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\$1000 Reward Offered For Information On Missing Man

Friends and neighbors of Brooks Merritt, missing from his home in the Moulton Community since January 10, have posted a reward of \$1,027 for "information leading to the trial and conviction of anyone having committed physical harm to Mr. Merritt."

Merritt, 61, a bachelor living alone, was first reported as missing on Wednesday, January 15, according to Sheriff William T. Dement's office. The Sheriff's department and volunteers launched an extensive search of the area near the man's home but failed to turn up any clue as to his whereabouts. The Sheriff has since contacted hospitals in the area and friends and relatives of Merritt to determine if he might be visiting them without having mentioned his trip to neighbors.

Merritt is described as being about 5'10" tall and weighing around 135 pounds. When last seen he was reportedly wearing striped overalls.

The reward funds have been turned over to Clerk of Court Ralph S. Knott. Sheriff Dement released the announcement of the move by Merritt's friends and neighbors Wednesday. The test of the release follows:

"We, friends and neighbors of Mr. Brooks Merritt, being concerned, anxious and afraid that he has met with

foul play hereby offer above reward for information leading to trial and conviction of anyone having committed physical harm to Mr. Merritt.

Above reward to remain with Franklin County Clerk of Court for six months or until such time Mr. Merritt is found free of harm."



MERRITT



Check Reward

Franklin Clerk of Court Ralph Knott, left and Sheriff William Dement are shown above holding checks and cash totaling \$1,027 which is being offered as a reward by "friends and neighbors of Brooks Merritt", a Moulton Community white farmer who has been missing since January 10. The State Bureau of Investigation has entered the case to assist Dement's department in the mysterious disappearance. Staff photo by Clint Fuller.

Perkinson Renamed Rescue Chief

(Frk. B.W.) The monthly meeting of the Franklinton Rescue Service was held last Friday evening at the newly acquired rescue building on Main Street.

The following officers were elected: Chief, A. J. Perkinson; Asst. Chief, James Payne; Captain, Kenneth Peterson; Lieutenant, Robert Ayscuse; Secretary-Treasurer, Wilson Gupton.

Records show that they made 212 calls during 1968 an increase over the first year. There are now 14 members in the local rescue service which is completely voluntary.

Recently four new members joined. They are Bobby Ray, Bob White, Rudolph Bridges and John Bridges. The local rescue service expressed their gratitude to the Franklinton Lions Club and to the people in Franklinton for their help in raising the money for the rescue building.

NC 39 Set For Bids Next Week

Bids are to be received by the State Highway Commission Tuesday of next week, January 28, on rebuilding a section of NC 39 highway east from Henderson, the Vance Board of County Commissioners has been advised. A similar stretch of NC 39 in Franklin County is to be considered in bids received that day.

Because of rising costs and lack of funds for the entire project from Henderson to Louisburg, only sections of the road will be let to contract at this time, it was explained. Highway officials met with the commissioners last Thursday and explained the reason for being unable to build the entire road.

Bids to be received Tuesday will cover 1.7 miles in Vance County east from the city limits from Andrews Avenue to a point north of Gillburg. It had been hoped 2.7 miles of road could be let from the \$600,000 allotted Vance County from the \$300 million State highway bond issue, but mounting costs will make this impossible now.

Meeting with the commissioners were Merle T. Adkins, division engineer, and W. F. Adkins, district engineer. The board had requested the meeting in order to learn details of the project and not to complain of the reduction in the amount of work that could be done at this time.

Franklin County's allocation for that portion of NC 39 from the State bond issue was \$750,000. Slightly more of NC 39 from Henderson to Louisburg is in Franklin County than in Vance, which accounts for the difference in funds.



HAL F. HUMPHREY

Humphrey Is Promoted

Fort Stewart/Hunter Army Airfield, Georgia, January 15, 1969 - Command Sergeant Major Hal F. Humphrey has been named Center Sergeant Major of the U. S. Army Flight Training Center, Fort Stewart/Hunter Army Airfield, Georgia.

Sergeant Major Humphrey, who, in this capacity, is the highest ranking enlisted man at the Fort Stewart/Hunter complex. Previously, he served as Army advisor to the 5th Battalion, 113th Artillery, 30th Infantry Division, North Carolina National Guard, Louisburg, North Carolina.

He recently returned from Vietnam where he served as Sergeant Major of the 54th Artillery Group from 1966 to 1967.

As Center Sergeant Major, Humphrey will serve as enlisted advisor to the Command Sections on matters of health, welfare and morale of enlisted personnel.

A native of Clark, North Carolina, Sergeant Major Humphrey began his military career in 1946. He was ordered to active duty with the 690th Field Artillery Battalion in New Bern, North Carolina, in 1950. He spent the next five years as a First Sergeant and

Sergeant Major with the 690th at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, and in Germany. During this period he attended the Seventh Army Non-Commissioned Officers' Academy.

From 1955 to 1956 Humphrey was See HUMPHREY Page 8

A Franklin County airman, who gave his life in Vietnam rather than risk injury to a group of people standing on a runway at the airfield, has been honored by the U. S. Army. The Link Trainer Building at Ft. Wolters, Texas, home of the U. S. Army Primary Helicopter School, has been renamed the Bennett Gay Wilder Building.

The Wilder Building houses the link trainer used to teach pilots to fly by instrument.

Wilder, 38, at the time of his death in the crash of a helicopter in Vietnam on September 29, 1967, was a 1949 graduate of Edward Best High School. He was the son of the late Henry A. (Fay) Wilder and Mrs. Lena Gay Wilder, who now lives in the Seven Paths Community of Franklin County.

Wilder's wife, Mrs. Elizabeth Austa Roth Wilder unveiled the plaque denoting the new name of the building in ceremonies at the Army base recently. Col. Lloyd G. Huggins, U. S. Army Helicopter School Commander also participated in the ceremonies.

Wilder was born September 5, 1929 and entered the Army in 1949. He served in five Korean War campaigns and received his wings and promotion to Chief Warrant Officer in December, 1956. At the time of his death, he was a Senior Army Aviator, qualified in both rotary and fixed wing aircraft. He had expressed a desire to fly while a student at Edward Best. He was killed on his second duty tour of Vietnam. He served at Ft. Wolters from 1965 to March, 1967 as assistant airfield operations officer. He arrived in Vietnam in July, 1967, as a part of the Army's U-21 New Equipment Test Team. He had served two tours in Germany, where he met and married his wife.

Among the special assignments given Wilder during his career as an Army pilot were flights by the late President John F. Kennedy to Paris, President Dwight Eisenhower to Por-

State Expected To Give Aid To Franklin

Attorneys Set Feb. 4 As Deadline In Case

The State Attorney General's office is expected to offer some assistance to the beleaguered Franklin County Board of Education in its latest skirmish with the United States Department of Justice. School officials, meeting for an hour with Attorney General Robert Morgan and assistant Attorney General Ralph Moody Tuesday afternoon, reported the meeting as "fruitful." Beyond this, however, locals are awaiting a statement by the Attorney General as to the degree of participation by the State.

Board attorney E. F. Yarborough, Board Chairman Horace Baker and Vice Chairman Clint Fuller conferred in Raleigh on behalf of the Board and asked that the State enter the total

Jury Excuses To Be Heard

Judge Linwood Peoples will be here to hear jury excuses for the February 3 term of District Court on Friday, January 24, according to Clerk of Court Ralph S. Knott. Peoples will be in the courtroom between the hours of 10 A.M. and 12 Noon, Knott said.

Youths Held For Break-Ins

Three juveniles have been arrested by Franklin Sheriff William T. Dement in connection with three break ins at Jasper Parrish's Store at Oswego on NC-561. The names of the suspects are being withheld but it was learned that two of the boys are 14-years-old and the third is eleven. Two live on Louisburg, Route 2, and the other lives on Rt. 1, Castalia. All three are Negroes.

The trio is expected to be charged with robbery of the Parrish store on January 10, 17 and 18. Dement says they will be turned over to District Judge Linwood Peoples, who serves as Juvenile Judge. Some of the merchandise, consisting of small items, such as knives, cigarette lighters and candy, was recovered, according to Dement.

case. The trio pointed out that two charges in the latest line directly affect every school system in the State.

Indications are that the Attorney General will join in to defend the 1958 ruling by his office, which prohibits children whose parents live outside the district from attending schools in the district. There is the possibility that the department will also join in efforts to defend the method of classroom assignments used by Franklin County. The method, which uses the "California Reading Test", is nationally recognized and widely used in North Carolina. Should the federal government be successful in knocking down these two Franklin policies, every system in the state would be affected, according to Board attorneys.

DEADLINE SETTING IS ROUTINE

Meanwhile an agreement has been reached by Board attorneys and attorneys for the original plaintiffs to have February 4 as the deadline for all three papers filed recently against the Board.

Attorney E. F. Yarborough disclosed this morning that he has successfully sought to have the one deadline. The February 4 date falls routinely as the twentieth day from the date of service of the charges by the Justice Department. Papers filed by the NAACP were sent to the wrong court resulting in a delay in them being served on the defendant Board. The filing of interrogatories by the plaintiffs, first of the three papers, would have had an earlier deadline without the agreement, said Yarborough. The consent agreement was delivered to Judge Algernon Butler, who signed it into an order. It had been erroneously reported that Butler had issued the deadline. Yarborough explained that the entire matter is routine in such cases. He did not discount the possibility that an extension might be requested in order to gain time for entry into the case by the State of North Carolina.

School Board members report a mounting deluge of calls from teachers, other school personnel and private citizens in support of the manner in which the schools have been

operated this year. Locals continue to express surprise at the latest charges, which have been branded as "untrue" by the Board in issuing an "emphatic denial" of charges of discrimination. Offers of money with which to pay Board member fines, as requested by the Department of Justice, have been coming in along with some offers by private citizens to serve some of the time. Should the Board be found in contempt, Board members have expressed their appreciation to all for these expressions of support.

There are three possibilities before the State Attorney General in the Franklin case, according to a reliable source. He can enter the case as Amicus Curiae a friend of the court as a party to the action, who volunteers some information and opinion upon some matter of law; or he may enter and become an Intervenor and thereby become a full party to the suit; or he may offer assistance in the form of legal help by his department.

The tuition question arose in 1958 when residents of Virginia attempted to send children to schools across the line while schools in their state were closed in defiance of integration. The ruling was "still adhered to" on September 4, 1968 in a letter to Franklin Clerk of Court Ralph S. Knott. It had also been reaffirmed in July of 1960 in an opinion to the Durham City School Board.

In essence, the one sentence states the position of the Attorney General's ruling. "I can find no statute authorizing the schools of this state to enroll pupils whose parents are domiciled in another state."

In regards to the situation where children are left with grandparents or other relatives while the parents reside outside the state, the ruling states, "It is my opinion that these children, or pupils, are not entitled to attend the public schools of this state."

The Franklin Board first set a policy of non-attendance by such pupils but due to the hardships involved last fall, altered the policy to one of tuition for this year only. Such children will not be eligible for the next school session under the Board's present policy.

Army Names Building In Honor Of Franklin Hero

tugal and Henry Cabot Lodge to Vietnam.

The crash which resulted in his death was called by his superior of-

ficers a "selfless and heroic act."

Special ceremonies were held at Edward Best High School on November 11, 1967, in honor of Wilder. They

were attended by his mother and a brother, Jimmy Wilder of Raleigh and a host of friends and relatives.



The Bennett Gay Wilder Building

Mrs. Elizabeth Austa Roth Wilder, widow of C. W. O. Bennett Gay Wilder, who was killed in Vietnam last September, is shown above following the unveiling of a plaque renaming the Army's Link Trainer building at Ft. Wolters, Texas in honor of the Franklin County native. Col. Lloyd G. Huggins, right, U. S. Helicopter School Commander, assisted in the ceremonies.

U.S. Army Photo.