

HEROES OF RED, WHITE & BLUE

## HEROES OF RED, WHITE & BLUE



## ~ WILKES COUNTY VETERANS ~

### VOLUME II

WILKES HERITAGE MUSEUM

EDITED BY DIANA PERRY *with the assistance of*  
MARILYN PAYNE, BRENDA COMBS, JUDITH WALSH,  
ROSE ANDREWS & AMANDA WILLIAMS

Copyright © 2009 by Wilkes Heritage Museum, Inc.

All Rights Reserved.

Designed & composited  
by Nathan W. Moehlmann  
Goosepen Studio & Press  
Conover, North Carolina.  
www.GoosepenPress.com

Printed & bound  
in the United States of America  
by Thomson-Shore.

To purchase *Heroes of Red, White & Blue, Vol. II*  
call the Wilkes Heritage Museum: 1.336.667.3171.  
www.WilkesHeritageMuseum.com

This publication was underwritten by the  
Kulynych Family Foundation I, Inc.

∞ *Courtesy of the Wilkes Journal-Patriot, the front cover photograph,  
by Dwight Nichols, features three Wilkes County area servicemen on leave in 1942  
in front of the Journal-Patriot offices, North Wilkesboro.  
Pictured left to right, PFC Gale M. Davis (killed at Normandy), CPL P. W. Duncan,  
of the Traphill Community, and Machinist Mate Johnson H. Payne, of Summit,  
were ordering subscriptions to the Journal-Patriot,  
so they could get the news while in service away from home.*

∞ *Courtesy of the Wilkes Heritage Museum, the back cover photograph  
features a cannon gracing the lawn of the Wilkes Heritage Museum.  
During World War I, the Germans captured this five-millimeter field piece  
from the Belgians. Later, the French, English, and the American soldiers  
on the Western Front recaptured it. It was shipped to Wilkes County  
after the war in 1924.*



*This veterans book tells the stories of the many Wilkes servicemen and women whose memorial bricks are given in tribute and are placed on the lawn of the Wilkes Heritage Museum. They served in every branch of service. Many were volunteers and many were drafted. Some were in combat and highly decorated. Some were killed or wounded in action serving their country. All who are included in this book left their homes to serve their nation and had their lives disrupted. This book is a worthy tribute to a legion of men and women who sacrificed for their nation from the Revolutionary War to the present conflicts.*

John Hubbard



CONTENTS

FOREWORD

9

INTRODUCTION

11

HEROES OF RED, WHITE & BLUE

13

INDEX OF DEDICATIONS

177

## FOREWORD

I WAS ASKED TO WRITE THE FOREWORD for Volume II of *Heroes of Red, White & Blue: Wilkes County Veterans*. I am honored and privileged to live in the greatest country in the world. Our country started out poor and grew to be the land where everyone wants to live and raise their family.

We, as a nation, have survived the great depression, several recessions, and numerous wars due to strong religious convictions, tremendous work ethic, and our fighting spirit. All of our freedoms are possible because of the many sacrifices of our veterans and dedicated citizens.

General Robert E. Lee, commander of the great Army of Northern Virginia, said “When a citizen answers his country’s call to service and performs his duty, he has served his country well and deserves the respect of its citizens.” Without the service given by veterans, we would have no freedom today. Thus, the Veterans Walk of Honor was made a reality in 2002 and gives all citizens a sense of pride. The Wilkes Heritage Museum is dedicated to preserving the memory of our veterans and the great history of our county.

The Wilkes Heritage Museum is housed in the historic old courthouse, which served the Great State of Wilkes as a hall of justice, county offices, and a gathering place for community events since the turn of the twentieth century. The reason we have been able to use this grand old building and live free in this great country is due to the many sacrifices made by our citizens in defense of freedom.

We urge each of you to participate by supporting the Wilkes Heritage Museum through membership, helping present our glorious past to our children. This historic building and the events held here are made possible by the sacrifices of our veterans and dedicated citizens through hard work. May God continue to bless the citizens of Wilkes County and the United States of America.

*George Childers, Vice-Chair  
Wilkes Heritage Museum, Inc.  
2009*

## INTRODUCTION

**T**HE VETERANS WALK OF HONOR PROJECT at the Wilkes Heritage Museum has been a labor of love since its inception in 2002. Over fourteen hundred bricks have been purchased in honor or memory of a veteran and placed in the walk. Individual stories have been collected along with photographs of the veterans for submission to the different volumes planned for print.

It takes a lot of hard work and dedication to bring something of this magnitude to fruition, and it could not be done without the initiative, dedication, and perseverance of the wonderful staff and volunteers at the Wilkes Heritage Museum. Countless hours have been spent reading, writing, scanning photographs, editing, and making phone calls to ensure the accuracy of each story for this volume of *Heroes of Red, White & Blue: Wilkes County Veterans*.

As with any printed document for public consumption, every aspect of this book has been analyzed and poured over countless times to try and achieve a final product that everyone can be proud of. However, there is always one obstacle that cannot completely be overcome, and that is human error. Please know that each story contained within this book is considered equally important, and the editors have strived

to do their best, preserving the stories as presented to us by the families and friends of each veteran.

To publish a volume of this magnitude, much less a series, is quite a time-consuming undertaking. A special thank you needs to be expressed to the following: The Wilkes Heritage Museum Board of Trustees for their support and help throughout this entire project; staff member Diana Perry for coordinating the printing of Volume II; and especially Brenda Combs, Judith Walsh, Rose Andrews, Marilyn Payne, and Amanda Williams for volunteering their time to type and edit each story as well as contacting the veterans or their families and friends to complete each story. This project, and especially this book, would not have been possible without each of you.

*Jennifer H. Furr, Director  
Wilkes Heritage Museum  
2009*

HEROES OF RED, WHITE & BLUE

401) **KENNETH M. KIMREY** *U.S. Army 1966–1969 – Vietnam*

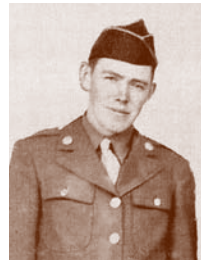


Kenneth Miller Kimrey was born May 9, 1946, in Sanford, NC, to Rives Brinn Kimrey and Marguerite Miller Kimrey. He served from May 5, 1966, to May 2, 1969. Kimrey was a SPC5 in the U.S. Army Signal Corps in Vietnam. ¶ Kimrey currently resides in Elkin, NC, with his spouse of 40-plus years, JoAnne Henderson Kimrey. They have one daughter, Allison Kimrey Shelton; her husband, Lonnie Shelton, Jr.; and their three children: step-grandson, Wayne Shelton; grandson, Tyler Brinn Shelton, and granddaughter, Sydney Erin Shelton.

*Submitted by Ken Kimrey*

402) **PFC WILLIAM DAVID THARPE** *U.S. Army 1943–1946 – World War II*

PFC William David Tharpe was born in Wilkes County on May 16, 1923, to William Freeland and Bretta Poplin Tharpe. He was the third child of ten and the first of five sons. His sisters are Loraine Tabor, Margaret Poplin, Nancy Guiton, Bretta May Hayes, and Helen Porter. His brothers are Sam, S. D., Loton, and Felix. ¶ David entered the U.S. Army on November 2, 1943. He had basic training at Camp Wheeler, GA, then went to Ft. George G. Meade, MD, to Camp Kilmer, NJ, and to Liverpool, England. He was then assigned to the 30<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division/Old Hickory Division and joined Company E, 120<sup>th</sup> Infantry, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion in France. The Old Hickory Division is still a NC National Guard unit today. ¶ David was an Ammunition Handler 844. He was in battles in Normandy (D-Day plus 12), Northern France, Rhineland, and Central Europe. He earned the Eame Service Medal with four Bronze Stars, Good Conduct Medal, Purple Heart Medal, and World War II Victory Medal. ¶ David qualified for the Combat Infantry Badge, Rifle M1, and MM. David was wounded July 25, 1944, confronting the enemy in the hedgerows of Germany. He was evacuated to a British hospital where he was treated and returned to his unit in September 1944. Thanksgiving Day 1944 he was wounded again and went back to England to recover. David returned to his unit in January. As his unit crossed the Rhine River he remembers the sweet sound of church bells ringing in a nearby town on Easter Sunday 1945. PFC William “David” Tharpe was honorably discharged from the U.S. Army January 20, 1946. ¶ David married Annie Lee Holloway on October 1, 1949. They had two daughters, Vivian Ann Settle (husband, SFC Harley Settle, Ret. U.S. Army) and Janet Elaine Winger (husband, Douglas Winger). David has two grandchildren and three great-grandchildren: David Lawrence Settle (wife, Diane Baker; daughter, Courtney Ann, and son, Colton Max) and Amanda Grai Settle (husband, Jon Settle;



daughter, Trinity Lyn). Both grandchildren are U.S. Army Veterans. David was a member of the 30<sup>th</sup> Infantry Association and a lifetime member of the Military Order of the Purple Heart. He passed away April 25, 2005.

*Submitted by David & Annie Lee Tharpe*

403) **LOTON E. THARPE** *U.S. Army Air Force 1947-1950 (not pictured)*

Loton E. Tharpe, son of William F. Tharpe and Bretta Poplin Tharpe, was born January 26, 1929. He died September 9, 2002. ¶ Loton was a private first class in the U.S. Army Air Force. He was stationed in Camp Hood, TX. After touring in the U.S. Army, he married Bobbie Hollaway and was married to her for 40 years. They had six children: Mike, Deborah, Crystal (deceased), Johnny, Tina, and Vonda. Loton was a successful businessman in Wilkes County, owning and operating Tharpe's Feed and Fertilizer and Tharpe's Tractor Company. Loton served as Mayor of Ronda.

*Submitted by Vonda Falls*

404) **GM3 SAMUEL Q. THARPE** *U.S. Navy 1947-1951*



I was born May 21, 1927. I served on the Atlantic Fleet tanker *USS Allagash (AO97)*. We helped service the fleet with oil in the Atlantic, Mediterranean Sea, as well as other seas. The Korean War started as we were returning to the U.S. from Europe. I was transferred to the munitions ship *USS Great Sitkin (AE17)*. While I was awaiting discharge, my enlistment was extended for a year due to the Korean War. We delivered ammunition to several Army and Navy bases outside the U.S. We also went through the Panama Canal into the Pacific Ocean and returned off-loaded ammunition to other countries on the return trip. ¶ An experimental winch was used to transfer ammunition to other ships at sea. The winch was designed to keep a cable tight so ammunition could be transferred to other ships at sea. To my knowledge it was never perfected! ¶ My parents were Bretta and Freel Tharpe of Ronda, NC. I married Mary Louise Wilson of Street, MD. We had three children, a boy and twins (boy and girl). I retired from the Maryland State Police as sergeant and then served as Peach Bottom Atomic Power Station Security Coordinator. After 43 years of marriage, I lost my wife. I later married Betty Anne Ford Clark of Airville, PA. I am now living in Airville, PA, and Pylesville, MD.

*Submitted by Samuel Q. Tharpe*

405) **FELIX H. THARPE** *U.S. Army 13<sup>th</sup> Infantry 1953-1958*



Felix was born on October 16, 1933, to Bretta and Freel Tharpe of Ronda, NC. He was raised in and lived in the community of Lomax in Wilkes County. He married Betty McCann in 1954. He was drafted into the Army in 1953 and trained at Fort Jackson. Felix went to Quarter Master School at Fort Lee and served at Fort Bragg. He served from 1953 to 1958. He was discharged from the Army as a corporal and discharged from the National Guard as a sergeant. ¶ Felix is presently retired and resides at 1032 Dobbins Mill Road, Elkin, NC, 28621.

*Submitted by Felix H. Tharpe*

406) **S. D. THARPE** *U.S. Army 1955-1956*

S. D. Tharpe served in the 10<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, 35<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery, at Ft. Riley, KS, and at Schweinfurt, Germany. He served in 1955 and 1956 in Operation Gyroscope. ¶ The 10<sup>th</sup> Division replaced the 1<sup>st</sup> Division, which was known as "Big Red One" because of occupied Germany. The 10<sup>th</sup> Division deactivated after WWII and was "put in moth balls," so to speak. Then in January 1955, the 10<sup>th</sup> Division was re-formed; everyone trained at Ft. Riley, KS, and all divisions, NCO's included, went to Schweinfurt, Germany. ¶ S. D.'s wife, Margaret Louise Dowell Tharpe, died July 1993. He then married Edna McNeil Triplett in October 1996.



*Submitted by Sheridan D. Tharpe*

407) **WILLIAM T. LEAGUE** *U.S. Marine Corps 1996-2004 (not pictured)*

William was born June 6, 1976. He served as a sergeant in the U.S. Marine Corps from October 1, 1996, to August 31, 2004. He was in Operation Iraqi Freedom. His hometown is Rocky Mount, NC. William is the grandson of William Frank Allen (U.S. Army), the nephew of both William James Allen (USMC) and Herbert Frank Allen (USMC), and the cousin of James Martin Allen (USMC).

*Submitted by Bob & Mickey League*

INDEX OF DEDICATIONS

- ABSHER, ALTON L. 501**  
*Given in honor by Alton L. Absher*
- ABSHER, ALTON L. 500**  
*Given in honor by Alton L. Absher*
- ABSHER, JAMES R. 683**  
*Given in honor by grandchildren  
Jessica Marie Gambill and  
Ethan Daniel Gambill*
- ABSHER, KENNETH B. 494**  
*Given in honor by J. B. Absher, Lindsey,  
Austin, Mason, and Sydney*
- ADAMS, ARCHIE E. 446**  
*Given in memory by his wife, Margaret,  
and his children, James, Albert, and  
Lillian Jane Adams, Brenda A. Dobbins,  
and Lisa A. Tyson*
- ADAMS, SR., GEORGE A. 544**  
*Given in memory by  
Glenda Church and Vivian Roberts*
- ADAMS, JAMES E. 445**  
*Given in honor by his wife,  
Glenda D. Adams, and family,  
Ian Adams, James La Monte,  
Zarah and James Leonard Adams*
- ADAMS, ROBERT CLINTON 515**  
*Given in honor by Michael Dale Adams*
- ANDERSON, BILLY G. 588**  
*Given in honor by  
Kimberly A. Reid and Billie A. Absher*
- ANDERSON, CALVIN G. 541**  
*Given in honor by Rudyne C. Anderson*
- ANDERSON, CHARLES D. 423**  
*Given in honor by Dena, Denny,  
Edwin, Sara, Matt, Abby, and Tyler*
- ANDERSON, CHARLIE B. 463**  
*Given in memory by  
Carolyn S. Anderson*
- ANDERSON, JAMES L., JR. 458**  
*Given in honor by his wife,  
Carol Anderson*
- ANDERSON, JAMES L., SR. 461**  
*Given in memory by his children*
- ANDERSON, JOSEPH C. 464**  
*Given in memory by his daughter,  
Pearl A. Osborne, and by his nieces  
and nephews, the John T. Jones family*
- ANDERSON, KENNETH 456**  
*Given in honor by his wife, Linda Anderson*
- ANDERSON, L. STEVEN 460**  
*Given in memory by his mother, Minnie  
Johnson Anderson, and his sisters, Patsy  
Goforth, Phyllis Carter, Vickie Anderson,  
Melinda Mobley, and Lisa Wilson*
- ANDERSON, LARRY W. 651**  
*Given in honor by  
Brenda and Christopher Anderson*
- ANDERSON, ROBERT G. 459**  
*Given in honor by his mother,  
Minnie Johnson Anderson, and his sisters,  
Patsy Goforth, Phyllis Carter,  
Vickie Anderson, Melinda Mobley,  
and Lisa Wilson*
- ANDERSON, ROBERT L., JR. 465**  
*Given in honor by  
the family of Robert L. "Cot" Anderson*
- ANDERSON, ROBY 618**  
*Given in honor by his wife,  
Hazel S. Anderson*
- ANDERSON, THOMAS L. 457**  
*Given in honor by his wife,  
Sandra C. Anderson*
- ANDERSON, WESLEY S. 462**  
*Given in memory by his nieces and  
nephews, the John T. Jones family*
- BALL, JARET ELIAS 429**  
*Given in memory by Annie Ball Johnson*
- BALLARD, BILLY DEAN 611**  
*Given in honor by Margaret Ballard*
- BARLOW, HENRY H. 536**  
*Given in memory by  
Pat and Suzanne McNeil*
- BAUGUSS, J. D. 799**  
*Given in memory by wife, Betty Jo Bauguss,  
and children, Tonya and Jeff*

**BESHEARS, BURL C. 484**

*Given in memory by  
Otus Phillips Beshears*

**BESHEARS, C. ADAM 425**

*Given in honor by Carol Beshears*

**BESHEARS, DANIEL F., JR. 483**

*Given in memory by Betty P. Beshears*

**BESHEARS, WILTON M. 507**

*Given in memory by his wife,  
Charlotte Beshears, and his children,  
Gary M. Beshears and Charlene B. Laster*

**BLACKBURN, BARRY R. "SAM" 477**

*Given in honor by Sandra A. Blackburn*

**BLACKBURN, JESSIE E. 493**

*Given in honor by Ervin Blackburn*

**BLACKBURN, LUIE T. 415**

*Given in memory by the children*

**BLANKENSHIP, WILLIAM E. 616**

*Given in memory by The BRATs*

**BLEVINS, FRANCIS 521**

*Given in memory by  
Evelyn Blevins Farrington  
and Bernice Ashlin, his daughters*

**BLEVINS, MACK ARTHUR 520**

*Given in memory by  
Evelyn Blevins Farrington, his sister*

**BLEVINS, OWEN E. 569**

*Given in memory by his children,  
Terry Johnson, Shelia Brown,  
Tim Blevins, and Lynn Trent*

**BOWMAN, BUDDY 628**

*Given in honor by Laura Stroud*

**BOWMAN, MERLE RAY 629**

*Given in memory by Laura Stroud*

**BOWMAN, RALPH, JR. 627**

*Given in memory by Laura Stroud*

**BOWMAN, RALPH, SR. 626**

*Given in memory by Laura Stroud*

**BREWER, ED 788**

*Given in honor by Betty K. Brewer*

**BREWER, JOE OLIVER 752**

*Given in honor by Lillie B. Brewer*

**BROCK, T. MACK 468**

*Given in honor by  
Terry A. and Ann Jackson Garwood*

**BROOKS, RALPH OLIN 783**

*Given in honor by  
Jane, David, and Debbie Brooks*

**BROWN, CHARLIE B., JR. 489**

*Given in honor by Danny and Janette  
Swaringen, son Anthony Swaringen, daughter  
and husband, Jamie and Daniel Lane, and  
grandchildren, Brandon, Reagan, and Will*

**BROYHILL, EVERETTE M. 663**

*Given in honor by  
Larry Broyhill and Dale Broyhill*

**BROYHILL, J. LLOYD 523**

*Given in honor by  
his sister, Arlee B. Andrews*

**BROYHILL, RALPH C. 422**

*Given in honor by his wife, Betty,  
and his children, Mark and Sherry*

**BROYHILL, VERNON C. 522**

*Given in honor by  
his sister, Arlee B. Andrews*

**BRYAN, THOMAS RHUDY, JR. 725**

*Given in honor by the Steelman girls*

**BULLIS, CARL W. 587**

*Given in memory by  
Brenda K. Cline and Janice K. Story*

**BUMGARNER, BILL 715**

*Given in memory by  
Barbara B. and Don Mathis*

**BUMGARNER, BILLY B. 594**

*Given in honor by Peggy Marley*

**BUMGARNER, DON 779**

*Given in memory by his daughter,  
Elizabeth Bumgarner McClanahan*

**BUMGARNER, HAROLD V. 667**

*Given in memory by  
Marcia Little and Brenda Moore*

**BUMGARNER, JAMES TED 787**

*Given in memory by  
Bob Bumgarner and Gladys Shumaker*

**BUMGARNER, JERRY B. 720**

*Given in honor by  
Penny Cashion Bumgarner*

**BUMGARNER, O. C., JR. 719**

*Given in honor by Traci Bumgarner*

**BYERS, CLAUDE G. 509**

*Given in memory by Kathleen Byers*

**BYNUM, JACKIE B. 419**

*Given in memory by  
Hyla B. and Fred Cundiff, Sr.*

**BYRD, JAMES ROSCOE 552**

*Given in memory by his sons,  
James, Jr., Tony, Perry, and Jerry*

**CALL, BAXTER R. 513**

*Given in honor by his wife, Julia Nance Call*

**CALL, NOAH LEE 540**

*Given in memory by Jo Ann Call*

**CALL, OTHA 596**

*Given in memory by his wife, Polly,  
and the Minton family*

**CALL, SANFORD, JR. 508**

*Given in honor by the family  
of Sanford Call, Jr.*

**CAMPBELL, GRADY C. 442**

*Given in honor by Paula Y. Bentley*

**CANTER, C. HADLEY 470**

*Given in memory by H. Eugene Canter*

**CARDWELL, CONRAD 479**

*Given in memory by Pauline Cardwell,  
Robert and Gladys, Renae, Lori,  
James, David, Isaac, Davis, and Baby*

**CARTER, ERNEST M. 481**

*Given in honor by Ernest M. Carter*

**CAUDILL, ARTHUR GENE 693**

*Given in honor by Willa Scott Caudill*

**CAUDILL, BILL L. 538**

*Given in honor by his wife,  
Nancy H. Caudill, his son, Kent H. Caudill,  
and his grandson, Zachary S. Caudill*

**CHATHAM, RAYMOND T. 518**

*Given in memory by his wife, Polly McCoy  
Chatham, and children, and grandchildren*

**CHURCH, BRUCE M., SR. 795**

*Given in honor by  
Kin and Vicki Church  
and Mark and Teresa Church*

**CHURCH, EDWIN R. 598**

*Given in honor by  
Dwight, Loretta, and Sarah Church*

**CHURCH, GORDON J. 691**

*Given in honor by daughter,  
Pearl A. Osborne, and son,  
George Ronnie Church*

**CHURCH, J. EDWARD 578**

*Given in memory by Eloise Church*

**CHURCH, JAY CLAYTON 699**

*Given in honor by his family*

**CHURCH, R. VAUGHN 582**

*Given in memory by  
the Vaughn Church family*

**CHURCH, ROGER LEE 692**

*Given in honor by Coleen Church*

**CHURCH, W. GLENN 615**

*Given in honor by  
his brother, Ralph Church*

**COCKERHAM, CHARLIE F. 605**

*Given in honor by Allen and Denise,  
Joey, Shana, and Kade, and Clint  
and Peggy Cockerham*

**CORE, LARRY DONALD 546**

*Given in honor by his children,  
Penny, Larry, and Greg*

**CRAVEN, HENRY H. 572**

*Given in memory by his wife, Lorene,  
and children, Henrietta Miller,  
Mark Craven, and Malia Goodman,  
and stepchildren, JoAnn, Doug,  
Rebecca, and Judy Pearson*

**CULLER, WILLIAM CLEGG 625**

*Given in honor by wife, Dessie H. Culler,  
and daughter, Martha Culler Watson*

**CUNDIFF, FRED 418**

*Given in honor by Fred Cundiff II  
and Rod Cundiff, his sons*