

WWI Profile: Francis Dillard Price, 1894-1971

BY NORMA ECKARD
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GUEST COLUMNISTS

Francis "Dillard" Price was born in Southport, son of William Ayers "Willie" Price and Carrie Geanette (or Jeanette) Tharp. The 1900 Census and 1910 Census shows the family continued to live in Southport. His father was a farmer. There was a total of 13 children.

Dillard's nephew, Bill Price, shared the following information about the family, as well as the photos of Dillard and wife Evie:

Dillard's father, Willie Price, operated a large farm near what is now the Athletic Park. His grandfather's name is Francis Dawson Price III. He enlisted in the Confederate Navy, serving as a landsman (novice seaman) on the ironclad sloop CSS North Carolina. He was injured in the Civil War. Dillard's grandmother's name was Julia Ann Swain Price.

Dillard's aunt and uncle were Edney V. "Lillian" Price Swain and McDermit D. Price. His uncle worked on his father's farm and his aunt was a school teacher. The four of them are buried in the Price Family Cemetery located at the Athletic Park. Another aunt was Florence Catherine Price Swain.

Dillard was eligible for the first draft on June 5, 1917. His draft registration shows that he was farming for his father.

On July 13, 1918, Dillard was ordered to report for duty. His training began at Clemson, S.C.

[Source: Ancestry.com. U.S.,

Lists of Men Ordered to Report to Local Board for Military Duty, 1917-1918 (database online). Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2013.]

The official documents for the Students' Army Training Corps (SATC), shared in a previous post, seem to indicate that drafted soldiers may apply for the Corps. But what's curious is that Pvt. Price's NC WWI Service Card at top shows he transferred from the SATC to the Coastal Artillery Corps (CAC) at Fort Moultrie on Sept. 13, 1918. The SATC did not officially begin until October 1918.

His VA Index indicates he served in the CAC, as well as the military marker at his grave. Typically, both the index and marker show the last assignment during the war.

There's no reason to doubt he served in the SATC for a time, but the sequence of events cannot be determined from the available documents. As his 1940 Census information shows, he had not completed high school, which is typically a condition of the Collegiate Section of the SATC. However, Clemson did have a Vocational Section and Dillard seemed qualified for it.

All of this is relevant only to determine whether to include Pvt. Price in the SATC list. He served until his honorable discharge on Dec. 6, 1918.

Dillard returned home to live with his parents, according to the 1920 Census. He married Evie Ann McDowell in 1926. The 1930 Census and 1940 Census show they contin-

ued living in Southport while farming and had one son.

Francis Dillard Price passed away on Oct. 10, 1971, at age 77. He was laid to rest in Northwood Cemetery in Southport.

His son, Dillard Hugh Price, served his country in the U.S. Navy during World War II, then as a civil servant for 30 years. He passed away in 2015 and was also laid to rest in Northwood Cemetery. His obituary is printed on his findagrave page.

If you would like to help us honor Francis Dillard Price or another Brunswick County WWI veteran, email the Friends of Ft. Caswell Rifle Range at ftcaswellriflerange@gmail.com or go to www.caswellriflerange.com.

We have been hard at work with Daniel Norris from SlapDash Publishing on the book we plan to offer this year, "Brunswick County in the Great War: Preserving the 1918 Fort Caswell Rifle Range and the Legacies of the Men and Women Who Served."

All 718 Brunswick County WWI veterans have been honored with a donation by people in the community. We thank the community for the amazing support! To see the veteran list with donors, go to the donor page on the website.



Photos contributed

Francis "Dillard" Price and wife Evie

I affirm that I have verified above answers and that they are true.

Francis Dillard Price
(Signature of mark)

Francis Dillard Price draft registration signature

Price, Francis Dillard		3,054,212	* White * Colored.	1
(Surname)	(Christian name)	(Army serial number)		
Residence:	Southport	Brunswick	NORTH CAROLINA	
(Street and house number)	(Town or city)	(County)	(State)	
* Enlisted * R. A. * N. G. * E. R. C. * Inducted at:	Southport NC		on July 13, 1918	
Place of birth:	Southport NC		Age or date of birth:	Aug 22/1896
Organizations served in, with dates of assignments and transfers:	Students Army Training Corps Clemson Agricultural College Clemson College SC to Sept 13/18; CAC Fort Moultrie *			
Grades, with date of appointment:	Pvt			
Engagements:				
Wounds or other injuries received in action:	None.			
Served overseas from:	None	to:	from:	
Honorably discharged on demobilization:	Dec 6		1918	
In view of occupation he was, on date of discharge, reported:	0		per cent disabled.	
Remarks:				
Form No. 724-1, A. G. O. * Strike out words not applicable. † Dates of departure from and arrival in the U. S.				

NC Service Card for Francis Dillard Price