



**The
Escambia
County
Historical
Society,
Founded
1971**

**The June Meeting
Tuesday, June 26, 2018
McMillan Museum
Coastal Alabama Community College
Brewton Campus
3:00 PM**



**The Program:
“Feed Sacks: Their Role in WWI &
WWII,”
Presented by Coletta Bailey,
President of the Baldwin County His-
torical Society**

Ms. Bailey’s presentation will cover feed sacks saving a starving nation in World War I, to Milton Hershey buying sugar plantations in Cuba, before the United States declared war on Germany in 1917, to ensure that he had a supply of sugar for his milk chocolate business. Displays from the “Great War” include: a cotton sack from the Hershey’s Sugar Plantation in Cuba and a flour sack that was delivered to the people of Belgium between 1914 and 1917 as part of the effort to feed their nation.

World War II will feature the innovation of the cotton bag manufacturers from a waterproof bag to “TiteFit Tubing” to save space for overseas shipment of

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**The July ECHS Meeting,
Tuesday, July 24, 2018
McMillan Museum, 3:00 p. m.
Museum Coordinator Don Sales will present
program: “What’s Going on at the
Museum and Alabama Room?”**

**A Correction
Jace Hammond was incorrectly identified
in the May 2018 ECHOES as Chase
Hammond.**



**Jace, not Chase, Hammond is the
young man in the uniform.**



**Pearl Harbor Detail
from Percy Kent Flour
Bag**

Volume 45 No. 6

June 2018

**Don’t forget to Bring Your
Favorite Finger Food or
Snack for the Refreshment
Period after the Meeting.
ECHS Will Provide the
Drinks and Ice.**

The Program *(continued)*

(Continued from page 1)

supplies. The Army Quartermaster used “TiteFit Tubing”, special heavy cotton tubular baling, instead of boxes to save 35% to 50% on shipping space and allowed more supplies to be loaded.

On the Homefront, 3.5 million men, women, and children wore clothing fashioned from feed sacks. The use of these cotton commodity bags was seen as being patriotic and thrifty. “A Yard Saved is

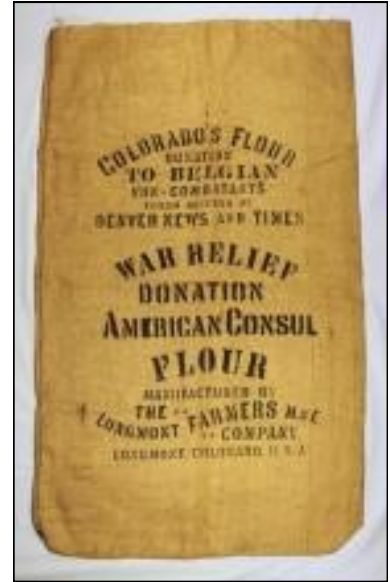
a Yard Gained For Victory” as the cloth was practical and fashionable.

The Percy Kent Manufacturing Co. bag, “Kent’s Print #233 United Nations,” was very popular and featured some major battles of World War II. It was so popular that it was printed several times. This print is also referred to as “Three Bad Eggs and the Flying Tigers.”

Percy Kent’s print #233 will be on display along with other prints from the 1940s.



At the Left, Flour Sack from Globe Mills of Los Angeles. At the Right, a War Relief Burlap Flour Sack. Both Flour Sacks Were Part of the Commission for Relief in Belgium.



Burlap Flour Sack

The following discussion of the significance of the sack as an artifact comes from <<https://www.historycolorado.org/node/4488>>.

Printed on the sack is: “Colorado’s Flour, Donation to Belgian Non-Combatants, Funds Secured by Denver News and Times, War Relief Donation, American Consul, Flour Manufactured by the Longmont Farmers M&E [Milling and Elevator] Company, Longmont Colorado U.S.A.”

How Does The Artifact Relate to Colorado History

At the start of World War I Germany provoked worldwide condemnation by invading neutral Belgium. In Colorado, two newspapers, the Denver Times and the Rocky Mountain News, led a drive to send flour to Belgium. They argued that Colorado could share its New World abundance with the war-torn Old World. The November 25, 1914 Denver Times newspaper describes small towns like

Loveland and Longmont raising money and loading railcars with flour to be sent to Denver to join the train heading east. Flour mills from around Colorado were selected to grind flour for the relief effort.

Why Is This Artifact Significant?

World War I is often a “forgotten war,” but it changed Europe forever and brought the United States onto the global stage. This well-preserved flour sack comes from early in the war in 1914, when the United States was on the sidelines in the conflict. This sack was part of a shipment of over 1,000,000 pounds of flour sent to Europe from Colorado flour mills. Private donations paid for the flour, ground in local mills like the Longmont Farmers Mill, to be shipped by train to New York and from there by ship to Belgium.

Central Hershey, Cuba



Above, a Cotton Bag for Sugar Produced at Central Hershey, Milton Hershey's Cuban Town

Central Hershey

The following information comes from the article “Built on Sugar”
<<https://www.mhskids.org/built-sugar-hershey-cuba/>>.

To help ensure a steady supply of sugar for his chocolate, Milton Hershey began to acquire land in Cuba in 1916 shortly after the death of Catherine Hershey in March 1915. The outbreak of war in Europe had disrupted the international flow of sugar, especially beet sugar grown primarily in Europe, which made Cuba a sugar hotspot.

While the Cuban land was an investment for the ingredients he needed for his chocolate, the country also became a place of refuge for Mr. Hershey. He spent increasing amounts of time in Cuba in the 1920s and 1930s and purchased several mills.

He also built a new mill and town, which he named Central Hershey – “central” is the Cuban term for a sugar mill and its surrounding town. Central Hershey eventually became the flagship of his Cuban holdings.

In 1922, Mr. Hershey even constructed an electric railroad between the major ports of Havana and Matanzas to transport his sugar, portions of which continue to operate today.

Hershey's Cuban holdings were eventually sold in 1946 to the Cuban Atlantic Sugar Company.

Amparo de Jong, the first person to be born in Hershey, said of her town, “We had the best sugar in the world . . . and we lived like kings. We had our own baseball club, bands, dances, concerts and movies. . . We would go to the hotel for ice-cream, where they had lace tablecloths, English porcelain, and chocolate and cigars were sold. And when we were young, all the girls would go and swim in the Hershey Gardens. This place was amazing,” from the article, “Sweet on Cuba: Riding the Hershey Town Train” at <<https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2017/apr/15/cuba-hershey-town-chocolate-train-beaches-hotels>>.



An Old Print Showing Central Hershey as It Was in Its Early 20th-Century Heyday

Print and text courtesy of <<https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2017/apr/15/cuba-hershey-town-chocolate-train-beaches-hotels>>.

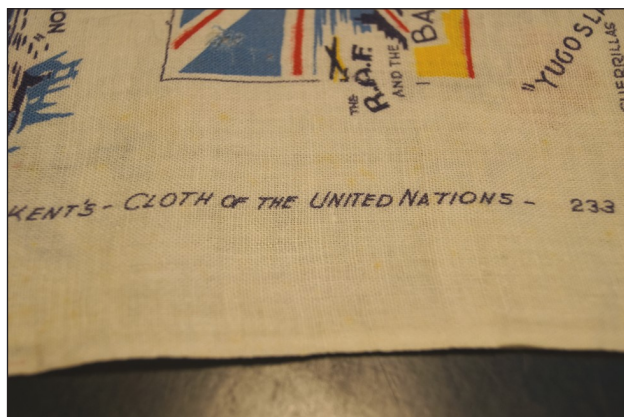
Kent's United Nations Print #233

Shown below, an example of the popular “United Nations Bag.” The bag with this print on it was also called the “Bad Eggs and Flying Tigers Bag,” referring to two of the most well known symbols in the print.



(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)



Detail of Kent Print showing the label on the border, "Kent's—Cloth of the United Nations." The United Nations was not formed until 1945 so this label indicates the term was already in use before the actual formation of the UN.



Detail of Kent Print showing the "Three Bad Eggs," Tojo, Hitler and Mussolini, with the slogan "Bad Eggs, Keep'em Frying."



At Left, Detail from the Kent Print Referring to the Battle of Stalingrad This battle (July 17, 1942-Feb. 2, 1943), was the successful Soviet defense of the city of Stalingrad (now Volgograd) in the U.S.S.R. during World War II.

Russians consider it to be the greatest battle of their Great Patriotic War, and most historians consider it to be the most significant battle of World War II.

It stopped the German advance into the Soviet Union and marked the turning of the tide of war in favor of the Allies.

The Battle of Stalingrad was one of the bloodiest battles in history, with combined military and civilian casualties of nearly 2 million.

Text from <<https://www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/battle-of-stalingrad>>.



Detail from the Kent Print Showing the Symbol of the Flying Tigers Narrative by Paul Merritt

The Flying Tigers were a group of American volunteer pilots and mechanics who went to China to fight the Japanese who had invaded China. They were set up before the US was officially in the war so we could not send in our military. The pilots and mechanics were enticed with high salaries, as much as 3 times what they were making in the US military.

They were recruited mostly from the

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

American military but some were true civilians. By presidential order, they were allowed to resign from the US forces. Once in China, they were actually sworn members of the Chinese military. They flew American made Curtiss P-40's which had been sold to China.

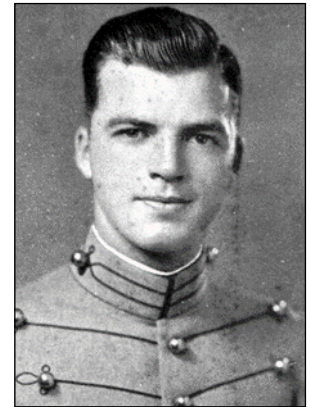
Trained in Burma, they actually got to China and fought their first battle 12 days after

Pearl Harbor. They were very successful but disbanded after one year. They are mostly remembered by the "nose art" painted on the nose of their planes. The distinctive artwork showed the mouth and teeth of a tiger shark. Thus the nickname The Flying Tigers.

After the war, an American all-cargo airline used the name Flying Tigers. It was a very successful venture and was merged into Fedex in 1988.



At Left, Detail from the "Kent's United Nations Print #233"; at Right, West Point Portrait of Colin Kelly, Jr.



The following is taken from the website Florida Memory <<https://www.floridamemory.com/exhibits/floridahighlights/kelly/>>.

Colin Purdie Kelly, Jr., of Madison County, Florida became one of America's first heroes of World War II. A 1937 graduate of West Point, the twenty-nine year old Kelly was a B-17 pilot in the Army Air Corps, stationed in the Philippines in December 1941 when the islands came under Japanese attack.

On December 10, Kelly's plane was sent on a bombing mission to attack Japanese ships off the coast of Luzon. The crew spotted a large ship they believed to be the battleship Haruna and from a height of 20,000 dropped three 600 pound bombs.

Though smoke obscured the target, Kelly and his men believed that at least one bomb struck the ship, and that it was probably destroyed. In fact the Haruna was not in the vicinity and Kelly's plane had perhaps bombed a large transport or the light cruiser Ashigara, neither of which had sunk.

On the return to its base at Clark Field, a Japanese fighter attacked and severely damaged the American bomber. Kelly ordered his crew to bail out, but he was unable to exit the

plane before it crashed. He was killed instantly.

Unfortunately, in the rush to publicize rare American victory in the war's early days, the details of Kelly's sacrifice became garbled and exaggerated. Many Americans believed that he had "won the Medal of Honor by diving his plane into the smokestack of the Haruna, becoming the first suicide pilot of the war."

In reality, Kelly received the Distinguished Service Cross, the nation's second highest award for heroism, both for the belief that he had damaged or destroyed the Haruna, but also because he "had sacrificed his life so that his crew could live."⁽¹⁾

When Florida Governor Spessard Holland learned of Kelly's death, he immediately sent a condolence telegram to the pilot's parents in Madison.

Later in the war, a "Four Freedoms" monument honoring Kelly was dedicated in Madison, FL. It was a fitting tribute to a valiant Floridian--one of the first from his state to sacrifice his life in World War II.

The Four Freedoms Monument

From Wikipedia the photo and text concerning the Four Freedoms Monument.

The Monument was commissioned by President Franklin D. Roosevelt following his articulation of the "Four Freedoms" in his 1941 State of the Union Address. This was before the Attack on Pearl Harbor and the participation of the United States in World War II. Roosevelt felt that, through the medium of the arts, a far greater number of people could be inspired to appreciate the concept of the Four Freedoms.^[1]

According to Roosevelt, the Four Fundamental Freedoms are: Freedom of Speech and Expression, Freedom of Worship, Freedom from Want, and Freedom from Fear.

The statue was created by sculptor Walter Russell and was dedicated in 1943 before a crowd of 60,000 people at Madison Square Garden in New York City.

It was dedicated to Colin P. Kelly as one of the first recognized American heroes of World War II. On June 14, 1944, the monument was re-dedicated in Kelly's hometown of Madison, Florida, with a speech by Governor Spessard Holland (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>).



Four Freedoms Monument
Honoring
Colin Kelly, Jr., Madison, FL.

Telegram from Florida Governor Spessard L. Holland

Governor's Office

Mr. and Mrs. Colin P. Kelly Tallahassee, Fla.
Madison, Florida December 12 941

I have just learned with the deepest regret of the heroic death of your son, Captain Colin P. Kelly, Jr., in an engagement with enemy forces while serving with the United States Army Air Corps in the Philippines.

As Governor of Florida, I beg to extend my deep sympathy which I am sure is equally shared by all of the people of our state. America today salutes the extraordinary courage and exceptional feat of valor of your son in the sinking of the Japanese Battleship Haruna and in the destruction of two other enemy ships, a splendidly successful

execution of his mission.

It may be of comfort to know that his exemplary bravery and achievement will serve as an inspiration to every patriotic American and especially to the men who now defend our shores in the fight for freedom. His deed will endure indelibly inscribed on the pages of American history.

Spessard L. Holland
Governor

*Text of Telegram courtesy of Florida Memory
<<https://www.floridamemory.com/exhibits/floridahighlights/kelly/>>.*

ECHS Honors Student Winners of the 2018 Flomaton History Fair Poster Contest

At a meeting held in the McMillan Museum, ECHS recognized the students whose posters were named as outstanding at the Flomaton History Fair.

Michael Dunn won First Place with a poster on the War of 1812. Tiffany Blair, whose poster was on the Scopes Trial, won second place. Chelsea Black received the third place award with a poster on America's Gilded Age, and McKenzie Faulk won fourth place for her poster on the medical

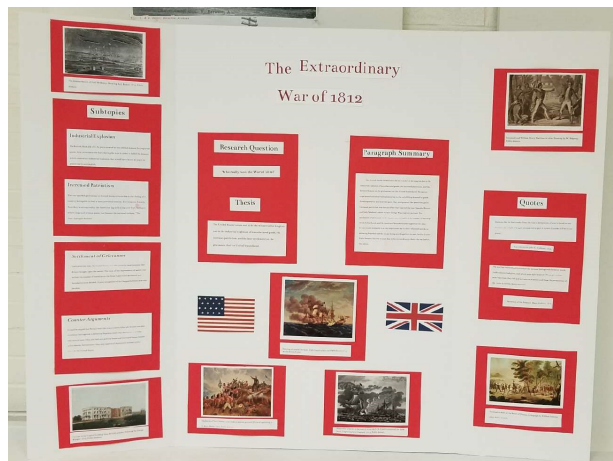
experiments conducted by the Germans on prisoners during World War II.

Each of these students received a monetary award from ECHS.

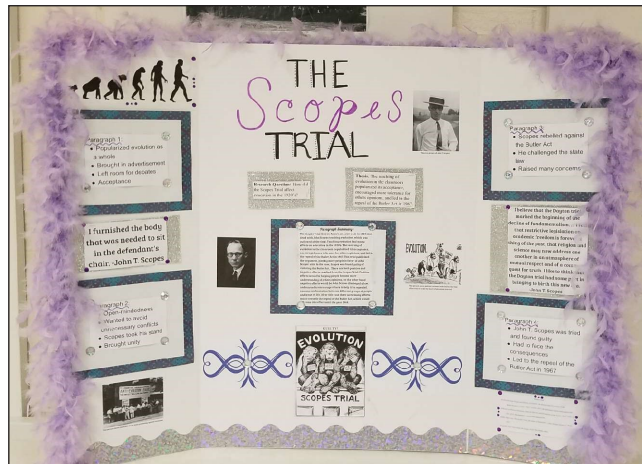
Also receiving recognition at this meeting were Jace Hammond for his poster on the US Marine Corp and Anna Chancery for her poster on the Wright Brothers.



Prize Winners for Posters in the Senior Division
Left to Right: McKenzie Faulk, Fourth Place; Chelsea Black, Third Place;
Tiffany Blair, Second Place; and Michael Dunn, First Place.



**Michael Dunn's Presentation on the
Extraordinary War of 1812,
First Place.**



**Tiffany Blair's The Scopes Trial,
Second Place.**

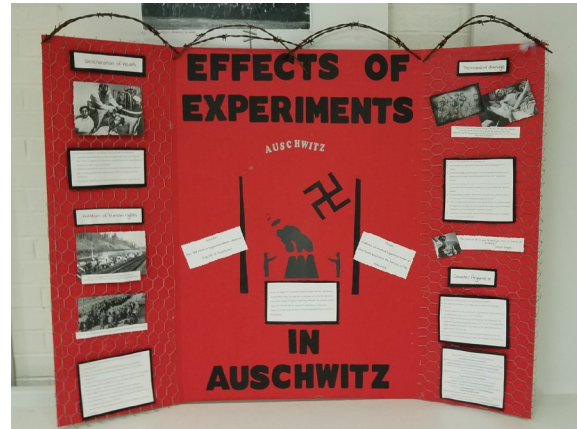
(Continued on page 9)

ECHS Honors Student Winners of the 2018 Flomaton History Fair Poster Contest *(continued)*

(Continued from page 8)



Chelsea Black's Presentation on the Gilded Age, Third Place.



McKenzie Faulk's Effects of Experiments in Auschwitz, Fourth Place.



Anna Chancery's Poster on the Wright Brothers, Honored as Outstanding Poster.



Jace Hammond's Poster on the Marine Corp, Honored as an Outstanding Poster.

Section of Highway 31 Between Atmore and Brewton to be Designated Hero's Highway to Honor Escambia County's Medal of Honor Winners

The Alabama State Legislature has designated the sections of Highway 31 between Atmore and Brewton as a Heroes' Highway to honor Medal of Honor recipients Sidney Manning and William Seay, both of Escambia County.

Sidney Manning will be honored between Atmore and Flomaton and William Seay between Flomaton and Brewton.

Funding is needed for markers and signs along this section of highway. Local VFW posts are organizing a fund raising project. Bill Gates, commander of Atmore Post 7015 is in charge of the project.

A GoFundMe account has been set up at [gofundme.com/medal-of-honor-memorial-road-signs](https://www.gofundme.com/medal-of-honor-memorial-road-signs) where tax deductible donations can be made. The ECHS Board has voted to donate \$500 to this fund.

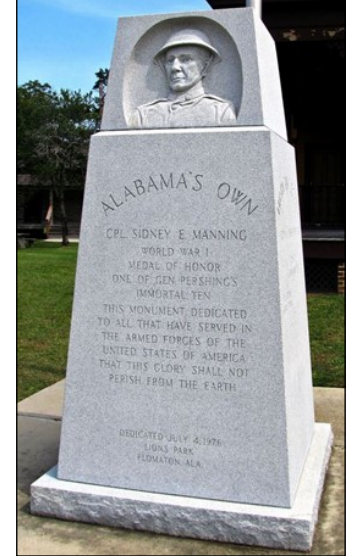
Sidney Earnest Manning



Sidney E. Manning



The Croix de Guerre ("War Cross") was a French Military Decoration Created in 1915 and Awarded during World War I and World War II. The Medal Was Given to Individuals or Groups for Feats of Bravery in Battle. One of Many Medals Awarded Sidney Manning.



This Monument to Honor Sidney Manning is Located at the Welcome Center in Flomaton.

The following article from the Encyclopedia of Alabama is by Graham R. Neeley, <<http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-3902y>>.

Sidney Earnest Manning (1892-1960) was one of two **Alabama** natives (the other being **Osmond Kelly Ingram**) awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor during **World War I**. On July 28, 1918, near Sergy, France, and the Ourcq River during the Aisne-Marne Operation, Manning, a corporal, assumed command of an automatic rifle platoon after two higher-ranking platoon leaders were injured or killed. He then provided fire cover for the men in his platoon so they could link up with others, refusing shelter until all the men had reached safety. He was wounded nine times. For his bravery, Gen. John J. Pershing, commander of the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF), listed Manning's heroic deeds as one of the ten most courageous acts of the war.'

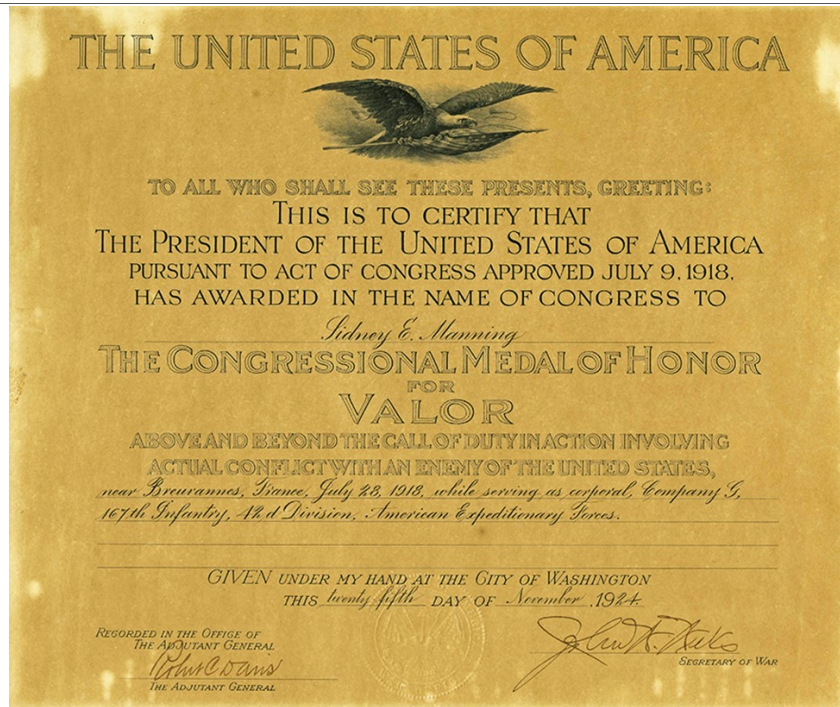
Manning was born on July 17, 1892, in Butler County, to Barney Austin and Sarah Elizabeth Vickery Manning; he had three brothers and one sister. Early in his childhood, the family moved to a farm in **Flomaton, Escambia County**. His draft registration card lists farming as his occupation and that he was married. He had two children with Mamie Knowles Manning, one of whom died in infancy

while he was serving overseas. He registered for the draft in June 1917 and was assigned to the Fourth Alabama Infantry. In August, the Fourth Alabama was federalized as the U.S. 167th Infantry Regiment. The regiment was part of the Forty-second "Rainbow Division," a newly created unit that was comprised of National Guardsmen from 26 states and Washington, D.C. The 167th was commanded by the recently promoted Col. William Preston Screws. Manning was assigned to Company G, 167th Infantry Regiment. The Forty-second arrived in France in February 1918.

By mid-July, the German Army had pushed their way into the Château-Thierry region of France. It advanced ever closer to Paris during this wide-ranging spring offensive, hoping to win the war before the United States could become more fully engaged. To prevent further German advancement, the Allied forces launched a counter-offensive in the Aisne-Marne region, an area of weakness for the German Army. Alongside their French counterparts, Pershing and the AEF initiated their assault in July. The 167th by then was a battle-tested and proven outfit. At La Croix Rouge Farm (July 24-26), the Alabama troops were successful in breaking through the defenses of the heavily fortified farmhouse held

(Continued on page 11)

Sidney Earnest Manning (continued)



This certificate is the official document awarding the Medal of Honor, the highest U.S. military decoration, to Flomaton native Sidney Manning in November 1924 for his bravery in battle during World War I.

Medal of Honor



(Continued from page 10)

by the Germans, at times fighting hand-to-hand combat and suffering 162 killed. The overall casualty rate was high for the Forty-second, which suffered 6,500 casualties during the offensive.

On July 28, the 167th was ordered north to cross the Ourcq River and capture a German position at Sergy. This small township lies just southeast of Fère-en-Tardenois and the Oise-Aisne American Cemetery in the Aisne department. In the assault, the two highest ranking officers in the automatic rifle platoon (of which Manning was a member) were either injured or killed. Manning assumed command of the platoon although already severely wounded himself.

Undeterred, Manning was able to regroup and lead the 35 remaining men, all the while providing cover fire with his automatic rifle. He received additional wounds but refused medical treatment. Because of his heroic efforts, the consolidated platoon completed its objective. The victory came with a cost: all but seven of the men were either injured or killed.

Gen. Pershing personally awarded Manning the Medal of Honor in March 1919 while the Forty-second Division was stationed in Remagen, Germany, as part of the Army of Occupation. He was also awarded the Distinguished Service Cross and Purple Heart; the French Croix de Guerre (Cross of War)

and Médaille Militaire (Military Medal); the Croce al Merito di Guerra (War Merit Cross) from Italy; and the Medalja za Hrabrost (Medal for Bravery) from Montenegro. While in France, in addition to suffering grave wounds, Manning learned that both his infant daughter and a younger sister had died.

Manning returned to Flomaton in 1919. Reportedly, the town planned a big celebration, which the humble Manning avoided by disembarking the train early. He participated in vocational training related to agriculture in Greensboro, Hale County, before returning to Flomaton. At some point, he also had been trying to enroll in similar training in Mississippi, but his application was denied by the government because of his numerous injuries. In 1921, Manning attended the inaugural Veterans Day wreath laying event, at the U.S. government's request, at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Washington, D.C.

State representative John Coleman of Marshall County pushed a bill through the legislature in 1935 that allocated financial support to Manning for the purchase of a farm and equipment. Manning died on December 15, 1960, in the Veterans Administration Hospital in Montgomery, Montgomery County. He is buried at Little Escambia Cemetery in Flomaton. In July 1976, the city of Flomaton erected a monument to Manning in Lion's Park; it was later moved to its current location in the Flomaton Welcome Center.

William Wayne Seay



**Sgt. William
Wayne Seay
(October 24, 1948 –
August 25, 1968)**

**Born in Brewton, AL,
he moved with his
family to Pensacola,
FL, graduated from
Escambia High.
Entered military
Service at
Montgomery, AL, in
Jan. 1967.
He went to Vietnam
with the 87th Trans-
portation Co., reas-
signed to the 62nd
Trans. Co.**



Sgt. William Seay was posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his courageous actions in combat during an ambush near Ap Nhi, Republic of Vietnam in 1968

Sergeant Seay's official Medal of Honor citation reads:

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. Sgt. Seay distinguished himself while serving as a driver with the 62d Transportation Company, on a resupply mission.

The convoy with which he was traveling, carrying critically needed ammunition and supplies from Long Binh to Tay Ninh, was ambushed by a reinforced battalion of the North Vietnamese Army. As the main elements of the convoy entered the ambush killing zone, they were struck by intense rocket, machine gun and automatic weapon fire from the well concealed and entrenched enemy force.

When his convoy was forced to stop, Sgt. Seay immediately dismounted and took a defensive position behind the wheels of a vehicle loaded with high-explosive ammunition. As the violent North Vietnamese assault approached to within 10 meters of the road, Sgt. Seay opened fire, killing 2 of the enemy. He then spotted a sniper in a tree approximately 75 meters to his front and killed him.

When an enemy grenade was thrown under an ammunition trailer near his position, without regard for his own safety he left his protective cover, exposing himself to intense enemy fire, picked up the grenade, and threw it back to the North Vietnamese position killing 4 more of the enemy and saving the lives of the men around him.

Another enemy grenade landed approximately 3 meters from Sgt. Seay's position. Again Sgt. Seay left his covered position and threw the armed grenade back upon the assaulting enemy. After returning to his position he was painfully wounded in the right wrist; however, Sgt. Seay continued to give encouragement and direction to his fellow soldiers.

After moving to the relative cover of a shallow ditch, he detected 3 enemy soldiers who had penetrated the position and were preparing to fire on his comrades. Although weak from loss of blood and with his right hand immobilized, Sgt. Seay stood up and fired his rifle with his left hand, killing all 3 and saving the lives of the other men in his location.

As a result of his heroic action, Sgt. Seay was mortally wounded by a sniper's bullet. Sgt. Seay, by his gallantry in action at the cost of his life, has reflected great credit upon himself, his unit, and the U.S. Army.:

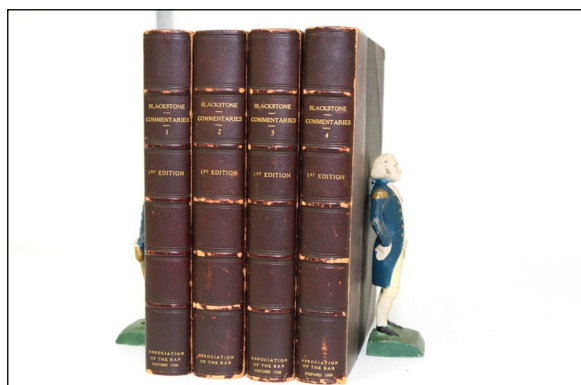
Snapshots of the May 2018 ECHS Meting



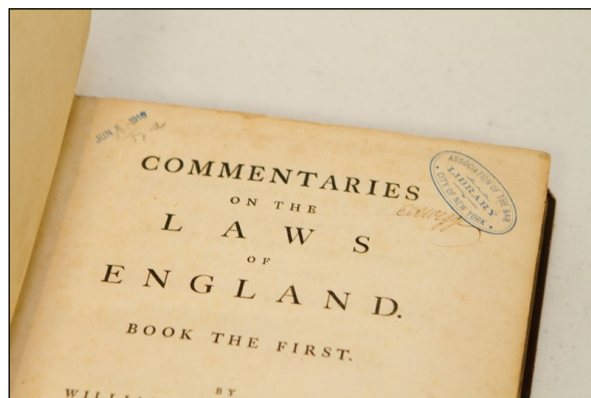
Don Sales Presents Guest Speaker Tom Parker with Thank You Gift for Presenting the Program for the May 2018 Meeting.



Left to Right, Deidra Dees, Don Sales, Barbara Page, Robin Brewton, and Tom Parker



The Blackstone Commentaries.



Title Page of Blackstone Commentaries.



Another Display by Justice Parker.



Don Sales and Tom Parker with Dr. Deidra Suwanee Dees, Director of the Office of Archives and Records Management and the Tribal Archivist at the Poarch Band of Creek Indians.

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The ECHS *Journal* Section

Remembering an Old Veteran



This Picture of Carroll on His Harley Became a National Symbol of Belgium's Liberation.



Handsome young hero of Peruwelz.

By Charles Ware

On Veterans Day we will pause to pay tribute to America's military veterans for their service and for the sacrifices they have made for their country and for the cause of freedom. But many veterans as individuals have never received the recognition and gratitude they so rightfully deserve. There was one old veteran from this area though, who was remembered and was honored in ways that he would not have dreamed possible. This is his story.

James W. "Bill" Carroll never considered himself a hero. "Never have been, never will be" he said. "I was just doing my duty." But to the people of Peruwelz, Belgium he was perhaps the greatest hero of World War II.

On the morning of September 3, 1944, German trucks and tanks were rumbling through the streets of Peruwelz as they were fleeing the Allied advance. The city of about 10,000, located on the French-Belgium border, had been ruthlessly occupied by the Germans for over four years. Just that morning, three more members of the local Belgium Resistance had been killed in the streets.

At about noon, just as the Germans were exiting the town, another sound echoed through Peruwelz. It was the roar of a powerful Harley Davidson motorcycle ridden by Private James W. Carroll. Carroll was a scout for the U. S. Army's 628th Tank Destroyer Battalion and had the very dangerous job of riding ahead of the battalion to access enemy positions. He thus became the first Allied soldier to enter Peruwelz.

Carroll had little time to enjoy his new-found fame as he had to move out later in the day to resume his scouting duties. A few weeks after he departed Peruwelz, the town received word that he had been killed in the Battle of the Bulge. In the years that followed, Carroll's legend grew. His picture was sold in shops, the story of his famous ride was taught in schools, and he was honored at an annual Mass. His picture, draped in black, hung in the town hall.

In 1994, with the 50th anniversary of the town's liberation approaching, the people of Peruwelz thought it would be fitting to locate Carroll's grave and place a wreath on it. Pierre Deprez, a college professor, and Jose Delplanque, the city manager, were given the task of finding the grave. For months they combed Allied cemeteries in Europe and worked with the U.S. Embassy and various veterans groups, but to no avail. When no records could be found of a James W. Carroll being killed in Europe, they concluded that maybe he was still alive.

Researchers came up with a list of 87 men in the United States named James W. Carroll and each of them was sent a picture of the soldier on the motorcycle and a letter asking for help in locating him.

The soldier in the picture happened to be very much alive and residing in his home town of Brewton, Alabama when he received his letter. Carroll had been wounded in the Battle of the Bulge, but had survived the war. He couldn't believe his eyes when he saw the old picture of himself on his Harley and was deeply moved that the people of Peruwelz would still

(Continued on page 16)

The ECHS *Journal* Section

Remembering an Old Veteran



**At the Left, Carroll
as Peruwelz Guest
of Honor 1995**

**At the Right,
Pierre Deprez of Belgium (left) and
Bill Carroll Salute at
Wreath Laying Ceremony
During Overlord Returns Visit to
Brewton in 2000**



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remember him after all those years. He immediately began trying to get in touch with Mr. Delplanque in Peruwelz.

A few weeks later, Carroll was standing on a platform in Peruwelz's 18th century cathedral as a Belgium chorus sang the Star Spangled Banner and he was welcomed back to the city. Above him was a banner that read "He is Alive-Hallelujah." What had been envisioned as a solemn wreath-laying ceremony evolved into a festival with a costumed reenactment of the liberation, including Carroll himself riding a motorcycle up the street. The headline of the local newspaper read, "The Return of our Hero."

For the next three weeks, Carroll appeared in parades, attended receptions, signed autographs, and spoke in schools. A local baker created a three foot chocolate statue of Carroll on his motorcycle. He was literally given a royal welcome, as he was invited to spend an afternoon with Belgium's Prince Lamoral de Ligne.

The festival became an annual occasion known as Remember Day and has grown over the years, now attracting thousands from around Europe and the United States. The city collected and restored a number of World War II vehicles to use for reenactments and many Germans come to play the part of the retreating German force.

For several years, until Carroll became unable to travel, the people of Peruwelz collected donations to bring him back each year as their guest of honor. He turned down several invitations to move to Peruwelz

to be taken care of in his old age. He continued to get hundreds of letters and cards from Peruwelz on his birthday and on Christmas, and he answered every one of them.

In early 2000, various groups in Belgium got together to come up with a way, in that millennial year, to come and thank the American people for helping liberate Belgium in 1944. They organized a project called Overlord Returns which entailed shipping 17 of their restored, vintage World War II vehicles to the United States and forming a "Liberty Convoy" which would visit several cities, celebrate Independence Day with the American people, and stage reenactments of their own liberation. In the words of organizer Pierre Deprez, "The project was to go with our WW II vehicles to the U.S. and say 'Thank You' to those who, twice in this century, helped Europe to be free again. Saying 'Thank You' and show, more than 50 years later, that we are still thankful for those who suffered and even offered their lives for us."

When the project organizers learned that Bill Carroll was no longer able to travel, they decided that since he could not come to Belgium to be with them, they would go to Brewton to be with him. They placed Brewton at the top of their list of stops for their "Liberty Convoy."

On July 10, 2000, about 60 Belgian citizens, along with their collection of vintage vehicles (including a Sherman tank), arrived in Brewton where they visited and were entertained for several days by the people of Brewton. On July 12, 2000, a ceremony was held in front of the Brewton court house where the people of

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The ECHS *Journal* Section

Remembering an Old Veteran



Plaque Given to the City of Brewton by the City of Peruwez. The Plaque is on display in the Thomas E. McMillan Museum on the Coastal Alabama Community College in Brewton.

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Belgium once again honored Bill Carroll and what he represented. A reenactment of the liberation of Peruwez, including Carroll's famous ride into town was staged, while a restored World War II B-17 bomber made low passes overhead.

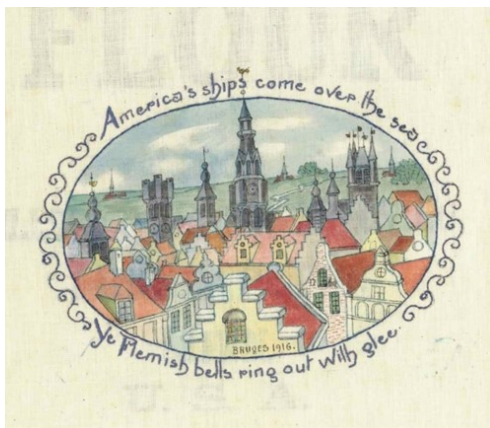
A two-foot granite plaque was given to the city of Brewton by the people of Peruwez to show their appreciation for James W. Carroll and all his comrades-in-arms. That plaque is on display in the Thomas E. McMillan Museum on the campus of the Coastal Alabama Community College in Brewton.

Carroll was born in Castleberry on July 6, 1921 and

later made his home in Brewton. He continued in the Army, seeing combat again in Korea, and retired in 1964. He was awarded the Bronze Star and two Purple Heart medals. James W. Carroll died on June 28, 2005.

Remember Day is still celebrated in Peruwez each year and, even though most of the people of the town were not yet born when he made his famous ride, the memory of James W. Carroll is celebrated as well.

The people of Belgium were well aware that Carroll did not single-handedly rid their country of Nazi oppression. To them he was a symbol, representing all the Allied soldiers who sacrificed for the cause of liberty. A plaque was erected in the town square Peruwez that proclaims, "James William Carroll is the embodiment of our recovered freedom."



This Pillsbury flour sack has been embroidered with the English phrase: "America's ships come over the sea, Ye Flemish bells ring out with glee." It is stamped "Bruges 1916."

The cotton sacks sent by America with food relief for the people of Belgium during World War I were saved and re-worked with stencils, paint, embroidery. They were then sold or given as gifts to people in Belgium, Britain, and the U. S. The money raised was used for further food relief and to aid prisoners of war.

ECHOES
THE NEWSLETTER FOR
THE ESCAMBIA COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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