

KERMIT WHITLEY

I took my Basic training at Camp Wheeler Ga. I left there came home 2 weeks before I finished my training. That's when the Battle of the Bulge happened. I came home for 3 days and went to Camp Shanks N.Y. I went to England on the USS Wakefield. I then crossed the English Channel to France from there I went to Belgium on train.

I was put in the 83rd Infantry Division and assigned to a rifle company. I crossed Germany sometimes riding tanks. After we crossed the Elbe River. I was captured for 3 days of all time it was Friday 13th. The Germans decided to give up to the American not Russia.

I received 3 Battle Stars The Battle of the Bulge, Ardennes & Central Europe. After the War I came home on an emergency leave. My Mother was real sick. I stayed at Fort Bragg until discharged.

Kenneth Whitely

I went for Basic Training at Camp Wheeler Ga. from Basic Training I came home for 2 days. I went to Camp Shanks N.Y. and I was put on the USS Wakefield to Liverpool England from there I crossed Channel to Le Havre France.

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Mr. Hackney I am a poor writer I hope you can make it look presentable.

Thank you
Kenneth

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TUESDAY

October 4, 2005
Vol. 109, No. 194

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NASH CABLE NEWS: County resists a Time Warner offer. **2A**

Tomorrow



CLOUDY
High: 70s Low: 60s
Complete forecast, 8A

Inside

ALZHEIMER'S MEMORY WALK
will be Saturday at 10 a.m. at the Wilson Medical Center walking track. Funds raised will go toward family support. **3A**

ERSKINE BOWLES IS BEST
choice to lead the University of North Carolina system back to its foundations. **OPINION, 6A**

WILSON IMPRESSES TWO
people who were traveling between Florida and Boston. A heart problem leads to a trip to the hospital; the travelers rave about the quality of care and the friendliness. **3A**

THE CHARACTER CORNER
trait for this week is good judgment, all part of Wilson County Schools' emphasis on character education. **8C**

SHUTOUTS WERE THE RULE
in soccer Monday, with Hunt beating Beddingfield 2-0 and Fike edging SW Edgecombe by a score of 8-0. **1B**

Reminders

TWO LIBRARY CHOICES:
The Wilson County Public Library continues its "Let's Talk About It" series with discussion of movies tonight at the main library. At the same hour, the Friends of Hackney Library group at Barton College will hear a talk by Jeff Broadwater at Hardy Alumni Hall. **7 P.M.**

WILSON CITY COUNCIL
will not meet Thursday. The meeting has been canceled.

A NATIONAL DEPRESSION
Screening Day is Thursday. Screenings are available at the Wilson County Health Department from noon to 6 p.m.

Wednesday's Edition



WHIRLIGIGS:
The new festival is just a month away.

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Deaths	4A	Sports	1-5B
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Entertainment	7C	Weather	8A



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Posing for a World War II photo were, from left, Joe Tedder, Kermit Whitley, Vance Thompson and Lannis Watson.

'It's amazing we are even here.'

Kermit Whitley
Reflecting on World War II experiences



Gathering this week for an updated photo are, from left, Joe Tedder, Kermit Whitley and Lannis Watson.

A mid-Atlantic memory

World War II veterans were captured in a news photograph

By Eddie Fitzgerald
Daily Times Staff Writer

It was 60 years ago in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean on board a troop carrier that four Wilsonians posed for a photograph that created a lasting bond of memories.

Lannis Watson was 21 when someone said a news photographer wanted to take his picture with three other Wilson County soldiers heading to Liverpool, England, and then to France to relieve infantry troops during World War II.

"How they got us together on that ship, I'll never know," Watson said this week.

The soldiers from Wilson left Camp Shanks, N.Y., and were on the ocean three days before their chance meeting occurred.

"Someone yelled, 'There's a photographer here who wants to take pictures of you four guys from Wilson County,'" Watson said.

Watson lined up with Joseph Tedder, 25, Kermit Whitley, 21, and Vance Thompson (age unknown). Everyone had their helmets on except Watson so someone tossed him one. Just as he caught it and put it on the photographer's flash went off.

'I was talking to my buddy in our foxhole and he stood up and an artillery shell landed close and exploded and blew him clear out of the hole and killed him.'

Joseph Tedder
Recalling the day he was injured.

"I thought, well, what a coincidence," Watson said.

Watson and Tedder knew each other. They had both been through basic training together at Camp Wheeler, Ga. But it was only chance that brought them together on the ship bound for England. Whitley knew Tedder at the time but not Watson.

Watson and Tedder were not even supposed to be on the ship. Both men got delayed and ended up on the USS Wakefield, a luxury liner converted to a troop carrier.

Before Watson's leave was over, after completing basic training, his mother died and his leave was extended for a couple of weeks.

Tedder was also delayed and ended up on the troop carrier along with Watson, Whitley and Thompson.

Although the men did not immediately renew their ties when they returned to Wilson after the war, Watson said one day he was at a local service station and noticed someone behind the counter who looked familiar. Later, when he went back to the station, he asked if the man by chance was Kermit Whitley.

He was told the man was Whitley just as Whitley drove up in the parking lot.

"So I had a golden opportunity to talk to him and showed him the picture," Watson said. "He said he also had one of the pictures at his home."

As it turned out, Tedder lived just down the road from Whitley. Thompson died years ago. But the three remaining soldiers got together and started to swap war stories and decided to write narratives of their war experiences.

SEE SOLDIERS, PAGE 2A

Water district is OK'd

Bids are accepted for bigger district

By Eddie Fitzgerald
Daily Times Staff Writer

Wilson County commissioners decided Monday night to go ahead with a proposed new section of the countywide water project even though there are not yet enough customers signed up. Bids to do the work have been accepted.

County Manager Ellis Williford said officials are hoping for 392 customers in the proposed Southwest Water District Rural Development Phase 2 project. So far, 300 people have signed up for the service.

However, plenty of potential customers just outside of the originally planned district have expressed interest in joining the water system.

The county Water and Sewer Committee will look at the possibility Oct. 18 of expanding the district from its original lines. It compensate for that expansion by eliminating service to some roads within the proposed district.

Commissioners approved the idea as well as bids to construct the new system. The bids are based on mileage of laid pipe and not a specific location.

Williford said everyone was "scared to death when the bids were opened" because of the hurricanes in the Gulf of Mexico that caused petroleum prices to spike.

"But I'm delighted to report we are within budget," Williford said. "...By today's stan-

SEE WATER PAGE 2A

Wilson alternative school for mentally ill opens its doors

By Margaret J. Stair
Daily Times Staff Writer

Set in an industrial neighborhood just southwest of downtown, a neat brick building on Douglas Street offers another chance for students who cannot function within any of the county schools.

"We are the last stop," said Susan Andrews, director of Youth Services Inc., a private company that runs New Opportunities, an alternative school that opened Aug. 25.

The school offers treatment as well as a full academic program for students who are mentally ill. It is licensed by the state as a mental health facility.

Wilson County Schools provides two full-time teachers, academic materials, and school lunches. Youth Services provides the building, the staff, and the therapy.

The public school system contracts with New Opportunities for the services, but no

SEE SCHOOL, PAGE 2A

McMahon sworn in despite some reservations

Wilson County school administrator moves back to Nash County

By Amber L. Whitley
Daily Times Staff Writer

NASHVILLE — Thirty-one years after accepting his first position with Nash-Rocky Mount Schools, Rick McMa-

hon was sworn in Monday night as the system's new superintendent.

McMahon had been Wilson County's executive director of middle schools for five years prior to this new appointment. He started his career as a teacher at Southern Nash Senior High School.

"I feel so blessed to have this opportunity," McMahon said Monday night. "We've got 18,000 children who will re-



McMahon

port to their schools in a few hours and teachers who will be working with them. That's what is important."

Though McMahon received a standing ovation from the Board of Education audience after being sworn in, the road to his appointment had been rocky. Some commu-

nity members and one school board member felt the proper procedure for hiring personnel had not been followed.

McMahon was hired as superintendent Sept. 29, less than three weeks after Superintendent George Norris resigned because of philosophical differences with the board.

But board attorney Wardlaw Lamar said that even though McMahon was hired quickly, local school board policy had

been followed because the position was posted, the board met to establish procedures for screening and interviewing candidates and one candidate, McMahon, had applied.

It was not the first time McMahon was considered for the position. He also was in the running five years ago when Norris was hired.

"We didn't spend thousands

SEE NASH, PAGE 2A

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Classifieds 237-7355
Advertising Fax 243-2999
Circulation Fax 296-0041
News Fax 243-7501

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Subscription rates
Single copy 50¢ Daily; \$1.00 Saturday
Per month in advance \$8.75
3 months (office paid) \$26.25
6 months (office paid) \$49.95
1 year (office paid) \$95.00
2 year (office paid) \$179.00

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Out of state mail
1 month 3 months 6 months 1 year
\$12.75 \$38.25 \$74.75 \$146.00

©2005 The Wilson Daily Times

(USPS 685-660)
Published Monday through Saturday by:
The Wilson Daily Times
2001 Downing Street
P.O. Box 2447
Wilson, NC 27789
Periodicals postage paid at Wilson, N.C.
Postmaster: Send address changes to: The Wilson
Daily Times, 2001 Downing St., P.O. Box 2447
Wilson, NC 27894-2447

Nash balks at letting Time Warner take system

By Laura Keeter
Daily Times Staff Writer

NASHVILLE — Unless Time Warner Cable agrees to upgrade the county's cable system, Nash County isn't willing to approve a transfer of the franchise from Adelphia Communications Corp.

Nash County is served now by Adelphia, which is in bankruptcy. Residents have complained about customer service and technical difficulties, said Catharine Rice of Action Audits LLC, the county's cable consulting firm.

Time Warner Cable approached the U.S. Bankruptcy Court and asked to buy Adelphia's system. Under federal

law, Time Warner and Adelphia have to ask for a county's and towns' approval to buy the system.

Rice advised the Nash County Board of Commissioners to deny approval of the transfer of control at this time. Commissioners did so Monday in the form of a resolution.

Other Nash County communities working with the firm should also pass the same resolution this month, Rice said. Those towns are Bailey, Middlesex, Spring Hope, Whittakers, Momery and Dortches.

The firm recommends denial because there's no commitment from Time Warner Cable to upgrade the system or to change the customer service or

technical service in any way, Rice said.

"What we're trying to do is persuade Time Warner they should commit to upgrade in Nash County," she said.

Action Audits hired a financial analyst whose assessment was that county rates would go up, but the system would not improve. The analyst said Time Warner Cable would focus on larger markets such as Los Angeles, Rice said.

In other business, commissioners approved expanding the beaver management program. In Nash and other counties, beavers dam streams, which can inundate huge areas and destroy acres of timberland and farmland.

Nash County will pay an additional \$36,700 for the remainder of the fiscal year to have a full-time U.S. Department of Agriculture wildlife specialist assigned to the county. The specialist would help control the growth of the beaver population in the county. A specialist could be in place by Nov. 1.

The county had \$4,000 budgeted for beaver control. About \$2,000 could be offset in revenues.

If the board continues the position next fiscal year, a full year's cost will be \$55,000.

Next year "is going to be a challenging year" fiscally, so continuing the position cannot be guaranteed, said County

Manager Bob Murphy. The position will be considered at budget time.

Beavers can stop up streams and cause additional flooding that could cost the county millions of dollars, Commissioner Fred Belfield said.

In another matter, Glenn Driver of Middlesex told commissioners people from other counties are dumping at the county's convenience sites at Nash County taxpayers' expense. He suggested the county implement controls, such as issuing stickers for vehicles.

Chairman Claude Mayo said county staff would look into the situation.

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WATER: District is approved despite shortfall in customers

FROM PAGE 1A

dards, these are excellent bids."

The county approved low bids for Herring-Riverbank of Kinston for \$2,523,089.50 to lay the pipe and Caldwell Tanks of Louisville, Ky. for \$576,825 to construct elevated water tanks.

The Herring-Riverbank bid came in about \$500,000 less than the high bid for the project. The bid from Caldwell Tanks was \$153,000 less than a competing bid.

"We have everything we need to proceed," Williford said.

The bad news about the proposed new water district is the number of signups from homeowners, Williford said. However, by expanding the district, the county should meet the funding requirements of the Rural Development Authority.

Commissioner Sid

Boyette said a lot of people living around the proposed district did their homework and are willing to sign up for the service. For example, about 20 people on Hawley Road are interested and there are about three places outside the original district that have expressed the same interest, he said.

Williford agreed. "Outside the district, we have a lot of interest," he said.

Commissioner Eldon Newton was a little concerned about spending more than \$3 million on the project without a commitment from enough customers.

But Williford said the RDA will not let the county proceed with construction unless there are enough customers to make the water district self-sustaining.

The original plan was to provide water lines from Jaycross Road near the Wilson/Wayne boundary to the west in the portion of the county near Kenly.

In August, the county's Water and Sewer Committee met to discuss possible changes to the originally planned district but needed to wait until the bids for construction were in to see how much it was going to cost.

Changes the engineer discussed in August included expanding the district westward, skirting Kenly and the Johnston County line and cutting eastward along the Wayne County line to just beyond N.C. 111. That will take in Pelt Road, where a lot of interest in the system was expressed during a public hearing in June.

Other new roads that could become part of the district include a section of U.S. 117 near Banana Loop Road, southward toward the Wayne County line; Hawley Road in the northwestern portion of the district; State Road 1665; and Frank Road with the possibility of Lefty Road in the

southern section.

Even with those changes, engineers on the project knew the county still would be 92 customers below the 392 requested by the Rural Development Authority.

However, Leo Green, engineer of the project, said in August that RDA would allow the county to let bids for the project because experience has shown the agency that more people will hook onto the system once it is constructed.

In the county's two existing water districts, more people are signing up for the water service every day. But the county is still losing money in those districts.

Commissioner Roger Lucas said he could not understand why more people were not interested in the expansion of the water districts. "I've heard nothing but good about the system," he said.

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County applying for funding for water hookups

Wilson County commissioners have decided to apply for a grant that will help eligible people hook onto the countywide water system.

Joey Raczkowski, county planning director, was given approval by commissioners Monday night to submit an application for a

\$75,000 Community Development Block Grant. This is the second such grant the county has received.

The money will be used to pay for 30 homeowners' hookup costs to the county water system. But the county has received 55 applications from property

owners who said they were interested in the grant.

"There are unmet needs out there," Raczkowski said.

The applications have to be ranked for eligibility, ranging from if they had applied for the previous 2002 hookup program, lower to moderate income,

62 or older, handicapped, single parent or number of children.

The grant program will pay for all costs associated with connecting the house to the county system, Raczkowski said. The grant application will be submitted this month.

Eddie Fitzgerald

SCHOOL: Alternative unit helps county meet special needs

FROM PAGE 1A

school funds go to New Opportunities, and students are not charged tuition. Students are referred through Wilson-Greene Mental Health.

Three students are enrolled now, but another dozen are in the process of being referred, said Curt Winbourne, president of Youth Services.

"It's a very involved referral process," said Lisa West, Wilson County Schools exceptional children's program specialist, who is a liaison with the school. "It's a very restrictive environment. We want to give our children the least restrictive environment possible."

A student's Individual-

ized Education Plan team decides whether placement at the school would be appropriate. That team is made up of the student's regular classroom teacher, special education teacher, a representative of the school system, and any specialists needed to address that child's specific problems.

All students identified as exceptional children have IEP teams who must meet at least once a year with the child's parents to design a plan to meet the child's educational needs.

The school has four classrooms and a capacity of 30 students. Classes are small, and each student receives individualized instruction as well as treatment.

"I'm very impressed with

the staffing and program at New Opportunities," West said. "I'm excited about the opportunities we can offer our children."

Youth Services Inc. also operates three group homes in Wilson County that are licensed to provide residential treatment to mentally disturbed children.

"The idea for the school sprang from the fact that we had a lot of trouble getting schools for our kids," Winbourne said.

The program replaces Carolina Choice, a day treatment center that had one half-time teacher. Rather than serving students who have been suspended from school, it offers a long-term placement

for students who need its therapeutic services.

"They've got a very good program over there," said Donna Simms, principal of Daniels Learning Center, the Wilson County Schools alternative school. "It's a much more comprehensive program than Carolina Choice."

"They can put students in classes that are age appropriate."

The teachers who work at New Opportunities are part of the Daniels staff.

"Our long-term goal for the children is that this is a transitional program and they can transition back into the regular schools," West said.

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NASH: New superintendent pledges to work with community

FROM PAGE 1A

of dollars on a national search that in my opinion would have brought us back to the same candidate," board member Franklin Lamm told the audience Monday night.

But several people attending the Board of Education meeting did not agree.

Andre' Knight, a member of both the Rocky Mount City Council and the Rocky Mount branch of the NAACP, said he didn't think the board had time to look for the right and best suited person for the job.

Board member Robert Bynum, who refused to vote for McMahon the

night he was hired, also refused to accept his contract Monday night. Again, he expressed the concern that the board had not spent enough time looking for other candidates and getting the input of the community.

Board member Joe Edge, who abstained from voting when McMahon was hired, said it was now time to move on. He cast his vote in favor of McMahon's contract.

Donna Hunter, a teacher for Nash-Rocky Mount Schools, also spoke in favor of McMahon's appointment and welcomed him back to the school system. Her concern is that students were taught not to

judge and criticize people, but that's exactly what some well-educated citizens in the community have been doing for two weeks.

"Chairman Horner, I don't ever have to agree with anything you say or the board says, but that doesn't give me the right to disrespect you," Hunter said. "There are far greater issues going on in the schools than the process of hiring a superintendent. If you don't believe me, come spend a day with me."

In response to the public input, McMahon said, "People need to be heard, and I hope that the emotion and passion I heard here tonight can be used, and

people will help us meet the needs of the students. We must work together on things. This is a public process."

Board attorney Wardlaw Lamar presented the details of McMahon's contract. His total salary will be processed by the state later this week depending on his credentials, but he will receive a local supplement of \$3,056.54 and an \$8,000 annuity for his performance, as well as vacation and benefits.

The contract runs from Oct. 1, 2005, to June 30, 2009.

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SOLDIERS: Surprise photo captures moment in young mens' lives

FROM PAGE 1A

The troop carrier continued zigzagging across the cold north Atlantic in January 1945, trying to avoid German U-boats. Watson could hear the powerful explosions of depth charges in the night.

"I was hoping they got him (the U-boat) because I didn't swim that well," Watson said.

Normally it took the troop carries about eight days to make the run from New York to Liverpool. But Watson said the passage took them 10 days.

"We didn't want to encounter those people," he said, thinking about the deadly U-boats that sank about 2,800 American and allied ships in the North Atlantic during the war.

After making it to England, the four Wilson County infantrymen were sent to Le Havre, France, where they were separated and assigned to different units heading to Belgium.

Watson was assigned to the 84th Infantry; Tedder, the 26th Infantry; and Whitley, the 83rd Infantry.

"The Battle of the Bulge was just about over," Watson said. "To our favor, it was not as aggressive as it had been when it started. It was one of the most bitter winters in Belgian history. The winter of '44 and '45 set a record. There was such cold wind, miserable conditions."

And the conditions quickly took a toll on Watson as he marched over the frozen Belgian countryside. A medic took his temperature one day. It was 104.6.

"He said, 'You're going back to the hospital,'" Watson said.

After stays in two Belgian hospitals and one in France, Watson was transferred to the 8th Army Hospital in England. While there, he went into the mess hall one day.

"Lo and behold!" he said. "Joseph Tedder came in and sat down beside me. That was the first time I had seen him since we were in Belgium. He had broken his leg."

When Tedder got to Belgium, he was assigned to the infantry headquarters, company 1778 Services Command Unit. Three days later his company was moved to the front lines in Germany.

kTedder wrote of the incident.

While trying to pull another soldier into a foxhole after a second explosion, Tedder fell in the hole and broke his leg.

After being transferred from a field hospital and a hospital in Belgium, Tedder was sent to the 8th Army Hospital in England. It was there he saw Watson at the mess hall.

"We talked about what had happened to us since we got separated at Le Havre, France," he said.

Meanwhile, Whitley was fighting in the Battle of Rhineland, Battle of the Bulge and Battle of Ardennes, for which he was awarded three battle stars.

"On a Friday 13th, of all days," Whitley said, he was captured by Germans after crossing the Elbe River and hiding out in a farmhouse about five miles from Berlin.

As Germans approached, Whitley and a fellow soldier were in the hallway of the house. They ducked into a room just as a German threw a hand grenade into the hall.

Whitley and the other soldier were not harmed from the explosion but were taken prisoner. He was a POW for only two days before the German lieutenant interrogating him surrendered to him.

The German lieutenant spoke excellent English, Whitley said.

"After I told him I was from North Carolina, he told me he had friends in Ohio," he said.

The Germans decided to surrender to the Americans rather than the Russians who were then already in Berlin, Whitley said.

"They hate us and we know that we will get much better treatment from you people," the German officer told Whitley.

A few days ago, the three remaining soldiers, now in their 80s, were standing in front of a flag in Wilson on a bright fall day. The photograph Watson carried of their chance meeting 60 years ago abroad a ship in the Atlantic was a little faded but still cherished.

"It's amazing we are even here," Whitley said, reflecting the sentiments of Watson and Tedder.

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