

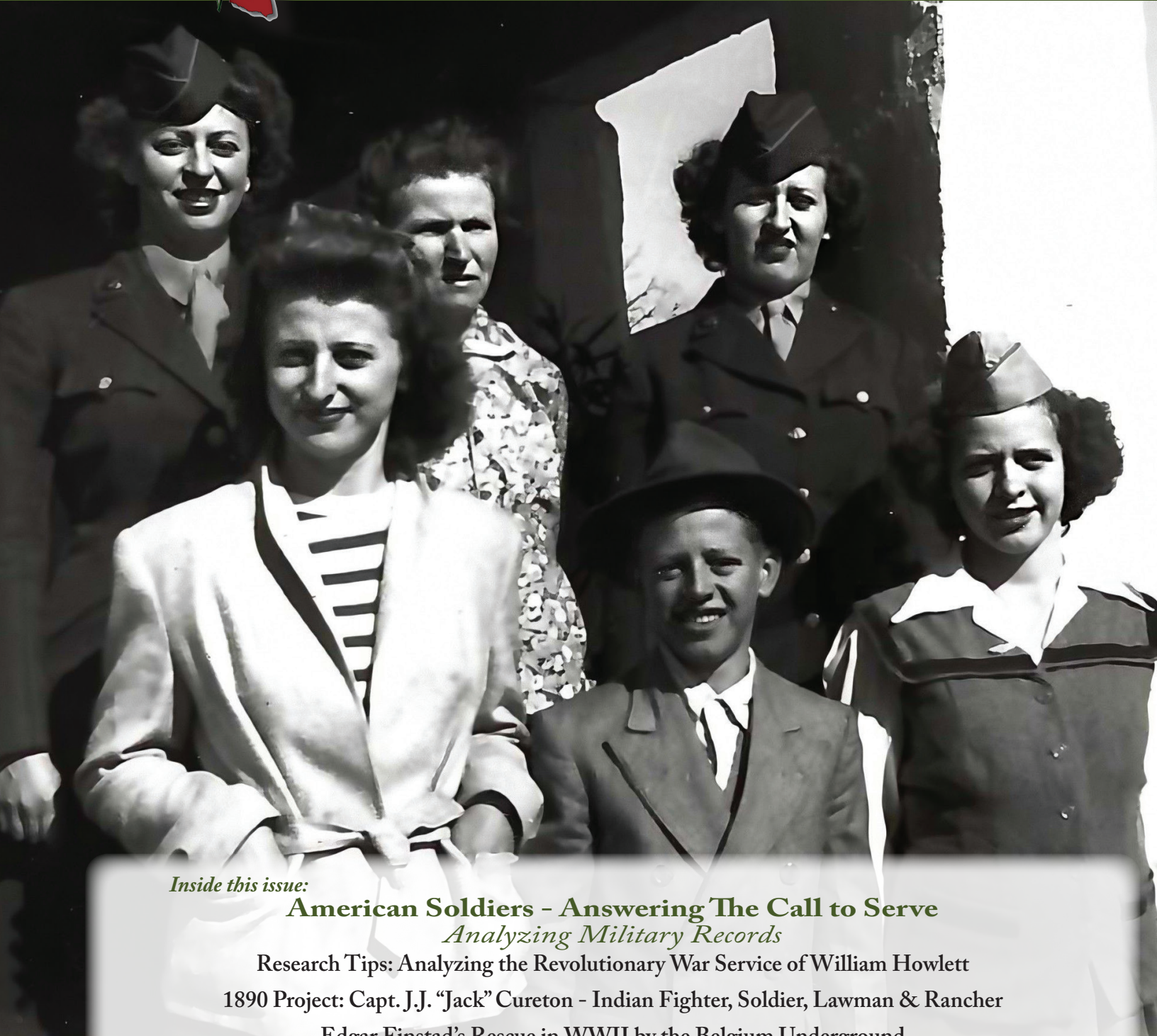


Vol 6, No 4

DEDICATED TO PRESERVING THE PAST FOR
PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS

Bosque County Genealogical & Historical Society Journal

Oct-Dec 2024



Inside this issue:

American Soldiers - Answering The Call to Serve *Analyzing Military Records*

Research Tips: Analyzing the Revolutionary War Service of William Howlett

1890 Project: Capt. J.J. "Jack" Cureton - Indian Fighter, Soldier, Lawman & Rancher

Edgar Finstad's Rescue in WWII by the Belgium Underground

William Bob Wood - Hillsboro Man Receives Soviet Medal

The Edward Robinson Family in the American Revolution

Purple Heart Recipient George Henry Gillard Jr & the *USS Amberjack*

2024 -2026 Elected Officers:

President- Jim Conrad
Vice President - Debbie Ferguson
Secretary- Paula Conrad
Treasurer - Gil Parks
Newsletter/Quarterly Editor -
LeAnne McCamey
Archivist/Librarian -
Peggy Wilson

Committee Chairs

Marketing and Publicity - VP
Membership - Meredith Tull
Family History Writing Contest -
LeAnne McCamey
Cemetery Preservation -
Ponice Hartman
1890 Project - Ves Box
Oral History - Eric McCamey

Purpose:

- To locate, collect, acquire, record, conserve, index, reproduce and publish materials pertaining primarily to the United States and Texas and especially to Central Texas and Bosque County.
- To associate as members, persons interested in researching their family heritage; to educate members in the preparation and publishing of genealogies, family histories and local histories.
- To make donations, by publication, acquisition, or memorial, to museums, public libraries, archives, and private research collections which are open to use by the public and are exempt organizations under section 501 (c) 3 of the Internal Revenue Code.
- To publish a newsletter, journal, or special manuscripts useful to family researchers and scholars.

Membership:

Membership is by calendar year beginning in January and is not transferable. Membership shall be open to all persons supporting the purposes of the Society.

Membership shall be subject to such limitations as the Society

may impose without regard to sex, race, color, creed, or national origin of individuals.

Membership shall be extended upon receipt of a completed membership form and the payment of at least one year's dues. The Society reserves the right to deny membership to any person or group whose purpose conflicts with the Society's mission.

Meetings:

Meetings are scheduled quarterly on the second Saturday at 1:00 p.m. of January, April, July, and October at the BCGHS

Family History Library unless otherwise announced. Contact bosquegenealogy@gmail.com for additional information.

Queries:

Members and non-members may submit free queries for publication in *The Bosque County Genealogical & Historical Society Journal*.

Contribution of material:

Researchers are encourage to submit abstracted data, ancestor charts, family group sheets, and biographical sketches for society files and/or publication. Donations of books, microfilm, maps, genealogical and historical resources, etc., are greatly appreciated.

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Front Cover

Pictured are the wife and children of Czech immigrant Vaclav Recinsky (1888-1959), the great-grandfather of member Christy Payne McCamey. Vaclav considered America the greatest nation on earth and encouraged all of his children to enter the armed forces who were of age to do so. This photo was taken around 1944. Vaclav's two oldest children, Willie and Annie Recinsky, are not pictured. Willie was already fighting on the front lines in France. He ended up being captured by the Germans. Vaclav's three oldest daughters had all joined the Air-WAC's by 1944. Annie and Julie served in the same unit. Pictured on the back row left to right: Julie Recinsky, Theresa Strakos Recinsky, Christina Recinsky. Front row left to right: Mary Recinsky, Emil Recinsky, and Blanche Recinsky (Christy's grandmother). Image courtesy of Christy McCamey's private collection



BOSQUE COUNTY GENEALOGICAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY IS A
SUPPORTING MEMBER OF THE TEXAS STATE GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

Letter from the President

Vital records can help you learn birth, marriage, and death dates for your ancestors. But what happened between those dates?

Newspapers can help you fill in the gaps and flesh out timelines. You can find out what your family enjoyed when not in the fields working.

I have found that the best website for Bosque County and Texas newspapers is the free *The Portal to Texas History* which is found at texashistory@unt.edu. The University of North Texas operates this fantastic resource. The Portal is searchable for your ancestor, school, church, or town. It gives you the full issue of the paper with the search terms highlighted. The Portal has now digitized over one million issues of Texas newspapers which include over eleven million pages.



Jimmy and Dad washing dishes

Now to the good part. The *Clifton Record* has been digitized with issues beginning in 1895. I have found that my great grandfather, Emil E Prescher, was a director of First Guaranty Bank in 1916 along with being a full-time farmer. He bought a Delco Light system for his home in Womack in 1917. In 1931, he built a 10-room boarding house near downtown Clifton.

Information on school or church events involving your parents are now available. Who won first place at the Central Texas Fair? What was the score of the Clifton football game versus Valley Mills in 1939? Find the photo and article of your parents' wedding.

Our relatives lived full lives and their stories need to be told. Newspapers can fill in these details and help us understand their lives.

Please check our calendar and Facebook for any changes in the schedule as we are adding new and exciting events as they become available. Members will be notified of any changes in the events via email. Please also check for updates on the BCGHS Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/bosquegenealogy>.

Jim Conrad

President
Bosque County Genealogical & Historical Society



Quarterly News

Brady Taylor, chief meteorologist for KWTX news channel in Waco, conducted an enlightening presentation for our July program on the effects of weather on our ancestors. He discussed several significant weather events in the area over the last century, providing us with a wealth of knowledge. His primary focus centered around the Bosque River. He talked about floods but also covered tornadoes and droughts, as well as years of extreme snow and heat. Beginning with the 1885 flood in Waco that killed fifteen people, he worked his way forward in time, highlighting specific events.

Brady showed images of the Brazos River flood that took place in the summer of 1899. From June 17th to the 28th, rainfall averaging 8.9 inches fell over 66,000 square miles of Texas, causing the Brazos to flood and killing 284 people.

Mr. Taylor described the great flood that affected Bosque and Erath Counties on April 17-18, 1908. This flood, one of the most destructive floods in Central Texas history, tested the resilience of our community. Many were homeless, and farmers lost thousands of dollars in crops and livestock. The flood washed away barns, fences, and countless acres of topsoil. Area bridges and railroad tracks were washed out, bringing travel and commerce between towns to a standstill. Communication came to a halt as telephone lines had to be repaired. Residents were also without electricity. Despite these challenges, our community stood strong.

Central Texas experienced a period of droughts during the 1920s. There was no rain for sixty-three straight days from December 1922 to February 1923, followed by eighty-two consecutive days of

no rain in 1924. Ironically, this period of droughts prevented us from dealing with the big problem of the Dust Bowl years that happened in the rest of the country from 1935 to 1938.

A historic snowstorm hit the area in December 1929. The first part of December had experienced unseasonably warm temperatures ranging from sixty to seventy degrees. An arctic front hit the region on December 17th, and temperatures dropped around forty degrees within twenty-four hours.

Despite its brief duration, the snowfall from this storm was truly remarkable. Clifton recorded twenty-four inches of snow in just twenty-four hours, coming in second to Hillsboro at twenty-six inches. Hillsboro holds the all-time 24-hour snowfall record for Texas. Interestingly, despite the record-breaking lows, by Christmas Day, the temperatures had soared to seventy degrees.

The most severe drought in Texas history occurred between 1949 and 1957. This drought is a stark example of the significant population shift that can occur when extreme weather patterns persist. Texas' population plummeted, and the economic loss is estimated to be in the tens of billions of dollars.

On May 27, 1997, a cluster of super cell storms moving southwestward caused an outbreak of twenty



tornadoes along the I-35 corridor. Among them was the infamous E-5 Jarrell tornado that claimed twenty-seven lives and injured twelve. This tornado was unique in that it caused bizarre phenomena; it tore asphalt off roads, ripped plumbing out of the ground, and even pulled the hides off of cattle.

The cause of these extreme weather events is a dry line, a boundary that divides the dry desert air from the humid tropical air. Central Texas' position between these two air masses makes it a prime location for dry lines to develop. This propensity affects air quality as well, causing the bad allergy seasons prone to this area.

At the close of the program, Brady fielded a good number of questions, and attendees shared some of their experiences. The thirty-person group was not just engaging, but integral to the success of the program. Their active participation and insightful questions added depth to the discussion. It was clear that they enjoyed the program, and their feedback was invaluable. We had several members rejoin, and two new members join.

VICE PRESIDENT RESIGNATION

Debbie Ferguson's official resignation as Vice President was accepted at the August BCGHS board meeting. She has been struggling with ongoing health concerns and feels that she cannot continue to dedicate the time and energy her position requires as Vice President. She has expressed her desire to remain only in an advisory position as past president on the board and to focus what time and attention she is able on developing educational programs at the library. Debbie has been a monumental force behind the success of promoting this society and reaching our goals during her tenures as President and Vice President. Her work has left an indelible mark on our society, and she deserves our utmost appreciation.

The board will be looking to appoint candidates to fulfill her term to the end of 2025. Official duties of Vice President are as follows: *The Vice President shall preside in the absence of the President or at the request of the President. Should the President for any reason vacate the chair, the Vice-president will fill the vacancy and become President. The Vice President will be in charge of programs [four per year] for meetings of the Society.* In this capacity, the VP is responsible for marketing and publicity for the Society, including posting on social media platforms and calendaring events with local publications.

We are reaching out to our membership for someone willing to fulfill this role. The individual appointed to that position will have the support and assistance of the board in program selection. As an advisory to the Board, Debbie will be available for suggestions. Your consideration in the matter is greatly appreciated!

Library - The signage and tinting of the BCGHS Family History Library have been completed. Larry Davis of Art Plus did a great job. This significant progress was made possible by the generous support of the Meridian EDC and matching donors.

The Meridian Public Library Board officially approved BCGHS to take any of their library shelving and other furniture needed for our library. The items in question have been tagged and will be moved upon availability, expected sometime in November.

When we get ready to move in MPL's donated furniture, we will remove all of the library's current furniture. If you are interested in purchasing the shelving or other items, please let us know.

FHL STATUS—We'd like to express our deepest gratitude to member Jon Jorgenson for donating a computer for our public terminal and for helping to set us up with a public IP address.

Fundraising - Due to the moving transition, followed by the necessary closure in October/November to replace our current furniture, we have had difficulty with scheduling and venue availability for our planned annual fundraiser this year. It has been postponed to next year.

A grand opening/ribbon cutting is planned once the furniture exchange has been completed closer to the end of the year. A date for that event will be set upon completion. A silent auction fundraiser will be held in conjunction with the grand opening. We are asking all of our members to participate by acquiring silent auction items of a retail value of no less than \$50 (they can include services, gift certificates and gift

cards etc) or, in lieu of that, to make a donation to the library. Anything you can do to help out is very appreciated. Remember that donations are tax-deductible. You can donate to the library online at <https://bosque-heritage.org/bcghs-family-history-library/>. Our donors and other information on sponsorships, donations, and bequests can be found at <https://bosque-heritage.org/sponsorships/>.



The annual business meeting date in November has changed to a fluid status at this time, due to the library transitions. It will be held during the grand opening/ribbon cutting event. Members will be advised when we are able to set that date. We plan to award our legacy sponsors at that time, as well as any Family History Writing Contest entrants.

COMMITTEE CHAIR REPORTS

Marketing/Publicity - *Vice President* - LeAnne, the Facebook and Website administrator, is requesting the help of a volunteer to take pictures at meetings and events to be posted on social and other media. Contact LeAnne at [jlmccamey@yahoo.com](mailto:jlmcamey@yahoo.com)

Cemetery Preservation - (*Chair Ponice Hartman*) - See the cemetery updates at <https://bosque-heritage.org/cemeteries/>.

Membership - *Meredith Tull* - Current membership is sixty-six members.

1890 Project - *Ves Box* - The 1890 Project is continuing the survey of county records for residents in Bosque County in 1890. There are currently 4,334 names in the

1890 database. The estimated population of Bosque County in 1890 was just over 14,000 residents — approximately 7,500 males and 6,500 females. The next survey will be the 1890 records of the Bosque County Commissioners Court.

Family History Writing Contest
-LeAnne McCamey - Nothing new to report. Complete details and a downloadable packet can be found on the website at <https://bosque-heritage.org/contests-projects-activities/>

Oral History Committee -Eric McCamey - Bosque County retired business owner and Vietnam War Veteran, Tom Nichols has agreed to an interview to take place in October.

Highway 6 in Meridian is now a FamilySearch Affiliate Library, which means it has access to more genealogy resources to help you make more family discoveries. FamilySearch is a world leader in family history.

There are only a few hundred affiliate libraries in the country. The designation means local library patrons will now have greater and more convenient access to the wealth of genealogical resources available through FamilySearch. The popular web service has over 6 billion searchable names and 2 billion images of historical genealogical records—and you get the helpful assistance of library staff.

“Libraries are wonderful local gathering places for learning. We are excited to have BCGHS Family History Library as our newest FamilySearch Affiliate Library. It will help FamilySearch expand opportunities for fun, personal discoveries and family connections to the local community,” said Paul Nauta, FamilySearch Public Relations Manager.

About FamilySearch

FamilySearch is the largest genealogy organization in the world. FamilySearch is a nonprofit, volunteer-driven organization sponsored by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Millions of people use FamilySearch records, resources, and services to learn more about their family history. To help in this great pursuit, FamilySearch and its predecessors have been actively gathering, preserving, and sharing genealogical records worldwide for over 100 years.

Patrons may access FamilySearch services and resources for free at FamilySearch.org or through more than 5,000 FamilySearch centers in 129 countries, including the main FamilySearch Library in Salt Lake City, Utah.

For more information visit the BCGHS Family History Library page on the BCGHS website at <https://bosque-heritage.org/bcghs-family-history-library/>

Press Release



The BCGHS Family History Library Becomes a FamilySearch Affiliate Library

Meridian, Texas — If you want to be part of the popular ancestry search trend, you may not need to look any further than the local library. The BCGHS Family History Library located at 9251

FamilySearch adds over 300 million free genealogical records and images online yearly from all over the world and manages the famous FamilySearch Library in Salt Lake City. It has amassed billions of birth, marriage, death, census, land and court records from more than 130 countries to help you discover and make family connections.





**Bosque County Genealogical &
Historical Society (BCGHS) FHL Library**

GRAND OPENING fundraising

Silent Auction

BCGHS Family History Library, HWY 6, Meridian Texas

COMING IN NOVEMBER/DECEMBER

TWO Days! Bidding opens

Friday Time/Date TBD

Bidding Closes

Saturday Time/Date TBD



**Stoeger Condor O/U 12ga Shotgun NWTF Edition
\$750 retail - Raffle Tickets \$10**

Tickets can be purchased online at <https://bosque-heritage.org/bcghs-family-history-library/>
Winners must be eligible for all gun ownership requirements

***** Items needed for Silent Auction include but not limited to Gift Baskets for Christmas, art, crafts, jewelry, books by local artisans and writers, kitchen and bath items, kids craft kits, textiles, antiques & collectibles, gift certificates for gift cards, services, trips, B&B rentals, and other.**

Pick up items right after the auction or arrange for pick-up later!

**For more information, or to donate items to the silent auction, contact
BCGHS Library Fundraiser, bosquegenealogy@gmail.com**

2024 BCGHS CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 13 – Saturday - Program at Clifton Civic Center 1:00 -3:00 p.m.
“Westward Expansion and Growth of the United States – Coming of Age 1866 – 1919”
by LeAnne McCamey

April 13 -Saturday - Program at Clifton Civic Center 1:00 -3:00 p.m.
“Railroads: They Built This Country, How They Work, and How They Still Are”
by Gil Parks

July 13 - Saturday - BCGHS Family History Library 1:00 -3:00 p.m.
“The Effects of Weather on the Movement of Our Ancestors”
By Brady Taylor, Chief Meteorologist for KWTX, Waco

ANNUAL TOMBSTONE CLEANING

Saturday, September 14, 10:00 a.m.

Our Savior's Lutheran Cemetery, Norse -Hendrik and Christine Dahl

October 5 -Saturday – Clifton Civic Center 1:00 -3:00 p.m.
“Fall at the Bosque Museum”
by Erin Shields, Executive Director, Bosque Museum

GRAND OPENING/RIBBON CUTTING - SILENT AUCTION FUNDRAISER/ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

TBD in November

BCGHS Family History Library open Fridays 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm

**Members will be notified of changes and updates
via email and Facebook.**

BCGHS Collection Highlight

This issue's Family Collection highlight is from our Digital Manuscript Collection and comes from the private collection of Elaine Bakke Bell Digital Collection, CM_AgnetteeFinstad Bakke, Volume 1, DMS003.

Pictured are images of John Alfred Bakke born on 30 April 1893 in Bosque County. He was the youngest son of Christian Magnus Bakke and Agnettee Finstad. He lived with Ole and Cora Bakke in Turkey Creek while attending Clifton Academy. He was described as "short in stature and always stood up very straight. He was loved dearly by all nieces and nephews, and they would get very excited when they knew he was going to visit." He died on 12 November 1976 in Clifton, Texas.

John was a Sergeant in WWI stationed in France. Within the collection is a copy of a

handwritten letter that John wrote to his brother, Carl Bakke, in June 1918 while he was stationed in France. It reads as follows:

"Dear Home Folks,

I suppose you are wondering where I have gone to. I am proud to say that I have arrived safe across the pond. I am somewhere in Europe at the present time. I cannot tell you what place this is. I had a great trip though I did get awful tired of riding all the time. Thank God it soon ended. I am now something like 7,000 miles away from home tonight but it doesn't seem to me that I am so far away from you. Let me tell you this is a big world. I wish I could tell you some of the things that has happened since I left camp in good ole U.S.A. It may be [illegible]. I will not take time to tell you anything this time.

How is everything with Mama and Papa. I hope they are well. Take good care of them. I did not get sea sick on the way over. I have been feeling fine all the time. It is somewhat cold over here [use] overcoat all the time. Have you thrashed the green [illegible]. How many bushels did I make? I [illegible] not much time to write this time. this is only a message to let you know that I have arrived across the pond safe and feeling good. Everything is lovley. I hope you are all well. write me often."

It appears a second letter was written later on to his sister. It reads as follows:



John Alfred Bakke, Volume 2 of Bakke_Finstad Collection. DMS003.18 The back reads "John Alfred Bakke in his WWI uniform. He was engaged to be married to Ora Clyde Bekken before he left. Property of Ole Bakke."

"Sunday night: Feb 2 [?]"

Dear Sister:

I am very lonesome tonight and not a thing to go to so I will try and pass away the time in writing letters. I recd a letter from Oscar which was very interesting. I have been writing quite a few letters to you people at home since we got settled down. I hope you have recd all of them. I am now living on the banks of the Mosella river [illegible] Germany. It is a very purdy place but I don't like it. I have a good place to stay. A dandy good room and bed to sleep in. The lady of the house keeps it clean for me all the time. does all my washing so I am fixed up all O.K. but take it from me I am sure anxious to get back to my Dear Old home in Texas. I understand we are to sail some time in March but I hear so much talk of going home I don't believe I am going until the day I am really and truely sailing. I am very sorry



John Alfred Bakke, Volume 2 of Bakke_Finstad Collection. DMS003.19. The back reads "John Alfred Bakke born in 1893 Married Ora Clyde Bekken. They lived on the C. Magnus Bakke farm. They had two sons. They are Billy Joe Bakke and John Alfred Bakke Jr."



John Alfred Bakke, Volume 2 of Bakke_Finstad Collection. DMS003.16. The back reads "John Alfred Bakke "Uncle Johnny"

to hear that so much bad news come about me in the community [sp]. It made me feel bad when I saw that write up about me in the Clifton Record. I am proud to say that I did not get a scratch in this war. I did not even get gassed like some people did that I know about [blotch] heard about.

[Elmer] Erickson was killed not far from where I was. I was [in the] battle he was in. Co A was in the first wave and I can say this much it was a hard hard fight. All went forward into the [Boches] machine gun bullets. they were barking at us from every direction and my dear pals were falling all around me but still we continued on forward with our rapid fire until the dirty devils were killed or driven away. Co A halted in a little ditch to reorganize and stay under cover and go forward again. but we [illegible] we were to weak so we held [illegible] we had. We did not have an officer left. our Captain and one lieutenant was killed and one seriously wounded. We went into the fight with our two hundred men but after the battle was over we only had twenty-six men left to hold the front lines. It was a very hard hard fight to live through

but I am glad that I lived through it. We buried 37 men together the next day that were killed in our Co. the rest were wounded. I have traveled some hard hard trails over here but I could soon forget those hardships if they would only start me on that trail towards home. From the way things look I think we will start home sometime soon.

Well I haven't much to say tonight. I have the blues to bad to write a letter, so I had better stop. I hope you all are well. I am fine and dandy. Give mama and Papa and every body else my love. Write me often - Your Bro John"

John later sent a post card to his sister, Alma Bakke Johnson, to let them know he was coming home. Postmarked 7 June 1919, and addressed to Mrs. O.C. Johnson, Clifton, Texas, it reads, "Can you imagine that I will soon be home with you again. I am now in Boston, Mass. Will start for Texas soon. J.A.B.

Arrived on June 7, 1919, Going to [illegible], J.A. Bakke, Co A, Reg 360, Div 98th."

A type written document in the collection reads "John Alfred, "Uncle Johnnie" Bakke was born 4-30-1893. He married Ora Clyde Bekken in _____. Ora Clyde was born 12-6-[18]-97, and died 11-1-68. They are buried at Norse in Bosque County, Texas. Uncle Johnnie died in 1976. John and Ora Clyde lived in the Magnus Bakke home between Norse and Cranfills Gap, Texas. They had two sons. Their first son is Billy Joe Bakke. He was born in 1930. He married Virgie McFadden in _____. They live in Cleburne, Texas. He died in [1986].

Their second son was named John Alfred Bakke, Jr. John Jr was born [1939]. He was killed in an auto accident in 1960 near the Womack Community East of Clifton. John was a student at [illegible]."

More items are being added to our family collections. If you would like to consider donating a family collection to BCGHS, forms for Gift Conveyances can be found at our website at <https://bosque-heritage.org/sponsorships/>

The BCGHS Collection Guidelines for those of you who are interested in possibly donating family manuscripts or collections in the future can be our viewed and/or downloaded at <https://bosque-heritage.org/bcghs-manuscript-collections/>

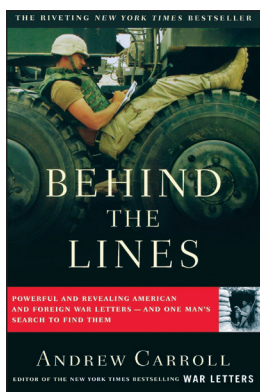


John Alfred Bakke, Volume 2 of Bakke_Finstad Collection. DMS003.17 The back reads "John Alfred Bakke John Alfred Bakke (1893-1976) Married Ora Clyde Bekken 1. Billie Joe Bakke b. 1930, married Virgie McFadden Bill and Virgie have two children Michael Ray Bakke and Karen Jan 2. John Alfred Bakke Jr b. 7-27-39 d. 8-15-60

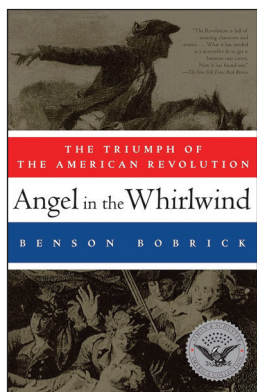
BCGHS Library Collection Recommendations

Behind the Lines: Powerful and Revealing American and Foreign War Letters--and One Man's Search to Find Them, Andrew Carroll, Scribner, 2006

Andrew Carroll spent three years traveling throughout the United States and around the world to seek out the most powerful and unforgettable letters ever written during American wars.



Behind the Lines is the result of that extraordinary trip and represents the first book of its kind: a dramatic, intimate, and revealing look at warfare as seen through the personal correspondence of US and foreign troops and civilians who have experienced major conflicts firsthand. From handwritten missives penned during the American Revolution to e-mails from Afghanistan and Iraq, Behind the Lines captures the full spectrum of emotions -- exhilaration, fear, devotion, despair, courage, heartache, patriotism, rage, and even humor -- expressed in times of war.

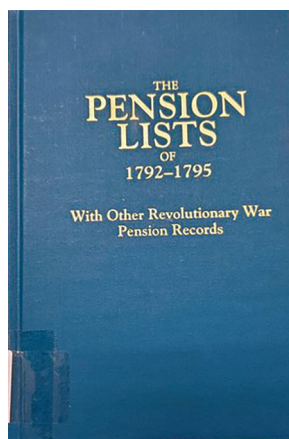
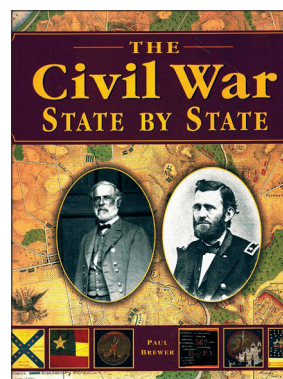


Angel in the Whirlwind: The Triumph of the American Revolution, Benson Bobrick, Simon & Schuster, 2011

Angel in the Whirlwind is the epic tale of the American Revolution, from its roots among tax-weary colonists to the triumphant Declaration of Independence and eventual victory and liberty, recounted by Benson Bobrick, lauded by The New York Times as "perhaps the most interesting historian writing in America today." Overwhelmed with debt following its victory in the French and Indian Wars, England began imposing harsh new tariffs and taxes on its colonists in the 1760s. Rebellion against these measures soon erupted into war. Bobrick thrillingly describes all the major battles, from Lexington and Concord to the dramatic siege of Yorktown, when the British flag was finally lowered before patriot guns. At the same time he weaves together social and political history along with the military history, bringing to life not only the charismatic leaders of the independence movement, but also their lesser-known compatriots, both patriot and loyalist, English and American, whose voices vividly convey the urgency of war.

The Civil War State By State, Paul Brewer, Thunder Bay Press, 2004

Civil War literature abounds, matched always by the continuing hunger for new material on the subject. Civil War State-by-State is a comprehensive review that carefully studies the involvement of each state represented on the 34 star pre-war flag. Dedicated entries by historian Paul Brewer feature text and 250 illustrations that bring to life the famous military leaders, politicians, regiments, ships, battle sites, and buildings connected with each state. Using a mixture of historical photographs, artifact imagery, and color artworks from both the Confederate and Union sides, this is a new look at the Civil War, and a must-have for all history buffs.



The Pension Lists of 1792-1795 With Other Revolutionary War Pension Records, Murtie Jane Clark, Genealogical Publishing Company, 2010

Two catastrophic fires in 1800, one in the War Department, the other in the Treasury Department, destroyed the earliest Revolutionary War pension application records. These records consisted primarily of claims for relief based on death or disability suffered during the War. Nevertheless, certain pension records pre-dating the critical year 1800 survive in the form of Congressional reports, and these reports would appear to be the earliest Revolutionary War pension records extant. Four such reports have been identified and are transcribed in this work. Within each report the claims are arranged by state, giving, generally, name, rank, regiment, description and circumstances of wounds incurred, and information regarding pension, place of residence and physical fitness. With an index to nearly 4,000 persons.



Recommended Web Sites

Hathitrust - List of applications for pensions which have been suspended or rejected.

American Revolution

<https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/008432255>

American Military History Battle Maps

<https://battlearchives.com/>

National Archives Genealogy Fairs & Series

<https://www.archives.gov/calendar/genealogy-series>

Americans By Choice

<https://archive.org/details/americansbychoi01gavigoog/page/n8/mode/2up>

Brethren Migrations

https://www.cob-net.org/docs/brethrenlife_migrations.htm

The Scotch-Irish

<https://www.americanheritage.com/scotch-irish>

Surnames by Bernard Homer Dixon

<https://archive.org/details/surnames00dixogoog/page/n4/mode/2up>

1890 Bosque County Ownership Map

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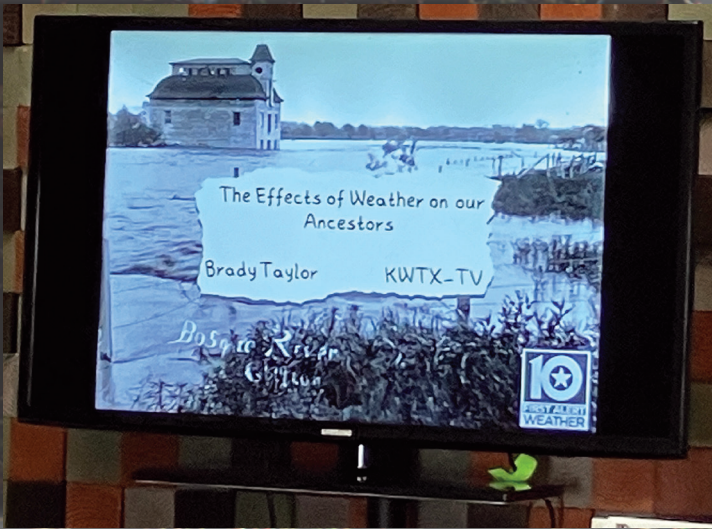
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QUARTERLY SCRAP BOOK





BCGHS Member Book Review

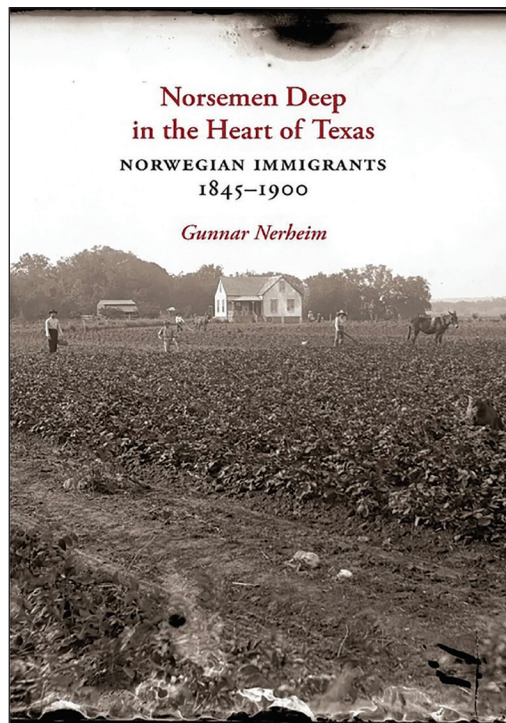
by Shirley Dahl

Norsemen Deep in the Heart of Texas: Norwegian Immigrants, 1845—1900, was written by Gunnar Nerheim and published by the Texas A&M University Press, College Station, 2024. Dr. Nerheim is Professor Emeritus of Modern History at the University of Stavanger, Institute of Culture and Languages, Norway. Tarleton State University sponsored this publication as *The Southwestern Studies in the Humanities*, Volume Thirty-One.

I met Dr. Nerheim during his many visits to the Bosque Museum of Clifton, Texas, to do research on 1845-1900 Norwegian immigration. During numerous years of research he and his wife, Inger Kari, examined artifacts and scanned documents held at the Bosque Museum and other locales in Bosque County and elsewhere. They loved researching the immigration of their fellow Norwegians and became dear friends to many residents of Bosque County. Dr. Nerheim answered many questions about Norwegian immigration by compiling, summarizing, and translating numerous Norwegian/English research studies. This volume has been described as "*The definitive history of Norwegian settlements in Texas.*"

The contents of the book include:

1) Johan Reinert Reiersen and the first Norwegian migration chain to Texas, 2) Chain migration from southern Norway to East Texas and Four Mile Prairie, 3) Cleng Peerson, the Father of Norwegian Immigration, goes to Texas, 4) Why did immigrants from Hedmark County in Eastern Norway end up in East Texas?, 5) Finding virgin land in the Bosque



Valley, 6) More Norwegian settlers on the Indian Frontier, 7) Living among transplanted hillbillies and slave owners, 8) Right or wrong — my Texas! Norwegians in the Confederate Army during the Civil War, 9) Norwegians in the Confederate Army after the Conscription Law, 10) A growing Norwegian Colony in Bosque County, despite Indian threats, 11) A system for indentured servants from Norway, 12) Harder to climb the agricultural ladder, and 13) a transplanted community.

The Appendices include interesting tabulations of the following:

1) Norwegians in Texas in 1860, 2) The wealthiest men in Bosque County, Texas, 1860, 3) Slave owners in Bosque County, Texas, and 4) Number of sheep in some Texas counties, 1890-1900. Finally, interesting notes and bibliographic sections follow. I highly recommend this volume. Read and find out why Dr. Nerheim calls some early immigrants in Bosque County "hillbillies".

Dahl Tombstone Cleaning



Bosque County Genealogical & Historical Society

Hendrick & Christine Dahl
Headstone Cleaning
Our Savior's Lutheran Cemetery
Norse, Texas
Saturday, September 14, 2024
10:00 am WEATHER PERMITTING



Farm Road 4145 *Directions from Clifton - take highway 6 north, at 3.9 miles turn left onto FM 2136, at 3.2 miles turn left onto FM 4155, at 8 miles turn right onto 4150, merge onto CR 4240 in 1/2 mile then take a slight right onto 4145. Destination will be on the left.
Cleaning will be rescheduled in case of inclement weather

We are thrilled to share the success of the Hendrick and Christine Dahl headstone cleaning at the Norse Cemetery in September. This event, which also saw the cleaning of the stone of Clinton J Neal Dahl, a three-month-old who might have been a grandson of the Dahls, holds significant importance in our shared mission to preserve history. Special thanks to Ponice Hartman, who volunteered to be the cemetery chair and coordinated these events, and was instrumental in this success. We also extend our gratitude to other members present, such as Jim and Paula Conrad, Donald and Ruthellen Mason, Jon Jorgenson, Ed Bell, Steve and Virginia Heinley, and William Busby. Thanks to all the BCGHS members and guests who participated. Your involvement and interest in helping us preserve history in this way has made a significant impact on our community. We look forward to your continued participation in our future events.



Research Tips

Analyzing the Revolutionary War Service of William Howlett

By LeAnne McCamey - BCGHS Newsletter/Quarterly Editor

William Howlett is LeAnne's 5th GGrandfather

William Howlett was the son of Daniel Howlett (1729-1786) and Mary Stephens (1729-1780). William was born in Dutchess County, New York, and was about six years of age when his family moved to Bennington County, New Hampshire, which is now Vermont.

When I initially began my research on William Howlett, I made a close examination of the census records on which he appeared. Beginning with 1850 (where Vermont is given as his state of birth), I worked my way all the way back to the 1790 census where he is located in Brandon, Rutland County, Vermont. The second page of the 1840 census indicates that he was a pensioner of the Revolutionary War and that he was eighty-six years of age. I was eager to locate, not only his pension application, but his Compiled Military Service Records (CMSR) as well.

A CMSR will provide you with your ancestor's rank, unit, date mustered in and mustered out, basic biographical information, medical information, and military information. Pension application files usually provide the most genealogical information. These files often contain supporting documents such as: narratives of events during service, marriage

certificates, birth records, death certificates, pages from family Bibles, family letters, depositions of witnesses, affidavits, discharge papers and other supporting papers. I was able to access William's records online through *Ancestry.com* and *Fold3*. Original military records of these items can

chronological order (they don't come that way) before you begin analyzing them. The front file page of his file is very misleading. It indicates his service in the Navy and in Vermont and gives the name of his widow (Martha) and the pension number R5305. The letters in front of pension application numbers represent the status of the applicant. S in front of the number indicates "Survivor" and that a pension was granted. W represents a widow who was granted a pension. Pension numbers beginning with R are rejected pensions. In William's case, the pension application file is actually that of his widow, Martha. A widow's pension may or may not include the veteran's pension, so it's important to look through all the documents in the file. Martha's application was rejected; however, the file did contain William's initial application which indicates that he did in fact qualify for and receive a pension and appears on later pension rolls.

The next step in analyzing William's application, was to carefully transcribe the original handwritten documents that are not legible, which can be very challenging! Fortunately, not only was I able to garner important genealogical data, but a wealth of background information on his



also be ordered from the National Archives at <https://eservices.archives.gov/orderonline/start.swe?SWEC-md=Start&SWEHo=eservices.archives.gov>.

William's application provides a great example of why you should put the individual pages in

have ever witnessed, resembling a continual clap of thunder.”

According to American Battlefield Trust “*For some combatants, the fight was personal. It was a desperate struggle; former friends who had grown up together in Vermont or the surrounding area found themselves facing off with each other... Burgoyne’s detachment suffered more than 200 dead and seriously wounded; more than 700 were taken prisoner or missing. American casualties were about 70...The defeat put a major strain on Burgoyne’s army, which, in addition to the casualties suffered, never secured the provisions the British commander needed. Burgoyne’s Native American allies lost confidence in him and his mission and left his army to fend for itself in the New York wilderness – deprived of its best-scouting forces. The Battle of Bennington was the precursor to the defeat of Burgoyne’s army two months later at Saratoga, turning the tide of war in favor of the Americans.*”

After the Battle of Bennington, William was marched from Shaftsbury to Pawlet, Vermont, where he was stationed. He was then marched to Saratoga and joined the Continental Army under

the command of General Gates. The Battle of Saratoga began on 19 September 1777, when American forces engaged in heavy combat on Freeman’s Farm. Amid a significant loss of troops, the British held off the Americans, and Burgoyne retreated to wait for reinforcements that never arrived. He began a second failed attempt on the Americans and attacked at Bemis Heights on October 7th. William was present at Burgoyne’s surrender to General Gates on October 17th. Military historians have long termed the Battle of



Painting of the surrender of British General John Burgoyne at Saratoga, New York on October 17, 1777 by John Trumbull

Saratoga as the “turning point of the American Revolution.”

“One of the most decisive American battles of the Revolutionary War, Saratoga ended British general John Burgoyne’s attempt to control the Hudson River Valley. The outcome convinced the Court of King Louis XVI that the Americans could hold their own against the British Army, sealing the alliance between America and France... The victory

persuaded France to sign a treaty with the United States against Britain. France’s financial and military support contributed to Washington’s victory at Yorktown in 1781, which effectively ended America’s War for Independence.”

Following the Battle of Saratoga, William served in the Greene Mountain Rangers under the command of Colonel Herrick for five or six months. He served a total of fourteen or fifteen months in the Vermont militia.

In March 1780, William traveled from Shaftsbury to New London, Connecticut, where he volunteered aboard the Man of War ship *Trumbull*. He served on that ship for nine months under Captain Nicholson and Lieutenants Mably and Starr. He specifically remembered the surgeon, Doctor Morrow, Chief Gunner Langson, and Sailing Master Hess.

The crew sailed from the port of New London on a cruise along the shores of Newfoundland and to the West Indies Islands, where they fell in with the British ship *HMS Watts* on 1 June 1780. The *Watts* was initially thought to be a frigate but turned out to be a 32-gun letter-of-marque.

William describes a sharp engagement in which he operated a 12-pounder on the main sail deck. William's report of thirty to forty men killed on the *Trumbull* was inaccurate. Captain Nicholson is said to have encouraged his men and "most cheerfully decided to fight."

According to Naval History and Heritage Command "Watt gave "three cheers and a broadside" to commence what historian Gardner W. Allen considered "one of the hardest fought naval engagements of the war." *Trumbull* soon ran up

Continental colors and returned the first broadside at a range of 80 yards. For two and one-half hours, the two ships traded shot in a fierce action. The range -- never wider than 80 yards -- most of the time was under 50 yards; and once the ship's yards nearly became locked together. Watt twice set the frigate afire; *Trumbull's* shot caused fires on board the letter

of marque that proved impossible to extinguish until the Briton had cut away much of her rigging. Most of the men in Watt's tops were either killed, or wounded, or driven below. The British ship's hull, rigging, and sails were shot to pieces. Holed below the waterline, the letter of marque took on water at an alarming rate, and her danger was compounded by the fact that the American guns had left her with only one operable pump. *Trumbull* fared little better. Captain of Marines Gilbert Saltonstall

subsequently noted: "We were literally cut all to pieces; not a shroud, stay, brace, bowling, or other rigging standing. Our main top most mast shot away, our fore, main mizzen, and jigger masts gone by the board..."

Trumbull lost eight killed and 31 wounded; Watt suffered 13 killed and 79 wounded. Both badly battered, the frigate and letter of marque broke off action and retired from the scene of battle."

Though Nicholson strongly wanted to engage again, he ultimately chose



Painting of the sea battle between HMS Watts and USS Trumbull by PH Rhodes

to leave the field of battle. William described the hurricane the crew faced as they struggled to return to Connecticut. They reached Nantasket on June 14th, three days after straggling into New York. "Nicholson subsequently reported that "was [sic] I to have my choice...I would sooner fight any two-and-thirty gun frigate...on the coast of America, then to fight that ship over again..."

According to Vermont records, William signed the Freeman's Oath

in 1781. He later signed the petition on 16 October 1788 "For maintenance of old town lines regardless of new survey" for Brandon as set in 1761.

Follow up research on the remainder of William's life indicates that he married Susan (probably Wood) around 1787. While researchers have not recorded Susan's maiden name, DNA strongly suggests she is the sister of Levi Wood, the son of Job Wood and Theoda Walbridge. William not only used Levi as a witness to

his service but also deposed on behalf of Levi Wood's application for a pension, stating that he had known him for fifty-five years and served with him under Ethan Allen.

William remained in Brandon until about 1793. Though he doesn't give a time frame or specific place, he states in his pension application that he moved from

Vermont to New York to Ohio.

The gap in deed records suggests that William was in New York from 1793 -1797. William's brothers, Daniel and Parley, appear in Onondaga, New York, in 1800, living in Howlett Hill. Madison County, New York, neighbors Onondaga County and Susannah's father, Job Wood, died there in 1810. Deed records place the father-in-law (John T Stagg) of William's daughter, Susannah, in

Madison County in 1802. William's brother-in-law, Levi, resided in Dutchess County in 1800. A logical assumption can be made that the Wood and Howlett siblings removed from Vermont to New York at about the same time.

William was the first of the family to migrate to the Ohio Territory. He was among the original thousands of settlers arriving in Marietta, Ohio, after the Battle of Fallen Timbers, which was waged in 1794 when General Anthony Wayne defeated the Indian Nations.

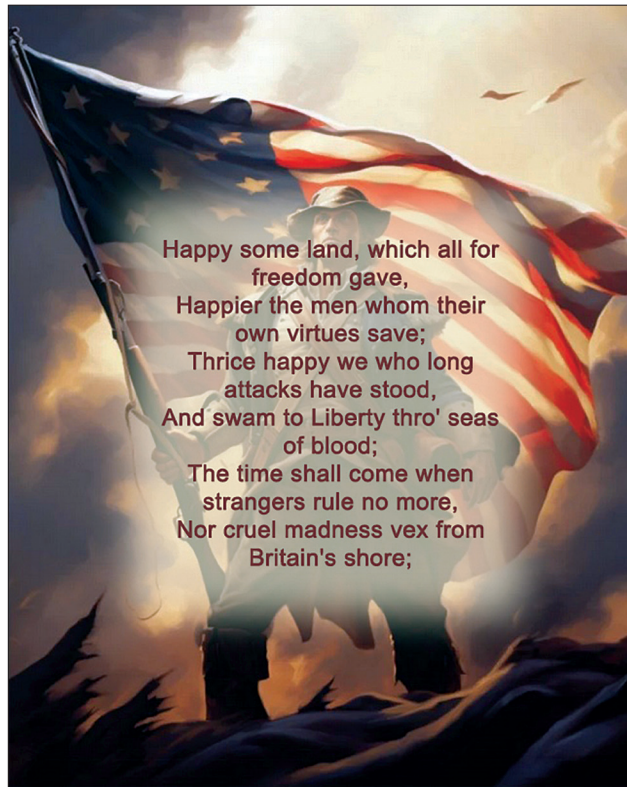
A deed dated 31 July 1797 places William in Belleprrie, Washington County, Ohio, where he was conveyed 100 acres in Cats Creek addition by the executive authority of the Land Ordinance of 1785. This ordinance stipulated that non-commissioned officers and soldiers of the Revolution were to be granted 100 acres (by 1776 Congressional resolution) for their service. William sold the same lot of land to Dudley Woodbridge a year later.

Tax records place William in Middletown, Washington, Ohio, 1801-1802. His youngest son, Lord Viscount "Nelson" Howlett (named after the legendary British Admiral Lord Viscount Horatio Nelson), was born in Marietta in 1808. William remains on Washington County tax lists until 1810.

William made a land purchase in Randolph, Dearborn County, Indiana, in 1813. He married Martha Jacks on 29 November 1815

in Ross County, Ohio — indicating that Susannah died around 1814 in Ohio or Indiana. Widowers with young children typically married quite soon after the death of a wife.

William was granted a patent of land in Dearborn County in 1817. Sometime after that, he removed two counties over to Columbia, Jennings County, Indiana. There this old soldier remained until his



Portion of poem "American Liberty" by Philip Freneau

death at the age of ninety-five on 27 August 1852. His son, Nelson, had died a year earlier on the Huntington Wagon Road in Deschutes County, Oregon, following the same fate as many other stalwart pioneers willing to confront the many dangers of the Oregon Trail on their way west.

Carefully analyzing your ancestor's military records not only equips you to put flesh to the story of your ancestor's personal experiences and life history, but it also gives you great

insight into American and world history and the role your families played in it. It's all about the story and the preservation of our ancestral and national history and heritage.

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1890 Project Highlight Capt. J.J. “Jack” Cureton - Indian Fighter, Soldier, Lawman & Rancher

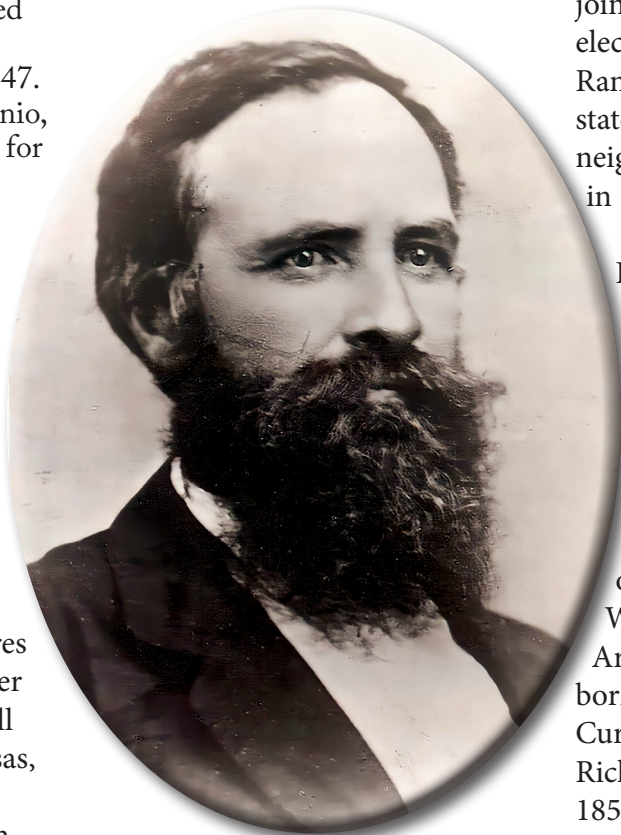
by Ves Box - BCGHS 1890 Project Committee Chair

James Jackson [Capt. Jack] Cureton, son of William Cureton, was born in Crawford County, present day Franklin County, Arkansas Territory, on October 19, 1826. In 1846, he served in Company H, Arkansas Mounted Volunteers, under Colonel Archibald Yell during the U.S. Mexican War. He is believed to have fought in the Battle of Buena Vista on February 23, 1847. He was discharged at San Antonio, Texas, and may have seen Texas for the first time during the war.

After returning home after the Mexican War, James J. Cureton married Eliza Margaret Price about 1847, in Arkansas. Eliza Price was born in Tennessee on February 14, 1823. Her parents were not found. U. S. General Land Office records show James Jackson Cureton of Franklin County, Arkansas, purchased about seventy-six acres of land in Arkansas on December 1, 1849. The 1850 census for Mill Creek, Franklin County, Arkansas, listed James J. Cureton, farmer, and his wife Eliza, with their son, William, age two.

James J. Cureton was a successful farmer and cattle raiser, at one time owning over 3,000 head of cattle. Historian William C. Pool stated J. J. Cureton made four overland trips to California — the first in 1852 as head of an immigrant wagon train heading for the gold fields and driving a herd of cattle for the miners. The California State census of September 1852 listed

Jas. J. Cureton, age twenty-six, of Arkansas, as a resident farmer in Sacramento County, California. Captain Cureton's son — William E. Cureton — remembered the J. J. Cureton family, including four sons, moved from Arkansas to the Texas frontier during the winter



Find a Grave, (https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/58926206/james_jackson-cureton) memorial page for James Jackson "Capt Jack" Cureton (19 Oct 1826–1 May 1881), Memorial ID 58926206, citing Cureton Cemetery, Bosque County, Texas

of 1854-1855. In 1855, the family settled on Keechi Creek near the Brazos River, in present day Palo Pinto County. There James Cureton engaged in both farming and cattle ranching. The homestead was about forty miles south of Fort Belknap, established in 1851 as the northernmost fort established to

protect early settlers on the west Texas frontier.

Jack Cureton joined his neighbors along the Brazos in the attempt to protect their families and property from the constant raids of the Comanche and Kiowa tribes. He joined the Texas Rangers and was elected Captain of a company of Rangers in 1857. Historical sources state that he fought alongside his neighbors at the Battle of Salt Creek in 1858.

In June of 1860, J.J. Cureton was listed as a stock raiser in Palo Pinto County, Texas. The family included his wife Eliza and their six children, as well as his brother, William H. Cureton. James J. Cureton and Eliza M. Price were the parents of four boys and two girls: William E. Cureton, born 1848, Arkansas; John Calvin Cureton, born 1850, Arkansas; James White Cureton, born 1852, Arkansas; Richard Adolphus Cureton, born 1854, Arkansas; Melissa Caroline Cureton, born 1857, Texas (she married William F. Grounds), and Dorinda Marzee [Dora] Cureton (born 1860, Texas) who married Judge O. L. Lockett.

Texas history books mention in late December 1860, Captain Cureton also led his company in what was called the Wolf Creek Fight in an area north of the Colorado River. During his service with the Rangers, J. J. Cureton formed lasting friendships with legendary

Texas Rangers like Shapley P. Ross, Charles Goodnight, and James “Buck” Buckner. Charles “Charlie” Goodnight served in J. J. Cureton’s Ranger Company. J. Everetts Haley’s book *Charles Goodnight: Cowman and Plainsman* has many mentions of Captain Cureton’s Ranger activities, “*Their field of operations was from the Clear Fork of the Brazos north to the Wichita Mountains in Indian territory and from the Plains settlements west to New Mexico.*”

On December 19, 1860, Ranger Captain Jack Cureton, leading about seventy citizen “Minute Men” from Palo Pinto County, supported Ranger Captain L. S. “Sul” Ross in the battle on the Pease River against the Comanche encampment of Chief Peta Nocona — father of Quannah Parker. During the fight, former captive, Cynthia Ann Parker, one of the wives of Peta Nocona, was captured [rescued?]. She was later forced against her will to return to relatives in East Texas.

In 1861, when Texas joined the Confederate States, some of the U. S. Army garrisons abandoned the Texas forts voluntarily. Others were forced to surrender to state authorities, leaving the Texas frontier unprotected. The Texas State Legislature organized volunteer troops, called the Frontier Regiment, to patrol areas

of the frontier against marauding Indians and Mexican bandits.

Family history states that Capt. J. J. Cureton enlisted in the Confederate Army on March 15, 1861, and retained his rank as Captain from the Texas Rangers. Military records show Captain J. J. Cureton enlisted in the Frontier Regiment, Texas State Troops on March 11, 1862, at Fort Belknap, Texas. His equipment included a \$200 horse, \$40 rifle, \$25 six-shooter, and \$50 of clothing. Jack J. Cureton served as Captain of Company B, Frontier Regiment,



Children of Capt Jack and Eliza Price Cureton, Front, left to right: John, Will, James. Back, left to right: Melissa, Richard, Dorinda, *Find a Grave, s* (https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/58926190/eliza_margaret-cureton: accessed August 13, 2024), memorial page for Eliza Margaret Price Cureton (14 Feb 1823–8 May 1906), Memorial ID 58926190, citing Cureton Cemetery, Bosque County, Texas

Texas State Troops, during the Civil War. Muster rolls list him from February 1862 through March 1863.

In March of 1862, Captain Cureton selected old Fort Belknap for the headquarters of Company B, Frontier Regiment. He moved his family there for protection from increasing Indian raids. Fort Belknap, established in Young County in 1851, was a former

U. S. Army post, and had been abandoned since the beginning of the war.

Camp Cureton was established on March 17, 1862, where the Gainesville-Fort Belknap road crossed the West Fork of the Trinity River southeast of Archer City. It was one of several posts set up by the Confederate Army to restrict Indian incursions. The camp was manned by half the men of the Frontier Regiment company of Captain J. J. [Jack] Cureton, for whom it was named. It had

long buildings for the rangers and a rock-fence corral for the horses. The camp was closed in March of 1864, when the regiment was concentrated at Fort Belknap.

In March of 1863, Captain Jack Cureton returned home to Palo Pinto County and served as captain of a militia company guarding the frontier until the end of war. Military records show that he re-enlisted in the Texas State Troops

in February of 1864 in Stephens County, Texas, and was paid \$75 dollars for twenty-five days of service. Captain Jack Cureton also participated in the disastrous battle of Dove Creek on January 8, 1865. In October of 1866, the *Dallas [TX] Daily Herald* reprinted a letter from Major General P. H. Sheridan of the U. S. Army concerning the organization of new frontier regiment companies in response

to the Texas Governor's request for additional protection on the frontier. The list included: "Capt. Jack Cureton, for the counties of Tarrant and Parker; Capt. J. B. Barry, for the counties of Bosque, Erath and Palo Pinto..." A Cureton family history stated that Captain Jack Cureton left the Rangers in 1867 in order to ranch full time.

No 1870 census record for the J. J. Cureton family was found. William Cureton, a son of J. J. Cureton, also stated that his father, helped by two of his sons, drove a herd of over eleven hundred cattle to California in 1870, taking the whole family on the trip. Jack Cureton farmed briefly in the San Bernardino area in California about 1870. In 1871, James Jackson Cureton was entered on the voter's list for San Bernardo. Local history states the Cureton family first came to Bosque County about 1865, settling in the Hog Creek area in southern Bosque County. When the family returned to Texas from California in 1873, J. J. Cureton established a ranch northwest of present-day Walnut Springs on land that later became Flat Top Ranch. J. J. Cureton was listed in the Bosque County Texas tax roll from 1874 to 1880.

J. J. Cureton served as Sheriff and Tax collector for Bosque County between April 1876 and June 1880. As sheriff, J. J. Cureton helped capture the Horrell Brothers during the Horrell-Higgins Feud in 1878.

The 1880 U.S. Federal Census, listed James J. Cureton, sheriff, and his wife, Eliza, living in Bosque County, Texas. Living with them were Captain Jack's brother, Henry Cureton, and two grandchildren, Calvin M., age five, and Hugh J.

Cureton, age two — children of William E. Cureton, whose wife had died in 1879. Living nearby was the family of James' brother Richard A. Cureton.

J. J. Cureton died on his ranch near Walnut Springs on May 12, 1881. He was buried on a hilltop overlooking the present-day Flat Top Ranch near Walnut Springs.

The 1900 census for Mohave County, Arizona, listed widow Eliza M. Cureton, seventy-seven, living with the family of her married daughter Melissa and son-in-law, William F. Grounds.

Mrs. Eliza Price Cureton died on May 8, 1906, in Walnut Springs, at the home of her daughter, Dora [Mrs. O. L.] Lockett. She was buried near her husband in the Cureton Cemetery near Flat Top Ranch. Other graves in the Cureton Cemetery include grandson James Cureton [1878-1900] and William Henry Cureton [1829-1902] — James J. Cureton's brother, who never married.

The History of Texas, published in 1896, stated: "The name of Captain Jack Cureton will be long remembered, at least so long as there are any old Texans still living, for his gallant service in the defense of the frontier..." A Texas state historical marker honoring Capt. J. J. Cureton stands at the front entrance to Katy Park in Walnut Springs, Bosque County, Texas.

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Edgar Finstad's Rescue in WWII by the Belgium Underground

as seen in *The Clifton Record* July 10, 2002

When I was digitizing Elaine Bell's Bakke-Finstad binders, I came across the newspaper clipping of this story as seen in the July 10, 2002, edition of the *Clifton Record*. It was submitted by Edgar Finstad's daughter, Janey Finstad Ivey of Clifton. I have copied it in its entirety for this issue commemorating our veterans. It can be viewed on the *Portal to Texas History* website.

"Finstad Saved In WWII By The Belgium Underground"

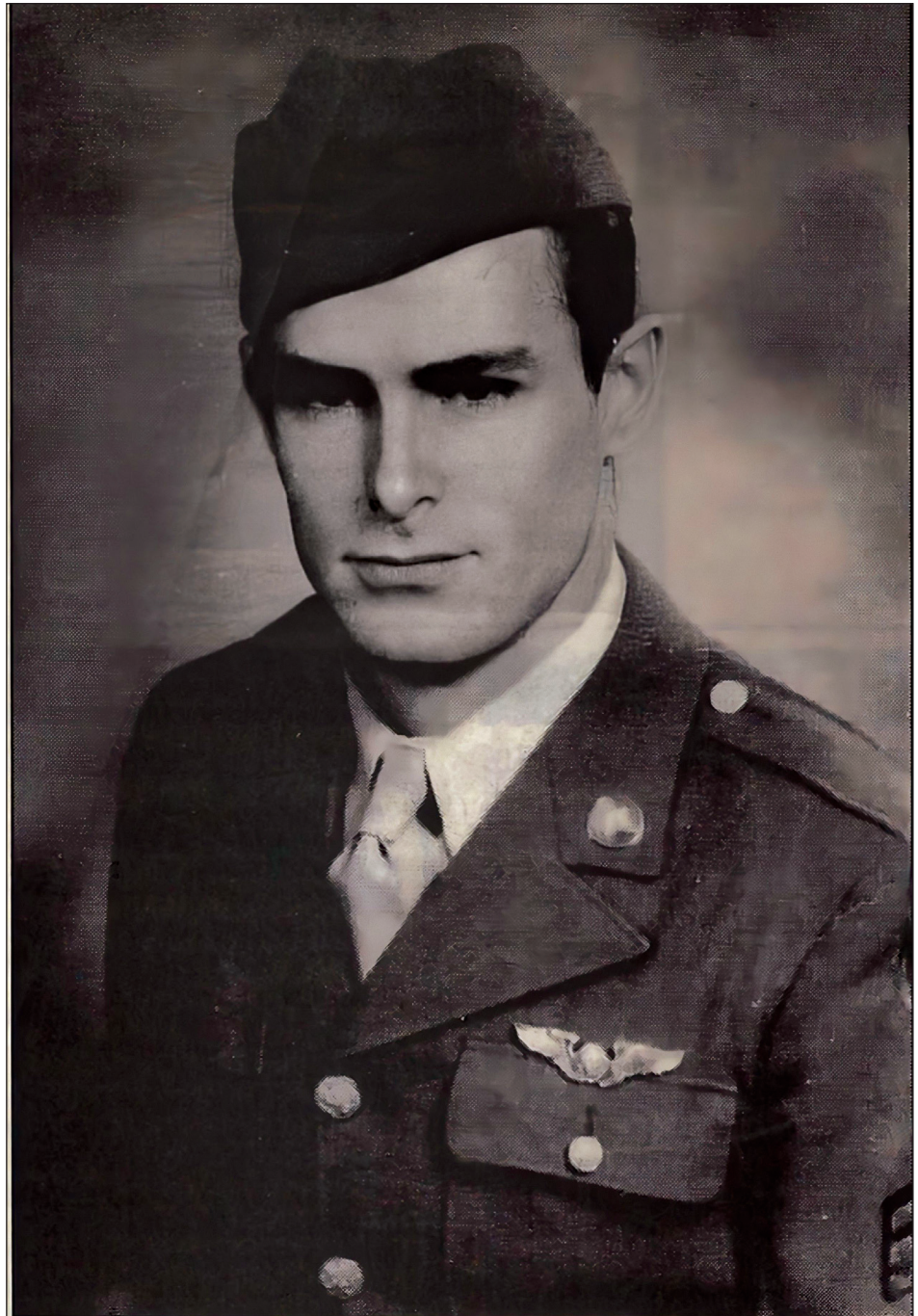
CLIFTON (*Gloria M. Howlett has been collecting the stories of Bosque County veterans for a book that she is compiling. This is the 10th in a series of the stories she has given to the Record for publication.*)

S/Sgt. Edgar Clarence Finstad was born Jan. 28, 1917, at Clifton. He was the first child and only son of Eddie and Hattie Constance Anderson Finstad. His three sisters were Verna Mae, Christine Jeanette, and Dorothy Lucille. Eunice died in infancy and their mother Hattie died in 1929, leaving Eddie to raise the children alone.

Edgar attended various schools around Clifton and worked as a farm laborer. He spent a tour of duty with the Civilian Conservation Corps in Colorado.

On Oct. 24, 1942, he joined the U.S. Army Air Force, where he received training to be a radio operator and assistant gunner on the B-17 the Flying Fortress. He served with the 8th Air Force, 332 Bomber Squadron, 94th Bomber Group.

Finstad married Jewel Blanche Sparks on September 28, 1943. She lived with her parents, Jim and Ida



BELGIUM UNDERGROUND HELPS FINSTAD — S/Sgt. Edgar Finstad survived World War II with the help of the Belgium Underground after he was forced to jump from a B-17 Bomber after a mission over Germany.

Sparks, while Finstad was overseas. All six of her brothers, Wilbur, Burton, James, Roscoe, Merrell, and Owen served overseas during World War II.

In December 1943, Finstad was sent overseas and stationed at Bury St. Edmunds, England. On March 4, 1944, returning from a mission to Berlin, Germany (his sixth) the prop on the #3 engine of the B-17 developed a problem and the pilot

ordered the crew to bail out. Of the 10 crew members, one died because his parachute failed to open, two were captured within a day, and three others were captured within two months, the other four crew members, including Finstad, stayed with the Belgium underground until they were liberated.

Finstad landed with his parachute at the border of two little Belgium towns, Beselare-Geluwe. He went into the Cafe DeKatte where Omer Destoppelaire, a Belgium National, came and got him. Destoppelaire took Finstad to Menen on the French border and into France, where he spent three weeks.

Finstad returned to Belgium because the Underground escape routes were closed. He traveled by bicycle with four members of the Underground, eventually meeting the pilot and gunner from his crew.

The group stayed with a stonemason for seven days, then a guide took them by train to Brussels and on to Liege. German soldiers were on the trains they traveled in. After arriving in Liege, the group went up and down streets and in and out of shops in case they were being followed.

In Liege, Finstad and the pilot stayed with a local butcher who hid them in a room. After two weeks in the room, Finstad asked to go to the countryside. A man named Raymond Loubeck came

for him and they rode bicycles to the town of Louveigne, where he stayed several days. While staying with the family of Emil Offerman and his wife, Finstad saw two of his fellow crew members. A close call came with German soldiers when an American airplane crashed near the Offerman farm. An old woman named Ermine gave the Germans false directions enabling the Offermans to hide Finstad in the hayloft.



B-17F formation over Schweinfurt, Germany, 17 August 1943 U.S. Air Force Photograph

Finstad was moved again to the town of Aywaille, where he was helped by a family named Servais. Finstad hid in the woods and slept in a haystack until U.S. Forces liberated Belgium.

After hearing about the American liberations, Finstad walked to the city of Louveigne where the Americans had set up a camp. From there, he was sent to Paris, interrogated, then to London and eventually to the states.

In August 1944, Jewel Finstad received the Air Medal for Edgar as he had been reported Missing In Action. In September 1944, she received a letter stating that he was safe in Belgium.

Finstad, upon his arrival in the states was given a three-week-furlough after which he reported to the Army Air Forces redistributions Station #2 for reassignment. Due to poor health, he was given an Honourable Discharge. His medals included the ETO

Ribbon with two Battle Stars, the Air Medal, and the Good Conduct Medal.

Edgar and Jewel Finstad bought a farm in the Clifton area and raised four children, John Edgar, Julie Elaine, Janey Eunice, and Jeffery Clarence, with six grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

Edgar farmed and did carpenter work for most of his life, however, his

greatest pleasure was playing the guitar. He continued to entertain people with his music until his hearing became impaired.

Edgar Finstad died at his home on Jan. 21, 1999. He was buried with full military honors at Boggy Cemetery just outside of Cranfills Gap.



William Bob Wood ~ Hillsboro Man Receives Soviet Medal

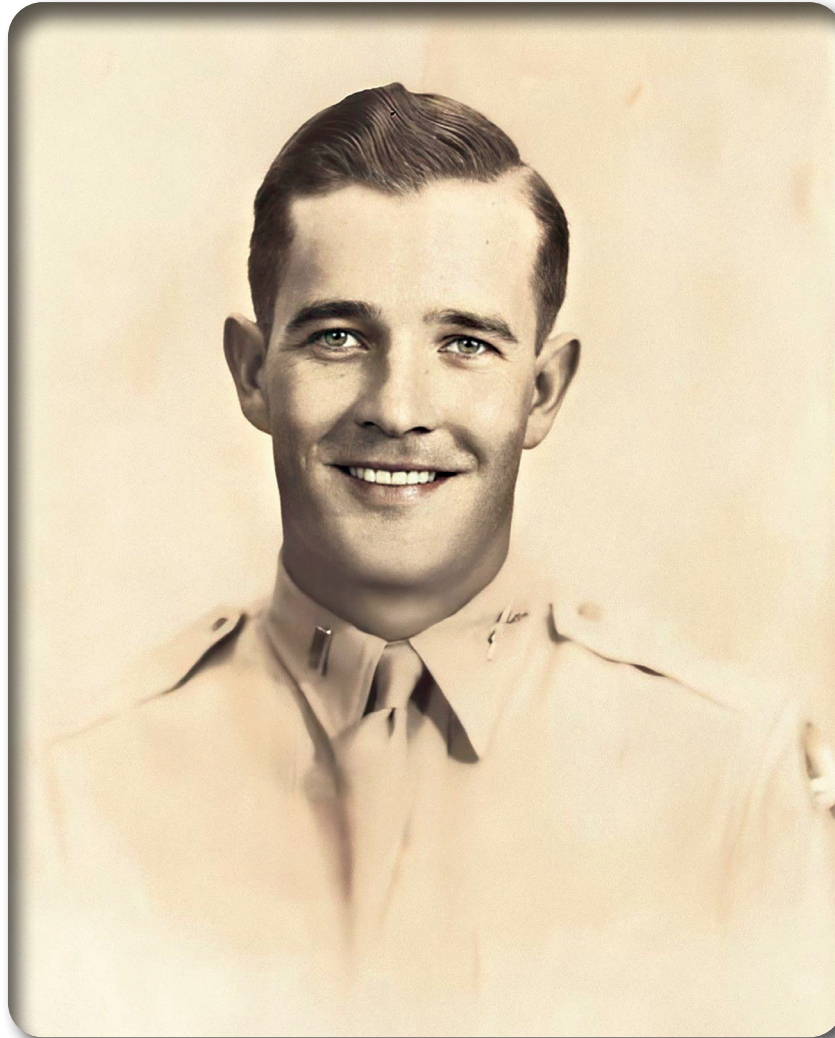
by Paula Conrad - BCGHS Secretary

William B. Wood was Paula's uncle

On 25 November 1940, 19-year-old William Bob Wood (14 October 1921 – 1 July 2015) enlisted in the Infantry Division of the Army at the Hill County National Guard. He was mobilized with the Texas 36th Infantry Division (Company "L", 143rd Infantry Regiment, Hillsboro). He trained in Texas and Florida and attended one of the first Officer Candidate classes in Fort Benning, Georgia. After instructing in Alabama, he was assigned to the 84th Infantry division and assigned to the European Theatre, where he served as a platoon leader, battalion intelligence officer, company commander and battalion executive officer. Wood received a Silver Star, two Bronze Stars and other medals from the United States Army for his service. He served in various National Guard and Army reserve positions following the war achieving the rank of Major.

On 8 May 1945, Victory over Europe (VE Day) was declared. The following week, Wood found himself in a most unusual circumstance. In a 1985 interview with the *Austin American-Statesman*, Wood detailed how he and eight other American soldiers arrived at a Russian camp after crossing the Elbe River in small

boats. At the camp, they drank vodka and swapped battle stories with the Russian soldiers, whom Wood told the *American-Statesman* were "utterly professional" and happy the war was over. Wood was also surprised at the lack of modern equipment used by the Russians.



Lieutenant William B. Wood

"My first impression was that Genghis Khan had been released across the Russian plains. I didn't know how they could have won the war with the equipment they had," he told the American-Statesman.

Wood and the eight other Americans spent two weeks in the camp. The nine soldiers were awarded The

Order of the Patriotic War medal by the Russian troop commander and praised for their heroism and personal bravery and expert leadership in combat. Wood said he did not know why he had been selected to receive this award.

This experience with the Russians made a great impression on Wood. After the war, he was one of the first students in the University of Texas at Austin's Russian Studies program (1945-1948). He was an honors graduate in economics and Russian language. After further training at Texas A&M, he joined the Central Intelligence Agency in Washington, D.C. He was proud of his thirty-one years of service with that organization.

William B. Wood in World War II:

20 September 1944
— Deployed to European Theatre of Operations

1 October 1944 — Arrived in United Kingdom

1-4 November 1944 — Landed on Omaha Beach (Normandy, France)

5-12 November 1944 — Traveled to the Netherlands

1 April 1945 — Crossed the Rhine River in Germany



Russian Order of the Patriotic War Medal

10 April 1945 — Captured
Hanover, Germany

13 April 1945 — 84th Infantry
reached the Elbe River

8 May 1945 — VE Day Declared
11 May 1945 — Last shots fired
in Europe

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Austin [TX] *American-Statesman*, " July 4 - July 6, 2015 <https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/statesman/name/william-wood-obituary?id=18542421>

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Images from WarFare History Network, "84th Infantry: From Training to Trial.," <https://warfarehistorynetwork.com/article/84th-infantry-from-training-to-trial/>



Infantrymen of the 84th Division join with machine gunners aboard Sherman tanks to concentrate fire on a German sniper holed up in Geilenkirchen. The fight for the German village lasted for more than three days.



An infantryman of the 84th points his M3 submachine gun, popularly known as a "grease gun," at a German soldier who has just thrown up his hands in surrender during the fight for Beeck, Germany.

The Edward Robinson Family in the American Revolution

by LeAnne McCamey - Newsletter/Quarterly Editor

Edward Robinson is the 7th GGF of BCGHS Member Matthew McCamey

Edward Robinson was born circa 1720 in Goochland County, Virginia, to John and Tabitha (nee Jones) Robinson. He was the fourth of fourteen children listed in the will of his father, John Robinson. He is allegedly a direct descendant of William Robinson (b. 1611) who came to America around 1635 from St. Helen's Parish in London, England, and died in what became Norfolk, Virginia, in 1656.

Edward's earliest appearance in Cumberland County, Virginia (formed from Goochland County), is seen in a deed where his father, John, granted 200 acres to Thomas Robertson of Chesterfield County, Virginia, on Deep Creek running to Muddy Creek adjoining Edward Robinson, who was tenured in 1749 on Thomas [Robinson's] plantation.

Edward had married Judith Southall approximately three years before that (maybe in Goochland County), and there they remained and raised a number of children. Edward was in the middle of his fifth decade of life when the American Revolution began in 1776.

Cumberland County, Virginia, holds the honor of leading the other colonies to call for independence. A governing body officially issued this call during the American Revolution. A historical marker in the town of Cumberland reads, "First Call For Independence - Near this

place from the porch of Effingham Tavern on 22 April 1776, Carter Henry Harrison, a member of the Cumberland Committee for Safety, read the Resolutions of Cumberland County to citizens gathered there. These resolutions called for the Colonies to "abjure any allegiance to his Brittanick majesty and bid him

first call by a governmental body for independence from Great Britain."

Court records indicate an interesting case that Edward's wife brought against him that very year. By all indications, Edward's home life was in turmoil as well.

In her petition to the Court, Judith

made several claims. She stated that she married Edward according to the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England (Anglican) and that she "lived with him a long time in the most perfect peace and harmony and bore to him many children."

Among her attributes of being a loving and dutiful wife, she claims that Edward possessed a considerable estate — both real and personal — acquired in great measure by her care and industry. Her charges against Edward state that he was "seduced by the instigations of a lewd and wicked woman or by a malevolent disposition toward [her]." Judith claimed that Edward was

treating her "with the greatest cruelty and

inhumanity" to the degree that she could no longer live with him in "comfort and safety." She goes on to state that she was truly miserable and pleads with the court to require Edward to provide support for her



Historical Marker Project, First Call For Independence, Cumberland County, VA https://historicalmarkerproject.com/markers/HM19TQ_first-call-for-independence-Cumberland-VA.html

a goodnight forever." The freeholders approved these resolutions, and Harrison was instructed "positively to declare for an independency" at the Virginia Convention. On this historic occasion, Cumberland made the

while she lived apart from him and to answer her charges. She added to her list of accusations against Edward that he often beat her and treated her with cruelty and violence. No answer to the bill was found in the Chancery file. The case remained on the docket until 1779, when it was finally dismissed for want of prosecution.

In 1776, there were a number of Robinson men from Cumberland County that joined the Continental Army. At least two of Edward's sons, John and Edward, were counted among them. John enlisted after the Battle of Trenton and served under Captain William Traylor's 2nd Virginia Regiment. It is likely that his brother, Edward Jr, served with him. Though John is found on the Valley Forge Muster Roll, Edward is not. However, Edward Jr. was awarded a 640-acre land grant for his service as a private in the Continental Army.

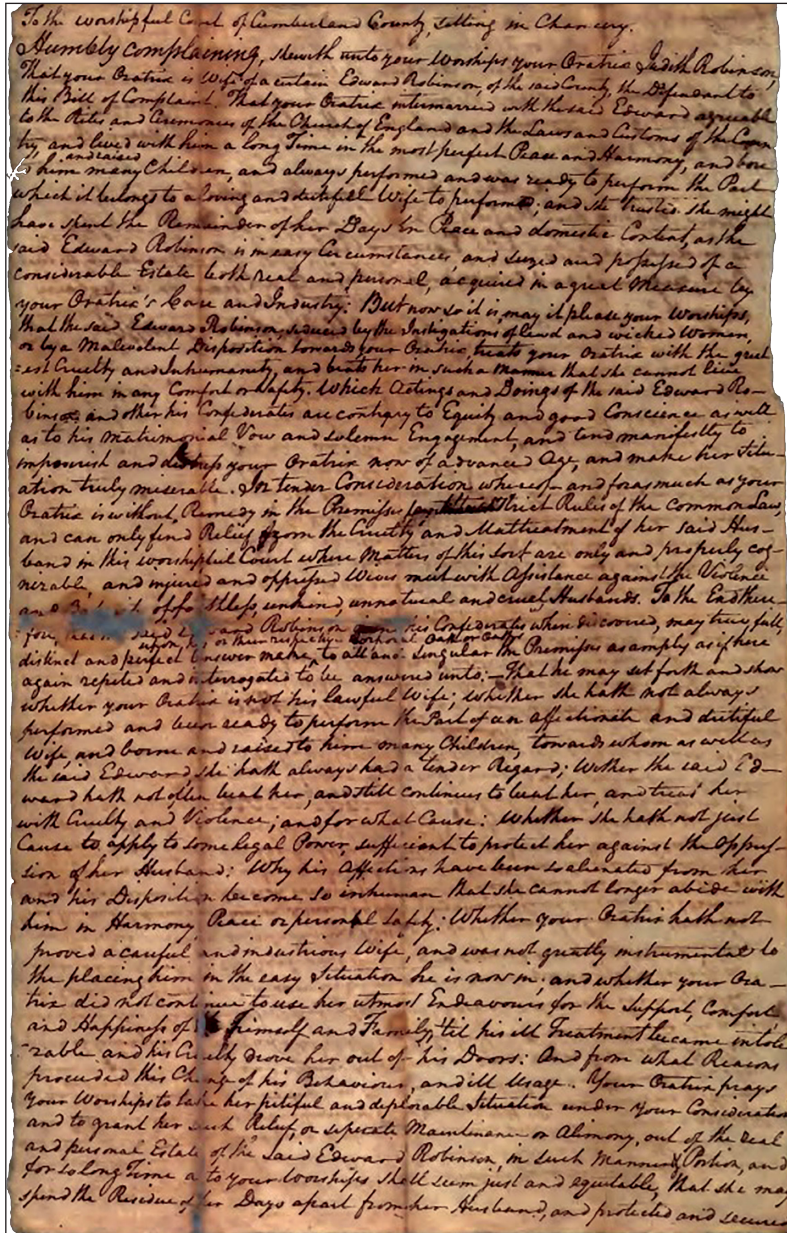
"In the fall of 1776, the 2nd was dispatched to engage Lord Dunmore's land and naval forces in the campaigns around Norfolk ... the Regiment departed in December 1776 to join Gen. George Washington and the Main Army in New Jersey. By the time the 2d was ordered to Maryland's Eastern Shore to suppress local Loyalists, the Regimental tailors were busy in Philadelphia equipping the Regiment with new regimental clothing. Originally attached to Weedon's

Brigade in 1777, the 2nd Virginia Regiment became part of Woodford's Brigade from 1779 to 1780... In late 1777, the British landed on the Chesapeake Bay to march on Philadelphia, and the 2nd Virginia Regiment was involved in the defense of the capital in the Battles of Brandywine and Germantown, both were defeats for Washington's army.

the months under the supervision of Frederick "Von" Steuben, training to become a professional army. With the rest of the Main Army, the 2nd Virginia proved they could stand up to the best of the British Army at the battle of Monmouth, where they provoked a rear action and held the field at the end of the day ... On September 14, 1778, the 2nd Virginia Regiment

was consolidated with the depleted 6th Virginia Regiment at White Plains... In December 1779, the 2nd Virginia Regiment was temporarily consolidated with the 3d reassigned to the Southern Department to counter a new British threat as part of General William Woodford's brigade. In what could have been a crushing defeat for the Continental Army, the 2nd Virginia Regiment was captured along with the whole Southern Department at Charleston, South Carolina in May 1780." (American Revolutionary War 1775-1783, Continental Army, 2nd Virginia Regiment <https://revolutionarywar.us/continental-army/virginia/>)

John was captured in the devastating capture of Charleston, South Carolina, and later escaped. Edward Jr. possibly shared the same experience, having escaped the fate of the other 5,266 prisoners captured at the time — many of whom perished on the notoriously



Library of Virginia Chancery Records, Cumberland County, VA, Judith Robinson vs Edward Robinson, Cause 1776 -015

After surviving the harsh winter at Valley Forge from December 1777 to June 1778, the Continental Army emerged from their winter quarters with renewed vigor. They had spent

deadly prison ships of the British Army. Edward Jr. died in 1826 before the Pension Act of 1832, so we will never know for sure. The capture of Charleston effectively wiped out the entire American Army in the South. The resilience and determination of Edward's sons, John and Edward Jr., in the face of such adversity is truly inspiring.

Edward Sr.'s other sons were of an age to have served in some capacity, whether in the militia or the regular army. At least one, Stephen (Matthew's 6th GGF), was paid for his militia service. This collective service of the Robinson sons in the militia is a testament to the unity and strength of the Robinson family during the Revolutionary War.

Edward contributed to the Revolutionary War by providing beef and grain to the army in September and October of 1781. On the tenth day of September, he provided two beef cattle weighing 525 pounds. His estate was reimbursed £6.11.1 (\$1,717.85 in today's currency) on 1 August 1783. Edward subsequently delivered 38 1/4 bushels of wheat on 18 October 1781 and was paid eight shillings.

Edward's brothers, Joseph and Field, also contributed to the war effort in that manner. Field was reimbursed for fourteen bushels of wheat and Joseph for 350 pounds of beef.

History is silent on whether or not Edward and Judith reconciled. It is likely that they did, as the

Edward's wife, Judith, died on 12 November 1806 in Cumberland County, Virginia. A number of her sons and grandchildren had migrated to Tennessee by that time, giving birth to a host of Robinsons leaving a legacy of service to America in the coming generations. This legacy of service to the country, passed down through the generations, is a source

of pride and honor for the Robinson family descendants.

SOURCES

Cumberland County, VA Will Book 1, p 343, FamilySearch, FHL 007675920.

Cumberland County, VA Deed Book 1, p. 64-65, FamilySearch, FHL0078937

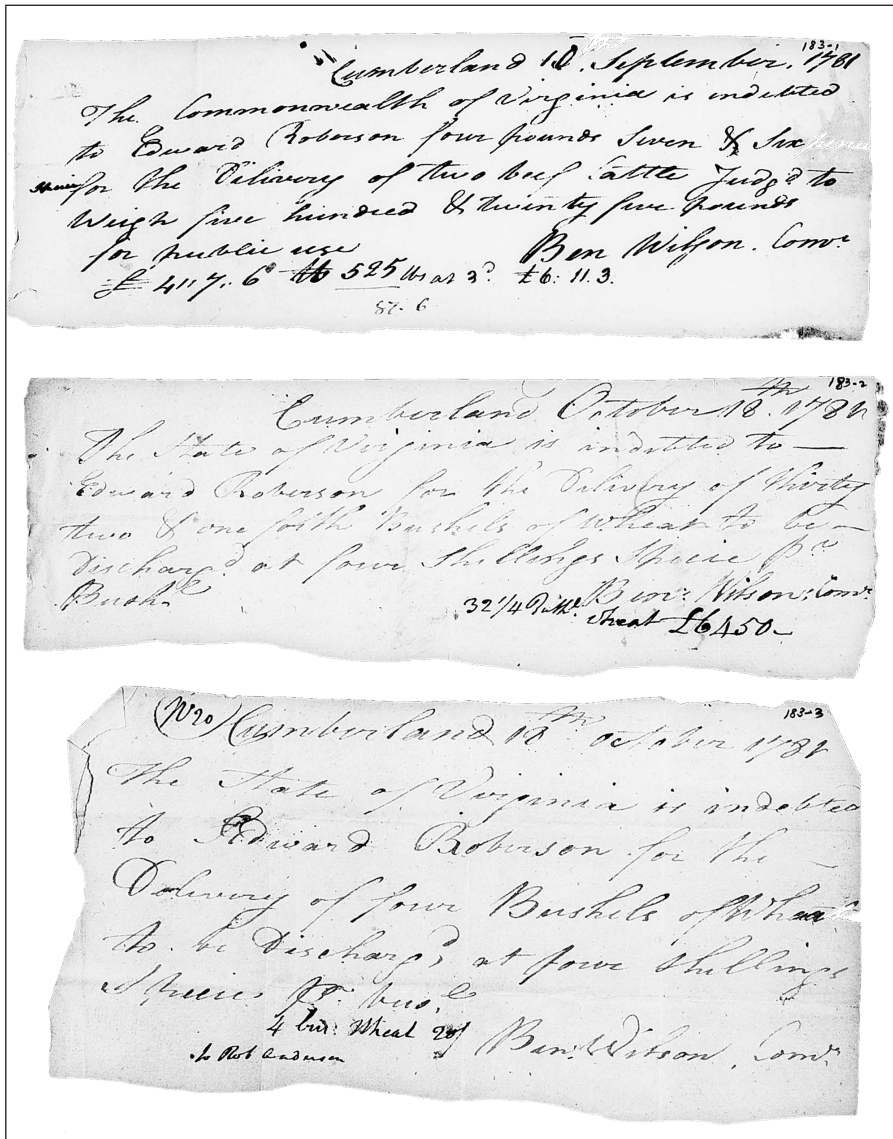
Roster of Revolutionary Soldiers in Georgia, p. 197, Mrs. Howard H. McCall, Ettie Tidwell McCall, Genealogical Publishing Com, 2010

Valley Forge Muster Roll <https://valleyforgemuster-roll.org/search-the-muster-roll/>

Tennessee State Library and Archives; Nashville, Tennessee; Early Tennessee/North Carolina Land Records; Roll: 4; Book: B-2, Ancestry.com

Ibid Cumberland County, VA Will Book 2, p 293

Cumberland Co, VA Will Book 3, p. 335, FamilySearch, FHL FHL007675921



Revolutionary War Public Service Claims, Cumberland County, VA, img 149-150, FamilySearch, FHL 008151644

civil suit was never prosecuted. Edward died intestate sometime before 28 January 1782. His estate was inventoried on that date. It included seventeen slaves and was valued at £1269.16.0 — about \$352,725.60 in today's money.



Purple Heart Recipient George Henry Gillard Jr- and the *USS Amberjack*

by Ponice Hartman - BCGHS Member

George Henry Gillard Jr was Ponice's Uncle

George Henry Gillard, Jr. was born in Dallas, Texas, on January 26, 1924, to George Henry Gillard, Sr. and Elsie Mae (Moore) Gillard. He was the third child out of eleven children born to Elsie and Henry. Shortly after his birth, the family moved to Hidalgo County in the Rio Grande Valley. They settled in the small community of Hargill about seven miles from Edinburg, the county seat of Hidalgo County. George attended school through the fifth grade. As Hargill only provided the elementary grades, continuing his education would require making his way to Edinburg to complete the upper grades. Because of lack of transportation or perhaps interest, George left school. George was born five years before the Great Depression began. This may also have led to him joining the workforce rather than continuing with his education. Times were definitely hard, especially if you had no land to grow your own food. The fact that the family had eleven mouths to feed at that time didn't help. (Only eleven at this point because Henry and Elsie's first child had died from gastric enteritis when he was eighteen months old and the last child had yet to be born).

George's father (who went by Henry either by choice or clarity's sake I do not know) was a mechanic by trade and taught his son the skills that would allow him to acquire a mechanic's job working

for James Spivey at his garage in Hargill. These skills also made him useful during his service in the war. At a time when it was essential to keep equipment up and running, George had a pair of willing hands and the knowledge and skill that he had learned from his father and on the job.

Most people who enlisted during this time were given this general rating. He was also designated as a V-6 which meant he was a volunteer and was classified for General Service and Specialists. During training camp the skills and capabilities of each recruit were evaluated and a new rating would be given based on performance and need of the navy.



George Henry Gillard Jr, Img Courtesy of Ponice Hartman's private collection

United States Navy Reserve (USNR)

The United States Navy Reserve (USNR) members were just what the name implies — they are being held in reserve until needed. As the need was great at the beginning of the war, these young patriots were brought into service with as little as three weeks training and then transferred to active service. The USNR originated during the Revolutionary War when citizens took to the seas in their own vessels to battle the greatest naval power of the time. When World War II erupted on September 1, 1939, the Naval Reserve was again ready. By the summer of 1941, virtually all

The Beginning of Military Patrol Registration

of its members were serving on active duty, their numbers were destined to swell when Japanese planes roared out of a clear blue sky over Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Navy reserve sailors from Minnesota aboard the *USS Ward* fired the first U.S. shots of World War II by sinking a Japanese mini-submarine outside the entrance to Pearl Harbor. Over the course of

On August 6, 1942, George Henry Gillard, Jr. enlisted in the United States Naval Reserve (USNR) at the Naval Recruiting Station (NRS) in Houston, Texas. He was given a rating of AS (Aviation Support) which meant he could be assigned to shore or sea duty.

the ensuing four years, the Navy would grow from a force of 383,150 to one that at its peak numbered 3,405,525 — the vast majority of them reservists, including five future U.S. presidents.

The mission of the Navy Reserve is to provide strategic depth and deliver operational capabilities to the Navy and Marine Corps team, and to the Joint forces, in the full range of military operations from peace to war. Reservists are called to active duty, or mobilized, as needed and are required to sign paperwork acknowledging this possibility upon enrollment in the reserve.

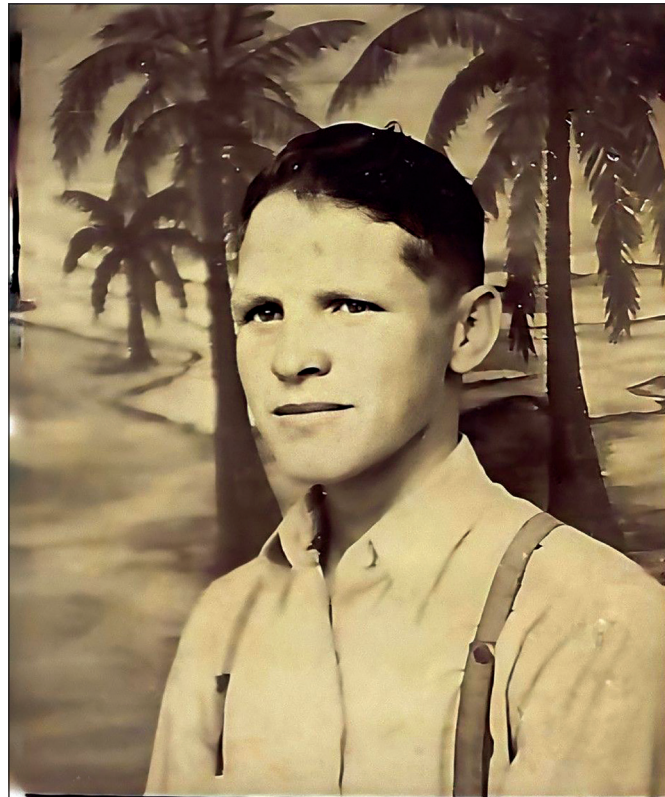
Volunteers, not conscripts

Upon his arrival at the United States Naval Training Station (USNTS) in San Diego, California, on August 10, 1942, George's branch was identified as USNR V-6 — meaning he was a volunteer and he could be used in any way that suited the Navy's need. The volunteer status of Navy recruits was not an exception. Despite the fact that there was an active draft system in place, the leaders of the Navy and Air Force opted not to use it and only to accept volunteers. In mid-1941, Congress authorized the draft, requiring all men aged 21-45 to register. By 1942, subsequent calls expanded the registration window to all men from age 18-66.

The Navy, though not resistant to having a draft, opposed using it for themselves. Nimitz testified in front of Congress that the service wanted to use their own quality standards, stating the needs of the Army and Navy were very different, and the Navy wanted to recruit a volunteer force. *"Neither the Army nor the Navy orders any man to fly,"* Secretary of the Navy, Frank Knox,

told Roosevelt in summing up the Navy's position. *"The same should be for duty in ships as no small part of the present high morale of the Navy is due to the fact it is entirely a volunteer force — a ship at sea is too small to maintain morale among men, some of whom may not wish to be there."*

The Navy's preference was to continue recruiting from all ages and leaving the draftees to the Army. The Navy, Knox told Roosevelt, would postpone taking draftees as long as possible — and



George Henry Gillard Jr, age 16mg Courtesy of Ponice Hartman's private collection

avoid it altogether if possible. The debate raged on for months, even after the attack on Pearl Harbor. It was Roosevelt — who was the assistant Secretary of the Navy during World War I and who took a personal interest in Navy affairs — who had the final word in whether the Selective Service law would apply to the Navy.

In writing to Secretary of War, Henry L. Stimson, in February

1942, Roosevelt noted the Navy had recruited half a million volunteer sailors during World War I. *"If the living conditions on board ship were similar to Army living conditions on land, the problem would be easier, but the circumstances of Naval Service being such as they are, I feel that it is best to continue the present system at this time,"* said Roosevelt. Roosevelt didn't close the door entirely, stating, *"we cannot predict personnel needs of the Navy during the balance of the war ... I think it best not to take up the matter again until the problem is a little different or until the Navy should run short of men received through the enlistment process."*

Early in the war, the Navy's projected growth was to a total end strength of 480,000 by 1946. In reality, by the end of 1945, the service would reach nearly 3.4 million. As a result, the numbers show the majority of those who served in the Navy during the war were volunteers and not conscripts. None of that was on the horizon during the fall of 1941 as recruiting became tougher by the month, and Nimitz began to rethink his selective service decisions. As a result, the final tally for November 1941 came to just 7,257 — far below the numbers needed.

However, it took only a couple of hours on December 7, 1941, to flip that dynamic back the other way. The Japanese surprise attack sunk five battleships and damaged another four while killing nearly 3,500 Americans and wounding thousands more. By the end of December, nearly 42,000 recruits

had joined the Navy, and officials were calling it a "recruiting bonanza." In January, that number was 59,522. By the time June rolled around, the groundswell of recruits had reached nearly 200,000. And the Navy didn't look back. By the time the war ended in August of 1945, the Bureau of Naval Personnel had recruited, trained, and sent off to fight a total of 3,546,179 officers and enlisted personnel needed to crew the over 1,200 combatant ships the service ended up putting to sea. Both were numbers no one envisioned as possible in early 1942.

Enlistment

After the attack on Pearl Harbor, young George — like so many other young Americans — rushed to the aid of their country. Family lore has it that he lied about his age in order to be able to enlist. While it may be true that he registered before his eighteenth birthday, he did not actually enlist until August after he turned eighteen in January. It is possible that George, Jr. and his father registered together. If that is the case, the date on George, Sr.'s registration card is January 14, 1942. There was not a date on George Jr.'s card. If George Jr. registered the same day, which seems likely, that would have been twelve days before his eighteenth birthday and possibly the source of the belief that he lied about his age. As he was not yet of age he went back to work in Hargill with his employer, James Spivey, as a mechanic until he

was finally able to report to the recruiting station in Houston to actually enlist on August 6, 1942. On August 10, 1942, just four days after enlistment, he was at the USNTS in San Diego, California.

Training and First Assignments

One month after arrival on September 10th, George received a change in rating. He went from V-6 to Sea 2c, (Seaman Second Class) according to the September

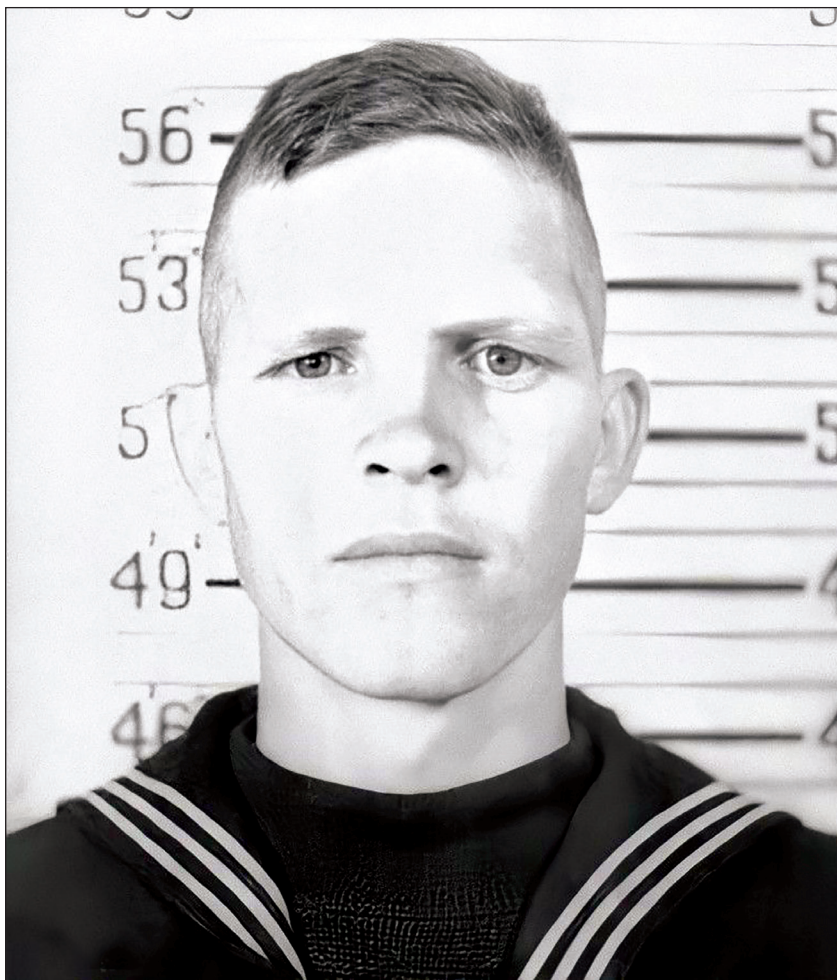
records were lost. As a result, his rating when he arrived at Pearl Harbor and was assigned to the tender ship *Fulton*, was back to AS V-6 and records were listed as not received according to the October 26th report. However, on a subsequent report on October 31st his rating was changed again on October 27 and listed as S2cV-6 even though his records were still listed as not received. This Report of Changes also indicated a transfer to the submarine *U.S.S. Guardfish* in October, 1942.

Military Patrol *U.S.S. Guardfish* (Flag CSD-82)

George joined the *Guardfish* on their second war patrol from October 25 to November 28. The *Guardfish* had just completed a highly successful mission and was now headed for the East China Sea and Formosa on this second war patrol. This mission was plagued with rough seas, monsoons, low visibility, damage received to the sub and its equipment due to the storms, and minimum contact with the enemy. These excerpts from the Final Report of Second War Patrol give us an idea of the conditions under which they sailed.

Weather:

- In general, very poor weather existed throughout the patrol.
- Encountered excellent weather en route to station, star fixes being obtained daily.



Fold3, George H Gillard, Jr (<https://www.fold3.com/memorial/664265486/george-h-gillard-jr> : accessed Sep 16, 2024), database and images, <https://www.fold3.com/memorial/664265486/george-h-gillard-jr>

30th Report of Changes record, P. 960. It also recorded George's transfer from the training station in San Diego to the Receiving Station in Pearl Harbor Territory of Hawaii (PHTH) as authorized by Command Service Forces for the Pacific effective September 29th. From this point on George's

- An extremely strong monsoon was encountered in the China Sea which lasted for 12 days. During that period the wind reached a velocity of as high as 40 knots, and it was impossible, due to the high seas, to conduct efficient visual patrol either on the surface or submerged during that period. Depth control was impossible at periscope depth for periods of over a few minutes. Navigational fixes obtained during this period were infrequent and sketchy. It was impossible during this storm to open either the hull or engine inductions. The engines took a suction through the Conning Tower hatch.

- Heavy seas and overcast skies were encountered approximately 65% of the period on station.
- The return trip to Midway was marked by inclement weather, high seas, and overcast skies. This led to some problems not usually encountered as is explained by this excerpt from the same report.

Health and Habitability:

- Health in general was good although the apparent vitality was considerably diminished during the latter half of the patrol, which may be attributed to three factors:
 - A protracted period of miserable weather,
 - Disappointment in lack of opportunity to get at the enemy coupled with effects of depth bomb attacks, and
 - Lack of fresh food continuing over a period of four months. Lack of physiological resistance at times necessitated removal of men

from the watch list on account of ailments which might otherwise have been considered minor. The commanding officer desires that all officers and men be given physical and dental examinations prior to next patrol. (This was underscored in the report.)

- Habitability of the vessel was good except during the 10-day period from October 22 to November 1 and on the return trip to Midway during which the outboard ventilation had to be secured due to rough weather.



Buka Passage is a narrow strait that separates Buka Island from the northern part of Bougainville Island, within the Autonomous Region of Bougainville of northeastern Papua New Guinea.

On those nights during battery charges, the sulfuric acid fumes in the living compartments reached a concentration that was both disagreeable and detrimental to the general health.

On her third war patrol, *Guardfish* moved her base of operations to the Truk area. *Guardfish* left Pearl Harbor on January 2, 1943, to patrol off the Japanese stronghold. She sank Japanese patrol Boat No.1 (the former destroyer *Shimakaze*) on January 12, 1943, west of Kavieng, and a 1,300 ton cargo ship the next day. The *Guardfish* was

attacked by the destroyer *Hakaze* on January 23rd, *Guardfish* sank her with a well-placed torpedo. Moving south toward Rabaul, she attacked a large convoy near Simpson Harbor, but was driven off by concentrated shore fire and escort attacks. *Guardfish* ended her third patrol by arriving at Brisbane, Australia, on 15 February 1943.

U.S.S. Amberjack (SS 219)

According to the *U.S.S. Guardfish's* January 31, 1943, Report of Changes, Gillard, George Henry #625 34 09; F3c V-6 was transferred to the *U.S.S. Amberjack* on January 22, 1943, and did not continue on with the patrol. According to the *U.S.S. Amberjack's* January 24, 1943, Report of Changes, Gillard #625 34 09; F3c V-6 was indeed transferred to the *U.S.S. Amberjack* on January 22, 1943, but as Sea2c. Once again his records were not received.

Amberjack had just completed her second war patrol on January 1, returning to Brisbane, Queensland, for a refit after safely concluding her patrol.

Following this patrol, the submarine's period of the refit was cut to twelve days due to the urgent need for submarines to patrol enemy-infested waters. She got underway on January 24, but was forced to return to Brisbane for repair of minor leaks which developed during a deep dive. Again departing Brisbane on January 26, *Amberjack* started her third war patrol in the Solomons

area with George on board. On January 29, she was directed to pass close to Tetipari Island and then proceed to the northwest and patrol the approaches to Shortland Basin. Orders were radioed on February 1, for her to move north and patrol the western approaches to Buka Passage. Having complied with these orders, *Amberjack* made her first miles southeast of Treasury Island on February 1, and sank a two-masted schooner by gunfire twenty miles (32 km) from Buka the afternoon of February 3, 1943. At this time she was ordered to move south along the Buka-Shortland traffic lane and patrol east of Vella Lavella Island.

In a second radio transmission on February 4, *Amberjack* reported having sunk a 5,000-ton freighter laden with explosives in a two-hour night surface attack that date in which five torpedoes were fired. During this engagement, an officer was slightly wounded in the hand by machine gun fire. Chief Pharmacist's Mate Arthur C. Beeman, went to the bridge to assist the officer and was killed by machine gun fire.

On February 8, *Amberjack* was ordered to move to the west side of Ganongga Island and on February 10, she was directed to keep south of latitude 7°30'S and to cover the traffic routes from Rabaul and Buka Island to Shortland Basin. On February 10, *Amberjack* was assigned the entire Rabaul-Buka-Shortland Sea area and told to hunt for traffic.

The last radio transmission received from *Amberjack* was made on February 14. She related having been forced down the night before by two destroyers, and that she had recovered from the water and taken prisoner an enemy aviator on February 13. She was ordered north of latitude 6°30'S, and told to keep hunting for Rabaul traffic.

All further messages to *Amberjack* remained unanswered, and when, by March 10, she had failed to make her routine report estimating the time of her arrival at base, she was ordered to do so. No reply was received, and she was reported as presumed lost on March 22, 1943.

have sunk *Amberjack*. However, no final conclusions can be drawn, since *Grampus* was lost in the same area at about the same time. From the evidence available, it is considered most likely that the attack of February 16, sank *Amberjack*, but if she did survive this attack, any one of the attacks and sightings thought to have been made on *Grampus* might have been made on *Amberjack*. The last official word on George was the final Report of Changes for the *U.S.S. Amberjack (SS219)*. On the top half of the page are as usual the names, service numbers, and ranks of all who were on board. The bottom half which always indicated

the changes to be made simply listed the branch of service for each member and these words: *Missing In Action 3-22-43; Changed to Presumed Dead 3-23-44.*

On many of the sites I researched for this article, George's rank and even birth date are listed incorrectly. In some reports he is listed as S2c, others as F2c. His birth month is sometimes cited as February rather than January.

However on this final report, George Henry Gillard, Jr. was acknowledged as a member of the United States Navy Reserve with a rating of F3c (Fireman third class). At last his record has been received!

Memorials and Awards

- The seventy-two members of the crew each were awarded the Purple Heart.

- They have been memorialized at Tablets of the Missing at Manila American Cemetery, Manila,



Reports received from the enemy after the war record an attack which probably sank *Amberjack*.

On February 16, 1943, Japanese torpedo boat *Hiyodori* and Sub Chaser *Number 18* attacked a U.S. submarine with nine depth charges at about 5°05'S 152°37'E. An escorting patrol plane had previously attacked the submarine. A large amount of heavy oil and "parts of the hull" came to the surface. This attack is believed to

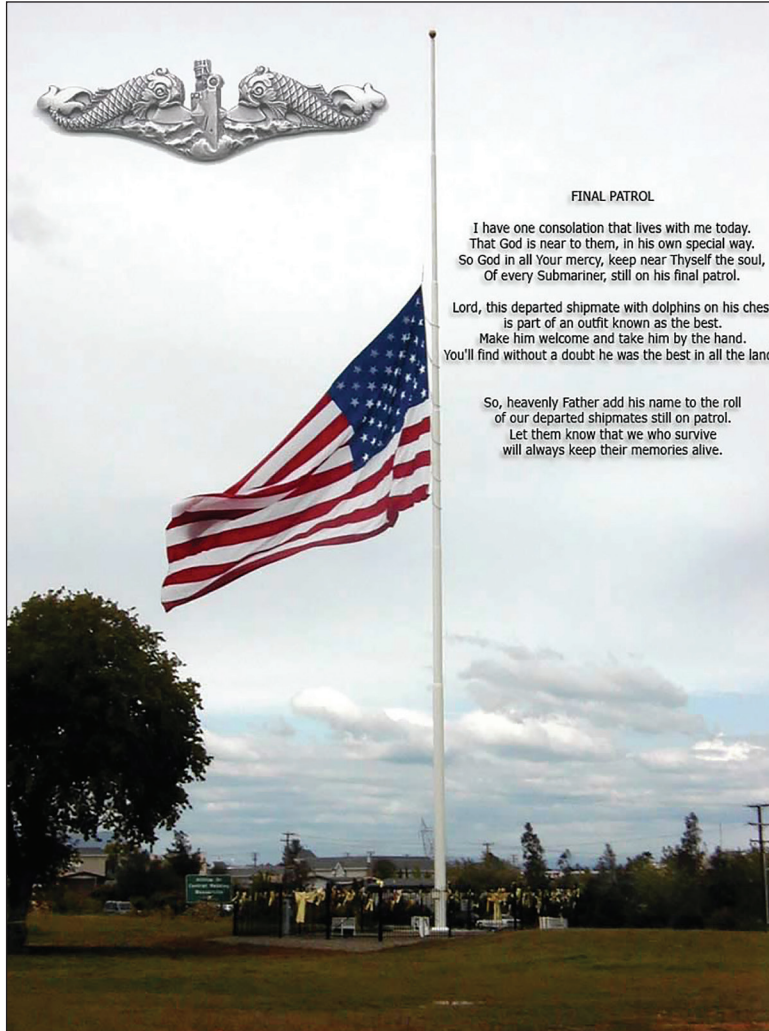
Philippines. This is an American Battle Monuments Commission location.

- Memorial plaques have been placed in the Memorial Courtyard of the National Museum of the Pacific War in Fredericksburg, Texas, as well as Pearl Harbor Naval Base.

- George, as well as probably all the others, have a military marker in his hometown cemetery placed beside his parents. His status as an MIA and Purple Heart recipient from World War II is inscribed on the stone.

George's life for the first seventeen years was much like many others who struggled through the Depression, but he took his role as big brother seriously. According to my mother who was nine years his junior, she has memories of George spending time with his younger siblings, joining them in outside games and activities, and rescuing them from trees they had been brave enough to climb, but too afraid to come down. One of her favorite memories was that once George started working, he always bought some kind of trinket for each of his younger siblings at Christmas. The reason she liked this memory so much is that George always made hers extra special. Whether it was because of a special connection she seemed to cherish throughout her life or the fact she shared George's January birth month or the fact that her birthday, January 1, was close to Christmas and a holiday in its own right — she was not sure. She just knew he always made sure she felt special.

The day that the family found out that George was missing and presumed lost, Mother was ten. They were notified with a telegram from Western Union. It was devastating to her and cast a shadow over the remainder of her life. We had a picture of him that always adorned a place of honor. I would occasionally see her gazing at it, sometimes with tears and sometimes with a smile. On his birthday, she would announce how old he would



have been. I often wished I could have known this uncle of mine that had obviously been so important in my mother's life.

Legacy

- The enlisted men's recreation center at Submarine Base, Pearl Harbor, is named for Chief Pharmacist's Mate, Arthur C. Beeman, who was killed in the gun battle of February 4, 1943.
- This vessel was credited with sinking three ships, for a total of 28,600 tons, and damaging two more ships for 14,000 tons damaged. *Amberjack's* first patrol was made in the Shortland-Rabaul-Buka area, as her last was.

During this first patrol conducted during the last half of September and the first half of October 1942, she sank a freighter, a transport and a large tanker of 19,600 tons. In addition she damaged a freighter and a transport, and made a valuable reconnaissance of several islands in her area. The second patrol of this vessel was in the area west of Bougainville. Although several attacks were made, no damage was done to the enemy. On the basis of her radio report, *Amberjack* was credited with having sunk a 5,000-ton freighter on her final patrol.

SOURCES

1DDSS Form 1 – Registration card
2Navy Reserve Official Site Archived 13 May 2020 at the Wayback Machine

3Midway, Momentum, and Manpower – the Navy's Bureau of Personnel in World War II. From MC1 Mark D. Faram, Chief of Naval Personnel Public Affairs

4"U.S. Navy Veteran Online Memorial / TWS Roll of Honor



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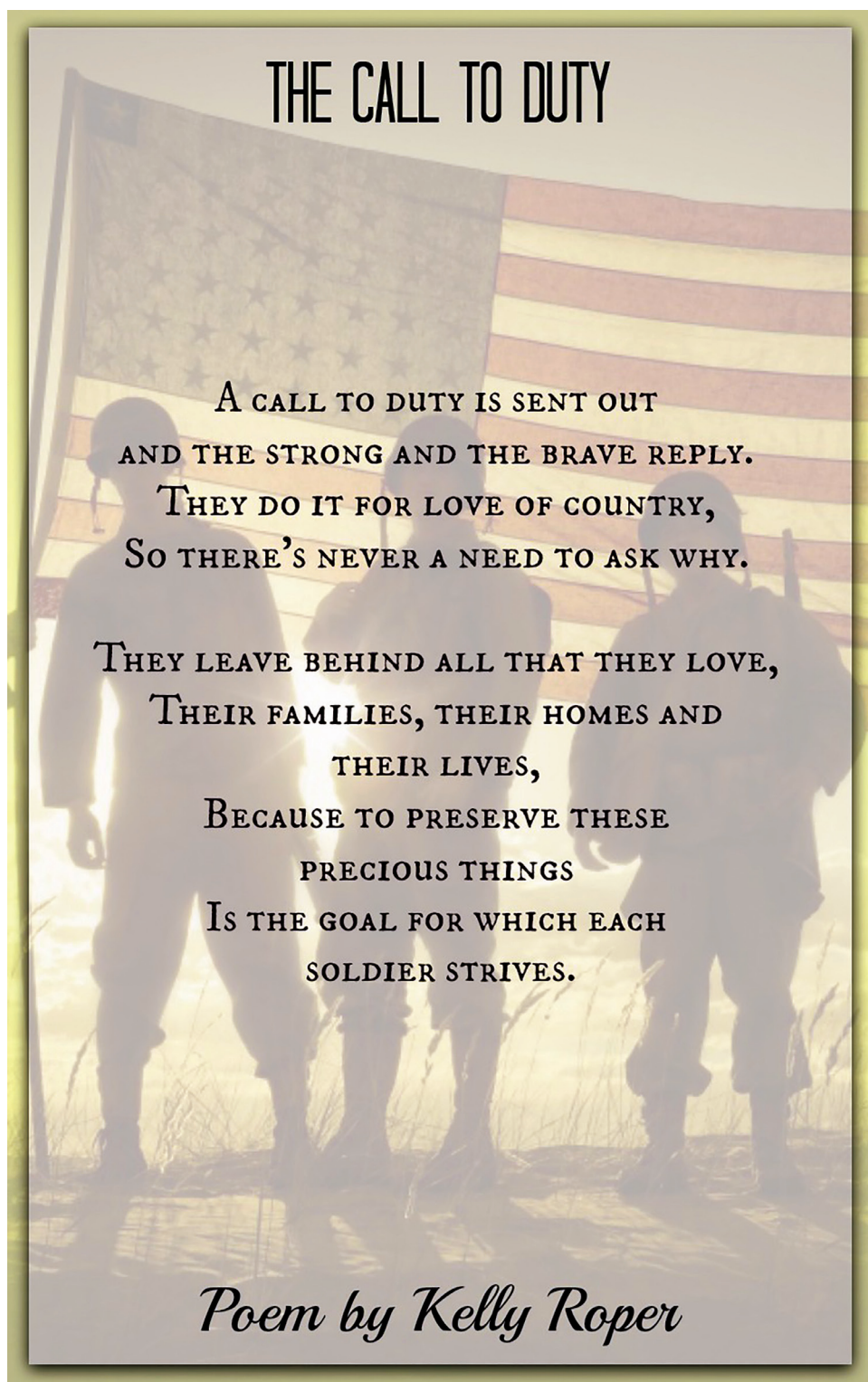
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This Issue Dedicated to the Memory of Those Valiant Sailors Lost at Sea on Board the USS Amberjack on 16 February 1943



Submarine Warfare Insignia (Dolphins)

U.S.S. Amberjack (SS-219)

Name	Rate	Name	Rate
Allmon, Mervin W.	MoMM1	Jewell, Thomas E.	CSM
Baker, William A.	RM3	Kingston, Francis P.	MoMM2
Banister, Paul S.	MoMM2	Koreyva, Victor J.	MoMM1
Barr, Luther V.	F1	Lester, Robert L.	S2
Bartoli, Renato	S1	Levesque, Raymond A.	EM2
*Beeman, Arthur Castles	CPhM	Lewellyn, James E.	ENS
Blauvelt, R.P.	LT	Lord, H. S.	LTJG
Bole, John A.	LCDR-CO	Lucas, Joseph B., Jr.	MoMM2
Bolze, John F.	FC1	Macy, Marvin R.	RM2
Brant, Harold J.	SC2	Massey, Arthur R.	MA2
Brossy, Henry E.	LCDR-XO	McDaniel, Ray	S1
Brousseau, Maurice J.	S2	McLean, Robert A.	TM1
Buchan, Wilson N.	EM1	Montague, Wallace	MA1
Cacciato, Diego, Jr.	TM3	Muir, Charles R.	CTM
Caldwell, Leland J. D.	S2	Ogilvie, Harold B.	TM2
Chaffin, Elmer E.	F2	Ouzts, Cleveland M., Jr.	MoMM1
Cheney, John F.	LT	Pavlin, Bruce R.	EM2
*Chrzan, Raymond J.	TM3	Pisarski, Henry	F1
Clark, Benjamin L.	TM1	Ranger, James A.	RM2
Coleman, James L.	GM2	Rakytka, John G.	S1
Coultas, William E.	MoMM2	Runkowski, Chester L.	TM3
Davis, Edward S.	S1	Ryall, Lewis R.	MoMM1
Davis, Le Roy C.	EM3	Sallee, Coy K.	SC1
De Groot, James	F2	Seidell, Daniel R.	ENS
Demler, A. M.	ENS	Smorol, Paul P.	F2
Ducharme, Donald	QM3	Spierer, Elwood R.	S1
Eastman, Alton G. H.	TM2	Springsteen, Chester A.	S1
Everett, Ernest J.	RT1	St. John, Francis T.	Y1
Gillard, George H.	S2	Stern, Richard G.	LTJG
Gosciniak, Thaddeus	MoMM2	Taylor, Henry A.	TM2
Hamilton, John W.	MoMM2	Thurman, Irby H.	F1
Henderson, Lloyd G.	EM2	Tobin, William J.	EM2
Hiatt, Don L.	EM3	Trask, Paul B.	TM2
Hill, William M. O.	F2	Ullstrom, John H.	S2
Jackson, Vernon T.	MoMM2	Ward, Alonzo G.	EM3
James, Homer E.	EM2	Wilson, Eldon I.	F3
Jeter, William L.	SM3	Winqvist, Henry C.A.	CMoMM

Note: *Beeman and *Chrzan were mistakenly included on this list of casualties when the Amberjack sank.

*Beeman was killed by returned gunfire during a surfaced battle in an earlier action on the same patrol while going to the aid of an injured officer, February 4, 1943;

*Chrzan was transferred off the boat on 26 January 1943 and survived the war.