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Those of us who belonged to Crabby's gang in boyhood, down at Union Point, have been saddened by the death of Commander Thomas H. Davis, Jr., USN (ret.) in San Jose, Calif. He was 56.

A native of New Bern, he entered the Navy at the age of 19, and worked up through the ranks. He was a full commander upon retirement at China Lake Naval Ordnance Test Station after 26-1/2 years service.

Tom (unlike New Bern's alderman with the same name, no one ever called him Tommy) served in two wars as an aviation gunnery and ordnance officer, and taught at Technical Training schools in Jacksonville, Fla., and Memphis, Tenn.

When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, Davis was on a vessel that brought out survivors. He later served at Saipan. He was stationed in Japan at the outbreak of the Korean War and served three years with the Fleet Air Service Squadron.

Later, he was with the X-5 experimental squadron at Moffett Field and China Lake. During his long Naval career he not only earned great respect from those who were associated with him, but deep affection.

Almost 40 years have passed since he left his home town, never to return, but every youngster grown old who frequented Albert Crabtree's little machine shop in days of yore will agree he was one of the best natured kids you ever saw.

As for Crabby, he exerted a wholesome influence on Tom and every other boy who ever found joy in his company. A bow-legged little man in khaki colored cover-alls, he was a wizard at repairing all things mechanical, but particularly outboard motors.

His metal shop was on the Meadows property, near the intersection of South Front and East Front streets, along Trent River. There wasn't much in it except a work bench, a battered desk, an oil drum converted into a stove, and several folding chairs.

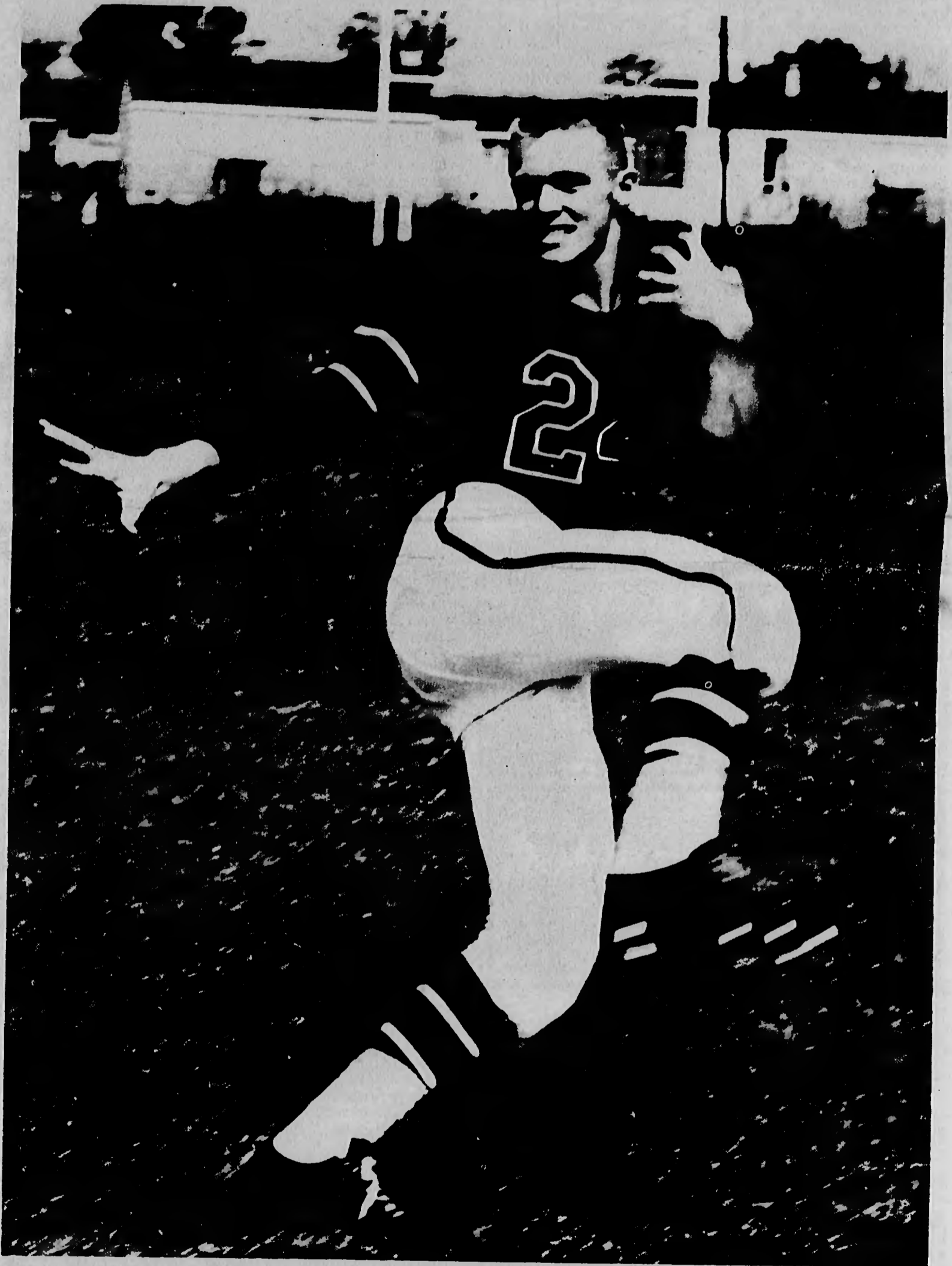
But thanks to Crabby, who came closer to being completely unselfish than any mortal we ever knew, those four walls embraced a veritable paradise for a group of juveniles that increased in number as the years rolled by.

Originally, the gang included Tom Davis, Charles (Shoot) Hall, Buzz and Johnny Mitchell, Reid and Andy Fuller, Harry, Bill and Robert Paterson, Bucky and Ecky Meadows, Gene McSorley, Jimmy Ketcham, Bill Gwaltney, Earl Harper, Dan Wiggs, and this editor.

Later, when Crabby used his own limited money to convert an abandoned warehouse on the river into a recreational spot complete with dock and diving board, the Union Point Club was formed. However, at the outset the aforementioned comprised what was known all over town as "Crabby's gang."

There were no official meetings, no dues, no rules and no by-laws for the gang. Crabby never threw his weight around. The boys knew instinctively that their jovial benefactor would have tolerated no rough stuff,

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HE HAD IT—The will to win is what Coach Roger Thrift will be looking for tonight, when he sends his New Bern High School Bears into battle here against Goldsboro's 4-A Earthquakes. Few Bruins of the past displayed as much determination as Jean Earl Worthington, seen above at the time he was still piling up yardage in the Northeastern Conference. Following graduation from NBHS, he starred for the Catawba Indians in the North State Conference, and led the

loop in rushing. His dazzling runs earned him All-American honorable mention. What Jean Earl lacked in poundage, he made up in speed, stamina and scrappiness. Like every other local grinder of yesteryear who brought glory to New Bern High, he is pulling for victory on this September evening. The Bears are in no mood to be tamed by the Quakes in their season opener, and that could be the difference.