

World War I Snapshot: Willie Blount, 1895-1938

According to his World War I draft registration, Willie Blount was born in Southport.

His father, Abram Blount, served in the Civil War in the Union Army. In 1998, Pvt. Abram Blount and another Southport Union soldier, Pvt. Abram Galloway, were honored in a rededication ceremony at John N. Smith Cemetery in Southport. (Source: Susan Kauffman, "Re-enactors unite in slaves honor," Raleigh News & Observer, Feb. 8, 1998.)

Abram Galloway's son, William Oliver Galloway, also served in WWI and is also buried in John N. Smith Cemetery. All four soldiers, fathers and sons, now have military headstones or flat markers.

At the time of Willie's registration in 1917, he was working in Wilson County and had a wife and child. By the time he was ordered to report for duty on Aug. 2, 1918, he had returned to Southport. He served in the 347th Service Battalion throughout the war.

During WWI, most Black U.S. Army soldiers served in service or labor battalions. A small group of Black men were chosen to serve in the infantry, as explained in William Frederick Brook's WWI Profile (caswellriflerange.com). As the WWI Army/Marine Division Rosters webpage for Brunswick County shows, a total of nine black men from Brunswick County served in infantry with the 92nd and 93rd divisions.

On Oct. 1, 1918, Willie became a bugler. A total of four WWI buglers from Brunswick County have been identified; all served overseas. Two were wounded: Buglers William Ralph Smith and Willie Hasper Hewett. A snapshot is planned for Bugler Rich Milligan.

Bugler Smith's WWI Profile includes a description of the dangers a bugler faced. Because buglers were used to communicate orders to troops, they were a strategic target for the enemy. The fact that two of the four buglers from Brunswick County were wounded is evidence of the increased risk.

Bugler Willie Blount served overseas from Oct. 21, 1918, until June 29,

1919, and was honorably discharged on July 15, 1919. It is unclear where he settled, although his family remained in the Southport/Wilmington area. When he passed away on Feb. 9, 1938, his address was Wilmington. His mother requested his military headstone.

Willie Blount was laid to rest in John N. Smith Cemetery in Southport.

The second shipment of the book, "Brunswick County in the Great War: Preserving the 1918 Fort Caswell Rifle Range and the Legacies of the Men and Women Who Served"

is now available. The book covers the history and preservation of the rifle range and includes profiles and snapshots of all of the courageous men and women from Brunswick County who served in WWI and have been featured on the website and in the Beacon for nearly three years.

Anyone wishing to purchase a book may visit the Friends website at caswellriflerange.com for directions or call Norma Eckard at (910) 278-7584. For more information, email ficaswellriflerange@gmail.com.

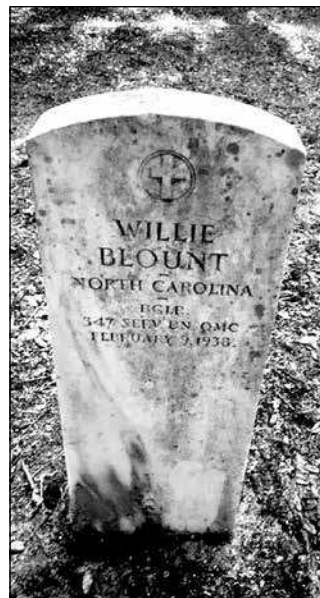


Photo contributed by Findagrave.com

Willie Blount headstone.

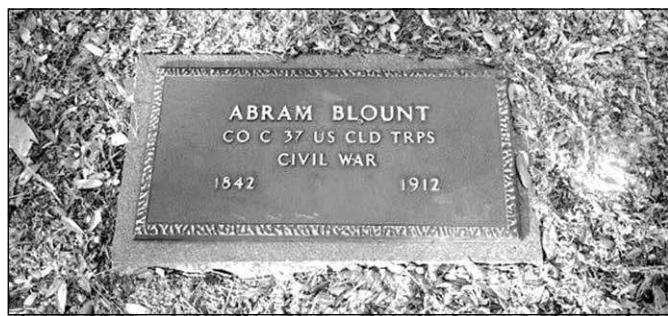


Photo contributed by Findagrave.com

Abram Blount (Willie's father) military flat marker



Photo contributed by Findagrave.com

William Oliver Galloway headstone

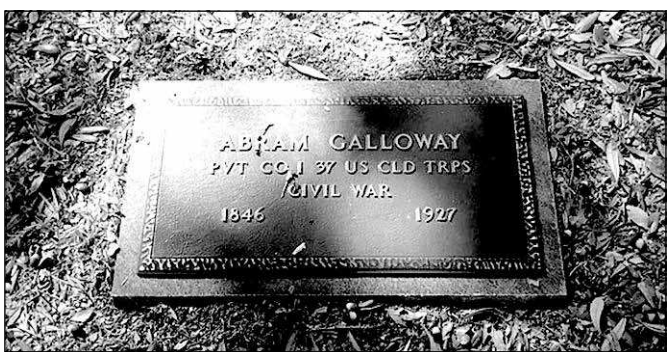


Photo contributed by Findagrave.com

Abram Galloway military flat marker

Blount Willie		4,234,962	Colored	1 1/2
(surname)	(Christian name)	(Army serial number)	(Race: White or colored)	
Residence: Southport Brunswick NORTH CAROLINA				
(Street and house number)	(Town or city)	(County)	(State)	
*Enlisted in	Inducted at L B Wilson Co Wilson N C Aug 2/18			
†Born in	Southport N C July 4, 1895			
Organizations:	Rot Camp 1 Camp Greene N C to Sept 11/18; Co B 347 Serv Bn Q M C to disch			
Grades:	Bglr Oct 1/18			
Engagements:				
Wounds or other injuries received in action: None.				
‡Served overseas:	Oct 21/18 to June 29/19			
§Hon. disch.	July 15/19 on demobilization			
Was reported	0 per cent disabled on date of discharge, in view of occupation.			
Remarks:				

Form No. 724-11 1/2, A. G. O. March 12, 1920. *Insert "R. A.", "N. G.", "E. R. C.", "N. A.", as case may be, followed by place and date of enlistment. †Give place of birth and date of birth, or age at enlistment. ‡Give dates of departure from and arrival in the United States. §Give date.

Photos contributed by NC Military Archives

NC World War I Service Card for Willie Blount