

# BROWSING THE FILES



Jack Hall

## 75 Years Ago January 11, 1945

Mr. and Mrs. W.J. Deaton of Shannon were notified that their son, Sgt. Henry Erwin Deaton was killed in action in France on December 18. Sgt. Deaton was with a mechanized cavalry reconnaissance group. He was in the campaign in Africa when he first went overseas, then to Italy and then to the front in France. In his last letter to his family written on the day he died, he told them that he had received all the Christmas packages sent him by his family and friends, and that "everything was just exactly what he wanted." Sgt. Deaton is survived by his parents and a number of brothers and sisters. Two brothers are in the service. W.J. Deaton Jr. is now in France and Benton is on a submarine in the Pacific. He was a member of Red Springs Baptist Church and before his induction was employed by the Durham Rayon Manufacturing company.

Families of two Hoke County boys serving in Europe have received word within the past week that they were missing from actions against Germany.

Pfc. Clinton F. "Jack" Hall is the son of Mrs. Ada Hall and was serving in France. He has been missing since December 14.

S-Sgt. Daniel E. Chason, 29, son of Mr. and Mrs. J.A. Chason of Lumber Bridge has been missing since December 21. He has been in France since the early days of the Normandy invasion and participated in many of the battles across France and Germany, and was with the unit which forced the fall of Aachen.

Cpl. Edwin McNeill son of Mr. and Mrs. John K. McNeill of Raeford has been down in the South Pacific for about two years, and until the other day had not seen anyone from these parts. Working in the post office on Leyte, he was sorting mail when he heard a voice draw out, "Say boy, where to want

this mail sack?" When he turned around he recognized Pvt. Bobby Carter, son of Mr. and Mrs. R.L. Carter, formerly of Raeford and now of Portsmouth, Virginia. The two made hasty arrangements for a gabfest that night.

Pfc. Ralph "Baby" Cox of the U.S.A. Paratroops is a member of the 101 Airborne Division that replied "Nuts" to the Germans when asked to surrender at Bastogne. He has been awarded the Purple Heart and Presidential citation.

W.D. Brown has assumed the managership of Raeford Hardware Store, recently purchased by himself and others. F.B. Sexton, former manager who has been in that store for 42 years, will continue to be there for a while. Lindo Sexton is also to remain but Mrs. Sexton, who has been the efficient bookkeeper will not be in the store after this week.

About 50 farmers and businessmen met at the court house in Raeford Monday night to hear a discussion of freezers lockers by Dr. D.E. Brady from State college. Advantages of freezers was discussed. Those present were interested in establishing a locker here and decided to make a drive to sell at least 500. The War Production Board requires that farmer rent at least 300 of this number before they will issue a permit to build this plant. Each locker will be 6 cubic feet and hold from 200 to 250 pounds of meat, cut, wrapped and ready for use.

From Poole's Medley, by D. Scott Poole: "In January 1911, John W. Moore came to my printing office, then located in a frame building where the Upchurch Milling company now stands. Moore asked me to support a movement for a new county to be formed from parts of Robeson and Cumberland counties. He went on to say that Senator J.W. McLaughlin was in favor of the movement and that the Senator had discussed the proposition with Senator Neil Arch McLean from Cumberland, all of whom has assured him that they would not oppose the formation of a new county with Raeford as its seat. But the Senator had not reckoned with his hosts." The folks back home had not been consulted.

"I told Mr. Moore that I was

not favorable to such a battle as I knew would bring on. I recalled the fights over the creation of Lee and Scotland counties. About half the people of the state have fought the formation of each new county and the changing of boundaries...

"Being a county seat does not particularly help a town. Look at Wentworth—100 years old and about like Arabia. Then there was Troy. It stood for 80 years during which time probably not over a house per year was built. It takes payrolls to build a town. Nothing else does."

## 47 Years Ago January 11, 1973

A storm which began about noon Sunday buried Hoke County under approximately five and a half inches of snow. Bitter cold, freezing rain and sleet combined with snow to paralyze the county. The forecast for today was 50 percent chance of snow mixed with sleet and freezing rain with daytime lows in the 20s.

Peter B. Young, award winning former editor of The News-Journal is improving in a New Jersey hospital after fire gutted his house New Years night. His wife, daughter and mother-in-law died in the fire.

Two people were killed and four others injured when an Aberdeen and Rockfish train and a car collided at 3 p.m. Jan. 3 near the Farm Chemical Company in Dundarrach. All the victims were from the Duffie area. The driver of the car told the highway patrol trooper investigating that her brakes failed as she tried to stop at the crossing.

## 25 Years Ago

High winds swept through the county, damaging power lines and uprooting trees. Wind gusts from 60 to 100 miles per hour were reported to the National Weather Service. The News-Journal recorded a gust of 51 miles per hour.

Rockfish-Hoke Elementary School has a new greenhouse. Working with Hoke Rubber, a business partner, the school also installed a weather station and garden.

living Christmas card.

Steve and Connie are interested in the local homes, having been in the house market themselves, and they discussed the resale and renovation of many of them. Frank is up to speed on this and if he doesn't have his real estate license, he certainly should. The conversation was lively as we swung around by the Pine Crest Inn where I frequently perform, and back into the main business district where I have played hundreds of times in every business that has live music. The Drum and Quill got my vote for the most festive light show in the village.

We unloaded for pictures at a place with hanging mistletoe, designated as a photo spot on Carolina Vista. Shiloh seemed content to wait, munching on more carrots.

We entered the circle drive of the hotel, experiencing it in a new way. Hotel guests were exploring the features of the lawn, marveling at the festive decorations. We pulled up under the huge covered entrance, feeling like somebody! We exited the carriage like faux royalty, the immediate center of attention and envy of onlookers. We said our goodbyes to Frank and Shiloh and disappeared through the grounds to our car and reality; one experience richer than before.

More later.

# Brothers

(Continued from page 1)

the lines of "personals" that appeared 75 years ago in The News-Journal, you can feel the support, and the community's hope for her, and the brothers Eldred Howell Helton and Lawrence Lilburn Helton. Drafted so closely, trained together, stationed together, commissioned as pilots together, an inspirational story fit for the papers seemed to be developing. But in less than two years, one of the boys would be dead, the other a prisoner of war.

In the February 18, 1943 issue of The News-Journal there's a small story about Lawrence being named to the Honor Roll at Mars Hill College, where his mother worked as a hostess, a matron. A few columns over, there's another "personal" that reads, "Eldred Helton who has been attending State College, was called to report for active duty at Miami Beach, Fla."

In the coming weeks, the newspaper reported both boys were called up, sent to Miami, on to officers' candidate school in Slippery Rock, Pennsylvania, and then commissioned as pilots in Nashville, Tennessee. They trained (and briefly separated) in Alabama and Missouri. In February, 1944, the paper reported they were back together again and reporting to Moultrie, Georgia for final flight training and were hoping to graduate at the same time in the near future.

And so they did. In the March 9, 1944 issue, an article said the boys got their wings along with two other Hoke natives, William E. Plummer and Reed Childress. While Plummer and Childress were on leave, the Heltons were sent on to Arkansas, to Walnut Ridge Army Air Field where they were assigned jobs as flight instructors.

Walnut Ridge was a large airfield in northern Arkansas, built in 1942 to help meet the need for pilots. A published history of the site says the U.S. had gone from training 5,000 pilots each year to 100,000 during the war. Walnut Ridge contributed 5,310. During the 22 months war training was conducted there, however, 42 students and instructors were killed in accidents.

Barely three months after the Raeford boys graduated—on June 1, 1944—Lawrence was in a two-seat BT-13 trainer, flying with a student, and, according to the page, attempted a maneuver known as a Chandelle, a course reversal that has the plane banking 30 degrees to turn completely around while climbing. The French had used the technique in World War I in dogfighting, and generally it's considered safe. But because the maneuver leaves the plane just a few miles per hour over its aerodynamic stall speed—the point at which it basically drops from the sky—performing it at low altitude is risky. One-eighth of a mile south of Bono Auxiliary Field, the report says, "the plane, being flown by Lt. (Barto) Hay,



LT. ELDRED H. HELTON



LT. LAWRENCE HELTON

The Helton brothers from The News-Journal in 1944.

appeared to attempt a Chandelle at low altitude, which produced a stall, and the plane crashed and burned."

In the News-Journal June 8 issue: "Funeral services were conducted at 3 o'clock Monday afternoon at the home of his uncle and aunt, Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Tapp of Timberland, who occupy the home where the Helton family had lived. "A large concourse of friends from throughout the county attended the services, and the many beautiful flowers attested the high esteem in which this popular young flyer was held."

Within a few months, Eldred was sent to Lincoln, Nebraska, then on to Pueblo Colorado to complete training on a Liberator bomber. "He is the co-pilot on his crew, and is being fitted to be a valuable member of a 'team' that will carry the fight into enemy territory," the News-Journal reported in October.

The B-24 Liberator was a four-engine propeller-driven bomber. Its twin tail and rudders, and flat, square fuselage had its fliers calling it the Flying Boxcar. More

machine," a common sentiment among fliers. "The B-24 was something of a shock when I was handed the controls and asked to fly it in formation. Where with the B-17, you could feel a connection with your airplane through the seat of your pants, it was not so with the B-24...you had to keep your eyes on the gauges every minute. It was not a musical instrument, like the B-17, it was a soulless machine, like the Link Trainer, my old nemesis." Checking with fellow pilots, he wrote, he found consensus. "Like a boxcar with wings," they said. "Another nickname, earned because of design weaknesses that caused its wings to fold and fuselage fuel tanks to burst into flames when hit, and because it had a single exit in the rear of the plane that made bailing out hard to impossible, was "Flying Coffin."

Eldred Helton's and his crew's first combat mission was on December 17, 1944. But they were on different planes. The practice was to pair a seasoned pilot with a crew new to fighting, and so Helton was paired with Lt. Robert Galvan



BT-13 from Walnut Ridge Airfield. (Walnut Ridge Airfield photo)

than 18,000 were built, the most of any bomber. It could carry up to 8,000 pounds of bombs. One of its mainstay weapons was the .50 caliber machine gun. "I'm not a gun nut," Jamie Stowell was quoted as saying in an Air and Space Magazine article on the B-24, "but oh my God! It's just astonishing power." Says the magazine, "Nothing like the rat-tat rattle of movie machine guns, the fire-spitting Browning quakes the air and even the ground beneath your feet." There were 10 on a Liberator. One pilot, however, writing in a veterans newsletter, called the bomber a "soulless

and his experienced crew. Oliver Maggard flew with Helton's green crew on another B-24.

"The 461st took off (from Tortona, Italy) with 31 airplanes for the Odertal Synthetic Oil Works that was located in what now is southern Poland," writes Edward A. Kussler in an autobiography. He was bombardier onboard Helton's plane. Heavily protected by anti-aircraft guns, Odertal was one of three refineries where over 20 percent of Germany fuel was produced, according to "Blechnhammer," by Duane Bohnstedt. It and other refineries were by then (See BROTHERS, page 6)

# Riding with Shiloh around Pinehurst

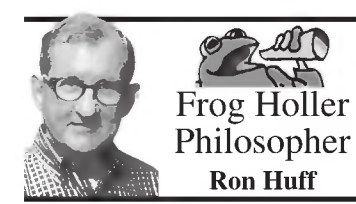
The Carolina Hotel was shining like a Christmas jewel as we arrived for our anniversary carriage ride. In addition to the large "Pinehurst" spelled out in thousands of small white lights on boxwood trimmed letters on the front lawn, there was an additional "Happy Holidays" spelled out in similar fashion. The view is magical as you approach the hotel on Carolina Vista, the beautiful signature lit dome crowning the impressive hotel building in its holiday glory.

Although born in Pinehurst, I missed this impressive sight for years in spite of driving within one block of it a million times on Route 5. I was probably 25 years old when I first saw it and the impact has lasted to this day. I would suggest that anyone who has not seen this spectacle drive in and around the circle drive of the hotel after sunset.

The interior of the hotel is perhaps as impressive during the holiday season. The halls are decked with boughs of holly and a lot more. We have seen this many times over the years but it is always awe-inspiring. Just park your car and walk in. It will be worth the time.

On this particular night, the hotel was simply a convenient place to rendezvous with Steve and Connie for a long-awaited carriage ride with Frank, the driver, and the beautiful horse Shiloh. This carriage has been a fixture in the village of Pinehurst for 40 years, yet, in all that time, I had never taken a ride. It is one of those things that we talk about often but never seem to get around to. On this, our 35th anniversary, we finally took the plunge.

Steve and Connie were there first and greeted us from the iconic front porch with its rockers and spectacular view of the lawn and entrance to the hotel. We joined them as we awaited the carriage. We watched as it slowly approached around the circle drive, stopping at the hotel entrance. The horse and carriage are decked out in Christmas lights during the



Frog Holler Philosopher  
Ron Huff

holidays and it draws a crowd wherever it goes. Cameras were flashing as the carriage unloaded, making room for us. Charlotte had prepared gifts for Frank and Shiloh, and we each had a photo op with Shiloh, feeding her carrots. Maybe that is why she has such good night vision.

The carriage is comfortable for four and the temperature was warm for late December. We piled in and off we went. The ride was to take around an hour and I guess I was naïve to believe we could get very far in that short period of time. Frank set out for the heart of the village, just a few blocks away. Although I have seen this area hundreds of times, it took on new meaning from the perspective of a slow-moving carriage. Frank, accustomed to tourists from out of town, began his narrative, pointing out historic buildings and their origins. We swapped gossip about whether the Magnolia Inn had actually been sold and discussed the recent history of businesses that had come and gone. The heart of the village is a fairy land of Christmas lights—a

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