed to reserve, was recalled to active service on September 10th and rejoined the Company on September 23rd. From September 24th to October 1st, proof sheets covering the New River and Wilmington Quadrangles of the Camp Davis Project were field checked by Sgt. Kuell and Sgt. Wilson.

Organization Day was celebrated by the entire command on September 25th at the Hotel Cherry, Wilson, N.C. with a dinner served at 1930. T/Sgts. Wyatt and Eckert and S/Sgts. Randall and Ball, the only remaining men who had been with the Company since its organization, were the guests of honor. After dinner the Toastmaster, Lieut. Ek, called upon Sgt. Wyatt to give a resume of the Company up to the present time. His speech was very interesting. Sgt. Holt also gave a brief talk. Captain Sabatelli then awarded prizes to the men who made the highest scores in firing the 30 Cal. Rifle for record. The following men, who had previously fired the rifle, won the prizes: M/Sgt. Mahinske, highest scorer-179-\$5.00, T/5th Grade Tapp, second high-174-\$3.00, T/5th Grade Detjen, third high-172-\$2.00. The following men, who had never previously fired, were also awarded prizes: S/Sgt. Ball, highest scorer-170-\$5.00, T/4th Grade Smith, second high-168-\$3.00 and T/5th Grade Hench, third high-155-\$2.00. Following the banquet, everyone enjoyed dancing to the music of Hal Thurston's Orchestra from Rocky Mount, and a very good time was had by all. For some time it was felt that an instrument repair man should be available, so a canvas was made for a suitable candidate. T/4th Grade Wilson fulfilled the requirements and was sent to The Ordnance School, Aberdeen Proving Grounds, Maryland. After completing a short course on EC. scopes and everything else but surveying instruments, he returned to the Company on November 30th, a qualified scoper. During September, Pvts. William L. Blair, Jr., John W. Foresman, and Will S. Gray, former members of Company "B" at Fort Belvoir, Va. joined the Company.

The Field Detachment moved from Dunn, N.C. on October 12th. The first platoon, with Lt. Matson in charge, went to Washington, N.C., while the second platoon, under Lt. Kiersch, went to Florence, S.C. Around the middle of October, a field checking party, consisting of S/Sgts. Newell and Losak and Sgt. McClurg, was formed to check the Burgaw, Rocky Point, Topsail, and Swansboro Quadrangles. Drivers were: Pfc. Golden, Lincecum and Bois. At about this same time, the battalion photographer, T/5th Grade L. Edenson, of Fort Belvoir, Va., was sent to this Company to take suitable

photographs of a survey company in action. These pictures are to be used as illustrations in the new "Operations Training Handbook" which will be off the press in the near future. Towards the end of the month, a group of approximately 50 high school boys, with their principals representing the high schools in Wilson County, visited the Armory for the purpose of getting some training in their High School Victory Corps Campaign. Lieut. Cassidy, M/Sgt. Mahinske and Sgt. Olkowski were the instructors.

The following gains and losses occurred during the month of October: Lieut. Ek, relieved of his duties with this Company and assigned to the 21st Engineer Regt (Aviation) at Langley Field, Va., left on October 9th, and on the following day, 1st Lt. C. L. Salley joined the Company from the 21st Engineers. A week later, Lts. Macdonald and Matson were appointed 1st Lieutenants. This change was followed by the transfer of T/5th Grade R. Montgomery, Pfc. Mueller and Pvts. Lynn, McTernan, Britton, and Bedell from this Company to the 660th Engr. Top Bn. at Fort Belvoir, Va. 2nd Lt. F. P. Cassidy, of Fort Belvoir, Va., was assigned to and joined this Company on October 21st. Six days later, S/Sgt. Randall was transferred from this Company to the 671st Engineer Top Co. (Corps) at Camp Bowie, Texas. Early in the month, T/5th Grade Augun and Pvt. Whelpley were assigned to this Company from Fort Belvoir, Va., and Aviation Cadet Lewis departed for Nashville, Tennessee. Technician 5th Grade Walker applied for a commission as Captain, because of his wide experience in the construction field. The request was disapproved and, in lieu of a commission, he was promoted to Master Sergeant and transferred on October 31st to Camp Claiborne, La. Lt. Ek was later heard from as "Somewhere in Africa" and Montgomery, Mueller, Lynn, and Britton as "Somewhere in England".

The First Platoon, stationed at Washington, N.C., having completed the portion of the Pamlico Project covered by photography, moved on November 10th to Lumberton, N.C. to assist the Second Platoon in working the Elizabethtown Project. This being the only project covered entirely by photography, the First Platoon is handling all the triangulation and traverse lines in the northern part of the project, while the Second Platoon is covering the southern portion, both working from west to east. Company "A" participated in the Armistice Day celebration held in Wilson, N.C. on November 11th. The ceremonies were very simple and were held on the steps of the court house. This was only the second time that Wilson observed Armistice Day since way back in 1918. On November 12, we were proud to receive the following note from the Battalion Commander, Lt. Col. L. R. Wirak: "Except for haircuts, I was well pleased with the appearance of Co. A on my last visit". 1st Lieut. Cahan, Dental Corps, after servicing the ivories of the Company for several weeks, returned to Headquarters, 30th Engineers, on November 19th, 1942. About this time, Lt. Matson returned to Headquarters in Wilson, and Lt. Cassidy took command of the 1st Platoon in Lumberton. On November 2, 1942, T/4 McCullough, T/5 Pinchevsky, and Pfc Cusumano left for the Cooks & Bakers School at Fort Meade, Maryland on detached service. On the 11th, three men departed for Engineer Officer Candidate School at Fort Belvoir, namely Tech Sgts. Bilzor and Wyatt, and Sgt. H. T. Montgomery; and on the 24th, T/5's Clute, Duncan, Epstein and Millian departed for the next class at O.C.S. The following men joined the Company during the month of November: T/5 Watson, Pfc. Budd, and Pvts Lavery, W. R. Johnson, Halliburton, Parker, Dawson, and Waring.

The Second Platoon, under the command of Lt. Kiersch, having completed their portion of the Elizabethtown Project beyond the economical motoring distance, was forced to select a new center of operations. This resulted in the platoon moving on December 18, 1942 from Florence, S.C. to Whiteville, N.C., where the work is being continued. Incidentally, this is the first time that Company "A" planned to continue its survey work throughout the winter. Major Worland, accompanied by Capt. Chalfant, the Battalion Medical Officer, visited and inspected the Company and Field Detachments on December 14th, and left again two days later for their return to Fort Belvoir, Va. T/Sgt. Rhinehart and Pfc. Tiroletti, after completing a short course on Field Operations, returned to H. & S. Company at Fort Belvoir on December 3rd. S/Sgt. Ball and T/5th Grade Reh left the Company and went to Fort Belvoir to attend a week's school on chemical warfare. After completing their training in the various phases successfully, they returned to the Company on the 14th of December to pass on their newly gained knowledge to the rest of the men. Staff Sgts. Sluder, Gaisford and McClurg and T/3rd Grade Wilson left for a field check of the Barco, Kittyhawk, Beckford, Edenton and Wade Point Quadrangles on December 14th. Sluder and Wilson returned six days later, while McClurg and Gaisford returned on the 23rd. During the month of December, the following men became members of Company A: Sgt. D. H. Johnson, T/5 Grove, Pfc Strange, and Pvts. Emerson, E. V. Price, Bedford, Bettmann, Cecelia, Collins, Engel, Jones, Mahoney, May, Noll, Breines, Friedman, McGrath, Dasher, Nicastri, Edwards, Hill, Krey, Rounsefell, Tamony and Dunay. Two more men, T/4 Hinkley and T/5 M. Miller, went to Engineer Officer Candidate School on December 10th, and Tech. Sgt. Medz went to the next class on the 24th. Lt. Kiersch was appointed 1st Lieut. on December 14th. A firing squad and escort, under Lt. Macdonald, were furnished by our Company for the funeral in Rocky Mount of an Air Corps Officer killed in a plane crash in West Virginia.

During the year of 1942, the organization was engaged in topographic surveying and mapping in North and South Carolina. A total of 1,954 miles of 3rd and 4th Order transit traverse was completed. 16 new triangulation stations were established, 21 quadrangles were completed, and 23 quadrangle maps were field checked. In addition to several large cadres leaving the Company during the past year, thirty members went to Officer Candidate School, practically all of them graduating, and nine others transferred to the Air Corps as Aviation Cadets. Besides, many other men who left Company "A" on cadres are now Commissioned Officers, Warrant Officers, or Master Sergeants. All our past Company Commanders are now Field Officers, and all the junior officers who have left are now at least Company Commanders. At the close of 1942, there are only two men left since the activation of the 30th Engineers, and only one officer and 30 men who were present at the close of 1941. However, officers and men may come and go, but still remaining and ever faithful, is "Jerry" the mascot. In recent years his domain has been threatened by the addition of two dogs, "Mocus" and "Stonehead Jackson", as well as a mother cat and four kittens, but to the majority of the personnel, "Jerry" is still "The Old Soldier".

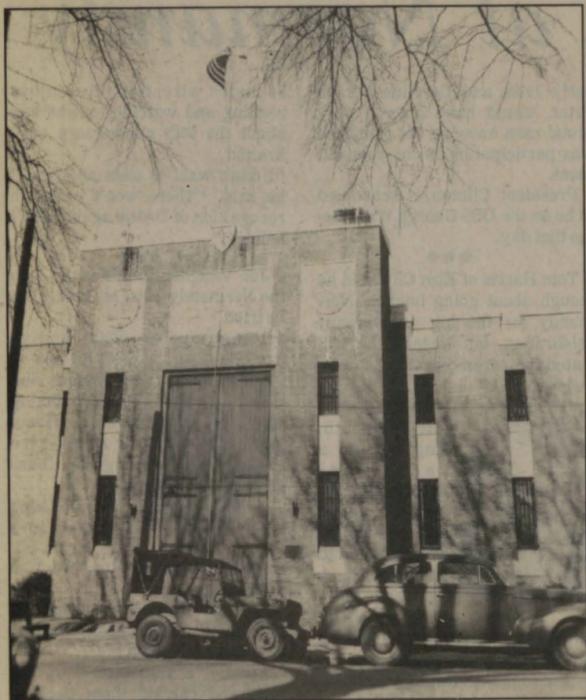
The year 1942 saw the following promotions made in Company A:  
4 - Master Sgts, 3 - First Sgts, 12 - Technical Sgts, 23 - Staff Sgts,  
16 - Sergeants, 18 - Corporals, 6 - Technicians 3rd Grade, 42 - Tech-  
nicians 4th Grade, 64 - Technicians 5th Grade, and 65 - Privates First  
Class; a grand total of 253 promotions.

With such a past of successful achievements and varied activities, and with the Company rapidly building up to full strength for the first time on its own merits without losses to cadres, the coming year of hard work ahead is eagerly awaited with hope and readiness to do our part in the common struggle toward ultimate and final Victory. The Spirit of Company "A" and our armed forces is best exemplified by an incident last spring, when a few men were needed for foreign service in a zone of very dangerous activity. The entire Company volunteered as a unit, making selection of the necessary soldiers imperative. Since "Pearl Harbor", Company "A" has been on the alert, ready and anxious to go into the theater of operations as soon as the "go" signal is given, and you can rest assured that every man, from the top to the bottom, will give the utmost to the Service of his Country.

THE END

Company "A" wishes to express its gratitude to Battalion Headquarters and to "C" Company, for their invaluable aid in the printing of this Company History.





### Company A

These Pierce submitted these photographs taken when her father, John Maclaga, was stationed in Wilson at the National Guard Armory in 1942 with Company A 35th Engineers. Clockwise from top left are the armory as it appeared during the war years, the interior of the armory at a work station, a flag ceremony at the Service Men's Club, and the company marching down Nash Street for a prayer service at the courthouse.



**SGT. W. J. TAYLOR, JR.**, son of Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Taylor, was in the Medical Corps of the Army. He entered the service January 1943. He was a member of the 86th Infantry Division. Having served in Europe until the war ended, he then served in the Philippines until March 11, 1946; when he was discharged at Fort Bragg, NC. He and his wife Elizabeth have a son, daughter, and a granddaughter.



**PFC BERRY J. HOWELL**, Mrs. Hattie T. Howell, of Wilson, Rt. 4, has received word that her husband, PFC Berry J. Howell, was slightly wounded in action Feb. 23 in Germany. He is now in a hospital. He entered the service May 24, 1944, and went overseas November 1944, in the Infantry. He was awarded the Purple Heart for injuries received in Germany. His parents, Mr. and Mrs. T. H. Howell reside in Wilson, Rt. 4.



**CPL. LAUDIS W. PERRY**, son of Mrs. Leora Perry and the late Mr. Vinnie C. Perry of Sims, entered the service October 1942, and was sent overseas March 1944. He is now stationed in the Pacific. He is in the Signal Corps.



**PVT. HENRY H. JENKINS**, son of Mr. and Mrs. W. T. Jenkins of Saratoga, entered the Army November, 1942, and received his training at Camp Reynolds, Pa., Swannanoa, NC. He was stationed at Camp Livingston, La. He has been awarded the Good Conduct Medal. Henry died June 8, 1982 in Wilson.



**SGT. CHARLES F. OWENS**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Owens, of Stantonsburg, entered the service in August 1942, and is now stationed with the Army Air Corps at Smyrna, Tenn. He is married to the former Hilda Jones of Nashville, Tenn., and they have four children, eight grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.



**S/SGT. PIERPON BASS**, son of Mr. and Mrs. A. G. Bass of Black Creek, entered the service over a year and a half ago and was sent overseas October 1943. He is now stationed in the French Battle area. He received the Purple Heart, a Regimental Citation, EAMET Campaign Medal with four Bronze Service Stars, two OLC HQ 38 EH, and the combat Inf. Badge. He was married to Margarine Ferrell and they had eight children.



**ROBERT LAMM**

**WILLIE LAMM**

**EDWARD LAMM**

**BRUCE LAMM**

Your family is so proud of all of you!

Love,  
"Lil Sis"



**JAMES GARDNER**, Seaman 1st Class, U.S. Navy, son of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Gardner, entered the service July, 1943. He is now stationed in England.



**CPL. LINWOOD H. SCOTT**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Elijah S. Scott, of Lucama, is now with the Quartermaster Corps on Guadaicanal. He entered the service September, 1942, and was sent overseas December, 1943.



**PVT. JOHNNIE LEE BARDIN**, son of Mr. and Mrs. J. P. Bardin of Black Creek, entered the service in May, 1944, and is now stationed in Louisiana. He is in the army engineers.



**PVT. I. CARLYLE LAMM**, 22, son of Mr. and Mrs. Lucian Lamm of Wilson, was killed in action in Africa, April 8, 1943.



**2ND LT. TOM W. BOWLING**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Bowling of Elm City, has been in the service for two years. He is stationed at Pecos, Texas. He is married to the former Ora Crisp, of Wilson.



**WILLIAM FARRIS MILLER**, S-1ST CLASS, son of Mrs. Pauline M. Bass, 100E. Green St., entered the service Jan., 1943, and has been overseas three times. At present he is in the Atlantic, where he has been since July of this year.



**PFC. JARRELL S. WILLIAMSON**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Howard F. Williamson of Sims, entered the service Sept., 1943, and has his training at San Diego, Calif. He was sent overseas to Hawaii Jan., 1944.



**T. H. FERRELL**, SC 3/c, son of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Ferrell of Wilson, Rt. 2, entered the service November, 1942, and was stationed at Piney Point, MD. He is married and has one child.



**CPL. BILLY C. DILDA**, son of Mr. and Mrs. J. L. Dilda of Fountain, entered the service March, 1941, and was sent overseas in August, 1942.



**PVT. WILLIAM PITTMAN**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Pittman, entered service November, 1940, and was stationed at Fort Warren, Wyo.

# Wilson men recall day on beach at Normandy

This article was first printed in the Daily Times June 4, 1994.

A piece of flesh which is part of man. Lying there on the red-stained sand. He had parents just like I or you. He was a soldier like us too. But he was fated; he died in the sand. From peaceful flowers to a half-rotten man.

-James Edward Evans

By Lisa Boykin Batts  
Daily Times Lifestyle Editor

Bill Dilda still had the blush of boyhood in his cheeks when he enlisted in the Army at age 16. He had to convince his mother to sign a paper claiming he was two years older.



Dilda

"Oh man, I was going to be a hero," Dilda said. He liked the glamorous tales of battle circulating through his neighborhood and wanted to be part of it all.

Three years later, at age 19, he was greeted by artillery fire as he embarked from a landing craft and waded onto the shore of Omaha Beach early in the morning on June 6. His mission: to remove mines from obstacles placed on the beach by German soldiers. The dream of glamour had already turned to a nightmare.

Fifty years have passed since 160,000 Allies servicemen crossed the English Channel to Normandy launching the largest amphibious assault in history — starting what would prove to be the beginning of the end of World War II.

Before the day was over, 3,881 U.S. servicemen were killed or wounded. And the soldiers who fought there haven't forgotten the carnage.

"I never expected to see the day we'd come back and return to the United States," said Dilda, now mayor of Macesfield. "I was scared to death; anyone who said they weren't afraid was lying. It was a horrible day all the way around."

Combat engineers, Dilda and his comrades were attached to the 1st Army, 1st Division, 16th Infantry. Dilda said he had no idea what he was getting into when he was briefed the night before the invasion.

"We never expected to see what we did," he said. "There was so much confusion; things didn't go as planned."

Ira Yelverton of Wilson concurred, saying things didn't go as planned despite the days of drilling. Now 83, Yelverton remembers running onto Omaha Beach, being fired on the whole time.

Yelverton, who measures his years of service by the Christmases he spent away from home, was in command of a reconnaissance unit and carried 20 men onto shore that day. For many, it was their first battle, but Yelverton had been in others, including invasion operations in North Africa and Sicily.

"We were told to go straight up the beach; don't wander," he said. "It was go, go, go."

A veteran of battle, he told the young men in his charge what to expect and what was expected of them.

"I told 'em it was do or die," Yelverton said. "There's no turning back. If you break your leg, we're still going."

Years after he returned home, Yelverton, who was wounded at Hurtgen Forest, wrote a long, personal account of the day on Normandy, describing what he saw and how he felt.

"The water was cold — up to our necks — and it was a hell of a long way to shore! The mortar shells were not as bad as they would have been bursting on land and shrapnel hitting you. Most of them exploded below water and caused waves to wash over us, and the machine bullets smacking the water made a loud plop! No sound at all when they hit human flesh. This was definitely a case of every man for himself," he wrote.

Once Yelverton and his unit reached the beach, they had to maneuver around barbed wire entanglements and the various obstacles placed on the beach by the Germans to make the invasion more difficult.

"After getting through the entanglements, there was an open stretch of sandy beach about 50 or 75 yards wide before the low hills," he wrote. "This strip was already littered with dead and wounded from the plunging machine gun fire. I noticed to our right was a sort of lagoon at the base of a fairly steep slope."

"I yelled and motioned for everyone to come that way. It seemed everyone was momentarily stunned by what was happening on the sandy strip. I didn't look back to see how many were following, but I found later that many did. After running faster than I had ever run in my life, through an area with antipersonnel mines and a small explosive device about 6 inches in diameter with enough charge to blow off a leg when stepped upon ... I, and most of the others, made it, but some didn't, to the boggy area."

The boggy area turned out to be a sewage dump for the French village nearby — a safer, but most undesirable stopping place. The men stayed there for awhile before moving farther up the beach and spending the night in a knocked-out gun emplacement holding the bodies of two German soldiers killed that day.

James Edwards Evans Sr. did some writing too.

A D-Day veteran, Evans, who lived in Wilson, took pencil in hand and composed a poem about the day on Normandy. An excerpt appears above. His daughter, Mary Wallace, treasures the pages in his well-worn journal that tell the story of D-Day for him.

Evans, who died 10 years ago, received the Purple Heart, silver and bronze stars and was also a POW during his days in the infantry, according to Ms. Wallace.

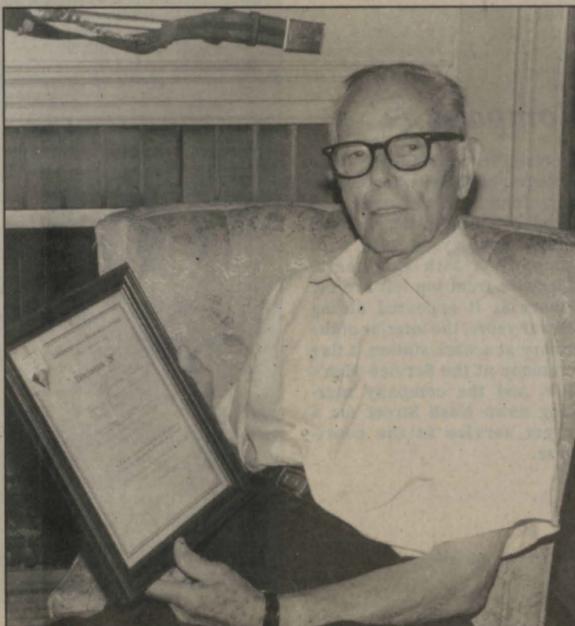
Watching documentaries about D-Day in recent weeks, Cliff Winstead has been reminded of things he's been trying to forget for 50 years.



Winstead

Winstead, 73, said it's hard for him to remember much about the invasion, probably because he didn't talk about it after returning from the war.

But he remembers enough about the day he waded on shore at Omaha.



Ira Yelverton, who was on Omaha Beach on D-Day, holds a war commendation.

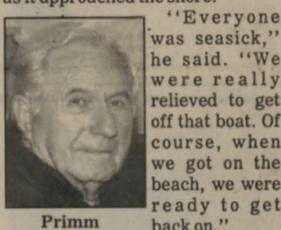
"We were told to go in and shoot everything we could see," Winstead said. "We fought, ran and crawled."

Winstead, who operated Cliff's Drive-In in Wilson, remembers running behind tanks to keep from being killed and losing quite a few men from his company. In later days, as the troops advanced to French villages, he remembers the flowers handed out by children and the fresh French bread baked for the soldiers by grateful villagers.

And he remembers being glad when it was all over and her could come back.

"I tell you, you were glad to be home," he said.

Tom Primm had never been in battle when he landed on shore at Utah Beach on D-Day, and he was glad to get out of the landing craft as it approached the shore.



Primm

"Everyone was seasick," he said. "We were really relieved to get off that boat. Of course, when we got on the beach, we were ready to get back on."

But the first lieutenant had an important job to do that morning and carried it out well, according to the citation he received later.

Primm was in charge of setting up communication lines on the Cotentin Peninsula that day to connect the assault elements who were coordinating attacks.

The citation reads: "He would go forward, at great personal risk to himself, under artillery, mortar and machine gun fire, to help remove any obstacle that was im-

peding the wire teams' work."

His memories of the day include the bodies on the beach and in the water and of Gen. Teddy Roosevelt Jr., wearing a wool cap and walking with a cane, leading his troops over the wall.

"He was a good, inspirational leader," Primm said. "He was a real blessing to the untried people."

Once the war was over, Primm stayed in the service. After 22 years, he worked another 12 with the government in the communications field. He's now with the American Red Cross, serving as volunteer disaster chairman for Wilson and Greene counties.

He's hasn't visited the beaches of Normandy since the invasion but plans to do just that later on in the year. After Normandy, where he will look for his name in a war museum, he and his wife plan to travel across France and into Germany, retracing part of the march he made across Europe 50 years ago.

The late Ray Glasco, who received a Purple Heart for injuries he sustained on D-Day, will be represented at the D-Day reenactment exercises at Normandy Monday. His grandson, Brett Talmadge Lewis, will be there.

An airman on the fleet aircraft carrier USS George Washington, Lewis should have a good view of the beach his grandfather was on 50 years ago as a frogman with the underwater demolition team — the original Navy SEALs.

Glasco's mission that day, according to his daughter, Cheryl Fanton, was to secure the beach — checking and destroying coral reefs that might damage the ships coming ashore.

Ms. Fanton said her father, who owned Westview Lanes in the

early 1970s and Carolina Screen Print, would have been a very proud man knowing his grandson was participating in the reenactment.

President Clinton is scheduled to be on the USS George Washington that day.

Tom Harris of Elm City said he thought about going back to Normandy for the big anniversary celebration, but instead, he will watch the ceremonies on his television set.



Harris

Harris, 74, left Plymouth, England, on a radio communications ship 50 years ago, headed for Normandy and Utah Beach. A top radio operator with the 60th Infantry Regiment of the 9th Infantry Division, Harris was attached to the 4th Infantry Division on the ship, which would take over communications if the 4th division headquarters ship was destroyed. The ship wasn't blown up, Harris said, and he landed on shore late in the afternoon on June 6 meeting light resistance. He waited on shore until his outfit came later.

Harris said he knew something big was up that day because of the number of colonels and brigadier generals on the ship.

"Nobody knew what the hell was going to happen that day," Harris said.

When he thinks back to that day half a century ago, Harris said he remembers how frightened he was as he climbed the rope walls to get in the landing craft which would take him to shore.

"I was scared 1,000 times," he said. "I don't know which time I was more afraid."

He also remembers cutting a piece from on the many silk parachutes on the shore left by the para-troopers for a souvenir of the day.

"Can you imagine thinking you're going to bring home a parachute," he laughed. "I gave it to the first French girl I came across."

Harris said he's proud of the time he served in the Army and glad the D-Day invasion is getting

so much attention. He enjoys reading and watching all he can about the 50th anniversary celebration.

"I don't want to miss anything," he said. "There won't be much recognition of D-Day again I don't believe."

Joe Vaughan didn't make it to the Normandy coast on June 6, but he tried.



Vaughan

stayed in the water for about 10 hours that day.

"Planes were going overhead like mad," said Vaughan, who was a battalion sergeant major.

Finally, a ship picked up the men and carried them back to England where they received new equipment and British uniforms. The next day, they were sent right back.

"When we got up with our unit, we thought they would be halfway to Paris," Vaughan said, "but they were only three miles inland."

The battalion's key mission on Normandy was to open the locks on the dam in order to drain the lowlands for the troops to pass.

The D-Day invasion was only the beginning of many more days of fighting for many of these men. Several saw other major battles, including the Battle of the Bulge.

They've lived a whole lifetime since that day on the beach 50 years ago — had careers, started families, sent their own children to battlefields, became grandparents and retired.

There's been plenty of time to reflect and remember those days in Europe and what they've accomplished.

They've heard about other battles and wars since those days and know there will be many more to come.

"Wars and rumors of wars," said Ira Yelverton. "Always has been and always will be, I suppose."

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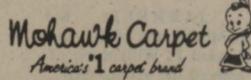
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**Rubber drives**

Wilson citizens turned out in the 1940s to participate in rubber drives such as this one on the courthouse steps in 1942.

(Photo courtesy of Therese Pierce)

**Former corporal remembers major who had him 'busted'**

The following is a reminiscence by Wilson resident Harry Severance, who served in Europe in World War II.

By Harry Severance

I had been home from World War II for several years, when I made a business trip to New York City. After completing my business, I returned to Pennsylvania Station to catch my train back to Wilson.

While walking through the terminal, I suddenly remembered that my wife had told me to buy a certain brand of socks from a certain New York department store. I was angry at myself for having forgotten, and so I looked around the terminal to find a clothing store.

I saw one, looked at my watch, and hurried inside. A man was standing in the front door, and when I asked him where the socks were he said, "Go straight down this line and you will find them."

I walked hurriedly down the line of counters, and as I approached the end I noticed a clerk who was leaning against the counter looking at me. I stopped hurriedly, looked down into the showcase where the socks were, and said, "I'll take a pair of these and a pair of these," while pointing to the socks I wanted. The young man never responded and just kept looking at me. I really didn't think he heard me, so I repeated my request in a much louder voice.

He never moved, and just continued to stare at me. I was hasty with him and said, "Do you work

here?" and he, continuing to look at me, nodded his head in the affirmative. I then looked at my watch "to make a point with him" and said, "I must catch a train in just a few minutes, so please give me my socks."

With that statement he said his first words to me, and they were, "Is your name Severance?" As one can well imagine, with a name like Severance, it is very difficult for even friends to remember how to pronounce my name, and here in a city of some 9 million people a complete stranger asked me if my name is Severance.

I turned my attention back to this young stranger, and replied, "Yes, my name is Severance."

He then began to question me as follows:

"Were you the Severance in the 70th Infantry Division when we were fighting in Germany?" My answer was yes.

"Were you a major for the 275th regiment in this division?" My answer was yes.

He then said, "Major, you don't remember me?" and I said, "No, I don't."

He then said: "Major Severance, I was Corporal Brown in the 275th until you busted me to Private Brown. Now, Major, I have been waiting 10 years for you to come in this store to tell you to buy your damn socks from somebody else!"

I enjoyed this scene so much that I really didn't care whether I missed my train or not ... but I just made it back to Wilson.

Hideki Tojo was the general who, as premier, led Japan into war with the U.S. in 1941. Tojo's popularity in Japan was high after the early victories of WWII, but soon diminished.



Hirohito became emperor of Japan in 1926. After the war, Hirohito took a personal part in the final surrender decision of 1945.

General Douglas MacArthur signs the Japanese surrender papers aboard the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay as Lt. Jonathan Wainwright and Lt. Gen. I.E. Percival look on. (Both were prisoners of the Japanese.)

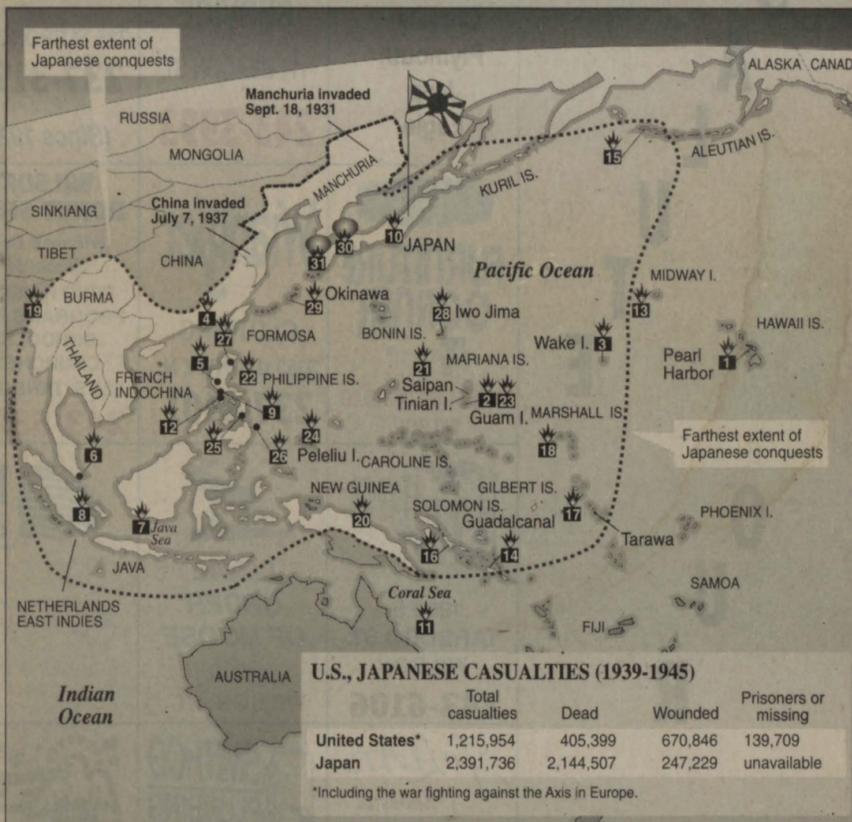


**The defeat of Japan**

Japan surrendered after the U.S. dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The Allies had intended to seize Kyushu, the most westerly island of Japan, early in November 1945, and then invade the main island of Honshu. Winston Churchill said, "These two great operations would have entailed bitter fighting and great loss of life, but they were never required. We may well be thankful."

**HIGHLIGHTS AND KEY BATTLES**

- 1941**
- 1 Dec. 7 The Japanese attack Pearl Harbor
- 2 Dec. 10 Guam surrenders
- 3 Dec. 23 Wake Island surrenders
- 4 Dec. 25 British troops at Hong Kong surrender
- 1942**
- 5 Jan. 2 Manila falls to invading Japanese
- 6 Feb. 15 Singapore surrenders
- 7 Feb. 27 The Allies lose the Battle of Java Sea
- 8 Mar. 7 Netherlands East Indies falls
- 9 Apr. 9 Bataan surrenders
- 10 Apr. 18 U.S. carrier-based aircraft bombs Tokyo
- 11 May 4-8 The Allies win the Battle of the Coral Sea
- 12 May 6 The Japanese occupy Corregidor
- 13 June Battle of Midway ends Japan's expansion
- 14 Aug. 7 U.S. Marines land on Guadalcanal
- 1943**
- 15 May 30 Attu surrenders
- 16 Nov. 1 U.S. troops land on Bougainville I.
- 17 Nov. 20 U.S. troops invade Tarawa and Makin
- 1944**
- 18 Jan. 31 U.S. troops attack Kwajalein atoll
- 19 Mar. 22 Japanese cross the border of India
- 20 Apr. 22 Allied forces land on Hollandia
- 21 June 15 U.S. Marines invade Saipan I.
- 22 June U.S. forces win the Battle of the Philippine Sea
- 23 July 21 U.S. troops land on Guam I.
- 24 Sept. U.S. Marines invade Peleliu I.
- 25 Oct. 20 U.S. Army forces land on Leyte
- 26 Oct. 23-26 U.S. Pacific Fleet crushes the Japanese fleet in the Battle of Leyte Gulf



**3 Japanese stages of World War II**



- 1945**
- 27 Jan. 9 Allied troops invade Luzon, Philippines
- 28 Feb. 19 U.S. Marines storm Iwo Jima I.
- 29 Apr. 1 U.S. troops land on Okinawa I.
- 30 Aug. 6 U.S. drops an atomic bomb on Hiroshima
- 31 Aug. 9 U.S. drops an atomic bomb on Nagasaki
- 1 Aug. 10 Japan opens peace negotiations
- 2 Aug. 14 Japan accepts the Allied surrender terms
- 3 Sept. 2 Japan signs the terms of surrender
- 4 Sept. 12 Japanese troops in Southeast Asia surrender

Sources: Triumph and Tragedy; The World Book Encyclopedia

AP/Carl Fox



**S/SGT. JIM H. ELLIS**, son of Mrs. Annie Moore, Wilson, Rt. 2, and the late Mr. Falcanor Ellis of Wilson, Rt. 2, entered the service January 1940, and has been overseas since November 1943. He is now in France. He married the former Norma F. Barnes June 6, 1948. They have one daughter Melissa Ellis. Mr. Ellis died May 12, 1986.



**CPL. H. R. GRIFFIN**, son of Mrs. Russell Griffin, entered the service August 1942, and was sent overseas to India in February 1943. Mr. Griffin was a life-long resident of Wilson until his death April 5, 1988. He was married to Mary Frances Griffin, and the father of Frances Griffin Buck and Robert Griffin of Wilson, and Russ Griffin, Lynchburg, Va. He was the brother of Mae Griffin Shackelford, Wilson.



**JOHN WILLIAM LAMM, JR., GM, 3/c**, son of Mr. and Mrs. John William Lamm, of Black Creek, enlisted in the Navy February 1943, and trained at Bainbridge, Md., Norfolk, Va., and Treasure Island, Cal. He was sent overseas July 1943, and has been on Guadalcanal, New Guinea, and is now serving in Saipan.



**LT. BRUCE N. CONYERS**, son of Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Conyers, 513 Broughton Street, has been in the service for two and a half years and overseas since October 1943. He is now in the Solomon Islands. He married the former Mary Matthews and they have three children.



**CWO JAMES (JIM) A. BOYKIN, SR.**, son of Mr. and Mrs. L. H. Boykin of Rock Ridge, is now in Germany. He is married to the former Francis Geraldine "Jerry" Harrington of Erwin, N.C. He entered the service January 8, 1941 and has been overseas with the 30th Division for 13 months.



**CPL. L. H. BOYKIN, JR.**, son of Mr. and Mrs. L. H. Boykin of Wilson, entered the service September 1942, and was stationed in the South Pacific September 1943. In the Anti-aircraft Battalion, he served in northern Australia, New Guinea, Admiralty Islands and the Philippines.



**PFC. ARTHUR MOORING**, has been reported missing in action Feb. 9, 1945 in Germany. He was captured by the Germans and held prisoner until the end of the war. He has been overseas since November 1944. He entered the service May 1944. His wife is the former Miss Myrtle Crawford of Fremont. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Mooring of Fremont. He returned to Wilson and retired in 1987 from NC Employment Security Commission after 41 years of service.



**CPL. BENSON N. BARNES**, entered the service September 1942, and was sent overseas January 1944. He is now stationed in the French battle area. He trained at Camp Hood, Texas. He is married to Annie Barnes and they have four children; 1st Lt. Begson Barnes, Jr., M.Sgt. Kimberly Merritt, Brenda Kirby, and Lenda Winstead.



**EDWARD LEE THIGPEN, S I/c**, son of Mr. and Mrs. J. P. Thigpen, of Stantonburg, Rt. 1, entered the Navy May 1941, and trained at Norfolk, Va. Wearer of a Presidential Citation, he has served overseas for 21 months and is now stationed at Norfolk. He was a member of the crew of the famed carrier Hornet when this ship was sunk and a crew member on the Henry Byrd when this ship was sunk. He was also a member of the carrier crew on the day Doolittle's men went off to Tokyo.



**PFC. ERNEST CLAY COBB**, entered the United States Army in February 1941. He had his training at Fort Benning, Ga., and Camp Blanding, Fla. Participating in the invasion of Africa, Private Cobb also was in the invasion of Sicily. Returning to England in the latter part of 1943 he remained there until his participation in "D-Day," invasion of France, where he has been since then. Before entering the service he made his home with his foster parents, Mr. and Mrs. Leslie Landin of Wilson.

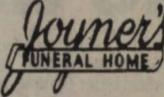
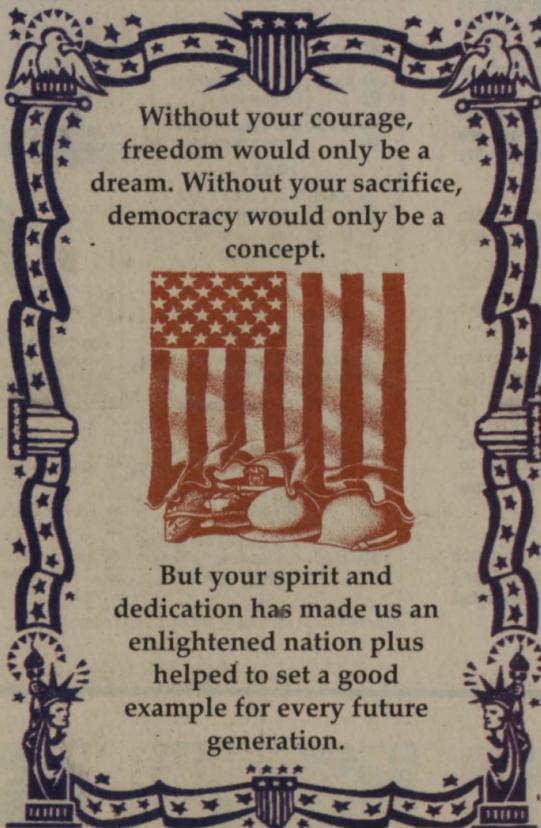


**PFC. JESSIE E. JONES**, son of Mr. and Mrs. J. E. Jones of Wilson, Rt. 1, entered the service January 1943, and in December, 1943, was sent to England, where he is stationed. He has a sister, Elsie Jones; a daughter, Jessica Twiddy; grandchildren, Tonya Keel, Tim Twiddy, Jr., and Nevin Twiddy, residing in Wilson County.



**PVT. SELBY ETHERIDGE**, has notified his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Selby Etheridge, Sr., of Saratoga, of his safe arrival in France. Pvt. Etheridge has been in the service since August. He is with the Army's 79th Division. Before going overseas he was stationed at Wheeling, Ga. He received six Battle Stars while in combat in Rhine Crossing, Germany. He served two years and was promoted to Sergeant.

WE SALUTE OUR WORLD WAR II HEROES

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 <p>1900 S. TARBORO ST. WILSON <b>243-6106</b></p>	 <p><b>LOYAL ORDER OF MOOSE # 989 WILSON, NC</b></p>	 <p><b>Diversified OPPORTUNITIES, INC.</b></p> <p>1010 HERRING AVENUE -- training people with disabilities -- serving business and industry -- OUR WORKFORCE IS READY, WILLING, AND ABLED! <b>291-0378</b></p>		 <p><b>KENLY INC.</b></p> <p>HWY. 301 N. KENLY <b>284-3123</b></p>	<p><b>ELK'S CLUB</b></p> <p>2814 Fieldstream Dr. <b>243-6159</b></p>	
<p><b>JoliAn Shoes &amp; Accessories</b></p> <p>Brentwood Shopping Center Wilson, NC <b>291-3899</b></p>	 <p>WILSON, N.C. (919) <b>237-9554</b></p>	 <p>Without your courage, freedom would only be a dream. Without your sacrifice, democracy would only be a concept.</p> <p>But your spirit and dedication has made us an enlightened nation plus helped to set a good example for every future generation.</p>		<p><b>parkwood mall &amp; plaza</b></p> <p>Over 30 Years Of Service To The Wilson Community</p>	<p><b>JAMES FINCH CHEVROLET BAILEY, N.C.</b></p> <p>400 MAIN ST., BAILEY <b>235-4121</b></p>	
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<p><b>COUNTRY CHARM Gifts BRENTWOOD SHOPPING CENTER</b></p> <p><b>237-0996</b></p>	<p><b>ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT COMPANY</b></p> <p>3003 HORACE WATSON RD. WILSON <b>291-1545</b></p>	<p><b>WILCO WELDING &amp; REPAIR, INC.</b></p> <p>2311 Wilco Blvd. Wilson, NC <b>291-9172</b></p>	<p><b>CAROLINA HOME CENTER</b></p> <p>605 S. Tarboro St. Wilson, NC <b>237-0122</b></p>	<p><b>THE SUGAR PLUM SHOPPE</b></p> <p>117 W. Nash St. Brentwood Shopping Center <b>291-9686</b></p>	 <p><b>RADIATOR REPAIR</b></p> <p>Sales • Service • Repair Hwy. 301 South Wilson, NC <b>291-0953</b></p>	<p><b>B &amp; G DISTRIBUTORS INC.</b></p> <p>2693 Forest Hills Rd. WILSON <b>237-2097</b></p>
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