

# The Foothills View

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## Discovered Tin Ore Here

# The Personal War And Victory Of Bobby Patterson

## A Veteran's Day Interview

Bobby Patterson may one day make the history books as the man who picked up a creekbed rock on his family's Cleveland County land and started the nation's first tin rush.

Since Patterson's find, the Billiton Corporation, a Netherlands-based subsidiary of Shell Petroleum, has bought exploration rights this month from several property owners between Shelby and Boiling Springs. The lure is the ore cassiterite, the source of tin. Further study of the Flint Hill community site where Patterson found that first rock last year has turned up 64 minerals in the top two feet of soil, he says; many are marketable, and, Patterson adds, "some valuable."

But there is no rush on Patterson's part to exploit the find. "No contract has been signed," he says. "We want to be sure about the environmental part."

"We don't want to do something that'll make enemies of our neighbors. There are quite a few older people out here. . . . Suppose someone comes in and digs down 1500 feet. Suppose it fouls somebody's well, or interferes with the water supply. People can't live on a place without good water. You don't want to run your neighbor out. There's more to life than money."

It's not the first time Bobby Patterson's convictions have run against the grain of self-interest. Now 51 and retired, he was working at Dover Textiles when he was 20 — "My mother's health was never good. I dropped out of school to help my dad" — when he decided to volunteer for the Marines and go to the Korean War.

"It was when the Chinese came into it," he says; he thought it over, his country was out-numbered, and it became Bobby Patterson's personal war.

"Look, I don't want publicity about this," he says. "The reason I don't talk about it is because I want to forget it. . . ."

The boxes of medals are dusty, the letters of commendation are yellowed when he brings them forth, reluctantly. There are three carefully-refolded telegraphs to his wife Nancy that begin, "We regret to inform you. . . ."

For each of them there is a long-unopened box with a purple heart.

Another case holds — among others — the Asiatic-Pacific medal, Marine good-conduct medal, the Korean medal for field action with two stars. There is a picture of him with several other men and women in uniform, posing on the deck of the presidential yacht Williamsburg. "Here's a letter from the president, inviting me to cruise the Potomac on his yacht," he says off-handedly, sharing a message from Dwight D. Eisenhower. "It turned out he couldn't go with us that time, but we did cruise the Potomac."

Certainly something had led up to that. The link was another yellowed paper, a letter from Patterson's commanding general in Korea. "When the reinforced squad of which he was a member was subjected to a heavy mortar concentration, followed by an attack of platoon strength, he unhesitatingly left the cover of his bunker in search of more effective fields of fire," the com-



A gentle man, Patterson (above), practices the healing hobby of tree grafting (below) for over 20 years after his wounding in Korea.



mentation said.

"In an effort to repel the enemy assault, he stationed himself on top of a bunker and from this exposed position, he brought devastating fire to bear on the enemy troops. . . ."

Bobby Patterson, then squad leader, remembers it in simpler terms. "We were out-numbered about 20 to 1. It was my squad that was out there. Oh, yes, it was night; the Chinese never hit us in the daytime; I just took my Browning automatic rifle. . . . When it got daylight there were 23 Chinese on the ground, in front of me. There were two of our 14 men left alive, Donald Wayne Vaughn and me. . . ."

He and Vaughn, who now lives in Texas, are still fast friends, he says.

He had come home from boot camp in April, 1952, and married Nancy McMurray of Polkville. When he had to leave, soon after the wedding, it would be a full year of bad news and anxiety before she would see him again. When she did see him, in April of 1953, he was learning to walk again, wounded in the legs and back. Before receiving these injuries, Patterson had healed from earlier wounds to return — at his request — to his unit in Korea. This time there would be no going back.

"It took 368 stitches to put me back together again," Patterson remembers. "That was outside; I don't know what they did inside."

No, was the pain over. Long after he was back working at Dover again, deterioration of injured bones required repeated surgery. "I worked all the time during all these operations," he says. "Dover is one of the best companies to work for. Mr. Charles I. Dover is one of the best men that there are. I never worked anywhere else."

An avid reader, Patterson meanwhile bought and read four whole encyclopedias, and got his G.Ed. from Cleveland Technical School.

He and Nancy raised and college-educated three daughters of their own and assumed foster parenthood of another daughter. There are five grandchildren, with another due soon.

"I was determined that when I came back home that I was going to get ahead and stay ahead honest," Patterson says. "I knew I had to make all the money I possibly could. I knew I would have children that would need an education."

"My daddy and mother gave me more than most people give their children — they gave me a sense of responsibility. My grandmother was a Cherokee Indian. She told me, when I was a little boy, 'Son if you make a dollar, save a quarter. If you can't save a quarter, save a dime.' I done what my grandmother told me, all the time I was working. Now I'm not beholdng to no man."

"One of my ancestors lost his leg at Kings Mountain," Bobby Patterson says, folding and refolding the trophies of his personal war. "I wasn't drafted to go to war — I volunteered and went. My primary reason for going was to defend what my forefathers fought for, before me. This is my country. . . ."

## Area Honors

### A Day For Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving appears to have come early for area students who were named to the honor rolls at Crest Junior and Senior High schools, and for a Boiling Springs man who received a prestigious scholarship.

Ninth grade: Sally Bivens, Barry Cabiness, Greg Dover, David Epley, Mark Greene, Elizabeth Hicks, Nicole Martin, Connie Mayhew, Phonda McBride, Anna Packard, Phil Philbeck, Noel Norman Sweezy, Leslie Williams.

All As for the 10th grade at Crest Senior Elementary School. Tammy Allen, Sandra Castles teaches Sunday School for the deaf in Boiling Springs and have two children who attend Boiling Springs Elementary School. Bailey, Christie Brabham, Bruce Cabiness, Emily Jones, Beth Lamb, Lynn Lavender, Lori McSwain, Chris Melton, Angela Morrison, Caleb Nolley, Robert Queen, Mike Rabb, Patti Rollins, Craig Scruggs, Mark Smith, Brad Stamey, Beth Towery.

Others named to academic honors were Bobby Allen, Lisa Bowen, Melissa Mathews, Renee Melton, Jeff Owens.

Eleventh grade: Bobby Allen, Lisa Bowen, Melissa Mathews, Renee Melton, Jeff Owens.

Twelfth grade: Carmen Creach, Susan Greene, Derek Greene, Kim Hipps, Lana Jolley, Mary Lamb, Robert Lamb, Deana Latham, Susan Lavender, Eric Jimmy Lovelace, David McCoy, Becky Proctor, Pam Rollins, Suzanne Sanford, Robert Thomas Burton, Tracy Weaver, Lisa Willis.

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The spaghetti supper is sponsored by the school PTA. Food will be served between five and eight p.m. Tickets are three dollars for adults, and \$1.50 for children (age 12 and under).

## School's Out Food's On

The River Bend Junior Golf Association conducted its annual putting championship Tuesday, Oct. 19, at the River Bend Golf Club. The winners by age group and score are:

Benjie Sanders, age 10-11, score 42; Bryan Edwards, age 12-13, score 38; Caieb Nolley, age 14-15, score 36; Mike Cherry, age 16-17, score 33. Cherry was the overall putting champ. His score of 33 was three under par.

The Inside VIEW	
Billy Graham	Page 3
Extramarital sex seen by the light of Scripture is discussed in Dr. Graham's "My Answer."	
Public opinion on the same subject is also polled on page three; over half of women say "no" according to a recent survey.	
Boiling Springs News	Page 2
Flint Hill News	Page 3

## City Gets Up For Breakfast

The farm meets the city Nov. 15-19 in activities planned by county extension agents that include a farm tour for fifth graders from Shelby schools and a Farmer's Businessmen's breakfast at the county offices Nov. 23.

The breakfast will be sponsored by the Kiwanis Club, Federal Land Bank Association, and Ideal Credit Association. Farmers that wish to attend are asked to invite a businessman, and to notify the extension office on numbers to attend to help with meal planning.

Other activities in-

clude a farm equipment display at the Cleveland Mall, and a poster contest for the fifth grade tour participants.

Winners of the poster contest will each be awarded a share of common stock from a corporation operating in Cleveland County.

In other extension service news, county agents caution that cooler temperatures ahead signal that now is the time to prepare the garden for winter months ahead.

Agents recommend preparing the garden soil for next spring by first tilling the soil this winter



Jack Perry, second from left, of 1st Citizens Bank presents a check to Patti Whitaker, a member of the Crest FFA Poultry Judging Team. The bank

paid the team's expenses to the national judging contest in Kansas City, Mo. Other member are, left, Cameron DeBrew and, right, Kelly Gragg.