

The World War I profile of Army Cpl. Elder E. Heath

By **NORMA ECKARD**
SPECIAL TO THE BEACON

Elder Eugene Heath was born, raised and lived most of his life in Brunswick and New Hanover counties. On May 27, 1917, at 19, Elder Heath enlisted in the N.C. National Guard by way of the Boys' Brigade. He was eventually assigned to Company I, 119th Infantry, 30th "Old Hickory" Division.

Cpl. Heath's North Carolina World War I Service Card shows he was a private. U.S. Army Transport records show him being moved to and from France, casualty lists printed in newspapers at the time and his military flat marker refer to him as Corporal Elder E. Heath. It is not unusual for discrepancies in historical records, and the evidence is overwhelming that the service card is incorrect.

Before settling at Camp Sevier, S.C., the soldiers were at Camp Jackson, S.C. There, photographs were taken. Previous profiles described training with the 30th Division at Camp Sevier, S.C., the transportation to France, and events up to and including the Hindenburg Line assault.

Cpl. Elder Heath was seriously wounded during the assault on the Hindenburg Line, along with many of his comrades in the 30th Division. History, 119th Infantry, 60th Brigade, 30th Division, U.S.A. Operations in Belgium and France, 1917-1919 reported the casualties in the 119th Infantry on that day were as follows: 146 killed in action; 691 wounded; 16 died of wounds; 37 taken prisoner;

and 12 missing in action.

A partial casualty list appeared in many newspapers after he was wounded. Pvt. Newton was also severely wounded that day. He recuperated in France and had a photo taken, again, with an unknown fellow soldier. Pvt. Newton's photographs give us a glimpse into the experience of the other soldiers from the 119th Infantry.

Cpl. Heath had a complete recovery, returning to duty Dec. 2, 1918. The war had ended a month earlier. When he boarded USS Huron on March 21, 1919, to return to America, the passenger list shows All Class A (fit for duty).

After Cpl. Elder E. Heath was discharged, he married. It does not appear he had children. Elder Eugene Heath was laid to rest in Columbus County in 1984. He was 88.

If you would like to help us honor Heath or another Brunswick County World War I veteran, go to caswellriflerange.com or email ftcaswellriflerange@gmail.com. Three hundred fifty Brunswick County World War I veterans have been honored to date.

A monument will be placed at the site of the rifle range in Caswell Beach Veterans' Day 2018 in honor of the men and women from Brunswick County who served their country. A book, "To All Those Who Served in World War I from Brunswick County, N.C.," is to be published in 2019 containing all 724 names, as well as a historical overview of the 1918 World War I Rifle Range Target Pit Storage Room.

We would like the public to review the names of the

following Brunswick County men who died during World War I to make certain they have not forgotten anyone who may have perished or missed someone while researching names that should be on this list.

Killed in action: Pvts. 1st Class Walter S. Brock and Erastus I. Nelson, Pvts. Harvey T. Chadwick, Jimmie Griffin and Harry L. Pigott, Cpl. Herbert B. Ward

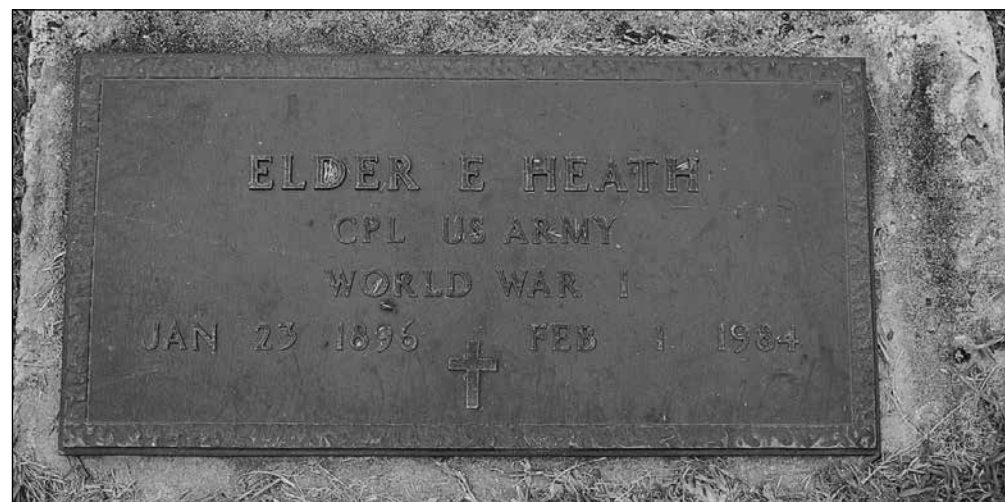
Died of wounds: Pvts. William C. Hewett and Benjamin B. Smith.

Died of Disease: Pvts. William F. Brooks, Carl J. Danford, Manning Hall, Claudie H. McCall, Elijah Milliken, Kendrick W. Outlaw, Cecil S. Pierce, Samuel C. Swain, Guy E. Watson, David Williams and Fred Wilson, Pvt. 1st Class John W. Carlisle, David L. Doshier (cook), Seaman James C. Edwards, Sgt. Robert G. Farmer

Before the monument is engraved, they need the public to help verify the list. If you see a discrepancy or know a name to be added, email ftcaswellriflerange@gmail.com.

The rifle range memorial and monument dedication will be held on Veterans Day, Sunday, Nov. 11, at 11 a.m. at the site in Caswell Beach.

Norma Eckard of Caswell Beach is president of Friends of Fort Caswell Rifle Range Inc.



Photos contributed

Grave marker for Cpl. Elder Eugene Heath



Pvt. Thomas Newton Bryson, left, with three unknown fellow soldiers in the 119th Infantry.



Pvt. Newton, a friend of Heath, is on the left.