



Photos contributed

100-yard rifle pit, Camp Sevier Rifle Range, Greenville, S.C.

The World War I profile of Army Cpl. Calmer Thomas Clemmons

BY NORMA ECKARD
SPECIAL TO THE BEACON

Calmer Thomas Clemmons was born, raised and lived most of his life in Brunswick and New Hanover counties. On May 5, 1917, at 22, Calmer enlisted in the N.C. National Guard by way of the Boys' Brigade, as described previously.

In October 1917, the 30th Division was created from NC National Guard units. Cpl. Calmer Clemmons was assigned to Company F, 119th Infantry, 30th "Old Hickory" Division. Previous posts 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.

Very early in the morning of Sept. 29, the 60th brigade (119th Infantry, 120th Infantry and 115th Machine Gun Battalion), with some units of the 117th regiment, assaulted this terrible line on a front of 3,000 yards, captured the whole Hindenburg system, then advanced still further and took the tunnel system with all the German troops hidden in it and next captured the towns of Bellicourt, Nouroy, Riqueval, Carriere, Etricourt, the Guillaime Ferme (farm) and Ferme de Riqueval; in this part of the assault advancing 4,200 yards and defeating two German divisions of average quality and taking from these (the 75th and 185th) 47 officers and 1,434 men.

Cpl. Clemmons was slightly wounded during the heroic assault on the Hindenburg Line on Sept. 29, 1918. This injury was reported on his North Carolina World War I Service Card. But he faced more serious injuries a few weeks later. Details of that battle will be covered later, as several Brunswick County men were wounded during that time.

Cpl. Calmer Clemmons was seriously wounded Oct. 16 (North Carolina World War I Service Card) or 18 (119th roster). The date was probably recorded incorrectly because Cpl. Clemmons was initially reported missing.

Cpl. Clemmons never returned to service because of the seriousness of his injuries, which are unknown. On Jan. 22, 1919, he left U.S. Army Base Hospital No. 40 in Southern England and boarded USS Plattsburg to New York. The passenger list stated that all passengers were "walking cases."

The Charlotte Observer (Feb. 13, 1919) reported the following: "Fifty-two Carolina soldiers, wounded in action in France but now almost well again from a New York army hospital, arrived at the base hospital at Camp Greene for medical and reconstructive treatment, according to information given out there yesterday. With relatively few exceptions, these men formerly were with the famous 13th Division. Others were with labor battalions, medical corps unit and artillery regiments... Corporal Calmer Clemmons, Company F, 119th infantry and Bugler William R. Smith, Machine Gun Company, 322nd Infantry. Bugler William R. Smith was also from Brunswick County.

Calmer Clemmons was honorably discharged Feb. 25, 1919, with no reported disability. He married and appears to have lived with his wife and son in Wilmington until his death.

Calmer Clemmons was laid to rest Sept. 26, 1965, at 69 in Oakdale Cemetery, Wilmington. Military honors are displayed.

If you would like to help us honor Clemmons 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 during 2019 containing all 724 names, as well as a historical overview of the 1918



Calmer Thomas Clemmons' grave marker



Captured prisoners, 1240 by 30th Division; background is 30th going to the front

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 that 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.