

WWI Profile: Harry Churchill Corlette Jr., 1898-1947

BY NORMA ECKARD
AND AMY ECKARD
GUEST COLUMNISTS

Harry Churchill Corlette Jr. was born in Southport, son of Harry Churchill Corlette Sr. and Louise White Grissom. The 1900 Census and 1910 Census shows the family remained in Southport. In 1910, they lived on Bay Street. His father was a pilot of a fishing boat.

A previous post introduced the Students' Army Training Corps (SATC).

Harry did not become eligible for the draft until the registration of Sept. 12, 1918. His draft registration shows he was a junior drug clerk at Watson Pharmacy Co. in Southport. He and his family resided in Southport, Brunswick County.

When the SATC became active in October 1918, Harry, along with Andrew Jackson Robbins Jr., 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 inauguration ceremony was held on Oct. 1, 1918. On Oct. 9, the front page of The Davidsonian included a photo of the SATC, along with the story.

Memorable ceremony held at formal inauguration of the SATC at Davidson

Messages from the President, Secretary of War and others were read.

A most impressive gathering was held at noon on the first day of October. It was indeed a historic ceremony and one that will long be remembered by its participants and those from the town who were present. It marked the formal inauguration of the Students' Army Training Corps at Davidson College. The battalion was formed in the shape of a square around the foot of the flagpole and messages from the President and many other prominent men were read by the officer's present.

The ceremony was begun with a prayer by Dr. C.M. Richards. Lieut. R.G. Denard stated that at that very hour over one hundred and fifty thousand students in more than five hundred colleges were standing at attention in a ceremony similar to that one.

Messages from President Woodrow Wilson, Secretary of War Newton D. Baker, Col. R.I. Rees and others were read by Lieutenants Candler, Dwyer and Dover-spoke.

The following message from the President was read: "The step you have taken is a most significant one. By it you have ceased to be merely individuals, each

seeking to perfect himself to win his own place in the world and have become comrades in the common cause of making the world a better place to live in. You have joined yourselves with the entire manhood of the country and pledged, as did your forefathers, 'your lives, your fortunes and your sacred honor' to the freedom of humanity.

"The enterprise upon which you have embarked is a hazardous and difficult one. This is not a war of words; this is not a scholastic struggle. It is a war of ideals, yet fought with all the devices of science and with all the power of machines. To succeed, you must not only be inspired by the ideals for which this country stands but you must also be masters of the technique with which the battle is fought. You must not only be thrilled with zeal for the common welfare, but you must also be masters of the weapons of today.

"There can be no doubt of the issue. The spirit that is revealed and the manner in which America has responded to the call is indomitable. I have no doubt that you too will use your utmost strength to maintain that spirit and to carry it forward to the final victory that will certainly be ours."

The flag was raised and the oath of allegiance was taken by the members of the S.A.T.C. Dr. Martin spoke on behalf of the college and stirred all present. The picture shown on page 1 was then made.

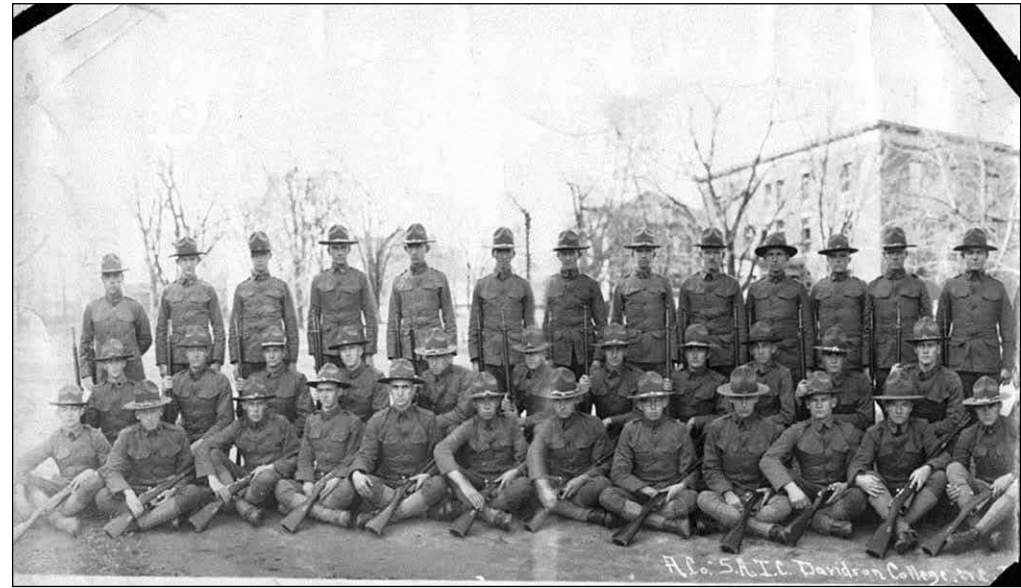
A yearbook for the 1918-19 school year at Davidson College is not available. However, the Davidson Historical Society shares photos of the Davidson College SATC on their website.

Harry and Andrew Jackson Robbins were initiated into the fraternity Pi Kappa Alpha, according to The Davidsonian, Oct. 23, 1918, p. 4.

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



The Davidsonian front page, Wednesday, Oct. 9, 1918.



Davidson College picture of SATC, December 1918.

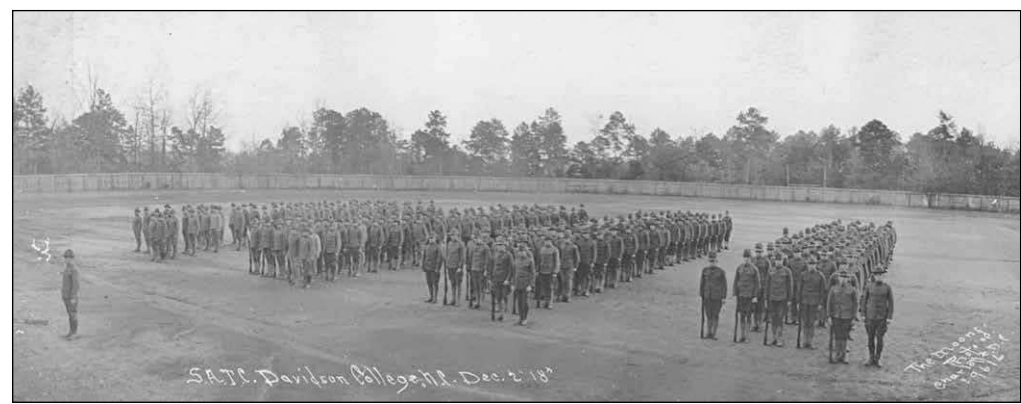


Photo of SATC at Davidson College.

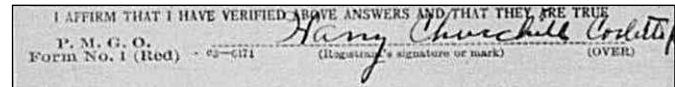
appears he did not return to college, as the 1940 Census shows his education was four years of high school.

In 1920, Harry was home, living with his parents in Southport. He had resumed working as a clerk for a drugstore.

The 1930 Census shows he and his wife, daughters, and parents living on Water Street in Southport. Harry was a manager of a dry cleaning shop.

The 1940 Census shows his mother continued to live with him after the death of his father in 1930. He was working as a salesman for a retail grocery. His wife was working as an assistant cashier at a bank. His three daughters were living at home; his oldest in high school.

Harry Churchill Corlette passed away from meningitis on June 27, 1947, at age 48. He was laid to rest in Old Smithville Cemetery in Southport. His obituary was published on the front page of The State Port Pilot on



Harry Corlette's draft registration signature.

July 2, 1947.

Harry Corlette dies suddenly

Popular Southport Citizen Died Early Friday Following Illness of Only A Few Hours Duration

Harry C. Corlette, former Southport City Alderman and business man, died here at Doshier Memorial hospital Friday morning after an illness of only eight hours.

Mr. Corlette, who was 48-years of age, was a life-long resident of Southport and was in good health up until the time he was stricken at 8 o'clock Thursday night. Attending physicians prescribed the cause of his death to spinal meningitis.

The deceased, a highly esteemed resident of Southport, is survived by his widow, Mrs. Rachel Todd

Corlette, assistant-cashier at the local branch of the Waccamaw Bank and Trust company, and by three daughters, Miss Doris Corlette, Miss Betty Todd Corlette and Miss Harriett Corlette, all of Southport.

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

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.

FRATERNITY INITIATIONS.

The following men were initiated by the fraternities on last Saturday night, October 19:

Pi Kappa Alpha: G. P. Apperson, A. J. Robbins, George Corbett, H. C. Corlette, W. W. McCorkle, L. Montgomery, E. M. Roberts, J. L. Dodson, R. E. H. Brown, A. B. Bradham, V. G. Grantham and L. W. Fischel.

News of Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity initiations.

Corlette, Harry C Jr	4,456,364	1
(Surname)	(Christian name)	(Army serial number)
Residence: Southport Brunswick NORTH CAROLINA		
(Street and house number)	(Town or city)	(County) (State)
Place of birth: Southport NC	Age or date of birth: Oct 2, 1898	
Inducted at: Southport NC	on: Aug 30, 1918	
Organizations served in, with dates of assignments and transfers: Davidson College Students Army Trng C Davidson NC to disch		
Grades, with date of appointment:		
Engagements:		
Wounds or other injuries received in action: None.		
Served overseas from: None	to: None	from: None
Honorably discharged on demobilization: Dec 10/18	19	
In view of occupation he was, on date of discharge, reported: 0		per cent disabled.
Remarks:		

Harry Churchill Corlette Jr.'s NC Service Card.