



# Lifestyles

## A 'thank you' for the ultimate sacrifice

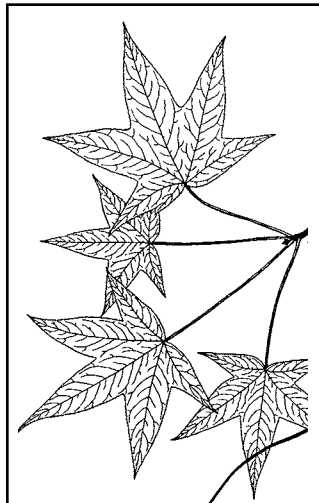
Perhaps when composing music, both time and circumstances shape the composition. Mozart always claimed that he did not move the moment, but the moment moved him. If that is the case, then a golden opportunity passed unnoticed in Gilberttown one Sunday afternoon in 1942. You can determine your own title for this missed composition, and we will give you our title after describing the background for it.

There were several beekeepers in Gilberttown and neighboring surroundings at that time, and they included Mr. T.J. Sullivan and Mr. O'Neil Wright. Beekeeping was a profitable endeavor that relied upon more than just honey for an income. Some of the beehives were rented out locally for crop pollination. Indeed, the Dept. of Agriculture estimates that at least one third of our food depends upon pollination by bees. Some of the hives were sold and shipped to other locations. Some customers wanted only queen bees. Canada became a good market for the queens.

When several beehives were going to the same place, they were often trucked to their destination. However, if just one or two hives were being shipped, they were tightly sealed and shipped in the baggage car of the passenger train that made two stops in town each day. On that particular afternoon, only one hive was being shipped. A driver took the hive to the train and handed it to the conductor who passed through the passenger car on his way to the baggage room.

But the poor man stumbled and dropped the hive, which promptly fell to the floor and shattered into a dozen pieces. Some of the bees took to the air, but most of them fell onto the floor. The alert passengers joined the conductor, and all of them went stomp, stomp, stomp. A good composer, appreciating the time and the circumstances, could have used the occasion as a background for his composition. Call it what you will, but we would have called it "The Gilberttown Stomp."

The popular songs in



**SWEET GUM**  
By Sammy Wright

that World War II era were mostly about the girls, families, and hometowns that our fighting men left. Consider some of them: "I've got a girl in Kalamazoo," and "When the swallows come back to Capistrano." One song, "Chattanooga Choo Choo," combined both a girl, a song, and a hometown. Consider how families responded to their sons being away: "I'll say a prayer for you, dear, each night at nine." It is even possible to consider the beginning of women's liberation through the reply to one song. The first song, by a male vocalist, was "Don't sit under the apple tree with anyone else but me," which quickly went to the top of the Hit Parade.

Not to be outdone, nor relegated to the ranks of the girl who was always patiently waiting, a female vocalist put her own version of the song on the Hit Parade two weeks later: "I won't sit under the apple tree with anyone else but you." But it involved more than just an apple tree. The girl sang about building ships and doing a man's work while her beau was away, and also made a few demands upon him. He too was told to stay away from that apple tree until she could join him under it.

When Hitler seized Czechoslovakia in 1937, President Roosevelt knew that only the United



Submitted photo  
Albert Hamrick, Jr., son of Albert Hamrick and Maggie Taylor Hamrick, was drafted into the service during the early stages of World War II. He was killed in battle in France

States could stop him from taking over the world. The President stepped up the draft, and the following years were periods of stress and anxiety, especially when our freedom was threatened on the battlefields of Europe. Everyone knew that there would eventually be land invasion of continent. Our country went into a stage of rapid rearmament.

During that time, many sad scenes took place around the train station as young men gave their families long hugs, some for the last time. We want to honor one of those young men

right here. It is our way of thanking him for the payment he made for our continuing freedom. Only through his sacrifice, and those of others, have we remained free.

Albert Hamrick, Jr. was the son of Albert Hamrick and Maggie Taylor Hamrick. He was born on the Bladon road and reared in Barrytown. He attended school in Barrytown, in a wooden structure that was located beside the Barrytown cemetery. Like most schools of the era, that building also served as a church on Sundays. This was not the building that is on the location now.

Only nine grades were taught at the school. It was consolidated with some other schools in 1937.

Albert was a hard working boy who was always doing something. The school was heated with a wood heater, so Albert picked up wood from beside the dirt road as he walked the four miles to school each morning. That was a volunteer job that he seemed to cherish. After school each day, he worked on the family farm, and in the summers in the logging woods. A quiet and reserved person, he was noted for his gentle manner and hard work.

It took a little time to gain Albert's friendship, but it never faded or waned once it was gained. No one ever heard him complain about anything. Rather than complain about a situation, he would try to fix it. An excellent swimmer, he enjoyed the creeks and the river on the weekend with his friends. However, most of Albert's life was centered around work on the farm or in the logging woods.

Like most young men at that time, Albert assumed that he would be drafted into the service. He was among the first group to be called after war was declared in 1941, and that meant serving more time than most soldiers. He never complained, but accepted his service as a fact of life that had to be performed. About his only communication while he was away was with his mom, and that was limited because his training was so intense that it left him very little time.

He trained at Fort Bragg, N.C. as an infantryman and then trained on machine guns. He served in the 39th Infantry, an element of General Patton's Ninth Division. After the Normandy invasion on D-Day, June 6, 1944, the division moved north-eastward during the remainder of the summer.

From the time that he was drafted until the end of his service, Albert was given only a few days furlough because conditions in Europe were very chaotic. He spent the time in Barrytown with his parents, and tried to look up some of his

former classmates. Most of them were also away in the service. His parents went with him to the same train station where the conductor dropped the bees several years previously.

After the Normandy invasion, Albert was wounded several times, and always went back to the firing line after recovering. The details of exactly what happened on August 17, 1944 were very sketchy, as they usually were in that terrible time. The War Dept. notified Albert's parents that he was killed in battle in Lignos, France.

The family never learned anything more. After the war ended, Albert's body was returned to Barrytown. He has rested since that time in the Barrytown cemetery, near where he was reared and schooled.

Our information for this article is from Mr. Berlie Hamrick, Albert's uncle who still lives in Barrytown. Our gratitude goes to him, for both the information and the way that he welcomed us into his pleasant home. When Mr. Hamrick offered to take us to the cemetery, we were more than interested. The inscription on Albert's tombstone is also quiet and serene, "May he rest in peace." The grave is near the top of the hill, at the back of the cemetery.

As we looked intently at the road beneath us, we were able to visualize the time when the road was reddish, sandy clay. We were also able to imagine a little lad with an armload of wood trudging up the road in the early morning. If the wood was long, he carried it on his thin shoulders.

We were able to see him as those shoulders filled out and the lad grew taller. We even noticed that his thin hair became a shock of blonde. Details of the imaginary scene quickly faded because of the cold morning.

Yes, the scene lasted only a few seconds, and then it was gone. We turned to walk back down the hill toward the road, after first murmuring: "Thank you, Pal .....

Thank you so much."

## Remembering 33 years of military service

My own life in the military from May 1951 to May 1984 was good. First I had to move from being a boy to a man, and the military did that.

I joined the Navy on May 29, 1951, and went to Bainbridge, Maryland for three weeks of training. The first stage of training was about the Navy and its mission. Second, I learned how to swim, and since I was going on a ship this was a "must".

The second part of my training was at Little Creek, Virginia. I had volunteered for truck driving duty at the Bainbridge USNTC. Here I was TDY to the Marines. I qualified in the operation and handling of LCM's, LCVP's, MWB's, 50ft. ML's, 30ft. ML's, and motor boats. We trained in beachhead landings with the Marines.

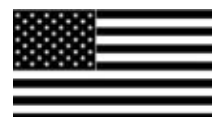
My next duty station was aboard the USS Wisconsin, BB-64, which was tied up at Norfolk, Virginia. I went aboard and assigned to the 4th Div., in charge of all boats. This was good (MOS) duty. My other duty was at the #4-5in. gun mount.

The Wisconsin sailed for the west coast by the way of the Panama Canal. This was



### Our Veterans

By SFC Richard M. 'Pete' Allen (Ret.)



something to see for a boy from Butler, Alabama! From the west coast we sailed for Hawaii. I could see some of the leftovers from World War II. The USS Arizona as she lay in the water.

I pulled two tours in Korea. On one I had a mission to get a man off a beach in North Korea. This went off good, and we got him before the North Koreans did. On my next tour, the Wisconsin was hit by North Korean guns. Three men from the 7th Div. were injured.

I left the Navy in May of 1954, came home and went back to school. In November of 1954, I joined the Alabama National Guard in Butler. The Unit at that time was Batt. B,

203rd FA. BN. I made many summer camps. Then we were changed to Company A, 156th M.P. BN. Had a lot of state call ups, some that turned out to be federal.

In September of 1961, the Unit was called to Active Duty and reported to Fort Gordon, Georgia for 11 months of training during the Berlin Crisis. After this we returned to Butler. Some time later we were changed to the 1165th M.P. Company.

After 33-1/2 years in the in the military - first with the Navy and later with the Army National Guard - I retired. In the Navy I was able to see parts of the world I could only read about - different countries, people and different ways

of life. It did me good to see how other people had to live, and the rights we have here in the good old United States of America.

My wife and I have been married almost 54 years, and we have two children, seven grandchildren, and one great-granddaughter.

GO NAVY, DEEP BLUE!

NEXT WEEK - Read about World War II veteran, PFC George W. Bethany.

(ED. NOTE: Pete lives in Butler and for years has collected information and written about Choctaw County's military veterans. Look for his columns each week in our WEEKEND EDITION, which is published each Friday. Readers who have information on local veterans may contact Pete by email at allwis64@yahoo.com. Copies of articles, information and photos for Pete may be dropped off at our offices in Butler or Gilberttown. We appreciate Pete's work in documenting and recognizing Choctaw County's military "heroes" and we hope readers will enjoy these columns. - Tommy)

## McGhee, Weatherly to marry

SILAS -- LaShauna Laneese McGhee and Levor Damond Weatherly would like to announce their engagement and forthcoming wedding.

Miss McGhee is the daughter of Jerry McGhee and the late Precious Beatrice McGhee and the granddaughter of Bessie Hill and the late Wesley Hill, Sr. of Silas.

Mr. Weatherly is the son of Mary (Earl) Gates of Lower Peachtree. And Alfonso (Sherron) McCoy of Thomasville. He is the grandson of the late William and Stella Weatherly and the late James and Abbie McCoy of Thomasville.

The wedding will take place at Shady Grove Baptist Church, in Silas, on February 24, 2007 at 2 p.m.

A reception will be held immediately following at the Silas Volunteer Fire Department.

Gettin' hitched?  
Announce it in the Sun!

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Home Owned, Home Operated ... *The Choctaw Sun!*