

Special Edition Commemorating the 75th Anniversary of the End of World War II  
The Denton County Historical Commission's

# RETROSPECT

Dedicated to the Men and Women of the Greatest Generation who Have Called Denton County Home

August 2020

## 75 Years Ago, Peace at Last: World War II Ends

*From the Desk of  
Denton County Judge Andy Eads--*

It has long been said the efforts of "The Greatest Generation" contributed greatly during World War II. While this generation paid the ultimate sacrifice overseas, at home they pulled together in ways never before seen.

In the span of six years, no region across the U.S. was spared from the ravages of World War II. Denton County, like many other areas, experienced the loss of lives while also pulling together to purchase war bonds to support the government, plant victory gardens and fill labor shortages on county farms to harvest crops of blackberries, wheat, oats and cotton.

Remembered today, the attack on Pearl Harbor affected the U.S. like no other, reaching deep into the heart of the United States – even into Denton County where William Claude Castleberry Jr. was killed in action aboard the USS Arizona – one of more than 2,300 casualties. On Dec. 8, the U.S. entered a global war that would inevitably result in the loss of an estimated 45-60 million lives.

World War II would rage on until Aug. 11, 1945, taking the lives of 179 men across Denton County from among the 2,515 area men and women who served.

Several of the thousands of Denton County residents who served rose in rank including: Brig. Gen. Roger Ramey, Gen. Henry Ray McKenzie, Gen. Samuel Tankersley Williams, and Brig. Gen. Kerry Berry.

On the home front, with many men on the battlefields, women stepped into the workforce to fill jobs left vacant by the war. At least 15 women worked at



**ABOVE: General Douglas Arthur (L) and Lt. General Richard K. Sutherland watch as Japan's Foreign Affairs Minister Mamoru Shigemitsu signs the formal surrender on board the USS Missouri.**  
*USSMissouri.org*

the Acme Brick Plant in Denton, one example of many throughout the U.S.

Denton County's biggest contribution to World War II was the Army Air Liaison program. George Harte built Hartlee Field in 1942 northeast of Denton to train these pilots. They were housed at the North Texas State Teacher's College (now the University of North Texas). An estimated 4,000 pilots trained at Hartlee Field in two years, including future astronaut Alan Shepard.

The Denton County Historical Commission created this online special edition of the *Retrospect* to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II. We ask that you join us at Denton County to recognize and celebrate the legacy of our collective history.

## Foreshadowing and Impact of World War II Felt Early in County

On November 11, 1918, Denton County and the entire United States erupted in spontaneous celebrations as Germany accepted the terms of an armistice and the first World War came to an end. In Denton, people crowded the Courthouse Square, celebrating from dawn until late at night. The locally famous photo of fireworks exploding from the Courthouse seemed to punctuate the relief that “The Great War” was over, and a prayer that peace might reign forever.

Alas, it was not to be. Unlike France and Belgium, the landscape of Germany was left largely unscathed after the war and rebuilding infrastructure faced little problem. But the strict terms of the Treaty of Versailles left Germans bitter and they adamantly refused to admit defeat.

By 1920, warnings were being sounded by those familiar with the aftermath. Writer and novelist Conigsby Dawson, speaking at the College for Industrial Arts in Denton, now Texas Woman’s University (TWU), warned of a German resurgence, saying they wanted the world to “forget” what happened and that they would eventually start another war.

Dawson proved to be an accurate foreteller of the future. The rise of Hitler and Nazism, combined with the Fascist movement in Italy, and the increasing militarism of Japan, would coalesce to plunge the world into the turmoil of a second global conflict.

The foreboding shadows of what was to come, and the winds of war, periodically cropped up in Denton County in the mid-to-late 1930s. But the ongoing concern at the time was more for the economy as the Great Depression lingered and the myriad New Deal programs brought employment opportunities to the county in the form of Works Progress Administration (WPA) projects, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), and other agencies.

When the Germans invaded Poland on September 1, 1939, Great Britain joined France in a quick response by declaring war on Germany. Tensions and concerns that another global conflict awaited put the world on edge as fears escalated.

The seriousness of the situation in Europe was made clear when Dr. Autrey Nell Wiley of the Texas State College for Women gave a first-hand account in the Sept. 12, 1939, edition of the *Denton Record-Chronicle* about a harrowing voyage on a ship that sailed from England: “Nothing has looked as beautiful to me as New York on Sept. 9—a city free of sand bags, gas masks and blackouts—a city with lights, blessed lights.” She brought news of the London blackouts and the sending of the city’s children to stay with people in rural areas. Her ship sailed in a zig-zag pattern and enforced a blackout at night to avoid German U-boats, with many passengers forced to sleep on mattresses in hallways or on the ship’s deck. The European war began to feel real.

As the United States inched closer to war, providing Great Britain with equipment to fight Germany via controversial “lend-lease” agreements and other forms of loans, the die was cast for the United States inevitably entering the conflict. By late summer of 1940 Germany was attacking Great Britain from the air and the talk in Washington D. C. moved to the need for a military draft “just in case.”

The Burke-Wadsworth Selective Training and Service Act was signed into law by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on

September 16, 1940, requiring all men age 21-36 to register for the nation’s first peacetime draft. The draft was by lottery and the first number drawn on October 27 was #158. Of the 6,175 men nationwide holding that number, the “lucky” first draftee in Denton County was Braley Villanueva of Denton. Scott Jacobs of Pilot Point, #192, was second.

The first draftees were SUPPOSED to serve on active duty for 12 months, with reserve duty for 10 more years or to the age of 45, whichever came first. But in the following year, Congress debated extending the service time and many balked. As the October 1941 deadline for releasing the first draftees approached, many barracks walls were “decorated” with the letters “O-H-I-O” for “Over the Hill In October.” Some deserted when extended, but the vast majority stayed as the extension was approved. December 7, 1941, rendered moot all thoughts of an early release from the military.

By the time Japan attacked Pearl Harbor and the United States declared war, the county and the nation were reconciled to the fact that war would come to the American people. It also became personal. Three Denton men, William Claude Castleberry Jr. (at Pearl Harbor), Kenneth Lee Lynch, and Billy Joe Dukes made the supreme sacrifice in the first days of the war, their memories honored in a citywide church service in January 1942

World War II had arrived on the doorstep of Denton County and the citizens were in the fight, at home as well as on foreign shores. Everyone was involved, one way or another.

Inside this special edition of the Denton County Historical Commission’s (DCHC) *Retrospect*, you will find stories of the people from Denton County who fought the war, how those at home lived during the time and how they supported the war effort; and how the war brought changes in the post-war era.

It is with gratitude and sincere admiration that I salute our writers who spent countless hours researching and writing these articles under the challenging times and conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic: **Judy Clements, Gary Hayden & Melody Kohout of the DCHC; Leslie Couture, Matthew Davis, Laura Douglas, Frederick Kamman, & Chuck Voellinger of the Denton Public Library; Charlotte Mooneyham, Annetta Ramsay & Randy Hunt.**

Thanks also to **County Judge Andy Eads, his staff, and the Office of History & Culture** for their support. Additionally, we thank **Bill Patterson and the *Denton Record-Chronicle*** for use of the newspaper’s archival content.

We hope you will find our efforts enlightening and interesting; as we salute the “Greatest Generation.”

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## America's Dilemma: Remain Neutral, Oppose...or Back Hitler's Germany

By *Matthew Davis*

Prior to U.S. involvement in World War II, Americans were divided between intervention in Europe and isolationism. There was a deep distaste among many citizens about involving themselves in another European war, so much so that Roosevelt successfully campaigned for a third term by promising that no American boys would be sent to fight. An anti-war student movement began at Yale and formed the America First Committee which had many notable members and supporters including future U.S. Presidents Gerald Ford and John F. Kennedy. Most notable, however, was Charles Lindbergh who served as the group's spokesman.

Lindbergh was a staunch anti-European war advocate and a believer in eugenics. He believed it more prudent to build up American defenses against what he viewed as the more dangerous threat, "Asiatic influences" of the Soviet Union and China that he thought would destroy the accomplishments of European civilization. While he understood the reasons behind the Jewish desire to end Nazi

rule in Germany, stating in his speech in Des Moines, Iowa 1941, "No person with a sense of dignity of mankind can condone the persecution of the Jewish race..." in the same speech he expressed his belief that the large ownership and influence of the Jews in motion pictures, press, radio and the government were the "greatest danger to this country." Such instances resulted in Lindbergh being labelled a Nazi sympathizer by the press. This further compounded his loathing of the "fourth estate." Lindbergh's disdain for the press had existed for years, since the 1935 kidnapping and death of his child and what he considered bad treatment of him and his family by the reporters.

Lindbergh admired the Germans for their technological achievements, especially regarding aviation. He was also taken with the hopeful vitality of her citizens during pre-war years as compared to the listless and dejected attitudes in England and France. However, it is unlikely he ever believed in the more extreme ideologies of the Nazi party, lamenting in his journal following Kristallnacht, "My admiration for the Germans is constantly being dashed against some rock such as this."

Despite being portrayed as a Nazi sympathizer, Lindbergh aided the U.S. war effort. He advocated at home for increased research and production in aviation when reporting on his inspection tours of German airfields where he was afforded the opportunity to pilot some of their more advanced planes. He encouraged England to do the same, pointing out that the British Navy and the English Channel would no longer be the formidable barrier it had once been

thanks to the airplane. Though he resigned his commission after President Franklin D. Roosevelt labelled him a Nazi, he continued to aid the war effort in the Pacific as a consultant, flying missions and teaching aviators how to get the most out of their aircraft.

According to the American Council on Public Affairs in 1941, there were as many as 121 anti-Semitic organizations in the United States, though most had "substance seldom more than a pretentious name." The America First Committee was not listed among them. The most notorious of these groups were the German American Bund headquartered in

New York and the Silver Shirts based out of North Carolina. Their stated goals were to "convert our American fellow citizens into true friends of the present-day Germany" and "save the U.S. from the Soviet-ism of the Jews and defend against their money-power," respectively.

Membership for these organizations spanned the country, but the Bund, the largest of these groups, only saw its membership reach approximately 25,000 members. Locally there does not appear to



ABOVE: Charles Lindbergh speaks at an America First rally in Fort Wayne IN, 1941.  
*Lindbergh Journals*

be any evidence for the presence of such groups, though each group listed Texas chapters, in Taylor for the Bund and in Dallas for the Silver Shirts. Post-war Nazi membership files only showed approximately 1,000 members in the United States with less than 2% of those in the South, and though the South was the stronghold of the KKK, there was not a disproportionate number of anti-Semitic groups.

White newspapers in the South condemned Nazi racism while refusing to acknowledge any similarities with American racism. Black newspapers often highlighted those similarities, but nonetheless saw the Nazis as their biggest threat with one black journal in Alabama stating that while "their rights were not being respected... 'in a Hitlerized U.S.A. we would have no rights for anybody else to violate.'" While Nazi propaganda incited a greater dislike of the Jews, the position of Nazi Germany as an ideological enemy helped ensure they gained no greater foothold.

There is no evidence of Denton County sympathizers for the Nazi cause in the local newspaper archives or those from surrounding counties. Although some individuals may have privately held such views. What is clear is that perhaps as early as Germany's invasion of Poland, the attitudes of the American people began to tend toward opposing Hitler's drive for world domination, and by the time our nation entered the war in December 1941, pro-Nazi sympathizing was almost unheard of in the United States, and those that did support Germany were wise to keep those sympathies to themselves.



## Third-Term Humbuggery or Political Piffle, 1940

By *Frederick Kamman*

George Washington set a precedent in not seeking a third term as president. However, until the 22<sup>nd</sup> amendment's ratification in 1951, this was not binding. People interpret Washington's example as a safeguard against despotism, and the question of whether to welcome a third-term presidency suffused the 1940 campaign.

Franklin Roosevelt was coy; he deflected questions about running again. He even seemed to bless the candidacies of his vice-president, John Garner, and other members of his administration who believed him when he said he would not run. However, when the Nazi war spread into Western Europe, Roosevelt saw himself as the man needed for the coming crisis. Until the 11<sup>th</sup> hour, he rejected talk of a third run, but felt sure his Party would call him back into service anyway. At the national convention, on July 18, it did on the first ballot.

Among Republicans, 38-year-old New York District Attorney Thomas Dewey was a contender for the nomination. Many considered him a cocky, inexperienced firebrand, but he was favored nonetheless. Another contender was Michigan's Senator Arthur Vandenberg. There was also Robert Taft, son of a former president. Alice Roosevelt Longworth, daughter of another former president, wrote an article supporting Taft's candidacy, describing him as a man whose "...feet will be firmly on the ground and whose mind will be upon solutions rather than becoming a shining hero of the indiscriminating masses." Former president Herbert Hoover was content and willing to wait and accept the nomination after the other candidates had exhausted the convention delegates.

The eventual nominee did not even appear on their radar until that spring. Wendell Willkie had voted for Roosevelt in 1932, and had not even registered as a Republican until 1939. He was president of the utility company Commonwealth and Southern Corporation, and within a few years of voting for Roosevelt, found himself in opposition to the Tennessee Valley Authority. In addition, he had become disillusioned with other New Deal programs that he thought promoted dependency and idleness. His candidacy seemed to come from nowhere. Not long before the Republican National convention, friends began encouraging Willkie clubs throughout the country; quite successfully, too. Henry Luce's *Time*, *Life*, and *Fortune* published articles of support. He seemed forthright and plainspoken – "The curse of democracy today is that everyone has been trying to please the public." Unlike the other Republican candidates, he was not an isolationist, and he was more amenable to a government role in business. Perhaps he was too like Roosevelt. Nevertheless, Dewey's star began to fade, and in late June, on the sixth ballot (and to Hoover's chagrin,) the delegates turned to Willkie. It was not until August 15 that Willkie formally accepted the nomination.

The campaign began in earnest, at least for Willkie. Roosevelt, following an earlier tradition, did not personally campaign until the fall. He had "neither the time nor inclination for purely political activity." Denton County, and Texas in general, was reliably Democratic, so we did not see much local campaigning. A June 27 editorial compared Willkie's unexpected rise to that of W. Lee (Pappy) O'Daniel, and implied that Texan's should not be too complacent. In July, the *Denton Record Chronicle* (*DRC*) reported "Democrats Want Willkie." In Dallas, some Democrats wanted Willkie nomi-

nated as *their* candidate also, to "end partisan politics."

On September 17, Willkie spoke in Amarillo. "Southerners say to me we believe in everything you believe in. But...they have a great tradition...80 years or more old, and that tradition is voting Democratic." Willkie encouraged Southerners to break that 80-year tradition and uphold a 140-year tradition. Captain Mike Hogg, chairman of "No Third Term Democrats of Texas," referred to it as "third term humbuggery." For their part, Speaker of the House and Roosevelt surrogate Sam Rayburn urged his Bonham listeners not to trade a "tried and true horse for one we know nothing about."

By September, Denton County Democratic Party Executive Committee chairman (whew) W.L. McCormick was ramping up local campaign efforts and Denton County Democrats were asked to "contribute liberally" to the national campaign fund. By October, only two or three hundred dollars had been collected.

Denton citizens submitted many anti-Willkie editorials. C.D. Judd's of October 30 blasted Willkie's ignorance, or falsification, of history. Willkie had called upon a tradition of debate between presidential candidate (citing the Lincoln-Douglas debates) to ensnare Roosevelt. It was said among "Willkie disciples" that Roosevelt's refusal to meet betrayed his fear of, in Judd's words, "enumerating the numerous Willkie misstatements." According to Mr. Judd, this was "preposterous bullying" and "political piffle." On the other hand, there were a few anti-Roosevelt folks in Denton. A.L. Harold rebutted Judd's editorial with "What Willkie Said," in which he quoted extensively from the speech in question to show Willkie was talking about a general history of political debate, and characterized Roosevelt as being "...unable to defend his third-term candidacy...financial policies... congressional purges and he knows it." "...he has dodged these issues, and has played an evasive, shifty, holier-than-thou part." Judd answered *that* with a more reasoned, point-by-point examination of Willkie's positions.

Nevertheless, Denton held its own "debate" in which Dr. Jack Johnson of "Denton Teacher's College," spoke for Roosevelt and Dr. W.F. Hauhart of S.M.U. spoke for Willkie. Tom Davis presided.

That year, Halloween pranks included graffiti on store windows; the *DRC* thought it worth mentioning "Too, some of the boys must have been Willkie-minded, as that name was written on several panes."

Denton turned out in big numbers on November 5. By 1:00, more than 1,100 residents had voted. The *DRC* invited people to telephone them that evening for the latest tallies. On November 8, presiding judge H.A. Porter reported the last county ballot box, from Waketon had finally arrived. However, it was apparent on the morning of the 6<sup>th</sup> that Denton County voters had gone for Roosevelt 8 to 1. The final, unofficial, total was 6,333 to 873. And the rest, as they say, is history.

After the election, the *DRC* published this bit of doggerel, written by Terrill Wheeler, buried on page 8:

### In Memoriam...

Adieu, dark horse, your race is run,  
And Roosevelt stays in again  
To keep us keep on keeping on,  
Despite all your shenanigan.



## Profile of a Serviceman: Roger Ramey

Few military men from Denton County have risen as far and as fast as did Roger M. Ramey. A 1921 graduate of Denton High, he entered the local National Guard unit while attending North Texas State Teachers College. He had risen to the rank of sergeant when his commanding officer encouraged him to take a competitive examination for entry to West Point.

Graduating from West Point in 1928, Ramey entered the Army Air Force for pilot training. First assigned as a pursuit pilot, he became commanding officer of the 42nd Bombardment Squadron at Hickam Field, Hawaii, in 1940, and was promoted to Major early the next year.

Shortly after Pearl Harbor, he was promoted to Lt. Colonel and a year later to full Colonel.

After assuming command of the 43rd Bombardment Group in October 1942, he directed the bombing attacks in the Battle of Bismark Sea in March 1943, sinking 22 Japanese ships. Col. Ramey also directed the attack on Wake Island and was promoted to Brigadier General on July 1, 1943.

When the Army decided to move its 58th Bombardment Wing from the China-Burma-India Theater to the Marianas Islands, Ramey was commended for making the move



without losing a single plane. From this new post, he directed the bombing raids on the Japanese mainland.

The military faced a new challenge after the Japanese surrender: getting the servicemen deployed in the Pacific back to the States. Again, Gen. Ramey was the man. In charge of "Operation Sunset," he oversaw the flights that brought thousands of servicemen home. His safety record remained intact.

Post-war saw Gen. Ramey reassigned to Fort Worth as commander of the 58th Bomb Wing. It was from that post that he became a central figure in the Roswell UFO incident of July 1947. He would later become known as the Air Force's "saucer man," debunking UFOs as extraterrestrial, though stating 10% of sightings could not be explained.

In 1949, Gen. Ramey led the military's efforts in assisting with Fort Worth's Great Flood. For his efforts, he was named Fort Worth Man of the Year.

By the time he retired from the military in 1957, after suffering his first heart attack, Roger Ramey had risen to three-star status as a Lieutenant General. On March 2, 1963, Lt. Gen. Roger Ramey died after suffering another heart attack. He was 57 years old. --DJ Taylor

## Profile of a Serviceman: James Hollingsworth

James Hollingsworth of Sanger was another army officer from Denton County who rapidly rose through the ranks to eventually become a three-star, Lieutenant General. But the stars would come post-war. Entering the Army in 1940 as a second-lieutenant after graduating from Texas A&M where he played on the football team, he soon found himself assigned to the 2nd Armored Division.

Hollingsworth's irreverent and brash demeanor endeared him to his men; his hard-charging style caught the eyes of his commanding officers. It was not long before his exploits and success in battles from North Africa to Germany led to his promotion to the rank of Colonel.

At age 26, Hollingsworth was commanding a regimental-size armored task force in General George Patton's Third Army; the General citing him as one of the top two tank commanders to ever serve under his command. In an incident now famed in Army lore, his advance guard of 34 tanks came upon dug-in German defenders at the Elbe River. Lining up his tanks on a ridge, he gave the old cavalry command that had likely not been heard in many years: "**CHARGE!**" As the tanks thrust forward at break-neck speed, the German troops fled, abandoning their positions.

Col. Hollingsworth was a tough bird and a warrior that relished being in the midst of the action. Wounded five times in World War II and a sixth time in Korea, he had a remarkable 38 Air Medals to go with his six Purple Hearts; three Distinguished Service Crosses; four Distinguished Service Medals; four Silver Stars; three Legion of Merit awards; three Distinguished Flying Crosses; the Soldier's

Medal, and four Bronze Star Medals. Years later, his alma mater, Texas A&M, erected a statue of him as the most decorated Aggie military man of all time. It was noted at the dedication that his statue was three feet taller than General Patton's at West Point.

By the Vietnam era, General Hollingsworth was still a hard-charging force and itching to be at the front in a battle. He became well-known in Vietnam by his radio code name: "Danger 79'er." His brash no-holds-barred style was offset to some degree by his genuine concern for the men of his command.

A British journalist profiled General Hollingsworth in a 1966 article, "The General Goes Zapping Charlie Cong." Hollingsworth's gung-ho enthusiasm and thirst for combat related in that article was later used as the basis for Robert Duval's character in the Francis Ford Coppola epic film, *Apocalypse Now*.

James Hollingsworth died in 2010 at the age of 91.

--DJ Taylor



## Denton's Airfields Supported the War Effort



C. P. T. budding Eagles of the fall semester line up for a picture at College Field. *From the 1942 NTSTC Yucca yearbook.*

### *By Matthew Davis*

The Golden Age of Flight solidified the airplane as not only an important instrument of commercial enterprise, but of war-making as well. Such importance was placed on aviation as a defense resource that in July 1939 the Civilian Pilot Training Program (CPTP) Act was signed into law extending federal vocational training to cover flight instruction while placing the responsibility for that instruction on colleges and universities with nearby flight schools. The intent was not only to provide pilots for the growing commercial aviation industry, but also create a pool of qualified pilots should the United States be drawn into the war in Europe.

To participate in the program Denton needed an airport since its previous one had been abandoned. In 1940, Denton Field was built just north of the city and in October of that year CPTP instruction began with Theron Fouts as Director, C.S. Floyd Jr. as Flight Instructor and Fred Connell Jr. as the Ground Instructor. Candidates for the program were required to have one year of college work at the North Texas State Teachers College (NTSTC), now the University of North Texas, and were trained in Piper Cubs bearing the Teachers College Eagle logo.

Commissioning programs soon developed and NTSTC became the first college in Texas to enlist Air Cadets when Flying Cadet Unit No. 1 was established at the school. This new program paid cadets seventy-five dollars a month and provided them with uniforms, food, quarters and medical care. Upon completion each cadet received their wings and a commission as a Second Lieutenant in the Army Air Corps Reserve.

In 1942 the Navy selected NTSTC as a location for its V-5 program. This program provided flight training for enlistees under the CPTP program. Servicemembers assigned to training in Denton stayed at the Corona House. That location is currently occupied by a CVS at W. Hickory and Avenue B.

Originally the CPTP program included five schools exclusively for women, but those programs were discontinued in October of 1940. As a result, during the first semester of the program women were not allowed to participate. In Spring of 1941 the first three women in Denton were admitted to the program, Kathryn Boyd, Jayne Kingston and Nancy Lowe. The Texas State College for Women (TSCW), now Texas Woman's University, added aviation courses for college credit under the physics department and their students could participate in the program at the cost of six dollars per hour. The first Texan to attain the rank of Ensign in the Navy's Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service (WAVES), Betty Jane Sehnann, completed CPTP training at Denton Field in the hopes that the WAVES would establish a flight program. Other female CPTP trainees used their flight experience to apply for the Army's Women Airforce Service Pilot (WASP) program.

As flight programs expanded it became apparent that a larger, flatter airfield was required. Denton Field was a pasture with a grass runway that "sank in the middle and rose steeply on the far side," so in 1942 a new municipal airport was constructed four and a half miles northeast of Denton known as Hartlee Field after the operator George Harte and his wife Beatrice Lee.

Harte originally contracted with the Army to establish a Glider Pilot Training school in Kansas. That school transferred to Denton and operated at Hartlee Field. The military was keen on the use of gliders in airborne operations after the success of the German invasion of Crete by gliderborne troops. The Harte Glider School opened as the 25<sup>th</sup> Army Air Force Glider Training Detachment and Chilton Hall on the NTSTC campus was leased by the government to house trainees and military instructors where it served as a residence, hospital, mess hall and ground school for the detachment.

*Continued as "Airfields" on next page*



## *Airfields*, continued from previous page

By 1943 there was an excess of glider pilots, so trainees were encouraged to apply for aviation cadet training instead. Eventually a new type of flight training was conducted at Hartlee Field for Liaison Pilots. These pilots were commissioned as artillery officers before coming to Denton for flight training. Upon completion they returned to the artillery school at Ft. Sill, Oklahoma to train as artillery observers.

In July of 1943, Harte purchased Denton Field to serve as both an auxiliary field for Hartlee Field and as the city's municipal airport. Contemporary accounts of the two air fields are somewhat confusing as these locations seemed to lack a consistent naming scheme when referenced in the *Denton Record-Chronicle*. At different times Denton Field is referred to as the Floyd Flying Field, municipal airport and Denton Field. It was also later named College Field with "Denton" and "College" being the only names that appeared on official airway maps for this location. Likewise, Hartlee Field was also referred to as the Harte Flying Field and the municipal airport.

When Senator Tom Connally announced that funds were allocated by the Civil Aeronautics Administration (CAA) for improvements to Hartlee Field, it was understood that the improvements were meant for use as a permanent municipal airport and not explicitly for military training programs. Hartlee Field however was not the ideal size or location and the city had a difficult time finding a site large enough and flat enough to serve as a true municipal airport.

### FLYING HIGH!

1944 marks the year that TSCW's first women for wings took out parallel rulers and protractors to plot their courses and took off from Harte Flying Field as the pioneer women that they were in their field.

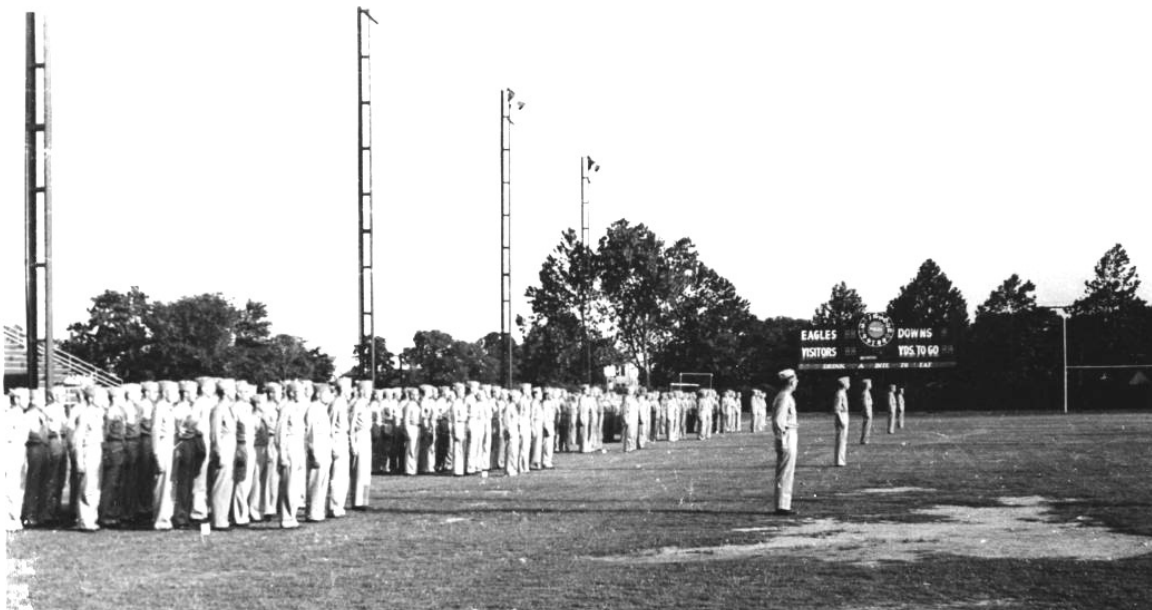
At right, Mr. Douglas, CAA instructor, explains the horsepower of the Cub's engine to Carol Shook, Othene Mae Gaffery and Eva Echols.

*From the TSCW 1944 Daedalian yearbook*



In 1943 a 550 acre site was selected approximately two miles southwest of Denton. While bids were solicited, and plans drawn up for the airport, the project met with numerous delays and construction was held up by the Army. The airport was eventually completed by the federal government and turned over to the city in 1946. It operates today as Denton Enterprise Airport.

While construction delays prevented Denton Enterprise Airport from playing a role in the Second World War, it nevertheless continued Denton's legacy of cooperation with the military when it became one of four airports in the nation to host the Department of Transportation's Forces to Flyers Program with flight training provided by US Aviation Academy.



**LEFT:**

**The First Liaison Training Detachment Graduation, 1944.**

*Courtesy of the Denton Public Library Special Collections*



# Denton USO Center: A Soldier's Home Away from Home

By Laura Douglas

The United Service Organization (USO) was founded in 1941 to provide morale and recreational services to U.S. service personnel. The Salvation Army, National Catholic Community Service, National Jewish Welfare Board, National Travelers Aid Association, the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) were brought together under one organizational name to support the U.S. Troops.

Shortly after the United States entered WWII the citizens of Denton realized that, while there were no military bases established in the county, there needed to be a way to help soldiers who were traveling through the area. In January 1942 the Denton Chamber of Commerce partnered with American Legion Post 71, local churches and other community groups to develop a plan to provide lodging and other basic services. By February the American Legion Hall had been established as a quasi USO. The Hall was open during weekends and functioned as a "Hospitality Center" connecting soldiers with Denton residents willing to offer overnight accommodations or meals, free of charge, to soldiers.

The "Citizens Committee of the USO," which was authorized by the central USO office in New York to act as an independent, locally financed group, was formed in March 1942. Before the end of the month plans and fund-raising were underway to expand the American Legion Hall. Work on the addition to the Hall began in June and was completed in October 1942, adding sleeping quarters that would accommodate 90 men and enlarged the men's restroom with a shower and bath.

The opening of Camp Howze in Gainesville in August 1942, as well as Denton's proximity to Sheppard Field in Wichita Falls and other bases in North Texas, led to the opening of a larger "official" USO center in Denton. The



ABOVE: Soldiers and young ladies at a USO dance in Denton.

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she was officially appointed as the director, even though the YMCA had a policy of only having men as directors of their facilities.

While the Long Building was being renovated, the Legion Hall added week-day hours and continued to serve Saturday afternoon and evening meals. The facility had books, magazines and stationary for the soldiers and volunteers available to mend clothes or sew on buttons and patches. Weekly Saturday night dances were started and were hosted by the Girls Service Organization, (GSO). The first dance took place at the Women's Club Building but over the next three years dances would be held in just about any space large enough to accommodate the crowds; including the gyms at the North Texas State Teachers College (NTSTC), now the University of North Texas (UNT), the High School and the outdoor Slab in the recreation park at NTSTC. At many of the dances the entertainment was provided by NTSTC music professor Floyd Graham and the *Aces of Collegeland*. Other acts included the *Gremlins*, an orchestra from the 86<sup>th</sup> Division at Camp Howze; the *Swingtet*, a female quartet from NTSTC; and an all-girl orchestra from the Texas State College for Women (TSCW), now Texas Woman's University (TWU).

On March 15, 1943, the *Denton Record-Chronicle* (DRC) reported that the Denton USO served over 700 men during that weekend. The article put a call out to the community for homes in Denton that could accommodate soldiers overnight, offering to pay the homeowner \$1 to let a soldier use a single bed or .75 cents each if two soldiers slept in one double bed. A 1945 article requested rooms for soldier's wives who were coming to meet their husbands who had recently returned from overseas.

During the years the USO was in operation, the citizens of Denton County were highly involved with the center. They donated food, cookies for the famous cookie jar, bedding (including homemade quilts), cots, books, and toiletries. They welcomed the soldiers into their homes for

*Continued as "USO" on next page*



ABOVE: "Fessor" Graham & the NTSTC stage band often performed for the local USO.

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Long Building on the northwest corner of Elm and Oak streets was renovated to be the downtown USO and was operated by the YMCA. Odis R. Higgins, the director for the new center, arrived in Denton in December 1942, followed by the assistant director, Miss Virginia Hicks. The center had a succession of directors, but Miss Hicks was part of the management team until it closed. She assumed the position assistant director in January 1943. Her main responsibility was to run the program division. She was made acting director in December 1943 and in August 1945

**USO, continued from previous page**

dinners and holidays and volunteered at the USO center events and dances.

The downtown USO opened on April 16, 1943. The facility included a recreation room with an upright piano, plenty of seating, a snack bar, two ping pong tables and, later, a pool table. A smaller hospitality room was used by the Hospitality Committee to help the soldiers find weekend accommodations in Denton homes. The Art Department of TSCW provided art exhibits for the walls. The center also had a quiet room to read and write letters. Over time, one wall was covered by military insignia and patches collected from the men who visited the facility.

Denton's USO was a segregated facility. Black soldiers had access to a USO center in Gainesville, but in Denton County, the citizens of the Southeast Denton community provided hospitality services and social gatherings. In an oral history interview Mrs. Bessie Harden talked about her

life during World War II. Ms. Harden said she remembered soldiers coming to her mother's and other houses in the neighborhood. The residents would provide meals and a place to sleep, but sometimes there were many more soldiers than could be accommodated. She recalled that Mary Lee Pratt coordinated the community efforts to help the Black soldiers visiting Denton, and they would use the Fred Moore School for dances and social occasions.

On February 1, 1945, when the Denton USO celebrated its second anniversary, the *DRC* ran an article with an overview of the center's history and the services offered. It also provided statistics for the centers use in 1943-44. During that time 83,615 men had attended weekly dances and 301,616 men had visited the center on the weekends. The war ended in August 1945. As the soldiers returned to their homes the need for many of the USO centers ended. Denton's was one of them. The closing ceremony for the downtown Denton USO was held on December 19, 1945 and the center officially closed on January 1, 1946.

## The Biggest Cookie Jar in the Biggest State

By Laura Douglas

The Denton USO was renowned for its remarkably large cookie jar. It was donated in June 1943 by Miss Norma Sederholm, who made it in a class at the Texas State College for Women (now Texas Woman's University.) Described as a huge brown crockery cookie jar, it sat on a prominently placed small table in the center of the main room. Just how many cookies the jar could hold continues to be a mystery. The number of cookies was reported differently in various articles from the *Denton Record-Chronicle*, ranging from 13 to 70 dozen. It probably depended on the size of the cookie.

Miss Eleanor Wilson, who oversaw "women's work" for the YMCA sponsored USO Centers and visited Denton in June 1943, said that it was the "largest she has seen in the USO centers over the US which she has visited for the past 3 years". The cookie jar was also featured in the December 1944 issue of the *USO Sou~Wester*, the publication of the USO for the Southwest. A photograph of the jar was captioned "Biggest Jar in the Biggest State."



**ABOVE: Two soldiers relax at the Denton USO next to the renowned large cookie jar that was always full of cookies.**

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By all accounts the cookie jar was extremely popular with the visiting GI's. It had the reputation of never being empty, continually kept supplied with cookies by various community organizations, businesses and individuals.



## Camp Howze: A Major Factor in Denton Economy & Life

*By Leslie Couture*

Camp Howze was once a United States Army infantry training camp located on a sixty-thousand-acre tract of land purchased from local landowners just northwest of Gainesville, Texas. It was named for Maj. Robert E. Lee Howze who had won the Medal of Honor and served during campaigns of the Philippine Insurrection and World War I.



**ABOVE:** Troops march at Camp Howze.

*Photo: The City of Gainesville TX*

Twenty-five men of the Quartermaster Detachment, 1885<sup>th</sup> Unit, Eighth Service Command arrived at Camp Howze on August 1, 1942, to get the camp started, approximately 17 days before the official date of activation. The federal government spent \$20 million for its construction and supplies.

Col. John P. Wheeler, the camp commander, activated Camp Howze officially on August 20 and a few hundred enlisted men were kept busy in preparations for the incoming 84<sup>th</sup> Division soldiers that would soon be trained there.

Paul Fussell in his book, *Doing Battle*, wrote: “Both officers and noncoms worked side-to-side for over two months, sometimes mired in the mud, building sidewalks, doing carpentry work, and whatever it took to get the camp ready for the men.

“In January through February of 1943, soldiers began coming in from all over the country. The PX was filled with a hodgepodge of accents and many of them hadn’t known how to pronounce the name of the new camp, calling it Camp “Howzy” instead of *Hows*.

“As many as 2,000 African American soldiers were stationed at Camp Howze. At that time, segregation was still a prominent way of life in the South, so Black soldiers were restricted in their duties, and served primarily in the motor pool. They also had separate barracks, PX, and service club.

“After stepping off the train, soldiers arriving at the camp were greeted by an empty prairie of dirt and rows of tarpaper shacks that leaked when it rained, complete with mice—indoors and outdoors—swarms of mosquitoes, something new to many called chiggers, and murderous heat.”

The camp created employment for hundreds of nearby residents, including people from Denton County, to supplement its work force with civilian workers.

Brig. Gen. J. Hilldring was the commander of the 84th. Col. E. K. White, was Camp Quartermaster, and Lieut. T. A. Arnold, was the billeting officer for the camp. As housing was scarce, Lt. Arnold spent time looking for suitable housing in Denton for Army officers and their families. By Nov. 1, 1942, over 100 families from Camp Howze and

thirty-five from the Hartlee Glider School had moved to Denton.

Said Fussell in his book, “The new men were assigned to regiments and taught the basic principles of military life. They were given lectures on hygiene, first aid, military discipline and courtesy, and other subjects: how to take a rifle apart, clean it, name its parts, and to hit bullseye with it. In the final stages of basic training at Camp Howze, the men crawled through the infiltration course, ran the close combat course and the Combat in Cities course. After basic training was over, unit training got underway. This was spent out in the field where they learned how to make a canteen of water last for 24 hours, with enough for drinking and a little left over for washing and shaving.”

When bored, soldiers would go to Denton, a place that was advertised in the *Camp Howitzer*, as a the “GI Paradise because of its collection of young lovelies.” Dan McAlister, who was a teacher and principal at one of the Denton Schools during World War II said about the camp, “They had just four armies come out of there. Some of them were shipped out and they’d refill it, you see. One, the 101<sup>st</sup>, that was airborne, anyway, it was over here on their leaves. Town’d be full of soldiers every Saturday, every weekend, most of ‘em from Howze. They’d get down here some way and get back. And the people of Denton was—it was just a patriotic duty. The people of Denton opened their homes to ‘em. And the picture shows ran full—full capacity. ‘Course, on weekends, those soldiers down there, they’d fill ‘em up.”

Just past mid-September of 1943, the camp post office caught fire and was nearly destroyed. The soldiers lost nearly all their parcel post packages and letters. Another fire in 1945 took the lives of two officers when their barracks caught on fire during the night. In addition to those fires, others lost their lives due to numerous accidents in which soldiers were killed by stray gunfire or drowned during maneuvers. A few died in an airplane crash, while others died in random collisions while driving. Other deaths .

*Continued as “Howze “on next page*



## **Howze**, *continued from previous page--*

were due to sickness, such as pneumonia. The sick and injured were taken to the base hospital at Camp Howze.

In November 1943, the 86<sup>th</sup> Division completed its period of unit training at Camp Howze, Texas and was ordered to the Louisiana Maneuver Area. The 86<sup>th</sup> Division was replaced in November of 1943 by the Cactus Division.

Construction of an enemy internment camp at Camp Howze began in mid-1943. "The camp included 170 frame buildings and was completed in three months for an undisclosed cost." It housed as many as 3,000 Prisoners of War at any given time, mostly Germans captured in North Africa. Their area was surrounded by a 10-foot-high fence and eight guard towers with mounted machine guns. However, this area also had a small store and theater, as well as grounds for recreation. The prisoners sent to Camp Howze were considered low risk. They were allowed to have jobs, receive pay, and use their money at the small store.

"In Texas, the POWs gathered pecans, picked peaches and figs, and harvested record amounts of cotton." Even in Denton, POWs were a possibility, "Prospects of having Denton's 1945 cotton crop picked by prisoners of war are extremely dim," County Agent G. R. Warren reported. "The nearest war prisoners are at Camp Howze, Gainesville, and at Princeton in Collin county, and it is not known whether prisoners could be secured from either camp because most are now working on farms near the camp. Other reports indicate that prisoners pick only about 80 or 100 pounds of cotton a day, whereas an experienced picker can pick nearly 200 pounds a day..." Any farmer who wished to use the prisoners of war labor had to apply to the county agent where the camp was located.

In some cases, the German prisoners were made more welcome by farmers than their regular field hands, with farmers speaking highly of their work ethic and abilities; a few even seeing them as their own sons. This was something the farmers generally felt ashamed of after the war.

As for the German prisoners, some could adapt and became friends with the locals. Some of the German prisoners at Camp Howze took up a collection of \$7,284.35 for the "welfare of all European children" as Mrs. Bess McCullar, with the Denton American Red Cross reported to the *Denton Record-Chronicle* on December 3, 1945. But other prisoners did not adapt and there were several suicides reported.

In 1946, there was no longer a need for the military bases, so the camp was disbanded, the buildings demolished, and the building materials sold off with priority going to builders with the veteran's housing program as housing materials were scarce after the war.

The City of Gainesville became the owner of the camp's airfield, now Gainesville Municipal Airport. Much of the land could not be returned to farming due to the altered landscape (concrete pylons) and leftover munitions (some accidents with "lost" munitions led to reports of injuries and death into the 1980s). The land was offered back to the original owners and many accepted; the purchase price often being less than what the government originally paid. Today, the old barracks pylons, chimneys, and water tow-

ers remain on private land where cattle can be seen grazing among them.

After the camp closed, the soldiers returned home. But some chose to stay in the area or brought their families back to Denton because of the educational facilities. And some who returned were former POWs.



**Scenes from Camp Howze, 2020. ABOVE: remains of barrack foundations BELOW LEFT: one of many abandoned water towers BELOW RIGHT: chimney**

*Photos: Christopher Jones*



## **Teens Warned to NOT Play as POWs**

From 1943 until 1946, Camp Howze was home to over 3,000 Prisoners of War, mostly Germans captured during the North Africa campaign of 1943. Although few tried to escape, some did, causing anxiety among the citizens of North Texas.

Local teens found it a bit of wicked fun to decorate their shirts with the letters, "PW" just as the prisoners had stenciled onto the clothing they wore. Reports of sightings of "German POWs" from nervous and alert citizens prompted Camp Howze to issue a warning to the teens to desist immediately with putting the PW marks on their clothing, as it hindered the apprehension of real escapees and could cause the teenagers to be shot by military personnel. --DJT

## Profile of a Serviceman: Noble Holland, Local Leader

*By Leslie Couture*

Noble Holland (1914-1993) was a significant figure in Denton's African American history. Brought up in a hardworking family from Jewett, Texas, son to Connie Holland and Roberta Haynes, who owned and worked a cotton farm. Noble's father died before he was six, and Roberta moved the family to Denton where she married Jim Lucas. The family lived on Lakey Street and Jim worked as a porter for a café, and later for the WPA doing street construction.

In 1934, Noble Holland married Elsenae Mae Jones. He supported the family as a porter at the Purity Bakery. They had a daughter named Sarah Mae Holland in 1935. When the Selective Service Law passed in September of 1940, Holland's name, along with thousands of other Denton County men, appeared in the *Denton Record-Chronicle (DRC)*, but it wasn't until January 13, 1944 that his enlistment date began with the United States Navy.

Historically, African American men had only been allowed to serve as mess attendants and stewards while in the Navy, instead of the general service; World War II brought significant changes to that way of thinking. Early in 1942, the Navy began to accept "qualified Negro men" for general service ratings, "every man aboard [to] be trained and utilized at specific posts or battle stations in emergencies. Black attendants and stewards were trained in shipboard drills at many jobs remote from their ratings, and they were frequently called upon to function in battle as gunners, torpedomen, fire-controlmen, ammunition handlers, etc."

For that purpose, in September of 1942, Negro Service Schools were opened at Great Lakes and Hampton Institute [Negro Industrial School] for Black recruit graduates. And in December 1944, it was decided that graduates of Class "A" Schools and rated "Negro" personnel would be used in the Pacific Ocean Area with further training offered for specialists at the destroyer escort school at the Naval Base in Norfolk, Virginia. Submarine chasers were trained in Miami, Florida.

Noble Holland was "stationed in the South Pacific on a transport." That is the only thing that can be found in the local paper about his service record, other than his rank: Seaman, First Class. He was discharged on January 14, 1946.

After the war, he and other Denton servicemen received job training skills in construction and building as part of the GI Bill. And it was these same young men who put their skills to work for their community. *DRC*: "The American Legion Post for Denton Negroes who fought in World War II was officially established on Friday, March 22, 1946." The post was known as the Penn-Reynolds-Jones Post No.840 in honor of three Denton African-Americans, William Penn, Carl Lee Jones and William C. Reynolds who were all killed in WWII. Officers elected included Robert L. Williams, post commander; Noble Holland, first vice commander... the group has started plans to buy a lot in the eastern part of town and hope to build a Negro American Legion Hall there as soon as possible." It was later renamed the Lakey Street American Legion Post No.840.

Continuing his work for the community, Noble Holland's name appeared amongst members of the committee for a recreation building in the new Negro park, listed as the finance chair in 1949.

Holland was consistently a hard-working person. After the war, he worked as a custodian, first at Texas Woman's University, and then at then at University of North Texas for a com-



**ABOVE:** Trade school class for African-American GIs. Noble Holland is in the second row, center, a hand on his shoulder.

*The Portal to Texas History, unt.edu*

bined 30 years before retiring. Then in 1975, he went to work for the Denton Post Office.

He was co-chair of the United Fund [United Way] in 1958 and the *DRC* used his photograph citing that he was known in the community as having "exemplary leadership skills." In 1961, Noble was the first Black person to be appointed to a city commission, serving as a member of the City Parks and Recreation Board. That year he was honored for his work in the community as a leader.

Holland, a friend of Fred Moore, served in the board of directors for the Fred Moore Day Nursery starting in 1957. He continued his work with the community to help propel the idea of urban renewal projects by sponsoring meetings on that topic to the public. In 1968, he served on the newly formed United Denton Neighbors steering committee whose purpose was "to help fix up homes in southeast Denton and other disadvantaged areas of the city."

Despite only having a fourth-grade education, Noble Holland accomplished much in his lifetime having learned the key to empowerment at a young age. He continuously worked hard to improve Denton's African American neighborhood.

In 1981, he received the first Fred Moore Award for community service during the NAACP banquet. It was presented to him by Moore's daughter, Alice Alexander, who presented the award saying, "We honor you because you have always introduced a positive element to the community." While inside the banquet hall of the Denton Civic Center, five robed members of the KKK picketed outside bearing a sign that read, "Keep Denton White."

As to what made him become an activist, the words of Mrs. E. J. Milam, in an oral history about WW II sums it up: "I think being in our community we were more interested in being represented in the city. So many of the young men had been away and came back. It gave them a different outlook. We wanted to be represented in our community, where we had never had any representation before. And they had experienced so much in traveling, after they'd been and fought in the war. And then when they go back home—they were segregated on the train and the bus and in the cafes, and I think all that had a bearing on the community to get involved to try to have things. Do something for yourself and make people aware of the things that you were against."

Noble Holland died in 1993.



## Profile of a Serviceman: Lloyd Garrison

*By Leslie Couture*

Col. Lloyd R. Garrison was the kind of man that people would point out as he walked down the street. "There goes Colonel Garrison!" He was known as a man who had travelled all over the world, seen places that no longer existed, and had a collection of items from every country imaginable.

Lloyd Russell Garrison was born in Carthage, Missouri on October 11, 1892. When he was just a few weeks old his parents brought him to Denton, Texas where his father set up his business: Garrison's Drug Store, a business that would exist for the next forty years. Perhaps it was this early trip and subsequent grounding, which sparked his sense of wanderlust and imagination. Young Lloyd received his bachelor and master's degrees at the University of Texas and taught languages at the North Texas State College until he enlisted in the Army in 1918. He got his commission and was in an artillery unit in South Carolina when the Armistice was signed.

The military asked him to stay in the service and, according to his oral history transcript, "since he liked it [the military] and wished to travel, he stayed in." While in the military, Lloyd began saving not only money, but his leave time for travels since the military had a liberal policy about accruing leave time.

He was stationed at the Colorado Agricultural College, where he taught ROTC until 1927. During a furlough, Lloyd began his first world trip to Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Japan, traveling for free on military transports, only paying for meals. He came back by way of China and France. In 1928, he made a second trip, this time to China, Japan, and the island of Borneo.

Lloyd was stationed at a military base in Pampanga, a province in the Philippines, for three years where he taught English. While there, he befriended Roque E. Velasco, a native of Gandara. In 1931, Garrison brought Velasco to his home and allowed him to live there for the next nine years where he was able to attend college. The two remained lifelong friends.

The world traveler, before beginning his next assignment, took a four-month-trip in October of 1930. It was a journey that would take him to places, some of which were the hotbeds of activity at that time: Java, the Celebes, the island of Bali, the Straits Settlements, the Federated Malay States, Siam, French Indo-China, India, Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Italy, France, and England.

Lloyd continued to move up the ranks, enrolling in officer's training school in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas in 1934 and attending Texas A&M at College Station in the military division in '37.

Garrison was promoted to lieutenant-colonel in Septem-



ber of 1941 while he was stationed at Fort Benning, Georgia. In August of 1942, he was made a full colonel and transferred to the First Army Corps at Camp Young, California where he was named adjutant general of the XIX Corps and later sent to Europe.

When asked of his impression of Europe he said, "I landed on the base in the middle of the night and I was sent to a place where our headquarters were...it was cold and heated by a little stove about a foot and

a half high; it burned coke. I had no orderlies in that country. The bathrooms were community bathrooms which were outside across the passageway. And it rained; it was cold, miserable."

In between times of misery, there were these little passages of normality, such as the collegiate reunion which was sponsored by the Stars and Stripes, which they first held in 1942. It was held at 3 Grosvenor Square, London, which was in the basement of the Grosvenor Club, a usually crowded restaurant where most of the Embassy staff came to eat. The area of Grosvenor Square was called "Eisenhower Platz" or "Little America" because Eisenhower had set up his headquarters at 20 Grosvenor Square. "Some 131 servicemen from Texas toasted their fallen comrades after listening to their guest speakers: Col. Lloyd Garrison and Professor J. Frank Dobie, who was then a professor of American history at Cambridge.

Later, in 1944, Garrison was part of the "Battle of the Hedgerows" during the most difficult and bloodiest phase of the Campaign of Normandy. He was the Adjutant General of the 4<sup>th</sup> Army of the XIX Corps, taking over after Adjutant General Charles M. Wells was injured. The XIX Corps played a significant role in the "first U.S. Army's victory during the Normandy Campaign" The fight was to get to Saint-Lô. In July of 1944, the 4<sup>th</sup> Division took three days of heavy fighting just to gain 2,000 yards.

In late 1945, he said, "I was General Patton's Adjutant General for a short time till he was taken away for a western task force...I was on his staff when he was killed."

Afterwards, he was sent to the G-1 Section in Austria as part of Gen. Mark W. Clark's occupation forces.

Colonel Garrison was awarded five battle stars for Normandy, Northern France, Rhineland, Germany and Ardennes actions. He received the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star medal with oak leaf cluster, Army Commendation ribbon, French Legion of Honor and Croix de Guerre with Palm.

He served as director of corrective service for the Army in 1947. He later transferred to the Pentagon in 1951 and retired in 1952, returning to his home until his death in 1993; a man with many stories and a great love for culture, people, and antiquities.



# On the Homefront, Victory Gardens Fed Bodies and Spirits

By Melody Kohout

In April 1941, the backyard garden was still a hobby. By the end of that year, plans for a home garden would become one of the most important contributions to the World War II defense efforts.

As early as December 23, 1941, the army rejected more boys for undernourishment than any other reason. Mothers and wives were encouraged to follow the Texas State College for Women (TSCW) "Food for Freedom" program food guidelines, study menus put out by the public health office, defense offices and the newspapers. County home demonstration agents presented the plan to farm wives and local 4-H girls to stress the necessity of vitamins and minerals and to urge homemakers to set a goal of making their home food supply nourishing with gardens, orchards and poultry. Women were challenged to fight the Nazis from behind their kitchen ranges. On the other hand, nationwide, people were asked to reduce and conserve all kinds of food stuffs in order to better supply the fighting boys "over there." What was a woman to do?

A big garden program was on the calendar of the federal government for 1942 as part of the defense effort. A nationwide goal of 5,760,000 farm and home gardens was set for schools and communities. Uncle Sam called on citizens to supplement their rations with "victory gardens." In January 1942, home gardeners were encouraged to plant a winter garden on a sunny windowsill; or as weather allowed using cold frames outside; and to start substituting fresh vegetables so that canned goods could be sent overseas to the battlefields. Nearly 20 million Americans answered the call. They planted gardens in yards, empty lots and rooftops.

Locally, the Chamber of Commerce maintained a list of vacant lots and available plots for people to plant neighborhood gardens, classified ads now included garden plowing and tilling, listings of plots available, and people willing to help with gardening chores.

Lee School PTA offered a series of discussions on gardening led by the North Texas State Teachers College (TC) home arts department. Home demonstration agents held



*history.nd.com*

classes on all aspects of gardening, including fertilizing and watering.

The *Denton Record-Chronicle* started running a daily article called "Your Victory Garden." Readers were urged to clip the articles and make their own gardening notebooks, as this was to be a comprehensive guide for every gardener.

Denton Public School students did their part in the victory garden effort. Schoolyards had become drop-off points for scrap metal and rubber. Now, under the direction of student teachers from TSCW, schoolyard gardens were being planted and worked by students to supplement the daily lunch program. A summer program led by TSCW home economic students and the 6th, 7th and 8th grade girls kept gardens going until school started in

the fall. Victory gardens had become a community and national source of pride, taking to heart the slogan, "grow your own, can your own," that made every American feel empowered and rewarded for their effort.

With all the growing going on, there came a need to preserve the harvest for year-round use. Farm families had been planting gardens and preserving produce for generations. Now, their city cousins were getting into the act. In 1943, approximately 315,000 pressure cookers were sold, compared to 66,000 in 1942. Citizens were urged to make growing and canning a community process.

Not everyone knew the many steps in canning food. To provide equipment and classes for all, the federal government funded community canning centers through the agriculture bureau. Denton's canning centers were located on the Teachers College and TSCW campuses with hired supervisors. They opened on May 31, 1943, just in time for the first garden vegetables harvested. Lone Star Gas Company hosted the "Canning Show" with lessons on canning methods for meat, fruit, and vegetables. Home demonstration agents were on hand every day at the canning center, offering tips on sterilization, and checking home pressure cooker gaskets and gauges, along with offering advice on freezing and drying methods of preservation.

***Continued as "Victory Gardens" on next page***

**“Victory Gardens” continued from previous page**

The canning center was running at full capacity, as ripening vegetables were brought to the canning center to be processed for use in the coming school year. To speed the process, a pea sheller was purchased by the canning center, allowing more garden peas and black-eyed peas to be canned.

By 1945, the federal government pulled the funding for the canning center program, needing to use funds directly in the defense effort. The agriculture committee of the Denton Chamber of Commerce and the Teachers College continued to sponsor the canning project. A one-cent fee was implemented to offset some of the costs. However, in July 1945, President Truman created the Office of Home Supply to encourage home canning and to coordinate agencies affecting the production and conserving of food. Many food crops were coming into markets and needed to be preserved to insure an adequate supply for the coming winter. With increasing military operations in the Pacific and the need for supplying food to millions in the devastated areas of Europe, there was little hope there would be ample canned goods available for civilians.

When the war ended, Americans were urged to continue the gardening effort to ease the imminent worldwide food shortage. The citizens’ growing and canning skills were enlisted to battle the shortage due to shifts in food supply from military to civilian use. 1946 saw Denton’ canning center in use and still popular with many housewives. But in 1947, the canning center was relegated to a small space in the Rural Arts Building at TSCW,

The victory garden and canning center programs of



World War II helped civilians keep up morale, express patriotism, and ease the burden on commercial farmers working to feed the troops. It united the people on the home front, giving them an outlet for their common fear while allowing them a sense of pride in providing food for their families and the world.

## Labor Shortage Severely Felt on County Farms

When the United States entered the war on December 8, 1941, Denton County farmers had just enjoyed a bountiful year of harvests. But other than the winter wheat crop planted, no other crops were yet planted. With the enlistments and drafting of men into the armed services, the labor pool of farm workers took a big hit. The dwindling numbers of an available workforce went from critical to virtually non-existent as the war dragged on.

By the summer of 1943, the shortage had reached the point that the agricultural committee of the Denton Chamber of Commerce took out an ad in the *Denton Record-Chronicle* exhorting the public to **Help Save Denton County Crops!** The chamber called for salesmen, lawyers, housewives and high school students to volunteer their spare time to work on a farm during the summer. The ad pointed out that growing food was only half the battle of keeping the troops fed--it had to be harvested and turned

into food. Licking the axis powers required a well-fed military.

By the summer of 1944, Allied troops had successfully made the D-Day landing in France and were advancing across Europe. But the need for farm laborers on the home front remained a critical need.

Blackberry pickers were sought for “morning work” in June, with a wage of 25 cents per gallon picked being offered. Help was also in demand for thresher crews to help harvest the wheat, oats and other grain crops, and County Agent G. R. Warren sought to match farmers and potential laborers through his office.

In the fall, the county’s cotton crop risked failure if cotton pickers could not be found. Schools delayed opening so that school children could help gather the crop.

The war’s end brought welcome relief to the farmer.

--DJ Taylor



# When Hollywood Came to Town: The War Bond Drives

“If you’re gonna have a war, you gotta pay for it some way, kiddo.” So went the general line of thought in Washington D. C. just prior to the United States entering the fray.

Before war was declared, “defense bonds” were issued in campaigns to get the public’s support for building military equipment to “keep America safe.” Almost immediately after Pearl Harbor, the defense bonds were renamed “War Bonds” and the appeal to the patriotism of those not in the military was non-stop.

Orators exhorted the public at “War Bond Rallies” to buy all the war bonds that they could. The reality of the process was that the individual was loaning the government money to conduct the war with the government’s promise to repay in the years after the war with a decent rate of return.

War Bond Rallies in Denton County were generally held at the Courthouse, usually outside on the lawn. To appeal to the conscience and patriotism of the county citizenry, military officials, one being Brig. Gen. Roger Ramey of Denton, gave speeches, backed by soldiers from nearby Camp Howze, or more importantly, by wounded servicemen recuperating at the McCloskey Military Hospital in McKinney.

But there was a sense of dazzle in some of the rallies. Hollywood actress Nancy Gates, who left Denton as a 15-year-old in 1941 for the big screen, came to town on more than one occasion, even finding time to speak of her work in support of the war from her Hollywood base and appearing at the Teachers College on Fessor Graham’s Saturday night stage show broadcast.

In June 1944, the Courthouse was covered in stars of the Hollywood variety when four--count’em--four Hollywood actors/actresses appeared. Character actor Lasses White re-

galed the crowd with his songs and humor, while ingenue Jeri Wayne caught the eyes of the guys, but not quite as much as film star Gale Storm. Every little boy with a six shooter stood in awe of Cowboy star Johnny Mack Brown, who was also favored by many ladies in the crowd.

The effort to raise War Bond funds was an ongoing effort in the county and the nation. By war’s end, the 7th War Bond Drive was underway. As a drive neared its end and if the coffers were short of the goal, the advertisers peppered their ads with daily calls for patriotism and duty.

--DJ Taylor

DENTON, TEXAS, RECORD-CHRONICLE, SATURDAY, JUNE 24, 1944

## ON TO BERLIN RALLY

### Hollywood Stars IN PERSON




## JOHNNY MACK BROWN GALE STORM LASSES WHITE JERI WAYNE

THESE STARS WILL OFFER ONE HOUR OF SOLID ENTERTAINMENT





## 35 Rare Articles to be Auctioned

### Several Returned War Heroes from McCloskey Hospital

## COURT HOUSE SQUARE, TUESDAY 2:30 to 4:30

THE WILLIAMS STORE DENTON COUNTY NATIONAL BANK <small>Member Federal Deposit Insurance Corp.</small> FIRST STATE BANK OF DENTON <small>Member Federal Deposit Insurance Corp.</small> MONROE-PEARSON GROCERY CO. DAVIS BROWN BILT SHOE STORE H. L. PETERSON IMPLEMENT CO JOE NORMILE Service Station & Garage WESTERN AUTO ASSOCIATE STORE MARVIN SELF SERVICE STATION	BONAR & ORR, General Insurance KIMBELL DIAMOND MILLING CO. JACK GRAY SERVICE STATION <small>Phone 466 Magnolia Products</small> G. H. BRAMMER TRACTOR CO M. A. Gay Roofing & Sheet Metal Foxworth-Galbraith Lumber Co. H. M. RUSSELL & SONS CO. BUTLER FURNITURE CO. COCA-COLA BOTTLING CO. MACK MASSEY MOTOR CO.	A. & P. GROCERY & MARKET Bell Roofing & Sheet Metal Co. SEARS, ROEBUCK & CO. TEXAS TELEPHONE CO. DIAMOND BEAUTY SHOP SWINDLE PHARMACY ROY BENTLEY GARAGE <small>Roy Bentley and Punny Crowder</small> INDUSTRIAL CREDIT CO. ECONOMY AUTO STORE SEVEN UP BOTTLING CO.	DICK HARRIS GROCERY GOEN FUNERAL HOME PHILLIPS RADIO SERVICE BROOKS DRUG STORE LITTLE MAJORS OIL CO. DENTON ICE SERVICE SAM LANEY TIRE CO. BURCHARD'S STUDIO JOE'S STEAK HOUSE McCRORY'S D. L. LINDSAY <small>Texas Distributor</small>	THE SEED HOUSE MODE O'DAY CAMP CLEANERS THE GRILL LA MODE JU-CY PIG STAND C. O. (Harve) GRAY <small>Conoco Agent</small> DUKE & AYRES PHILIP D. COLBY BEN IVEY
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ABOVE: Newspaper ad for appearance of Hollywood stars at War Bond Rally  
 Denton Record-Chronicle, June 24, 1944, p.3



# Though Critical to War Effort, Public Welcomed End of Rationing

No one LIKED rationing, but most accepted it as a reasonable and necessary fact of life if America was to win the war against Japan, Italy and Germany.

With point systems in place, every household member, from parent, grandparent, and all the children down to the baby, were issued a book of ration stamps. Each item purchased had a point value required for purchase. Food, fuel and tires all required one or more stamps along with the cash.

The rationing, and all the grumbling that came with it, persisted until Japan announced its surrender. It was soon

announced that some rationed goods no longer required a stamp or stamps, and over the next few months more items became available without stamps. The October 31, 1945 edition of the *Denton Record-Chronicle* reported that on the first day shoes were no longer rationed, every shoe store in town was swamped and experienced record sales as men and women, led by college students, descended on the stores to buy two or three pairs of shoes.

The war was over, rationing was done; a relieved and grateful public bought unrationed goods like they were going out of style.  
--DJ Taylor

## Rationing Ads from the *Denton Record-Chronicle*:

**SHOE STAMP 18  
MUST NOT BE  
TORN OUT OF  
BOOK**

By Orders of OPA

We want to sell you your shoes . . . that's what we are here for. But the law says we can't, UNLESS you bring in your No. 18 shoe coupon IN THE BOOK (NOT TORN OUT.)

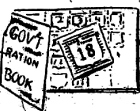
You want to do business with stores that observe the law. These shoe stores will observe the law because we value our customer's confidence and respect more than we value sale, so . . . will you please do this, as a special favor to us.

**Wrong!**



Don't ask us to accept shoe coupons unless they are in your book. The law says we mustn't!

**Right!**



**Exception**

When you order shoes by mail, you can send the No. 18 coupon in your order. When you come in person, the No. 18 coupon **MUST BE IN YOUR BOOK.** When using special shoe stamp be sure serial number of your ration book is shown on stamp.

- |                          |                      |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Austin Shoe Store        | The Williams Store   |
| The Boston Store         | J. C. Penney Company |
| H. M. Russell & Sons Co. | Sears Roebuck & Co.  |
| Burr Department Store    |                      |

**ABOVE: It was important to NOT tear out the stamps. Only the retailer could remove it from your book of ration stamps (to insure it was YOUR stamp).**

**RIGHT: With the war at an end, businesses peppered their ads touting no need for ration stamps**

*RIGHT: Even the most ordinary of items were in short supply and purchases were limited.*

# Bobby Pins

Received Another Extra Shipment  
TODAY

Only 3 Packages To  
A Customer, So That  
Everyone Will Get An Ample Supply!

**10¢ Pkg.**

**McCRORY'S**

## Now-----You Can

Drive in  
YOUR  
Favorite  
TEXACO  
SERVICE  
STATION



**and Say "Fill 'er Up"  
And Happy Days Are Here Again---  
Gasoline Is Unrationed**

And TEXACO Dealers in Denton County and 48 states of the Union, as well as the Dominion of Canada, are waiting at their pumps ready to greet you and again honor your TEXACO CREDIT CARD. Yes, keep your new TEXACO CREDIT CARD handy and use it for the sake of your car. It means extra good car care at TEXACO DEALERS wherever you drive. Your car is vital to you . . . make it last . . . Stop in regularly where you see this famous sign---



REMEMBER YOU ARE ALWAYS WELCOME AT THE DENTON AND DENTON COUNTY TEXACO DEALERS

**D. L. LINDSAY**  
-TEXACO CONSIGNEE-

## Profile of a Serviceman: Ryan Remembered in France

By Chuck Voellinger



In 2019, Denton High School Journalism teacher Rebecka Frey was contacted by Alain Maas in France seeking information about an American fighter pilot, Lt. James Abney Ryan, who crashed in November 1944 near his home. Mr. Maas and his father Gerard had done extensive research about the life and death of Lt. Ryan as part of the work of their local World War II memorial association and supplied that info to her and the Denton Public

Library. The following account is taken from that research with the permission of Ms. Frey.

James Abney Ryan was born July 10<sup>th</sup>, 1923 in Denton to Charles and Mary Estelle Ryan and graduated from Denton High School in 1940. He subsequently worked as an inspector at the North American Aviation Plant in Dallas before enlisting in the Army Air Corps in January 1943. He received his wings the following March 12 and was eventually assigned to the 406 Fighter Group, 513 Squadron of the 9<sup>th</sup> Air Force at Mourmelon-Le-Grande Airfield near the village of Falck, Moselle in the northeastern area of France, very close to the border with Germany. He was

killed in action on November 19, 1944. While on a bombing support mission against the German military in the area, his P-47 Thunderbolt crashed into the side of a hill after sustaining damage to one of the wings.

Immediately after the crash, local people tried to rescue him but found the German SS already there. Eventually, German troops left the area and his remains were clandestinely buried in the Falck Cemetery, Moselle, France near the Saint-Brice Church a few days later. Scraps of his uniform and his dog tag identifying him were found at the site and his name was placed on a cross at his grave, "James A Ryan, American Pilot." His remains were eventually removed to the American Cemetery at Saint-Avold, France on May 9, 1947, and were finally returned to home soil in the I.O.O.F Cemetery in Denton in 1949.

When this tragedy occurred, he was listed as Missing In Action and it took almost a full year for his death to be confirmed by the War Department. One can surmise from the research and documents included, that the locals who found Ryan gave information to American troops when they arrived. However, it took agonizingly long because his body hadn't been identified by United States troops at the time and they had to go back, reconstruct the events, get evidence, and take statements from witnesses.

We, the citizens of the City of Denton and Denton County, are deeply indebted to the painstaking and dogged research of the Maas Family for commemorating Lt Ryan's role and sacrifice in the liberation of France during World War II.

### FDR's 4th Term Campaign Resisted by Some of the Once Faithful

When the Presidential nominating conventions commenced in the summer of 1944, the Allied Forces had already made their successful entry onto the European continent after D-Day. Having broken precedent by running for and winning a third term, Franklin D. Roosevelt ran for a fourth term and was unencumbered in his quest for his party's nomination. But many who had loyally supported him previously found it difficult to endorse a fourth term and some worried that the nation was close to turning the office of president into an ad hoc monarchy. Denton County was no exception as the election approached. Here are a couple of paid advertisements from the *Denton Record-Chronicle*: --DJ Taylor

**"Enough of a Good Thing Is Enough"**

Includes the President's Term of Office

In this great country of common people neither can one man be indispensable nor can he deserve a major share of national merit. Like the Church, its guiding predecessor, this country may exist undefiled only through bona-fide group management.

Let's exalt our country as we exterminate Hitler!

**DOLPH EVERS**

Here's where we stand, regardless

**"NO 4th PRESIDENTIAL TERM, EVER, FOR ANY MAN."**

Won't you join us?

E. W. Morrison, C. A. Tripp, Mrs. J. F. Brown, John. F. Brown, Mrs. Leon Brown, W. H. McNitzky, Dolph Evers, Mr. H. W. Williams, Mrs. H. W. Williams, Joe D. Walde, Mrs. Joe D. Waide, R. H. Loader, J. C. Ferrell, Mrs. J. C. Ferrell

If you, too, would like to thus openly uphold the Constitution of the United States, the civil bible of Americans, and its associated time-honored precedents, just communicate with Dolph Evers and your name will be properly included in this public notice which hereafter will appear weekly until election day. There is no obligation and any Denton County resident is eligible for space in such a declaration.

Also we will be glad to receive your name, but not to be published if you prefer.



## Denton Woman Played Vital Roll in International Red Cross Effort

*By Judy Clements*

Following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the Denton County Red Cross stepped in to do their part. By the end of December, the local chapter was only short \$500 of reaching their quota of \$6500 for their fundraising efforts. J. E. McCrary donated the use of his building on the southwest corner of the court square for the purpose of a public Red Cross workroom. *Denton Record-Chronicle*, the local newspaper, reported shipments of Red Cross yarn being delivered to the local knitting club to make sweaters, earmuffs, socks, mittens, and beanies for men, women, and children. Sewing clubs were meeting their quotas of 25,000 surgical bandages and classes in first aid, nutrition and nursing were being authorized by the Red Cross.

A 1929 graduate of North Texas State Teacher's College, Rita Pilkey, knew that her skills as a physical education teacher could be better utilized overseas after seeing the ad placed by the Red Cross for recreation workers. To apply for the job, a woman had to be single, have a college degree, and be at least 25 years old to be selected.

She went to Washington, DC, to attend the two-week orientation, and then to New York to await an opening in overseas recreation work. The workers were eventually taken to California, where they were told they could only carry a limited number of bags on the ship that would take them to India. There were nine people to a room during the 40-day trip at sea. In letters to her parents, she recalled flying from Calcutta, India, over "The Hump," and arriving in Kunming in late January 1944, where she lived through the winter in a tent. In November, after being selected to set up the first tent facility at Luliang, Rita told her parents she liked it in Kunming but felt honored to be chosen to go to

Luliang because it is supposed to be the hardest place. Pilkey was the director of the only tent club there. She wrote that with hard work, they were able to open two of their tents by Christmas. They baked enough Christmas goodies for over a thousand men by moonlight after lights-out. Miss Pilkey, a non-smoker, saved her cigarette rations to give to her friends as presents. It was a big



**Miss Rita Pilkey of the American Red Cross**

success, and the boys appreciated their efforts so much that they kept those tents open while continuing to work on the rest of the club.

The recreation clubs were run similarly to a USO club. There were only two jukeboxes in China, and one of them was at Luliang. Pilkey reported that the Red Cross donuts were "the talk of the base," and her Chinese cook could make over 2000 donuts a day on a charcoal fire. She recalled that one day over 300 pilots on a bombing mission dropped in to refuel their planes. They served the men two 250-gallon drums of coffee.

The grand opening of Luliang's Canvas Covered Club occurred on January 30, 1945. Famous actress Ann Sheridan from Denton was expected to cut the ribbon to open up their new club. She never showed up, so one of the servicemen suggested that Miss Pilkey do the honors saying, after all, "what does she have that you don't have?" To that, Miss Pilkey replied, "Just a different distribution."

On her return crossing to the U.S., she was presented with a certificate at a shipboard celebration on Magellan Day for having traveled around the world.

After the war, she returned to working in the physical education department at North Texas State Teacher's College, where she taught recreation theory, camp leadership, tumbling, and square dancing. In 1960 she became the second sponsor of the UNT Green Jackets, served 30 years as a Denton Girl Scout volunteer, and as a camp director from 1938-1968 at Camp Fern in Marshall, Texas.

Rita Pilkey made Denton her home until her passing in 2000.



**ABOVE:** Rita Pilkey and Betty Smith at entrance to the only canvas Red Cross club on the China-India-Burma border.

# Denton County Gets Into the Scrap!

By Frederick Kamman

Scrap drives are one of the defining features of the home front during World War II. Economists will point out that the material collected didn't add substantially to war productions, and a cynic might point out that much that was collected wasn't used in the way advertised (an example is most glycerin derived from recycled fat went towards soap, not explosives,) but no one can doubt that the effort of collecting scrap greatly boosted civilian morale – everyone, including children, was proud to be contributing to the war effort. And Denton County contributed admirably.

The first scrap drive took place even before the United States had entered the war. The "Scrap for Britain" drive was announced for July, 1941, but Denton was collecting metal before that. Dr. L. H. Hubbard, president of Texas State College for Women, was a community leader who, early on, urged scrap-iron be collected for Britain. A "Round About Town" column in the *Denton Record Chronicle (DRC)* mentions an "Iron-for-Britain" campaign that had been going on for a while, and encouraged readers to take scrap iron and aluminum to the pile located on Bell Avenue, just north of the main building. On July 28, the Texas Theatre accepted scrap aluminum for admittance; the person with the heaviest bag won a month's pass. Scrap aluminum was also piled at the city hall annex on Cedar Street. By August, once communities throughout the county had contributed their collections, the scrap totaled 2,890 pounds. Nationwide, "...it was hoped that the aluminum gathered from American housewives would make 2,000 planes."

Scrap collection began in earnest soon after the attack on Pearl Harbor. The Denton Boy Scouts (who had also collected and loaded donations of metal the previous summer) designated a building in the McClurkan Block on West Hickory Street for paper and rubber. The building was to be open at least once a week to receive contributions. Although ongoing scrap collection was the norm, all-out drives during defined periods would capitalize on Americans' patriotism and love of competition to spur special effort. Towns would chastise themselves for poor turnout, newspapers reporting, "Salvage Paper Campaign Here Is Disappointing." Also, as citizens effectively scoured the nation for certain materials, officials got a good idea of how much of those materials were actually available in the country.

The next national push was a scrap rubber drive which began on June 15, 1942 and lasted 16 days. Four hundred thousand filling stations across the country paid a penny a pound for the scrap citizens and businesses brought in, and the federal government would reimburse the stations once they shipped the rubber on for recycling. Denton County participated in this drive, of course, but also continued its own program. On the same page of the *DRC* issue announcing the national drive, W. D. Barrow, chairman of the local war aid fund campaign, and Denton Mayor Lee Preston reminded residents to thoroughly search their property and leave all scrap rubber and metal on the curb. Trucks

would collect this scrap beginning at 1:00 pm Saturday, June 13, and local Boy Scouts would assist in the effort. Pickups for all types of scrap, especially tin and paper, became regular events in Denton throughout the war.

On a national level, the drive collected a disappointing amount of rubber, and it was extended. Perhaps hoarding was a problem; national authorities had estimated one million tons of scrap rubber available. Perhaps organization was also a problem. It didn't seem to be one in Denton County, though. The first page of the June 16 *DRC* had several articles about the drive, including one asking Denton residents to intensify their on-going efforts, offering information about items containing reclaimable rubber, and where to bring them. The next day's paper detailed the efforts of county residents.

When the extended drive ended, the *DRC* reported "Denton County can be proud of the rubber collected.... On a per capita basis, Denton County did much better than some larger counties." By late 1943, the manufacture of synthetic rubber had ramped up to provide most of what was needed nationally, and there were

no more organized rubber drives.

In August 1942 Denton County responded to another call for scrap metals. A committee was organized under chairman (sic) Nena Robertson, who was the county home demonstration agent. She appointed community chairmen: R. L. Massey for Pilot Point; B. T. McGee, Lewisville; J. T. Donald, Justin; Bud Gentle for Sanger; Virgil Gibbons, Krum; O. A. Lipstreu, Aubrey; and C. A. Cowen for Roanoke. This committee cooperated with the Denton salvage committee, chaired by Ben Ivey. Residents of the county were asked to gather metal from their homes, farms, and business and sell it to scrap dealers. By August 26 there were four heaps of large scrap metal items on each side of the courthouse square, and the county celebrated that Friday with a parade featuring a 30-piece band. Scrap piles were also accumulated in county schoolyards.

*Continued as "SCRAP" on next page*





**SCRAP, cont'd from previous page**

**Boy Scouts Gather Aluminum**



**ABOVE:** From the July 29, 1941 edition of the *Denton Record-Chronicle*, L-R, Bert Hodges, Roy Jack Woods, Charles Scherle and Leon McMahan add to the collection of Aluminum in Denton.

Scrap paper became a focus in 1944, and the young people of Denton County played a prominent role. During four days in February, pupils at the West Ward School and the North Side School gathered 38,000 pounds of wastepaper. Wastepaper was stored in a building on the corner of Cedar and Oak Streets. On March 31, O. L. Fowler, manager of the Chamber of Commerce, and Mayor Preston

spoke to a group of Boy Scouts about the importance of wastepaper in relieving the national paper shortage. The Boy Scouts and the Chamber's War Aid Committee sponsored several Sunday afternoon paper drives. Each Scout was encouraged to collect 100 pounds of paper during April (and subsequent months.) Later that month, Loyd Sullivan, salvage chairman for the county, urged county schools to gather paper. During the August drives, Scouts Curtis Ramsey, Earl Thomas, John D. Rowlett, Glenn Fuqua, Charles Hedges, Louis Steube, Weldon Bauling, Jimmy Debenham, and Fred Coffey collected, in total, 25,318 pounds. Three August paper drives yielded 50,000 pounds. Regular Sunday afternoon paper drives throughout 1944 and 1945 collected tens of thousands more pounds.

Other things, such as fat and silk, were recycled or set aside for the war effort. The *DRC* often mentioned how much cooking fat had been turned in at butcher shops, and in a 1980 interview, William and Mrs. Smith remembered making laundry soap with grease. As of June 16, 1943, "Enough silk and nylon had been collected in Texas...to make 140,000 powder bags for three-inch guns..."

Sunday collections, piles of scrap, tons of material – Denton County sustained this effort for four years. It is understandable that there may have been some fatigue as a result. J. C. Matthews, president of North Texas State College/University in the 1950s and '60s, remembered about some of the drives "...I guess all of them had to be done, but I think some of them are overdone. At the first, everybody thought it was exciting and were into it, right at the last they thought they were carrying that thing a little too far, and unnecessary...." But up to end of the war, Denton and Denton County were in the scrap!

## Profile of a Serviceman: Wylie Barnes

The Denton bus driver had relocated to Memphis, Tennessee, by the time the United States entered the war and he entered the military. But Wylie Barnes, a 1928 graduate of Denton High, adjusted quickly to the Army way of life and advanced to the rank of Sergeant by war's end.

An infantryman, Barnes would see considerable action assigned to the European battlefields and saw his first combat in November 1942 when Allied troops landed at Casablanca. From there, his unit fought through Tunisia and North Africa before joining the invasion of Italy at Salerno. Later, he was slightly injured in the battle at Monte Cassino.

On June 6, 1944, D-Day, Barnes was part of the secondary invasion of France, landing on the Southern French coast at Saint Maxine. From there, his unit advanced across France and into Germany, among the first to reach the Rhine River.

As the troops moved through Germany, Barnes witnessed first-hand the horrors of the concentration camp at Dachau and saw the piles of bodies, starved men...and the ovens.

When word reached Barnes and his fellow soldiers that Germany had surrendered, they were on duty guarding Hitler's mountain hideout, Berchtesgaden. While news of the German surrender was celebrated wildly in other European

countries, all was quiet in Germany as the subdued nation accepted defeat.

Sgt. Wylie Barnes and his men, though, did celebrate. In grand fashion, too, mind you. In Hitler's bombed out castle, the groundskeeper showed them the Fuehrer's wine cellar where they happily spent the day drinking a bounty of fine champagne.

Wylie Barnes recounted his wartime adventures after his discharge when he visited his mother who lived on West Hickory Street.

Barnes soon returned to his hometown of Denton to work for North Texas State University.

In 1954, Wylie Barnes tossed his hat into the political arena and was elected Sheriff of Denton County. He continued to serve as sheriff through 1976, making him the longest tenured sheriff in county history.

Wylie Barnes died 1990 at the age of 82. He is buried at Denton's Roselawn Cemetery. *--DJ Taylor*



**SGT. WYLIE BARNES**

*Denton Record-Chronicle*

## War Meant Women in Workforce, Changes in Fashions & Styles

*By Melody Kohout*

March 23, 1939, found the ladies of Denton gathered in the auditorium of Texas State College for Women (TSCW) enjoying a style show staged by the students and sponsored by six of the local clothing merchants: the Vanity Shops, the Williams Store, H. M. Russell & Sons Co., The Boston Store, J. C. Penney Co., and Miss Elizabeth Hendley's Shop. As the stringed ensemble played quietly, the women were shown dress for all occasions from formal dinner to sports costumes. Pastel shades, Scotch plaid, and Roman stripes dominated the scene.

In an airmail letter from New York, Mrs. Edna Cobb, buyer for H. M. Russell & Sons Co. encouraged ladies of Denton to endure "just a few more weeks of winter and then comes the most provocative of all fashion season, Spring!

The following year, spring fashions introduced a new strong color, "fashionable grey." It was paired with bright red bags and gloves and pockets were added as the newest fashion trend. No more hiding pockets as "kangaroo pockets" were front and center. Little did the ladies know that in the coming years, those pockets would be used to carry necessary essentials as part of their preparation for war defense.

As late as March 1942 the fashion industry was still trying to provide women with stylish trends. Women were told spring and summer clothes would reflect a "South American influence," using red and yellow accents, frosty ruffles and embroidery in their new wardrobe. After all, "Beauty is a Duty" to keep up morale.

As the United States entered the war, women of all ages would start to put to good use the sewing and mending skills learned from childhood. They would also learn to recreate fashions by reusing clothing from year to year, wear pants, and discover long hair wasn't as glamorous as before December 7, 1941.

When "the boys" started going away to war, the women of Denton County were called into service at home. In addition to their normal duties of running households, women were asked to sew for the Red Cross, start victory gardens to preserve the produce, plan to live within rationing restrictions, and be prepared for blackouts and enemy attacks. The *Denton Record-Chronicle* carried columns to address these new duties of women; "The Modern Woman" and "Wartime Glamour" were sources of encouragement and tips on everything from wartime dating to recipes and tips on sprucing up last year's clothes. Women were advised to plan their wardrobes with war effort work in mind.

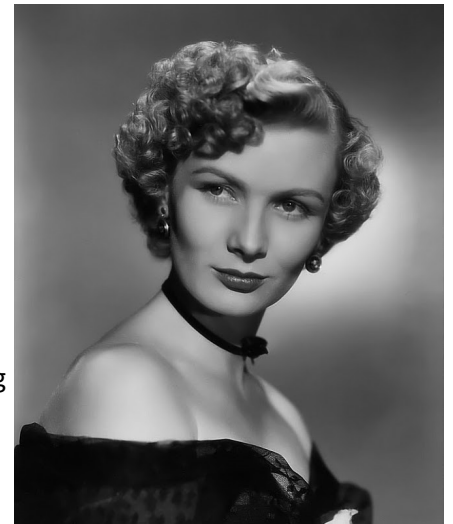
In their new busy varied lives, women were looking for clothing that would accommodate their activities and their modesty. Slacks offered versatility for women to bend,



***SAFETY FIRST!*** Actress Veronica Lake in a government ad depicting the danger of longer hair. *Flashbak.com*

move and work in their new roles. As women were called into service in defense production, pants were just one of the changes made. The popular hairstyle at the beginning of the war was the "Peek-a-Boo" style with its long, loose wavy tresses popularized by actress Veronica Lake. Factory managers soon realized the style was dangerous in many of the production posts. When the issue became a danger to women nationwide, the government asked Veronica Lake to be the example of wartime style. Miss Lake complied and bobbed her locks into a short pageboy style which became known as the "freedom bob."

Women soon followed the trend, finding it much more practical and requiring less upkeep. Other hair accessories were implemented for factory working women including turbans and the snood—a crocheted net used to secure hair away from the face.



***ABOVE:*** Actress Veronica Lake after cutting her famous long locks into a "freedom bob." *wordpress.com*

*Continued as "Wartime Styles" on next page*



## *Wartime Styles,* continued from previous page

Off the job, women still longed for feminine styles. With silk, rubber, leather, and metal, just to name a few things that were in short supply, this situation would rock women to their very foundation--as in "foundation garment." Women of the time had obtained their slender shape using girdles and other foundation garments and these used rubber to provide elasticity and form. Sales of silks, foundations garments and leather shoes were limited to the dwindling stock merchants had on hand. Women adapted with rounded figures making a comeback, skirts and dresses of loose fit, and shoes and bags made of felt or other cloth tops. Styles reflected the shortages of goods, buttons replaced metal zippers, hair ribbons replaced bobby pins. It has been noted many women gladly did without. One woman said, "If Uncle Sam wants my girdle, he can have it!"



**The "snood."**  
*GoodHousekeeping*

Buying habits were also changed as a result of the evolving economy. Many local department stores "closed the books" by no longer offering purchases on credit. Women were urged to take inventory of the entire family's clothing before buying anything new; and when buying new, to buy the best quality they could afford and make it last. The two and three piece suits, made popular by the Duchess of Windsor, were no longer sold all together. Each piece had to be purchased separately. With the shortage of cotton looms, many new dresses and suits were made of wool crepe with popular colors remaining black, navy blue and grey. Accent colors were given patriotic names, such as Cheer Navy, Yankee Marine, Pinafore Blue, Drum Major Red, to remind ladies of their part in war defense.

As schools began "Air Raid Training," all people were en-

couraged to practice for blackouts and possible attacks. Because nighttime was a popular time for enemy raids, women needed to be prepared. "Blackout coats" became a staple in many women's closets. Made of heavy flannel with spacious pockets for carrying a flashlight, cosmetics and extra rations, some models had a hood or a blackout hat with an attached flashlight on each side. Some were painted luminous paint to reflect in the dark, walking shoes were sometimes made with small lights on the sides.



**ABOVE: WW II female factory workers.** vintageinn.ca

Blackout bags were roomy with long straps, zippered compartments providing room for a sweater, book or chocolates. American stylists took the war in stride and made sure women were well-dressed in or out of a blackout.

American women answered the call to reduce, mend, re-use, economize, and contribute to the defense effort. They danced at the USO, made airplanes and ammunition, grew their own food, and changed their hair and make-up routine. They learned that making good choices, such as reading books, walking places, feeding their family nourishing food, and that selecting well-made clothes over those that had style but nothing else, was an advancement in the right direction--a direction toward victory.

## **April 12, 1945, a Day of Storms for County; a Day of Shock for the Nation**

The mild spring day dawned bright in Denton County, a few spring thunderstorms in the forecast. The county, as well as the nation, was optimistic that the war in Europe would soon be over. The German troops were in rapid retreat and the news each day reported new Allied victories.

In mid-afternoon, the skies darkened as storms approached the Prairie Mound community west of Argyle and a tornado dropped from the clouds, destroying houses, damaging others and killing livestock.

Soon after, a tornado struck the Pilot Point area causing further damage with injuries to some residents.

That was big news locally, but the bigger news came a few hours later when it was learned that President Franklin D. Roosevelt, the man who had guided the nation during the Great Depression and through the war almost to its conclusion, had died at Warm Springs, Georgia.

Stunned, the nation resolved to get behind the new President, Harry S. Truman, a mostly unknown former Senator from Missouri. Truman's cousin, W. F. Truman, lived on South Elm Street in Denton. He told the paper that his cousin was not one to seek the spotlight, but always willing to help and led when needed to get the job done. --DJ Taylor

# Germany's Defeat Brought No Celebrations

May 7, 1945: Hitler is presumed dead; Germany's government is in disarray; and finally, the Germans surrender. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill declares May 8 as Victory in Europe Day, or V-E Day as it quickly became known. Great Britain, France, Belgium, Russia and other Allied European nations broke into spontaneous celebration and crowds filled the streets.

In the United States, though, it was quite different. The late President Franklin D. Roosevelt, dead less than a month, had urged Americans to NOT celebrate until all the fighting was done and the warring nations had surrendered. In the Pacific, the war with Japan raged on. So, Americans gave a silent cheer, said a prayer, and quietly went about their business.

In the City of Denton and Denton County, the citizens attended church on Monday evening at the church of their choice since almost every church was open.

The Denton Retail Merchants' Association announced there were no coordinated closings planned in celebration, and Chamber of Commerce manager O. L. Fowler warned that "Victory in Europe must mean no let down in the war

effort.. We must go ahead with our regular work and jobs."

Denton Police Chief Ray Powell asked that the citizens not darken the spirit of the announced victory in Europe by foolhardy celebrations at home and warned pedestrians against careless crossings or parading in streets.

The two colleges in Denton held assemblies of thanksgiving, grateful that one part of war was over.

Businesses took out ads reminding that the job was not finished. Brooks Drug Store offered this:

**The War with Germany is Over!  
Let's Celebrate**

**>By Keeping on the job every day!**

**>By buying more War Bonds!**

**>By Doing all our president and our country asks!**

**--And By Remembering--**

**It's A Tough Road to Tokyo!**

It would take a few more months before the war finally ended and the celebrations began in earnest. But on V-E Day, Denton County remained quiet. --DJ Taylor

# Japan Surrenders; Denton Celebrates at Last as War Ends

By Frederick Kamman

Japan was beaten. Even the Japanese government (and certainly the population) realized this. The question was whether they would decide to surrender or fight to the death. The Allies had issued the Potsdam Declaration on July 26, calling on Japan to surrender unconditionally or face destruction. The declaration imposed terms on the Japanese; "We will not deviate from them. There are no alternatives. We shall brook no delay." Among the terms were a temporary occupation, disarming of the military, "...stern justice shall be meted out to all war criminals..." and an elimination "...for all time [of] the authority and influence of those who have deceived and misled the people of Japan..." to attempt world conquest. For most Americans, this included the Emperor.

Military officials in Japan's cabinet still hoped Soviet mediation (which became impossible after August 9) or threat of a suicidal defense could force negotiations, e.g., no occupation, or war crimes trials conducted by the Japanese themselves. Civilian government officials realized these weren't possibilities. But one item, an Imperial guarantee, was essential; otherwise, the *kokutai* (national polity) couldn't survive. At the Emperor's urging, Japan informed intermediaries the nation would accept the Potsdam terms provided the Declaration "...does not comprise any demand which prejudices the prerogatives of His Majesty as Sovereign Ruler."

The August 10 *Denton Record Chronicle* headline read "JAPAN TO SURRENDER." Even though based on a Japanese civilian broadcast, not a diplomatic declaration, crowds began gathering at the White House. In Denton, Mayor Lee Preston announced all businesses would close immediately with the official surrender announcement, if made before noontime. Otherwise, businesses would close

the next business day. The colleges announced a similar arrangement. All churches were encouraged to hold services.

Most Texans opposed allowing Japan to keep her Emperor. "With little show of emotion..." Texans calmly awaited the Allied decision. Active duty soldiers; however, were ecstatic. This led to careless festivities – on Okinawa, six were killed and 30 injured by falling shell fragments and bullets during celebrations.

*Continued as "War Ends" on next page*





## War Ends,

*continued from previous page*

Washington had not expected a surrender offer this soon. Now began deliberations whether to accept it, then consultation with allies. Stimson, Marshall, and others favored acceptance. The Emperor's authority would be useful enforcing surrender and occupation and saving thousands of lives was worth the concession. James Byrnes, however, did not want the appearance of merely abandoning the Allied stance. The Secretary of State's response, dated August 11, was suitably artful and ambiguous – "...the authority of the Emperor...shall be subject to the Supreme Commander of the Allied powers...." and "The ultimate form of government of Japan shall...be established by the freely expressed will of the Japanese people." It implied, but did not state, the Emperor could remain.

The August 11 *DRC* proclaimed, "ALLIES ACCEPT JAPAN'S SURRENDER." "Churches Plan to Observe Day of World Peace" described the victory services planned by the First Baptist and First Presbyterian Churches. Chaplain F.G. Rogers, Major C.L. Jackson, and Ensign Dewey Mark would officiate at the Baptist service. Either Reverend Joseph J. Copeland or Reverend Robert Graham, from Pennsylvania visiting his parents, would lead the Presbyterian service. First Methodist pastor Phillip W. Walker would preach "The Day We've Longed For."

Japan's cabinet had wanted an express statement securing the Emperor's position. Again, they entered into discussion but, after nearly three days, were again deadlocked, and again turned to the Emperor. Meanwhile, intercepted Japanese military and diplomatic broadcasts, some of which indicated the militarists might not accept surrender, aggravated America's wait. Expectancy during these few days sparked many rumors and false starts.

Monday the 13<sup>th</sup> it was reported "False News Flash (that Japan has accepted) Touches of Premature Celebration." The United Press offered \$5,000's reward, and the FBI and FCC were looking into who had "cut into the UP's line to disseminate false information." Another report stated the investigation was focused on "three points in the deep South."

The headline that day was "Tense Nation Still Awaits Japanese reply: Japan Dallies Over Decision on Allied Surrender Terms." Intercepted Japanese radio broadcasts indicated their government had not received the Allied response until Monday, Japanese time. Perhaps this was true; the two countries were communicating through Switzerland, but officials were puzzled by the delay. *DRC* reported "Sunday Was 'I Don't Know' Day at White House and Day of Anxiety for Reporters and People over Nation." Press secretary Charles Ross had advised reporters to be at the White House by 8:30 Sunday. Reporters waited; it became apparent no one in the White House had any information. They chased down any conversation and entertained rumors, e.g., General MacArthur and Admiral Nim-



**ABOVE:** The crowd gathers on Courthouse lawn to celebrate war's end.

*Denton Record-Chronicle, August 15, 1945*

itz "...were on a Japanese battleship in Tokyo Bay dicker-ing for the surrender." One reporter wondered where the Japanese had gotten a battleship.

August 14 (15<sup>th</sup> in Tokyo) was the expected day, but still uncertain for publishers. The *DRC* headline was "SURRENDER STALLED; Tokyo Says Answer on Way But Not Yet Received at Bern." Also reported, though, was that Japanese radio had broadcast "an Imperial message accepting Potsdam proclamation will be forthcoming soon." Few in Denton heard that initial message; it was received at 12:50 a.m. Also reported – Texans, "Distrustful of Japan to the last...." will celebrate only upon an official announcement.

An EXTRA appeared later that afternoon – "JAPAN GIVES UP!: Tokyo Surrender Reply Reaches Bern." Immediately after the 6 p.m. official announcement, a crowd began gathering on the square. An impromptu parade started at the American Legion Hall, after which Mayor Preston called everyone to order and Reverend Frank Weedon offered a prayer. North Texas State College faculty member Mary McCormic sang patriotic songs throughout the evening. Three veterans offered short speeches: Robert Buntyn – WWII; Dr. H.E. Roberts – WWI; and E.V. White – Spanish American War. District Judge Ben W. Boyd delivered the main talk.

Only the theaters were open Wednesday. It seems many college students slept late, missed breakfast, and had trouble finding "...a place even to get a cup of coffee." The next day, Mayor Preston expressed his thanks for the orderly celebration, and normal business resumed, with hope for a peaceful future.

Even with the surrender at hand and hostilities halted, the formal process for ending the war did not occur until September 2, 1945, when the Japanese diplomatic delegation, led by Japan's Foreign Affairs Minister Mamoru Shigemitsu, met the Allied delegation led by General Douglas MacArthur on the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay.

## A-Bombs Hastened War's End; State/County Connections

*By Frederick Kamman*

People closely involved with the program called it the “gadget,” and in secret messages among the upper military and government echelon it was described in terms of a medical patient. The cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were, of course, on the list of potential targets that, in June, were placed on a “do not firebomb” list. Hiroshima had the misfortune of being the only city on the final list not to hold any allied POWs. Nagasaki had been much further down the list; a tertiary target. But Secretary of War Henry Stimson insisted that Kyoto, Japan’s ancient Capitol and cultural center, be removed from the target list. Nagasaki was moved to the primary list. This did not necessarily seal its fate, but on the morning of August 9, Kokura was obscured by smoke from surrounding cities that had been recently firebombed. So the B-29 bomber named *Bock’s Car* (or *Bockscar*) moved on to Nagasaki.

Some officers and politicians, e.g. Leslie Groves and George Marshall, thought that no more than two bombs were needed to end the war. Others saw the bomb as just another, albeit extreme, tool in America’s arsenal that we would continue using throughout the year; a third bomb was slated for late August, and three more were planned for September and perhaps an additional seven by December. Marshall was so amazed that Japan did not surrender immediately after the Nagasaki bombing that he requested all future atomic bombs be reserved as tactical weapons for use in the invasion of Kyushu.

At Alamogordo, New Mexico, in the early morning of July 16 a Fat Man-type (plutonium) bomb was tested. The uranium bomb (Little Boy) was pretty straight-forward, and everyone assumed it would work. The test was codenamed “Trinity.” Before the explosion, the Manhattan Project scientists bet on how powerful it would be. The estimates ranged for Robert Oppenheimer’s mere 300 tons of TNT to Edward Teller’s 45 kilotons. The “yield” was towards the center of that range, at 18 to 22 kilotons.

There are several connections between the atomic bomb program and Texas, even Denton. An unexpected one was reported in the Texas State College for Women student paper, *the Lass-O*, on September 28, 1945. Sophomore Rolean Melton was fishing at the Alamogordo dam the morning of July 16 and witnessed the explosion – “There was a loud explosion and a bright flash of light...all the fishermen around thought it was an airplane crash.”

Once the *Enola Gay* (named after Commander Paul Tibbets’s mother) dropped “Little Boy” over Hiroshima the morning of August 6, some of the secrecy surrounding the Manhattan Project was lifted. On August 8 an article appeared in the *Denton Record-Chronicle (DRC)* about eighteen University of Texas scientists who had secretly worked on atomic bomb development. Some of them were “hounded by their draft boards and reviled in their hometowns as draft dodgers.” In a case or two...their parents were actually embarrassed to walk down the streets.” On August 10 it was reported that Texas State College for Women (TSCW) Professor C.E. Normand, who had been

on leave from his position as director of the physics department, had been working on the atomic bomb project at Oak Ridge, Tennessee. “On his infrequent visits to Denton, the TSCW professor could say nothing of his duties.” North Texas State College alumnus James Collier also worked on the project in Oak Ridge. The article reporting this states that his sister, Mrs. Garner Payne, 416 Panhandle, also had a role in the bomb’s development, but is not more specific. Charles L. Langston, also a graduate of NTSC and a former superintendent of Krum schools, was awarded a bronze medal for his work as “superintendent of industrial relations for the Fercleve Corporation” at Oak Ridge. At the time of the report, Langston resided in Tioga, just over the Denton County line in Grayson County

Readers of the August 13 *DRC* learned that Captain Kermit Beahan of Houston celebrated his 27<sup>th</sup> birthday “...by dropping atom bomb No. 2 on Nagasaki.” The *Bockscar* mission seemed jinxed with multiple difficulties, but Beahan was able to find a clearing in the clouds and drop the bomb visually.

Joe Stiborek of Taylor, Texas, was radar operator aboard the *Enola Gay*. The August 8 *DRC* had an article about how proud his parents were. His father also remarked about the bomb, “It is very good in our hands and very bad for the Jap(ane)s(e).” The article stated that his two sisters were also in the military.

Closer to home, and an indication of the secrecy surrounding the atomic bomb, is the story of Major James Taylor, a former associate professor of history at TSCW. He was on General Carl Spaatz’s staff as chief of the historical section of the United States Strategic Air Forces in the Pacific but was as surprised as everyone about the bomb. It was “the best kept secret in the world...I knew a little bit about everything but that.” In late 1945, Taylor supervised the writing of the history of Air Forces in the Pacific from Pearl Harbor to the surrender ceremony.

How did the citizens of Denton County react to the news of the atomic bomb? It’s hard to tell; there appear to be no news stories or editorials that were local. We can see that people were interested, some optimistic about the new atomic age. Clubs hosted talks on relevant topics. “World Needs Moral Goodness, Rotarians Told.” Reverend Phil Walker – “I think it (atomic bomb) gave the world a chance to save itself...” or, “Atomic Bomb May Result in 5,000 New Products.” At the Christmas party of the local Shakespeare Club, NTSC historian C. A. Bridges was to give a “semi-humorous” talk on the atomic bomb. There were debates whether or not the U.S. should share the atomic secret with the rest of the world. However, the feeling of most people is probably summed up in this reminiscence of Velma Bass (Austin Avenue) – “It was a horrible thing and it’s still horrible to think about, but if it saved thousands of lives of our men as they say it was to have done, then I suppose it was justified, but it is horrible to think it could happen again.”



# These Men Made the Ultimate Sacrifice

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** The *Denton Record-Chronicle* originally reported that 113 Denton County men had given their lives in the fight against Axis powers in World War II. Later reports and research by Randy Hunt of Denton uncovered far more, 179, including UNT students. These are their names. A few names are quite similar, and might possibly be duplicates. We want to recognize every brave soul who died for our country in World War II; ALL are included here.

Compiled by Randy Hunt



- |   |                                     |                                    |                                       |
|---|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Alexander, Earl F. (Pilot Point)          | Dawson, Yeland F. (Sanger)          | Lyde, William Clark (Denton)       | Pratt, W. C. (?)                      |
| Alexander, Guy (Lewisville)               | Dean, Loyal P. (Frisco)             | Lynch, Kenneth (Denton)            | Putman, Leonard H. (?)                |
| Ashford, Jr., John M. (Aubrey)            | Decker, Boyce (Plano)               | Malsano, Paul (?)                  | Raley, Amos Clyde (Denton)            |
| Atkins, Jr, James Marvin (Denton)         | Dial, James Connelly (Denton)       | Martin, Bob (Hebron)               | Rankin, Bill R. (?)                   |
| Ballard, Jr., Calvin Floyd (Denton)       | Dillard, Charles E. (?)             | Martin, William Allen (Lewisville) | Rayzor, Jr., James Frederick (Denton) |
| Beaird, Robert P. (Denton)                | Dukes, Billie Joe (Denton)          | Massey, Bobbie L, (Pilot Point)    | Reynolds, James Weldon ((?)           |
| Beck, Weldon H. (Aubrey)                  | Durham, Ballard (Slidell)           | Maxwell, Billy Tom (Denton)        | Reynolds, William C. (?)              |
| Bergstrom, Delbert Phillip (Krum)         | Durham, Jr., Allen P. (?)           | McClure, Milton Taylor (Justin)    | Rice, Charles W. (Sanger)             |
| Bishop, Baron (?)                         | Elrod, Grover Clendon ((?)          | McClure, Taylor (?)                | Richardson, Frederick (Pilot Point)   |
| Blackwell, William C. (Denton)            | Erwin, Barney (?)                   | McCrary, Joe W. (Pete) (Denton)    | Ritchie, Billy McCauley (Denton)      |
| Blakely, Royce Cordell (Sanger)           | Flanagin, Charles Ensley (Denton)   | McCurry, Charles R. (Denton)       | Roberts, Jr., Pat Neff (McKinney)     |
| Blodgett, Harold F. (Denton)              | Flanagin, Frank (?)                 | McFall, James Stanley (Denton)     | Ross, Albert F. (Dallas)              |
| Bouldin, John F. (?)                      | Florance, James W. (Justin)         | McKinney, James E. (Ponder)        | Ruff, Campbell G. Daniel (Denton)     |
| Bowles, Raymond A. (?)                    | Flowers, Jr., William L. (Denton)   | McMahan, John (?)                  | Russell, Ben Nelson (Denton)          |
| Bradley, Raymond G. (Denton)              | Foutch, J. A. Roy (Pilot Point)     | McMath, Jack Lyndon (Krum)         | Rutledge, Kenneth (Denton)            |
| Briggs, Tommy Ray (Denton)                | Fowler, Paul (?)                    | McMillian, Carroll E. (Roanoke)    | Ryan, Abney (?)                       |
| Brooks, Frank L. (Denton)                 | Francis, Travis R. (?)              | McWilliams, James W. (Sanger)      | Seagraves, Raymond L. (Lewisville)    |
| Brooks, William Harry (Denton)            | Fulmen, Carl (?)                    | Melton, Jack (Sanger)              | Shoulders, Robert M. (Denton)         |
| Buck, Donald A. (Denton)                  | Gann, Jr, Mood (Justin)             | Meredith, Frances E. (Denton)      | Simpson, William Paul (Denton)        |
| Bushman, W. W. (?)                        | Goode, George H. (Denton)           | Miller, George E. (?)              | Sims, Guy (?)                         |
| Carrico, John E. (Sanger)                 | Greenhouse, Kenneth (?)             | Miller, Howard Jess (Aubrey)       | Sloan, James M. (Pilot Point)         |
| Castleberry, Jr., William Claude (Denton) | Hall, Lloyd (?)                     | Miller, James Phillip (Denton)     | Smatt, Charles H. (?)                 |
| Chandler, Alvin Edward ((?)               | Hancock, Roy Lee (Denton)           | Miller, Neil Dean (Aubrey)         | Smith, Billy Booker (Bartonville)     |
| Chandler, Jimmy (?)                       | Harris, H. F. (?)                   | Miller, Virgil Hugh (Denton)       | Smith, Harold (?)                     |
| Chrismon, Jr, Henry Carl (Denton)         | Harris, Sam W. (Aubrey)             | Mitchell, William M. (?)           | Smoot, Charles H. (Denton)            |
| Clendenin, Royce E. (Denton)              | Harris, W. F. (?)                   | Munn, Vester (Pilot Point)         | Springfield, James F. (Pilot Point)   |
| Coker, Charles R. (Denton)                | Harris, Wesley (Aubrey)             | Murdock, Guinn N. (Denton)         | Stoval, William Brooks (Denton)       |
| Cotner, Charlie T. (Ponder)               | Hastings, Jr., Clifford E. (Denton) | Myers, Roy E. (Krum)               | Strittmatter, Alots C. (Pilot Point)  |
| Couch, William Clyde (Sanger)             | Hawkins, Harold Lee (Denton)        | Myers, T. E. (?)                   | Thomas, Eugene W. (?)                 |
| Coulter, A. J. (Stoney)                   | Hickman, Clifford E. (Denton)       | Opitz, Max Julius (Denton)         | Tolan, Gilbert A. (Roanoke)           |
| Cowling, Jr., Alvin (Sanger)              | Hudson, Robert Allen (Denton)       | Osburn, Vail E. (?)                | Travis, Roland F. (Denton)            |
| Cudd, James Eli (Denton)                  | Hyten, Jesse Lee (?)                | Owens, Lawrence Howard (Denton)    | Turner, Howe (Denton)                 |
| Culberson, David (?)                      | Jackson, Paul (?)                   | Pace, Wallace Edward (Sanger)      | Turner, Rowe (?)                      |
| Culpepper, Vernon (Lewisville)            | Jamison, William Lester (Denton)    | Painter, Sam (Lewisville)          | Turner, Thomas Truman (Denton)        |
| Darnell, Edwin Alton ((?)                 | Jeanes, Charles (McKinney)          | Parks, James Warren (Denton)       | Upchurch, George O. (Lewisville)      |
| Davis, James Reece (Aubrey)               | Johnson, Jr., Isaac V. (Lewisville) | Parks, Jewell (Denton)             | Vannoy, Edward L. (Denton)            |
| Davis, Rupert L. (?)                      | Jones, C. C. (Sanger)               | Parr, Horace (Denton)              | Vaughan, Joe R. (Pilot Point)         |
|   | Jones, Harold N. (Denton)           | Parsley, J. Walton "Pooch" (?)     | Walling, Leo Mason (Pilot Point)      |
|   | Jones, J. C. (Sanger)               | Parsley, Joseph Dalton (Denton)    | Webb, Jack Townsen (Sanger)           |
|   | Jones, Julius Roy (?)               | Pearson, Ollie E. (Denton)         | White, David Talbot (?)               |
|   | Keller, Charles R. (?)              | Peery, Charles E. (Sanger)         | Wilkerson, Neal T. (Bartonville)      |
|   | Kelley, Clyde C. (Aubrey)           | Penn, Alrick N. (Denton)           | Wilroy, Charles B. (?)                |
|   | King, James H. (Denton)             | Penney, Norman Wilson (Denton)     | Wilson, Barnett C. (Denton)           |
|   | Landers, Edward (Lewisville)        | Perry, Jr., Charles Edward (?)     | Wilson, Clifton (Denton)              |
|   | Lawson, Hermon (Pilot Point)        | Pewett, Robert L. (Denton)         | Wilson, Tom Fred (Pilot Point)        |
|   | Little, Warren Paul (Denton)        | Porter, Charles V. (Prosper)       | Wingo, James Lewis (?)                |
|   | Loftin, Clarence (?)                | Pratt, Holman (?)                  | Wright, Robert G. (Denton)            |
|   | Lowe, Frank (Denton)                |                                    |                                       |

## Returning Veterans Found Community at Vets' Village

By Annetta Ramsay and Randy Hunt

When Texan Frank Gioviale lost a uniform button during World War II, he found his wife. Nurse Tillie Charlton sat near him at a café in Ireland. He asked if he could borrow a needle and thread. She admired the polished button almost as much as she admired the wavy-haired soldier and she asked if she could borrow a match. He asked to marry her.

After Gioviale's tour of duty as a medic in France, he moved to Denton to prepare for Tillie and infant daughter Ruth's arrival. Frank had majored in music prior to the war at the North Texas State Teachers College, now the University of North Texas, even accompanying Professor Floyd Graham to Austin to record the state song.

The Giovalas were the first wave in a flood of World War II veteran families eager to obtain higher education.

Because returning vets created a housing shortage, NTSTC used property at 308 Bradley Street for veteran housing. The lot, donated to the college in 1910, sat vacant and covered with weeds until December of 1945. During the holiday break, hutments were installed in four neat rows. According to a 1948 *Denton Record Chronicle* article, the prefabricated stand-alone Army surplus hutments, a cross between a hut and an apartment, were donated by the Fort Worth office of the Federal Public Housing Authority.

Of the hutments, 39 were doubles with two units, and 10 were single dwellings. Each hutment had a living room, bedroom, kitchen, and dinette with movable plywood partitions.

Veterans who moved to Vets' Village were grateful to return to their families, and grateful for GI Bill tuition and expense stipends that made their education possible. Most of all, they were grateful to be alive because, according to a plaque at the University Union, at least 140 NTSTC students died in World War II.

Vets' Village hutments were arranged in six rows on three streets: Sheridan Avenue, Blondell Avenue, and Gates Avenue. Street names honored former NTSTC students who became screen actresses: Ann Sheridan, Joan Blondell, and Nancy Gates. Gates financed the playground in the middle of Vets Village.

Thirty families and twenty single veterans moved into the hutments. About twenty children moved into Vet's Village. The first baby was born to Mr. and Mrs. Crellon Menire on August 18, 1946. Vet's proclaimed it a "fertile valley" as the number of village children swelled to 40. The veterans and ten wives enrolled at NTSTC college.

Sadly, Vets' Village Director, Robert C. Sherman's family lost everything when his hutment burned. Sherman then moved next door. He continued to work at the college for 30 years as a respected Biology faculty member. His son, Bob, remembers President Joseph McConnell's daughter, who lived behind Vets' Village, hopping the boundary fence to babysit for him.



ABOVE: A GI/Student mows the lawn at Vets' Village.

UNT Archives

Vets' Village residents called themselves "villagers." They developed a close-knit enclave with special events like an elaborate Valentine's Day party in 1947.

The waiting list grew to over 100 applicants as soon as the village known for neatly manicured yards opened. The college could have filled 100 hutments in the years after the war.

NTSTC embraced the villagers. *The Yucca* yearbook documents villagers' active participation in campus life as football players and cheerleaders, and winning recognition, like listings in *Who's Who*. The yearbook also commented "He is a veteran of World War II, and now a student, who is more serious, aware of world problems and family matters. He is older, maybe wiser, and his presence affects the campus. In a few years he will be gone into better houses and away from school. He is really an American." A handful of villagers launched distinguished education careers after obtaining doctorates.

Villagers elected a Mayor and town council in 1949. William Kamenitsa was Vets' Village's first Mayor. During what should have been his last mission as a bomber pilot, Kamenitsa's 18 bomber formation was attacked by 50 single-engine German fighter planes. After another bomber lost a wing and swerved into his ship, Kamenitsa's plane suffered mechanical failure and crash landed 23 miles behind enemy lines, killing three of the ten crew members. He awoke with German soldiers waving the plane's maps in his face. Kamenitsa spent a year in Stalag Luft III POW Camp for Air Force officers, arriving about a month after the escape depicted in *The Great Escape*. Just before the war ended, he was marched 70 miles in snowy conditions to Nuremberg before being liberated by Patton's Third Army.

It's hard to say who benefitted most from Vet's Village: Veterans needing a place to live, a college whose enrollment swelled with veterans, or a city that grew.

*Continued as "Vets' Village" on next page*



**Vets' Village, continued from previous page--**

At a Vets' Village barbeque one year after his liberation, Kamenitsa and fellow NTSTC student and veteran Roy Allmon compared war experiences. They realized Allmon had been Kamenitsa's rescuer.

Few villagers had cars, so bicycles were their main transportation. Because the neighborhood was in a food desert, 29 veterans organized a buyer's club in 1947. Each member who paid a \$10 fee received a five percent return. Bob Brammer operated the Vet's Village Grocery at 313 Sheridan that gave villagers, faculty, and the general public access to canned goods, baby food, and dog food.

Vets' Village brought growth to Denton. The vacant land around Vets' Village was platted in 1906 by W.W. Wright. The neighborhood around the village developed because most houses were built in 1947 with Veteran's Administration loans, a program created in 1944 to compliment the GI Bill.

Vets' Village closed after applications declined in 1960. The college razed the hutments and built the Bradley Street Apartments for married students in 1961. Those apartments were demolished by 2006, and the lot is currently vacant. A collaboration between the Texas Veteran's Hall of Fame, Denton Parks and Recreation, and UNT could turn the land

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ABOVE: A GI wife hangs washing at Vets' Village. UNT Archives

park to honor veterans, and the parks' role housing veterans.

In a July 1961 *Campus Chat* Student newspaper interview, President James C. Matthews praised the community that was Vets' Village, estimating approximately 500 families lived there between 1946 and 1960.

## The G. I. Bill Had Immediate and Long-lasting Impact on Local Campuses

By *Chuck Voellinger*

The "Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944", commonly known as the G.I. Bill of Rights, was signed by President Roosevelt on June 22, 1944 after six months of debate and rewriting in Congress. This long-lasting program, that has benefitted millions of American veterans and their families over the decades, was created in large part as a reaction to and correction of the veteran's experience following World War I. The American Legion and congressmen who were veterans from that earlier conflict realized the need for a comprehensive program to be administered by the Department of Veteran's Affairs.

During the peak year of participation, 1947, 49% of all college admissions were through this program. By the end of the original program's lifespan in 1956, almost half of the 16 million eligible veterans had participated at some level with 2.1 million homes secured--a practical impossibility for most servicemen prior to the War.

Locally, North Texas State College (UNT) saw the largest participation of the two schools in Denton with a smaller group of female veterans benefitting at Texas State College for Women (TWU). By mid-1946, approximately a third of the almost 3,000 students at North Texas were veterans, the first-time men outnumbered women at the school.

A special Denton County Vocational School was created at North Texas to help veterans specifically with free tuition paid for by the Veteran's Administration including vocational testing capabilities.

Gamma Iota Chi, GIX, was a fraternity organized in 1944-1945 specifically for veterans of both sexes and worked with the American Red Cross to secure loans and financial help.

A program to help vets identify new home construction intended for them was initiated here in early 1947. This was an effort to place signage at the homesite so that veterans would get the first chance at applying. All was not roses, however, when the Veteran's Administration was behind in reimbursement to North Texas in the amount of \$130,000 for 1945-46, forcing President McConnell to borrow money to cover university expenses. This was further exacerbated by the problem of faculty leaving Denton for better paying opportunities elsewhere.

One positive result was the creation of a committee of representatives from similar schools around the state to bring their needs to the legislature as a group with the intention of raising salaries to be more in line with competing institutions and finance construction for the post-war boom in enrollment.

Across town at TSCW, enrollment was in decline as women were tending to enroll at co-ed institutions because of the large number of male GI's attending and the newly created junior college system. The situation was critical enough for President Hubbard to embark on a recruitment program, part of which ironically touted the college's close proximity to the same GIs, the relaxation of some rules governing conduct, and post-war construction and improvement of facilities to attract students.

## Still World War II: Personal Memories and Thoughts

*By Dr. Charlotte Shepherd Mooneyham*

As a 6 or 7-year-old, I found a large box in the hall closet, under the staircase, tied with strips of cloth. There were old letters, telegrams, and newspapers in the box. The newspapers were marked with an ink pen and there were names written on the maps reproduced in the paper. I could read a bit but had to ask my mother about some words and what they meant: a barrack, a Quonset hut, a sergeant? Why had our family worried about their 17-year-old brother, Harold Orr, on a battleship in the Pacific or his brother Charles in Germany? Why were letters in thin envelopes? The pages of the letters were so thin that light could pass through. Telegrams seemed odd. All were about the war and friends and family.

I was barely able to read but could always find an adult who would read to me and who tried to explain war to a child. I first heard the story that follows in whispered voices. The story is told to honor the Allies, to honor those who fought for decency, humanity, and freedom. While observing and dialoguing, some aspects of the whispers were understood, some caused nightmares. The remembered story follows and is reverently told. The story is about my uncle, Charles C. Orr Jr. I want to thank him, his wife, Lucille Armstrong Orr and his daughters Cheryl McAlister and Connie Cole because my uncle's sacrifices came home and were shared by them, and by a community. A John Muir quote states eloquently: *"When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe."* The Nature Conservancy uses that quote as a mission statement. That quote could be a lesson for the world.

As Sergeant Orr, squad leader, lay wounded in the snow, in the yet to be named Battle of the Bulge; only the snow kept him from bleeding to death and only the dead body on top of him kept him from freezing to death. Someone took his boots off though he was alive. At first, revenge for the stolen boots came to his mind. His thoughts changed as he talked to God and promised to help other people for the rest of his life if he got to return home.

Prayers were answered. After months in a European hospital, Sergeant Orr did come home. He traveled on the troop train and asked his older sister to meet him before he came to Denton. Since Charles's mother died when he was six, my mom, his older sister, partially assumed a mother's role for the younger children. Charles wanted to know how shocking his injuries looked. Charles and his sister, Irma Orr Shepherd met in Waco. Irma kept a little bar of soap and wrote on the wrapper alongside the name of the motel where she stayed, the date when she saw Charles's injuries. The soap was still in a top drawer when Irma died.

Charles's physical scars were visceral, but his spirit was strong. He learned to tie shoes in seconds with one hand. He refused to get a disabled license plate because he said he was not disabled; he got to return home. He lived a life with vigor and compassion.

Charles lost a lung and doctors wanted to amputate his arm since the nerves were dead. Part of his shoulder was missing. After months in a European hospital, he came

back to the states with the arm he refused to let the doctors amputate. The arm eventually withered, and the fingers would not open. The arm and hand were numb. Sometimes a pen was pushed into the hand to make the fingers seem purposefully clutched. Senator Bob Dole, presidential candidate, had a similar injury.

Charles enlisted while a junior attending Texas A & M. He was a member of the corps. He never returned to finish his degree. Some say he did not want to leave his wife, father, brothers and sisters again.

Charles's daughters were born in 1950 and in 1959. Mr. Orr was successful in business endeavors and served on the School Board, the City Council, and in various civic organizations. He bought groceries and had them delivered anonymously to families in need. He bought a recliner and had it delivered to a Denton home where a man was dying from cancer and found it uncomfortable to sit. Lucille had a Degree in Business Administration and her degree probably helped as she balanced the check book when Charles generously and immediately helped people as soon as he saw a need.

At the wars end, the people of the world, including the children, saw the liberation of the Concentration Camps. The naked or ragged skeletons, barely alive, walking with dim hopeless eyes. Some had filthy rags hanging on their rawboned bodies. The eyes looked huge in the emaciated faces. Seeing the images was terrifying, more so for children like me. The suffering was immense. Albert Einstein said, *"The world will not be destroyed by those who do evil, but by those who watch them and do nothing."*

I grew up with red roses on a trellis, a backyard swing set, and tree to climb, but sometimes had difficulty sleeping. I found places to hide from the Nazis. The real stories need to be told so that Nazi-like actions never happen again. A child in a Polish ghetto, confined by the Nazi troops on the way to extermination or a concentration camp tells of seeing a yellow butterfly once, but soon even the butterflies wouldn't come. May children of the future always have backyards, roses, and butterflies.

Dr. King said, *"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."*





# The First British Invasion--the (War) Brides



By Laura Douglas

When you hear the term “British Invasion” the first thing that may come to mind is the Beatles and the pop music explosion of the mid-1960s. But the true British Invasion happened at the end of World War II. It is estimated that over 115,000 individuals immigrated to the United States under the provisions of the War Brides Act of 1945 and the Alien Fiancées and Fiancés Act of 1946. The majority, approximately 70,000 of those, including children, were from the British Isles. There were a few GI’s from Denton who married overseas and, as their wives came to Denton County, the *Denton Record-Chronicle (DRC)* ran a series of articles about their arrivals.

As reported by the *DRC*, the first G.I. Bride to come to Denton County was Freda Kate Gordon. She married Lt. James E. Ratliff on August 10, 1944 in Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, England. Her arrival was heralded with an article “Denton Flier Wins Race with Stork by 5 Days” In the June 15, 1945 paper. Ms. Ratliff took a commercial flight and arrived in Denton before her husband, Lt. Ratliff, who traveled by military transport. He made it to Denton 5 days before the birth of their daughter.

The wave of war brides hit Denton County in 1946 after the military had brought home most of the soldiers and then began transporting the foreign spouses and their children. According to the *DRC*, Shelia Dymond of Croxley Green, Hertfordshire, England was among the first to arrive after the end of the war. Shelia met her husband-to-be Joe Allen Bridges at a dance in November 1942 and they married November 27, 1943. Joe was discharged from the service in May 1945, but it took another year of letter writing and filling out forms to arrange permission for Shelia to come to Krum, Texas.

Margery Kathleen Packwood of Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, England married Corporal Marvin H. Landers in November 1944. She sailed from England with their infant daughter on the *Queen Mary* in March 1946. While he was waiting to be reunited with Marge, Marvin built the family a cottage at 316 Ruddell Street. When Marge and their baby arrived by train after the nine-day trip from England, she told a *DRC* reporter that while on the train she had had her first banana in six years.

Margaret Marcel Brannely was from Australia. She immigrated in March 1946 to be with her husband Glenn Ellison who was a student at the North Texas State College (NTSC) now the University of North Texas. Glen had served in the Army Air Force in North Africa and the Pacific.

Frank Gioviale met his future wife, Tillie Charlton of Cookstown, Northern Ireland, at a café. A *DRC* article from March 8 1946 recounts: Frank was in a bus-station café in Belfast and a button popped off his jacket. Tillie, a nurse, was at a table nearby and he asked if she had a needle and thread. Admiring his highly polished button, she asked if she could have it as a souvenir. Tillie came to Denton in March 1946 with their one-year old daughter. The family resided in the Vet’s Village at NTSC, where Frank was enrolled.

A brief article published April 5, 1946 in the *DRC* reported that James Fornter went to New York to meet Lucy Victoria Hall and their infant daughter who had arrived on the *Queen*

*Mary*, which docked the previous day. James and Lucy had married in London on May 23, 1945.

Mrs. Betty Cleary, from Cosham, England arrived in New York on the *Queen Mary* on April 4, 1946 and was reunited two days later in Denton with Chesley (Harvey) Hornsby. The two were married in November 1944. In July 1976, the couple, who shared a love of art, founded HMS (Her Majesty's Ship) Art and Frame Shop near the UNT campus. The landmark store served Denton’s art community for 35 years, finally closing in July 2012.

Joan Manion of Urmston, Manchester, England came to Denton to be with her husband Calvin Johnson. He was originally from Spanish Fort, Texas, and was attending NTSC. Joan and Calvin met in Blackpool in August 1943 and were married in August 1945. When asked about her trip to Denton in a *Campus Chat* article, April 19, 1946, Joan said, “I didn’t know that it was possible to travel so far across flat ground without going over the edge,” but she did find Texans very friendly and the “food a great deal different.”

Olive Margaret Braithaupt was serving in the Women’s Royal Naval Service. She was on a train back to her hometown, Liverpool, England, when she met PFC Horace Leverton who had only been in England for about a month. The two were married January 20, 1945. Margaret arrived in New York on the USS John Erickson on April 28, 1946 and was in Denton a few days later.

Suzanne Roukhout was from Belgium. A *DRC* article from March 7, 1946 stated that she met Earl Browder when the ground forces of his unit were sent to Goselies, Belgium to establish a base. During a welcome celebration he “jumped a fence” and found himself walking with a girl. Even though their communication relied on the French he learned in High School and the little English she knew, the two were soon dating. It was about a month after their marriage, November 6, 1945, that Earl was sent back to the States. The *DRC* announced Suzanne’s arrival on April 30, 1946 with an article titled “Train Too Slow, Ex-GI Meets Belgian War Bride in Denison” Apparently, Earl cut two hours from the wait by driving to Denison to meet the train, ending their five-month separation.

Gladys Wright was from Leicester, England. She married Army Air Force Tech. Sergeant James W. Goodwin in May 1945, only four months before he was shipped back to the U.S. It took three applications with the Red Cross to arrange transport for Gladys’ passage to New York on the *Queen Mary*. They were reunited in Denton, in May 1946.

Clara Titterton and Army PFC James Lewis were married in her hometown of Manchester, England on May 4, 1946. She came to Denton in July 1946. The couple made Lewisville their home.

Other GI Brides from WWII came to Denton after 1946, and there probably were others who arrived in 1945/46-not mentioned in the newspaper. In 1968 they formed a Denton chapter of “The Transatlantic Brides and Parents Association.”

Many residents of Denton County may credit their existence to romances and marriages begun overseas between American servicemen and the local women of faraway lands.

## Long Overdue WASPs Land in Denton

By Gary Hayden

As the country's wartime manpower was funneled into uniform, on the home front genders in the workplace underwent a transformation. Now females could find a factory job or, for a very few, a fuselage.

The Women Airforce Service Pilots, or WASP, was a classified program created on August 5, 1943, for non-combatant women pilots to fly a range of missions with all manner of tactical aircraft from the P-58 Mustang fighter to the B-29 bomber. They even encountered live fire as they commanded tow planes for target practice.

To join up there were a few qualifications; 200 hours of logged flight time, a high school diploma and an army physical, etc. Of course, the ultimate criteria called for females to be between 21-35. There was considerable interest in the program as 25,000 women volunteered.

From that pool only 1,000 select recruits earned their Silver Wings at Avenger Field in Sweetwater, Texas. These elite new pilots had flight orders to ferry planes from factory to base or base to base. As to their performance vis-a-vis their male counterparts, the WASPs exceeded all expectations. By delivering an armada of 12,000 planes during the conflict the stateside WASPs relieved flyboys for forward assignments. But as the Allies began winning the war, the airmen wanted their cockpits back.

It was well after D-Day and just before Christmas 1944 when the WASPs were disbanded...and disowned. Once grounded, WASP discharges came piecemeal at scattered bases without fanfare or recognition that 38 WASPs were killed in the line of duty.

Despite their military instruction, postings and assignments the WASPs were labeled civilian volunteers and denied veteran status. Decades later this injustice was rectified, and surviving WASPs were granted full military designation. Today we can pay tribute to the remaining WASP veterans who in early 2019 had dwindling numbers reckoned to be below 30.

Subsequent to the Axis surrender all war and post war WASP documents were sealed in the National Archives for decades. You'll recall the WASPs' classified category. Once the government finally released the WASP records it was as though the WASPs went airborne again and chose to touch down for good here in Denton where Texas Woman's University (TWU) was designated as the final official repository for the WASP archives. That was in 1992.

Within its WASP Collection, TWU archivists have sorted 25 pertinent topics into separate figurative hangers. Parked in each are subjects such as diaries, logbooks, biographies,



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photographs, military records, accidents and reunions, and more. Not only are War Department files found at TWU but also materials from individual WASPs.

The number of items in the official WASP archive is staggering with more than one million items.

Of these, 15,000 have been digitized and can be found on TWU's website under Woman's Collection, Collections, Women Airforce Service Pilots. This public website is free to inspect although TWU holds the copyright to the Collection and its posted contents.

WASP uniforms and other artifacts in the TWU Women's Collection are located on the second floor of the Blagg-Huey Library on TWU's Denton campus. This exhibit is open Monday to Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is free.

Papers of the WASP Collection can be accessed for complementary research by appointment with TWU archivists.

TWU is also tasked with promoting the WASP legacy. Those efforts have apparently spawned other tributes to the silver winged women.

Besides a number of published books there's *We Served Too* the 2013 documentary from independent filmmaker Jill Bond. More may be revving up for the big screen.

*Hidden Figures* was a feature movie produced by 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox. This studio has already optioned the WASP account written by TWU Associate Professor of History Katherine Sharp Landdeck, Ph.D., who is not associated with the Collection.

Look for it coming to a theater near you soon, perhaps.

Check out the saga of these patriotic women; their legend is right here in Denton. So, ask yourself, "How would 12,000 grounded US Army Air Corps planes affect America's war effort?" We owe a note of gratitude to the women called WASPs.