

The Gipson Boys

Orange County lost many soldiers in 20th century wars. Below is the story of two brothers as cited by Paul Carter in the Orange County Historical Society *Record*, Vol. 45, No. 2 (Fall 2014), 8.

PFC Thomas Ellis Gipson

“Private First Class Thomas Ellis Gipson was born 4 January 1923 to Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Gipson of Madison Run. His mother was the former Mabel Lucy Hicks...Because of the needs of the family during the depression era, Thomas only attended grammar school before going to work for the Brockman Lumber Company, which was operated at Madison Run by Rosser Brockman. Located across Route 639 from the current Royal Concrete, with close proximity to the railroad, its main product was railroad ties.

“Thomas was drafted in Charlottesville on 16 February 1943 and took basic training at Camp McCain, Mississippi. He left for overseas duty on 23 April 1944 as a member of Company G, 47th Infantry, 9th Division. He was killed in action in Cherbourg, France on 10 August 1944. Details of his death are not known. He was buried in a temporary cemetery in Marigny, France which was opened on 31 July 1944 and eventually held 3,070 bodies of Allied and German soldiers.

“At the time of his death he had three brothers in the service: PFC Clifton L. Gipson, somewhere in France; PFC Walter R. Gipson, Kelly Field, Texas; and Private B. F. Gipson of Camp Butner, North Carolina. His parents were notified of his death by a telegram that came into Pages Drug Store and was delivered by Mathews Taxi. In the late forties his body was returned to Orange and buried in Graham Cemetery. A soldier, who carried his dog tags, accompanied the body to insure that the casket wasn't opened. His parents received the Purple Heart, awarded posthumously.”

SGT Clifton Lee “Pete” Gipson

“Sergeant Clifton Lee Gipson was born 24 November 1924 at Madison Run. Like his brother, he only attended grammar school and then worked on his parent's farm (now Wolftrap Farm) before entering the service. Pete was drafted at Richmond on 10 March 1943 and took basic training at Camp Claiborne, Louisiana. He left for overseas duty in December 1943 to become a member of a field artillery unit of the First Army.

“The ‘Fighting First Division’ was originally formed in France in 1917. During WWI, this division was the first to land in France, first to suffer casualties and the first to take prisoners. On 25 March 1945, near Griesbach, Germany he was taking a break from the

war in his tank under a tree when it was hit by a shell. His commanding officer, Captain James B. Armstrong, wrote Mrs. Gipson,

Your son was without question one of the finest men I have known in my experience in the army or elsewhere. He gained the confidence of the men he commanded through duty. He was at all times cheerful and eager to do his part. He had many friends, not only in Company C but throughout the battalion. On behalf of all the officers and men of this company, I offer my deepest sympathy.

“Details of his death were not known until after the war when one of his soldier buddies from Richmond, who witnessed the event, came to see the family here in Orange. Mrs. Gipson wrote letters to the Army pressuring them for his remains. On 22 March 1950 his remains were reinterred in Arlington National Cemetery in Section 34, Grave 4691. The parents were awarded his posthumous Purple Heart. Mrs. Mable Hicks Gipson presented flags to the American Legion and the Orange County Playground in memory of her two sons killed in the war.

“On Sunday, 11 November 1945, several thousand people turned out for a parade held to honor the men and women from the county who served in the armed services. More than fifty soldiers and sailors in uniform marched down Main Street. In attendance was Governor-elect William M. Tuck of South Boston who was the guest speaker. He was introduced by attorney Virginius R. Shackelford of Orange. The Governor spoke from the porch of the Coleman Hotel, across the street from the courthouse. On the porch also was Mrs. Gipson as Governor-elect Tuck’s guest. A section of the stand was reserved for the parents and next of kin of the thirty men who lost their lives in the war.

“The Orange County Honor Roll, sponsored by the Orange County American Legion Post 156, was unveiled by sisters Jane and Mary Agnes Gipson. It listed all who served including the ones who gave the supreme sacrifice. The Junior Women’s Club of Orange headed by Mrs. Courtney (Susan) McIntosh, copied the more than 1500 names provided by the selective service board and the Orange County War History Committee. Robert Brooking of Locust Grove spent considerable time painting the names on the Honor Roll. Getting a complete list of names was very difficult and it wasn’t until 14 March 1946 that a list was finalized and published in the *Orange Review*.”



THESE GAVE THEIR LIVES

Beck, William Edwin
Breedon, General Lee
Bryant, Gordon Otto
Clatterbuck, William Randolph
Claude, David Kerr
Corbin, Roy Franklin
Davis, Louis Sanford
Dean, King Jackson
Deane, Laurence Dare
Ellis, Russell Kenneth
Gipson, Clifton Lee
Gipson, Thomas Ellis
Grasty, Charles Franklin
Grymes, William Breckenridge
Hamilton, Frank Gilbreth
Harris, Edward Parker
Hughes, Wallace Edward
Jackson, Oscar
Johnson, Irvin
Keeler, Vance Hite

Lohr, Jesse C.
Long, Marvin Ashby
Maples, Andrew, Jr.
Martin, William Emmanuel
Mason, William Barton, Jr.
Nottingham, Severn Marcellus, Jr.
Peacher, Ernest Edward
Raup, Robert William
Reynolds, William Edward, Jr.
Richardson, Edward Hill
Simpson, Raleigh R.
Smith, Robbie W.
Stevenson, Henry
Thompson, Harrison
Tisdale, Tyrus Heber
Turner, Hezekiah
Wallace, John Raymond
Waller, Edward, Jr.
Waugh, George Morgan
Wiltshire, Robert Paul

