

WWI Profile: Andrew Jackson Robbins Jr., 1897-1932

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GUEST COLUMNISTS

Andrew Jackson "Jack" Robbins Jr. was born in Southport, son of Andrew Jackson Robbins Sr. and Ada Caroline Drew. The 1900 Census and 1910 Census show the family remained in Southport. In 1910, they lived on Lord Street.

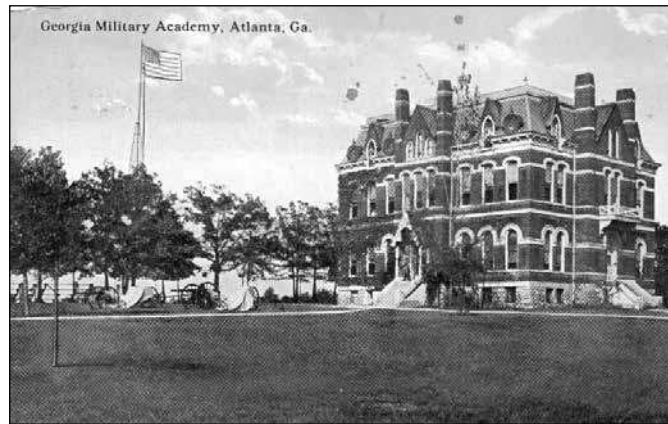
Southport Historical Society, Susie Carson Research Room, has a research file for his father on their website, which is the source for the following information. The file includes many fascinating details of his life:

Jack's father, Andrew Jackson Robbins Sr., was a building contractor in Southport from 1895 until 1922. He built many homes for prominent members of the community, as well as structures in the area such as the Brunswick County jail, post office and bank.

In addition, he built the school house at Fort Caswell in 1899 and the brick bakehouse there in 1913. More buildings at Fort Caswell have been reported as constructed by him.

It is said that he built cement bunkers at Fort Caswell for the government during World War I. Could he have built the bunker at the Fort Caswell Rifle Range? There is no confirmation, but any information received in the future will be shared on the website.

Jack Robbins Jr. attended high school at Georgia Military Academy in College Park, Ga. This was printed in



Source of 1913 postcard: Georgia Military Academy.

his obituary, but also found in a sentence in the society news of The Wilmington Dispatch on March 26, 1916, p. 9. Georgia Military Academy in College Park in Atlanta, now known as Woodward Academy, was a military boarding school for boys, founded in 1900.

By 1910, GMA had 14 teachers, a student body of 150 boys, two more buildings and a football field. In these early years, teachers and their families lived with cadets in home-like buildings arranged around plazas, playgrounds and courtyards."

During the 1917-1918 school year, Jack attended NC State College of Agriculture and Engineering in Raleigh (now simply known as NC State) as a freshman, according to the 1918 yearbook, The Agromeck. His area of study is indicated as mechanical engineering.

The Infantry Unit at NC State College was compulsory for the first two years. Recall that the military training programs at colleges were separate from the Students' Army Training Corps, which did not become active until October 1918.

Jack was a private in Company E. His battalion, the Second Battalion, consisted of Companies E, F, G and H.

He was not found in the 1918-1919 yearbook, but we know he was at Davidson College for at least part of that school year.

Previous posts introduced the SATC and his fellow corps member from Southport, Harry Churchill Corlette Jr. Like Harry, Jack

did not become eligible for the draft until the registration of Sept. 12, 1918. His draft registration shows he was working at Fort Caswell.

When the SATC became active in October 1918, Jack and Harry met the physical and educational admission requirements and volunteered. Both were accepted and ordered to report for duty on Oct. 2, 1918, at Davidson College, a collegiate section from NC.

The Nov. 11 Armistice ended their training and the SATC was demobilized. Pvt. Robbins was honorably discharged on Dec. 10, 1918.

Jack's brother Benjamin Drew Robbins, also served in WWI. He enlisted in the U.S. Navy on May 21, 1918, serving as a Machinist Mate, 2nd Class, on a Submarine Chaser until discharged on Aug. 11, 1919.

In 1920, Jack was home, living with his parents in Southport. He had resumed working as a clerk for the U.S. Government. This implies he had not returned to college, but there are no records to confirm.

According to the Southport Historical Society's files, in 1922, his parents and siblings moved to Orlando due to his brother Ben's serious illness. Jack and his wife joined them for a time, as seen in this excerpt from the 1922 Orlando City Directory [Source: Ancestry.com. U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995 [database online]. Provo, Utah, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2011].

Orlando newspapers show his father continued building at a rapid rate. The residence of his parents at 322 Agnes St. appears to be built by his father. This is based on The Orlando Sentinel, which lists a permit requested by A.J. Robbins for a garage and residence at Agnes Street in the April 17, 1921 issue. Photos of the home and garage are available on the website.

Jack Jr and Elizabeth are not listed in subsequent issues of the Orlando City Directory. Their son was born in New Hanover County on Nov. 8, 1922, which shows they had returned to NC that year. The 1924 Wilmington

Robbins, Andrew J Jr		4,456,363	*White *Colored-
(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	Brunswick Co NC	on	Oct 2 18
Place of birth:	South port NC	Age or date of birth:	Sept 18, 1897
Organizations served in, with dates of assignments and transfers:	Students Army Tng C Davidson College Davidson NC to disch		
Grades, with date of appointment:	Pvt		
Engagements:			
Wounds or other injuries received in action:	None.		
Served overseas from †	No	to †	
Honorably discharged on demobilization	Dec 10/18	from †	
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.

Photos contributed

NC Service Card for Andrew Jackson Robbins.

City Directory lists Jack as a foreman for the City Laundry Company, living on Wrightsville Sound. Subsequent directories show he had become a bookkeeper for the same company.

The 1930 Census shows he and his wife and their son were living on Wrightsville Road in Wilmington. Jack remained a bookkeeper for the City Laundry Co. His wife Elizabeth was a clerk for the steam railway [Additional Source: Wilmington City Directory, 1930].

Andrew Jackson Robbins Jr. passed away from pneumonia on Oct. 8, 1932, at age 35. He was laid to rest in Oakdale Cemetery in Wilmington. The flat marker shown is from Findagrave.

Obituaries were printed in newspapers in Orlando. The following clipping was printed in The Orlando Sentinel on Oct. 11, 1932, p 3; while the obituary from The Orlando Morning Star on Oct. 12, 1932, p. 2 is copied below. Both mention that his parents were alive; however, his mother had passed away earlier in the year. The obituary also includes that he left college to enlist in WWI, but we know he actually entered the SATC at Davidson College.

Funeral of A.J. Robbins Jr., 35, son of Mr. and Mrs. A.J. Robbins of 546 S. Lake St. Orlando was held Mon-



Flat marker for Andrew Jackson Robbins.

day in Wilmington, N.C. The young man died at Wrightsville Sound, Saturday after a week's illness. The wife, the parents, two sisters, Mrs. A.A. Starling and Miss Josephine Robbins, the last four of Orlando, and one brother, Ben D. Robbins, of Tampa survive.

Mr. Robbins was a bookkeeper employed in Wilmington at the time of his death and was educated at Georgia Military Academy and Davidson college. He left college to enlist in the U.S. forces in the World War and was a member of the American Legion and Pi Kappa Alpha social fraternity.

Jack's son, Dr. Jack Hinton Robbins, lived a long life, passing away at age 93. His obituary is printed in Findagrave and is copied below:

Jack Hinton Robbins, age 93, of Bradenton, died peacefully at home surrounded by family on Saturday, March 12, 2016.

He was a retired physician and colonel in the United States Air Force. Born in Wilmington, NC on Nov. 8, 1922, he is preceded in death by his mother, Elizabeth Branson, and father, Andrew Jackson Robbins Jr., who died when his son was just 10 years of age, both from Wilmington, NC.

As a teenager, he traveled the world with his mother and missionary stepfather, William Branson, living several years in Africa, China and India. He attended Loma Linda Medical School and entered the Air Force in 1948, where he met and married his wife of 60 years, Lola Robbins.

During his 25 years of service, he specialized in aerospace medicine, serving as a flight surgeon and assisting in the Mercury Space Program. He was later assigned to the Surgeon General's office. He also completed his residency in radiology while serving in the Air Force.

He retired from the military and moved the family to Bradenton in 1973. Dr. Robbins practiced radiology in Bradenton for almost 15 years before retiring from the medical profession. He was an admired

and respected physician, always demonstrating integrity and kindness to everyone he encountered.

After retirement, he traveled regularly with his wife and enjoyed countless hours fishing with his son.

He is survived by his wife, Lola Robbins, his five children and numerous grandchildren. Visitation is 6-8 p.m. Wednesday, March 16, 2016, at Brown & Sons Funeral Homes & Crematory 43rd Street Chapel. Funeral Mass is 2 p.m. Thursday, March 17, 2016, at Saints Peter & Paul the Apostles Catholic Church. In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to Southeastern Guide Dogs or the charity of your choice.

While his parents, siblings and son were ultimately laid to rest in Florida, one brother, Robert Marion Robbins, who passed away at age 2, had been laid to rest in Old Smithville Cemetery in Southport in 1896. No records establish his parentage, he is not mentioned in obituaries, and the 1900 Census shows his mother Ada Robbins had given birth to two children with two surviving (Bennie D. and Andrew J.), rather than three children with two surviving. However, his headstone identifies him as the "Son of AJ and Ada D Robbins," so he is assumed to be their son.

If you would like to help us honor Andrew Jackson Robbins Jr. or another Brunswick County WWI veteran, email the Friends of Ft. Caswell Rifle Range at ftcaswellriflerange@gmail.com or go to caswellriflerange.com.

We have been hard at work with Daniel Norris from SlapDash Publishing on the book we plan to offer this September, "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.