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A Grateful Nation Remembers: Bulloch County's World War II Roll of Honor

James D. Bigley Jr.
Rebecca Ziegler
Georgia Southern University

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A Grateful Nation Remembers...

Bulloch County's World War II Roll of Honor

by
James D. Bigley, Jr.
and
Rebecca Ziegler

Statesboro, Georgia
May 29, 1995
Preface

Over the last five years, we have been commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of World War II — the bloodiest conflict that the world has yet known, a war which called forth great suffering and sacrifice, as well as outstanding heroism. On this Memorial Day of 1995, which falls between the fiftieth anniversaries of VE Day on May 8 and VJ Day on August 14, we honor those persons from Bulloch County, Georgia who gave their lives in the Second World War.

The Bulloch County Honor Roll and biographies of some of those who died in the war have been compiled by Dr. James D. Bigley of Georgia Southern University, with assistance from the students in his classes in museum studies. Mrs. Evelyn Darley Mabry of Statesboro has rendered invaluable help in collecting these names and biographies. We wish to express profound gratitude to all who provided us with information about their friends and relatives.

In an undertaking of this sort, inadvertent omission of some who lost their lives in the war is almost inevitable. For many others, we had no other information beyond their names, and thus were not able to include their biographies here. This should not be taken to mean that we do not honor the sacrifice that they made for their country and for the freedom of all the world. If anyone knows of any person who has been left out of the honor roll or has additional information or corrections for the biographical sketches, we invite you to get in touch with Dr. Bigley at the Department of Recreation and Leisure Services, Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, GA 30460-8077, telephone (912) 681-5462. It is our plan to incorporate these additions and corrections in a later edition of this booklet.
ROLL OF HONOR
BULLOCH COUNTY ARMED FORCES PERSONNEL
WHO DIED DURING WORLD WAR II

Allen, Albert - PFC, USA; Killed (accident) 12/25/43; Italy.

Anderson, James V. - PFC, 155Inf, 31Div, USA; KIA 12/14/44;
Morotai Island.

Arnett, John D. - SGT, USA; KIA 3/23/45; Germany.

Barnes, Alfred C. - PFC, 3MarDiv, USMC; DOW 7/27/44;
Guam.

Beasley, Inman - USA; KIA 9/14/44; Germany.

Box, John T. - PFC, 133Inf, USA; DOW 7/14/44; Italy.

Branson, Dan C. Jr. - PVT, 504PIR, 82Abn, USA; DOW 12/25/43; Italy.

Bryant, William H. - SSGT, 284th Eng, USA; Killed (accident)
1/20/45; Luxembourg.

Buie, John C. Jr. - PFC, USA; Killed (accident) 8/16/45; Luzon Island.

Chester, Barney L. - PFC, 34Inf, USA; KIA 10/20/44; Leyte Island.

Cooper, James O. - PVT, USA.

Cowart, Leroy Jr. - 2LT, 21st Pursuit Sqn, AAC; Died as POW 2/45; Japan.

Darley, John F. Jr. - HA 1/C, USNR (4MarDiv); KIA 2/19/45;
Iwo Jima.

DeLoach, Pierce Darwin - SSGT, USA; KIA 5/30/45; Luzon Island.

Dickerson, Kelley Bruce - SM 1/C, USNR; 8/9/42; Naval Battle of Savo Island.

Ellis, Erastus Don - USA; KIA 11/19/44; France.

Evans, Olice R. - SGT, 103Div, USA; DOW 3/19/45; France.

Futch, James A. Jr. - PFC, USA; KIA; France.

Gerrald, Bill M. - PFC, 3MarDiv, USMC; KIA 2/24/45; Iwo Jima.

Gordy, Carl L. - PFC, USA; KIA 8/3/43; SW Pacific Area.

Hendley, Thomas - PFC, USA; Killed 1945; France.

Hendrix, James M. - SSGT, AAC.
Hodges, F. Glen - Ens, Torpedo Sqn 6, USNR; KIA 6/4/42; Battle of Midway.

Hodges, Herman Lavonne - PVT, 84Div, USA; DOW 9/29/44; Aachen, Germany.

Holloway, William G. - PFC, USA; KIA 8/5/44; France.

Howell, Arthur J. - PFC, 5Cav, USA; KIA 3/11/45; Luzon Island.

Hunnicutt, Charles - USA; KIA 8/24/44; France.

Lanier, James Alvin - PFC, 2nd Armor Div, USA; KIA 12/17/44; Battle of the Bulge.

Lynn, Jemison B. - PVT, USA; KIA.

Martin, Archie Redell - SM 1/C, USNR; Died (illness) 5/9/45; Bike Island.

Martin, Charles T. - SSGT, USA; DOW 5/24/44; Philippine Islands.

Mincey, Leonard E. - PVT, 8Div, USA; KIA 7/44; France.

Minick, Carrol - LT, Aviator, USNR; KIA 1/15/45; Luzon Island.

Morris, Cecil - CPL, USA.

Newton, R. Earl - PVT, USA; Killed (accident) 6/27/46; Germany.

Newton, Gerald B.

Oglesby, George W. - PVT, USA; Died (illness); Persian Gulf Command Area.

Pennington, Austin K. - PFC, USA; KIA.

Pennington, Jaekle (Jake) - SGT, 3Army, USA; KIA 12/23/44; Germany.

Poindexter, Ernest L. Jr. - PFC, USA; KIA 4/12/45; Cebu Island.

Ramsey, Berton H. Jr. - LT, 322BG, AAC; KIA 3/17/43; over Holland.


Riggs, Rupert D. Jr. - PFC, 6MarDiv, USMC; KIA 5/17/45; Okinawa.

Shelnutt, Barney W. - SGT, RadOp/Gunner, RCAF; KIA 10/26/41; Germany.

Shurling, J. I. - PVT, USA; KIA 3/15/45; Germany.

Sills, Erastus D. - PVT, USA.

Small, Rufus A. - TSGT, USA; KIA; Italy.

Suddath, Jack L. - LT, USMC; KIA 6/15/43; Saipan Island.
Summerlin, Clifton - PVT, USA; Killed (accident) 7/43; American Theater.

Swint, James Walter - SGT, AAC; Killed (plane crash) 1/19/44; Lake Charles, LA.

Thornton, Charles T. - CPT, USA; DOW.

Turner, Cecil - USA.

Wall, Charles D. - 2LT, USA; KIA.

Ward, Albert A. - USMC; KIA.

Ward, William D. - PFC, USA.

Warnock, Roland D. - LT, AAC; KIA 2/24/44; over Germany.

Waters, Floyd B. - PVT, USA; DOW.

White, Jack B. - App SM, USNR; KIA 2/27/42; North Atlantic.

Williams, Ellis E. - SSGT, USA; DOW.

Womack, Hardy Talmadge - PFC, 88Div, USA; KIA 4/17/45; Germany.

Woodward, John Gilbert - Avn Cadet, AAC; Killed (plane crash) 5/15/44; Moody Field, USA.

PFC Albert Allen - Infantryman, US Army

Albert Allen was born in Bulloch County in 1907 and attended Statesboro schools. He enlisted in the Army on March 6, 1942 and trained at Fort Bliss, TX. He was sent overseas to Italy in early 1943. On December 25, 1943, while on patrol near Pianura, Italy, PFC Allen fell from a cliff and was killed. He was 36 years old at the time of his death. He is buried at Bethlehem Primitive Baptist Cemetery.

PFC James V. Anderson, 155th Infantry, US Army

James Vernon Anderson was born on December 28, 1913. He attended Rocky Ford High School and worked on his family's farm during his youth. On May 5, 1942, he was inducted into the Army from Bulloch County. After completing his basic training at Camp Shelby (MS) and Camp Bowie (TX), he was assigned as a rifleman to "A" Company, 155th Infantry of the 31st Division, also known as the "Dixie Division." His unit was shipped to the Southwest Pacific Area in March of 1944. PFC Anderson took part in the recapture of several islands. He was killed on December 14, 1944 during a "mopping up" patrol on Morotai Island. PFC Anderson is buried at Bethlehem Primitive Baptist Church Cemetery.

PFC Alfred C. Barnes, 3rd Marine Division

Alfred Conley Barnes was born in Statesboro on September 29, 1924. He attended Statesboro High School and played on the football team. Scheduled to graduate with the Class of 1943, he enlisted in the US Marine Corps in April of that year
and was called to active duty prior to the commencement ceremony. After his basic training, he was assigned to an infantry company in the 3rd Marine Division. His first action with the Division came on July 21, 1944 when he took part in the first assault landings aimed at the recapture of Guam. During the night of July 26, he was mortally wounded during a intense Japanese counterattack aimed at dislodging the Marines from the island. After being evacuated to a hospital ship, PFC Barnes succumbed to his wounds on July 27, 1944.

PVT Dan C. Branson, Jr., 82nd Airborne Division, U.S. Army

Born on October 2, 1922 in Liberty County, GA, Dan Branson lived with his family near Pretoria Station where he attended Warnock School. He entered the service on August 6, 1942 and completed paratrooper training at Fort Benning, GA. PVT Branson was assigned to the HQ Company, 504th PIR, 82nd Airborne Division and served in the invasions of Sicily and Italy. During mountain fighting near Casino, Italy, he was injured when he fell on a frozen mountain trail while carrying supplies to some men in an outpost. Not wanting to leave his buddies, he refused evacuation to an aid station. As a result of his injuries and the bitter cold conditions, he contracted pneumonia and died, on Christmas Day, 1943 according to some reports, on January 11, 1944 according to others. PVT Branson is buried at Emit Grove Baptist Church Cemetery.

SSGT William Henry Bryant, 284th Engineer Corps, US Army

William Henry Bryant was born in Bulloch County on July 29, 1923 and attended Stilson High School. He was married to Geraldine Quattlebaum. He enlisted in the service on February 10, 1943 and was trained as a mechanic. He went overseas in November, 1944 with the 284th Engineer Corps. S/SGT Bryant saw duty in England, France, and Germany. He was killed in a vehicle accident in Luxembourg on January 20, 1945. He is buried at Ash Branch Primitive Baptist Church.

PFC John C. Buie, Jr. - Infantryman, US Army

John C. Buie was born March 5, 1925 in Bulloch County. He graduated from Nevils High School. He entered the US Army in December, 1944 and was sent to the Pacific Theater in June, 1945. On August 15, 1945, the day Japan announced it had surrendered, PFC Buie was accidentally injured when a mortar exploded that was being fired to celebrate the end of the war. He died of his wounds the following day. He is buried at Lower Lotts Creek Cemetery.

PFC Barney L. Chester - 34th Infantry Division, US Army

Barney L. Chester was born April 26, 1924 in Bulloch County, and he attended Westside School. He enlisted in August, 1940, and was sent overseas in January, 1941. PFC Chester was killed in action on October 20, 1944 on the first day of the Invasion of Leyte Island. He is buried at Bethlehem Primitive Baptist Church Cemetery.

2LT Leroy Cowart, Jr., 21st Pursuit Sqn, Army Air Corps

Hailing from a family with deep roots in Bulloch County, Leroy Cowart, Jr. was born in 1918 and attended Statesboro
By 1939 he had served in the local National Guard unit and had graduated from Georgia Teachers' College. He enlisted in the Army Air Corps and completed flight training in San Antonio, TX.

Lt. Cowart was assigned to the 21st Pursuit Squadron and dispatched to Clark Field, Philippine Islands in October, 1941. His squadron's aircraft were quickly destroyed during the initial Japanese attacks on the Philippines in December, 1941. His unit fought as ground forces until the fall of Bataan in April, 1942. Lt. Cowart was captured on Bataan, endured the Bataan "Death March," and survived transportation to Japan on the "Hell Ships" in late 1944. He died from malnutrition, exposure, and lack of medical care in February, 1945. Lt. Cowart's ashes are interred in the U.S. National Cemetery, Manila, P.I.

HA 1/C John F. Darley, Jr. - Combat Corpsman, 4th Marine Division

John Fletcher Darley, Jr. was born in Athens, GA on July 10, 1924. He grew up in Statesboro, where he graduated from Statesboro High School in 1942, then spent one year at Georgia Teachers' College (now Georgia Southern University). Darley was inducted into the US Navy in June, 1943. He underwent basic training at the Great Lakes Naval Training Station (IL), then received medical instruction at the U.S. Naval Hospital in Quantico, VA. On February 7, 1944, he was sent overseas, where he took part in the invasion of Normandy on June 6, 1944. After a short leave in the United States, he was sent to the Pacific Theater as a Hospital Apprentice First Class. He was among the first to land on the beach of Iwo Jima on February 19, 1945, as a Navy Corpsman giving medical assistance to the Fourth Marine Division. Darley was almost immediately wounded in the arm by shrapnel, but he refused to stop and get treatment for himself. He continued to give first aid to the wounded until, three hours later, he was killed by a mortar shell. Darley was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star.

SSGT Pierce Darwin DeLoach - Infantryman, 27th Infantry Reg.

Pierce Darwin DeLoach was born January 9, 1924 in Brooklet. He graduated from Brooklet High School in 1942. On June 30, 1943 he was inducted in the US Army. He served with the 27th Infantry Regiment during the Invasion of Luzon Island, and was wounded in action on March 27, 1945. After recovering from his wounds, SSGT DeLoach returned to the front lines. He was killed by enemy small arms fire on May 30, 1945 near Santa Fe, Luzon.

SM 1/C Kelley Bruce Dickerson - Gunner, U.S.S. Vincennes

Kelley Bruce Dickerson was born in Portal on January 23, 1923 and attended Portal High School. After working in the Civilian Conservation Corps, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy in February 1941. SM Dickerson was assigned to the cruiser U.S.S. Vincennes, where he served as a gunner in one of the ship's eight-inch gun turrets. In August of 1942, the Vincennes was part of the naval task force detailed to cover the American landings on Guadalcanal. On the night of August 8-9, the Vincennes was sunk during the Naval Battle of Savo Island, the first naval surface action of the war. Dickerson was mortally wounded while manning his gun and died after being evacuated from the sinking ship. He was buried at sea. A companion who was with him at
his death brought this last message to his parents: "Tell them that I did my best -- that I stuck to my post of duty."

SM 1/C Clyde T. Dixon - USS Mount Hood

Clyde T. Dixon was born in Bulloch County in 1912 and attended Clito area schools. He married Leona Deal and they had three sons. In January, 1944, he was drafted and assigned to the ammunition ship USS Mount Hood. On November 10, 1944, while docked in the Admiralty Islands with a full load of ammunition, the Mount Hood exploded and sank. SM Dixon and 299 shipmates were instantly killed. The cause of the explosion has never been determined.

PVT Erastus Don Ellis - Infantryman, US Army

Erastus Don Ellis was born September 22, 1916. He attended Register and Statesboro schools. He joined the Army in 1937 and planned to be a career soldier. PVT Ellis was killed in action on November 19, 1944 in France while he and his squad were attempting to fight their way out of a surrounded position. He is buried at Bethlehem Cemetery.

SSGT Olice R. Evans - Co. L, 411 Infantry, 103 Division, US Army

Olice R. Evans was born March 14, 1917 in Bulloch County. He attended Brooklet High School. He married Mildred Lee and they had one daughter. In February, 1943 he entered the service. SSGT Evans was wounded on March 15, 1945 by a sniper during a house-to-house search in the village of Mulhausen, France. He died four days later. He is buried at Clito Baptist Church Cemetery.

PFC James Albert Futch, Jr., Infantryman, U.S. Army

Known as "Junior" to his family and friends, J. A. Futch was born in Bulloch County in the early 1920's. He attended Warnock School and helped sharecrop local farms with his father and brothers. In about 1942, he and his brother William were drafted into the U.S. Army. Junior Futch was trained as a rifleman and shipped overseas in early 1944. He was killed in action in France some time after the Normandy Invasion. PFC Futch is buried at an American military cemetery in France.

PFC Bill M. Gerrald - 12th Marines, 3rd Marine Division

Bill M. Gerrald was born June 23, 1925 in Bulloch County. He attended Brooklet High School. In September, 1943 he was inducted into the service and, after completing basic training, was immediately sent overseas. PFC Gerrald was killed in action on February 24, 1945 on the fifth day of the assault on Iwo Jima. He is buried at Emit Grove Cemetery.

PFC Thomas Hendley - US Army

Thomas Hendley was born on August 20, 1920, in Register, GA. He attended New Hope School. PFC Hendley died in June, 1945 at Rheims, France. He was buried in France.
Ensign F. Glen Hodges - Torpedo Sqn Six, USS Enterprise

Glen Hodges, the son of Mr. and Mrs. W.C. Hodges, was born in Statesboro on January 22, 1917. He graduated from Statesboro High School in 1934 where he played football and basketball. In 1939 he graduated from the University of Georgia Forestry School.

Ensign Hodges enlisted in the United States Naval Reserve as Seaman Second Class at the Navy Recruiting Station, Macon, Georgia on May 13, 1940. Three months later, he accepted an appointment as an Aviation Cadet. On March 13, 1941, he was designated Naval Aviator (heavier-than-air) and accepted a commission as Ensign in the United States Naval Reserve. On April 5, 1941 and was assigned to Torpedo Squadron Six (U.S.S. Enterprise) for active duty involving flying.

In June of 1942, the Enterprise was part of the task force assigned to beat back the Japanese invasion of Midway Island. The ensuing "Battle of Midway," in which the Japanese lost four aircraft carriers, is identified as the "turning point" battle of the Pacific War. From that time on, the Japanese were forced to assume a defensive position while the United States mounted an offensive battle plan. At the time of the battle, the Navy's torpedo bombers (TBD's) were obsolete in comparison to Japanese aircraft. It was in these aircraft that the Torpedo Squadrons from the carriers Enterprise, Yorktown, and Hornet attacked the Japanese fleet.

Ensign Hodges' squadron consisted of 16 aircraft; only four survived the attack. Hodges' plane was shot down and he was presumed dead on June 4, 1942. For bravery in pressing his attack in the face of insurmountable odds, Ensign Hodges was awarded the Navy Cross.

PVT Herman Lavonne Hodges - 84th Infantry Division, US Army

Herman Lavonne Hodges was born in 1925 in Bulloch County. He attended Register and Savannah schools. PVT Hodges was wounded during the Battle of Aachen, Germany on September 28, 1944; he died the following day. He is buried at Eastside Cemetery, Statesboro.

PFC William G. Holloway - Company E, 8th Infantry Reg, US Army

William G. Holloway was born May 17, 1918 near Register, GA. He attended Register High School. On November 7, 1942, he married Margaret Hodges. He was inducted into the Army on October 17, 1941. PFC Holloway was killed in action on August 5, 1944 near St. Lo, France. He is buried in Lower Lotts Creek Cemetery.

PFC James Alvin Lanier - 2nd Armored Division, US Army

Alvin Lanier was born on February 26, 1925 in rural Evans County. His family moved to Nevils, Bulloch County in 1932, where Alvin graduated from Nevils High School in 1943. He was inducted into the U.S. Army in June of 1943 at Statesboro. After graduating from basic training at Fort Knox KY, he was assigned
to the 2nd Armored Division as a tank gunner. PFC Lanier was wounded in September 1944 during a battle on the German border. After convalescing in France, he was stationed with his division in the Ardennes region of Belgium. This was one of the first American units attacked by the Germans in the Battle of the Bulge, December 16, 1944. PFC Lanier was killed in action on December 17, 1944 while manning his tank. He is buried at the American Military Cemetery at Henri Chapelle, Belgium.

SM 1/C Archie Redell Martin, US Navy

Archie Redell Martin, known as Dell, was born in Statesboro on September 11, 1907 and attended Bulloch County schools. He married Carol Inez Hutchinson. He was in the restaurant business in Gainesville, FL when he was inducted into the Navy in March or April, 1944. He was a ship's cook 1st class at the time of his death from illness in a base hospital on Bike Island, New Guinea, on May 9, 1945.

LT Carrol E. Minick - TBM Pilot, US Navy

Carrol E. Minick was born in Brooklet and graduated from Brooklet High School in 1937. In 1941 he graduated from University of Georgia. He entered the US Navy in July, 1942 and trained at Corpus Christi, TX. While operating from an escort carrier, his torpedo bomber was shot down by anti-aircraft fire during a mission off the coast of Luzon Island on January 15, 1945. Lt. Minick and his crew are buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

LT Berton H. Ramsey, Jr., 322nd Bomb Group, 8th Air Force

Born in Statesboro on April 21, 1919, Bert Ramsey attended Statesboro schools and Georgia Teachers' College. After graduating from the University of Georgia in 1941, he served as the principal of Metter High School. He enlisted in the Army Air Force in December, 1941 and received his wings in September, 1942. Upon completing training as a pilot in the Martin B-26 "Marauder" aircraft, Lt. Ramsey was assigned to the 322nd Bombardment Group. His group was the first B-26 unit to fly low-level combat missions over Europe. The group's second mission occurred on May 17, 1943. Eleven B-26's departed on a mission to bomb power generating plants in Holland. One aborted with an electrical malfunction, but all of the remaining ten aircraft were shot down by anti-aircraft fire. Of the fifty airmen who took part in the mission, thirty, including Lt. Ramsey, were killed.

AMM 3/C Troy J. Reddick - Patrol Sqn 93, USN

Troy Johnson Reddick was born on May 18, 1923 in Portal and graduated from Portal High School in 1941. He enlisted in the US Navy in April of 1941 and, upon completing high school, was inducted for basic training. He was rated as an Aviation Machinist Mate and served as a radio/telegraph operator on PBY-5A patrol aircraft. He was assigned to Patrol Squadron 93 (VP93) which was stationed at Quonset Point, Rhode Island. The squadron's duties were to perform anti-submarine patrols in the North Atlantic in efforts to stem the massive shipping losses that German U-boats were inflicting upon the Lend-Lease supply convoys to Britain. On June 8, 1942, while on patrol off the coast of Newfoundland, Reddick's aircraft failed to return to base. No trace of the aircraft or its crew was found.
PFC Rupert D. Riggs, Jr. - 22nd Marines, 6th Marine Division

Rupert D. Riggs was born September 5, 1925 in Statesboro. He attended Statesboro schools. In September, 1943 he was inducted into the United States Marine Corps. He was assigned as a machine-gunner, Company L, 3rd Bn, 22nd Marines. PFC Riggs received his first Purple Heart for being wounded prior to the Okinawa Invasion. He was killed in action during the fighting on Okinawa on May 17, 1945. He is buried at Eastside Cemetery, Statesboro.

SGT Barney W. Shelnutt - No. 75 Sqn, Royal Air Force

B. W. Shelnutt was born on February 7, 1918 and lived with his family in Statesboro, GA. He graduated from Statesboro High School and completed a course of study in the Business Department at South Georgia Teacher's College in 1937.

SGT Shelnutt went to Toronto to enlist in the Royal Canadian Air Force on April 22, 1940. He was the first Georgia resident to volunteer for service with the RCAF in World War II. He was a specialist in Wireless Telegraphy and Radio work and graduated as a flying observer and gunner. In early 1941 he arrived in England, where he was assigned to No. 75 (NZ) Squadron, Royal Air Force. He flew more than 40 missions over German-held territory. On one mission, his plane's fuel tanks were damaged by anti-aircraft fire, forcing him and the crew to bail out over south England when the plane ran out of fuel while returning from the mission. His Commanding Officer wrote to his mother that he was one of the best wireless operators in the squadron.

TSGT Rufus Alexander Small, US Army

Rufus Alexander Small was born about 1922 near Portal. He served as an Infantryman in the North African and Italian campaigns. At age 21 years, he was reported missing in action during fighting in Italy.

PVT Clifton Summerlin - US Army, Engineers

Clifton Summerlin was born in 1917 near Register, GA. He attended New Hope School. In July, 1943 PVT Summerlin was serving in an Army engineering detachment which was clearing land for an airfield in Florida when a dynamite charge exploded at the wrong time; he was one of 52 servicemen killed. He is buried in New Hope Cemetery.

SGT James Walter Swint, Aerial Gunner, 480th Bomb Sqdn (M)

James Walter Swint was born October 10, 1914 and grew up in Bulloch County. He attended Stilson schools. In September

On the night of October 26, 1941, his Wellington bomber was heavily damaged by flak upon returning from a mission over Germany. The pilot was able to "ditch" in the North Sea, and all the crew but Shelnutt escaped from the sinking aircraft and were later rescued. The pilot of the bomber wrote to SGT Shelnutt's mother that B.W. had "remained at his post too long after the plane was forced down on the sea, in attempts to send an S.O.S., and was drowned."
of 1941, he enlisted in the Army Air Force and graduated from flexible gunnery school. Sgt. Swint was then attached to a B-26 bomber squadron and stationed at Lake Charles, LA for additional training prior to overseas duty. During a training flight on January 19, 1944, his aircraft crashed in the Gulf of Mexico. He and the entire crew were killed.

LT Roland D. Warnock - B-24 Pilot, Army Air Corps

Roland D. Warnock was born in Bulloch County. After graduating from Georgia Teacher's College in 1938, he taught Industrial Arts in North Charleston, SC. He enlisted in the Army Air Corps in February, 1942. While on his first combat mission, his aircraft was shot down over Gotha, Germany on February 24, 1944. Five of the crew were able to parachute to safety, but he and four other crewmen went down with the plane. He is buried at Zachary Taylor National Cemetery, Louisville, KY.

Aviation Cadet John G. Woodward - Army Air Corps

John G. Woodward was born November 27, 1922 in Bulloch County. He attended Stilson High School and the University of Georgia. In January, 1943 he entered the Army Air Corps. Cadet Woodward was killed on May 15, 1944 when his training aircraft crashed at Moody Field. He is buried at the Old Fellowship Primitive Baptist Church Cemetery.

In addition to the casualties of World War II from Bulloch County, listed in the Roll of Honor, the following persons had strong ties to Bulloch County and are remembered by many still living here:

LT Rufus B. Stephens - B-24 Pilot, 467th Bombardment Group, Army Air Corps

Rufus Stephens, known as Steve, from Comer, GA, was working for the Agriculture Adjustment Administration in Statesboro when the war broke out. He joined the Army Air Corps in January, 1942. In a wartime wedding in Statesboro, he married Lillian Blankenship of Dublin, GA on July 27, 1943. Steve received B-24 training, and, in February of 1944, he was sent to England with the Eighth Air Force.

Steve and his crew successfully completed fourteen missions over Europe. Their fifteenth mission took place on May 29, 1944. Upon returning from the target, the B-24 was hit by flak about one mile before it would be out of harm's way. The plane went into a spin from which Steve managed to recover at 13,000 feet. He then ordered the crew to bail out. Steve and three other crew members were unable to escape and crashed into the Baltic Sea. Steve was awarded the Air Medal and two Oak Leaf Clusters for fifteen missions, and a special citation for enabling six members of his crew to survive. One of his crew members wrote to his widow: "Only by Steve staying with the controls, straining, exerting super-human strength to bring it level momentarily, made it possible for most of us to bail out. I shall never forget him."
TSGT Alfred Louis Wendzel - 463rd Bomb Grp, 15th Air Force

Alfred Louis Wendzel was born in Coloma, Michigan on July 1, 1920, the son of Richard and Bertha Wendzel, where he attended Berrien County Schools. He enlisted in the Army Air Corps on August 12, 1941 and received training at various bases. Among these was the Statesboro Air Base, where he arrived in August, 1943 with the 118th Observation Squadron. He was assigned overseas in November, 1944 with the 15th Air Force in Foggia, Italy. TSGT Wendzel was a top turret gunner in a B-17G aircraft. On February 15, 1945, his entire squadron was accidentally downed by bombs dropped by another 15th Air Force squadron that was flying at a higher elevation during a bombing mission to Vienna, Austria. Most of the crewmen, including TSGT Wendzel, were reported missing in action, although a few were imprisoned by the German Army until after the war. In 1948, TSGT Wendzel was interred at Eastside Cemetery in Statesboro, GA. On June 8, 1944, he was married in Tampa, FL to Evelyn Darley of Statesboro, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J.F. Darley. John Darley, Jr., brother to Evelyn Darley Wendzel, was killed at Iwo Jima on February 19, 1945, only four days after Alfred Wendzel was killed.

SSGT Frank R. Zetterower, Jr. - 42nd Infantry Division, US Army

Frank Zetterower, who was born on February 26, 1919 in Dublin, GA, was well known in Statesboro. He entered Georgia Teacher's College in 1937, where he served as the Freshman Class president and was a member of Delta Sigma. He married Nona Thackston of Statesboro. SSGT Zetterower entered the Army in September of 1943 and was attached to the 222nd Infantry Regiment of the 42nd "Rainbow" Division. He served as an infantry squad leader and was responsible for leading his men safely through several battles in the fall and winter of 1944. On January 6, 1945, his squad was involved in action in the village of Gamsheim, France. While the squad was crossing an open schoolyard in the face of enemy fire, one of his men was wounded. SSGT Zetterower left the safety of his position in an effort to remove the wounded man from the field of fire. In so doing, SSGT Zetterower was mortally wounded and died shortly after dragging the man to safety. Zetterower was posthumously awarded the Silver Star medal for his selfless sacrifice.

United States of America

50th Anniversary of World War II

A Grateful Nation Remembers...

Bulloch County Historical Society
Post Office Box 42
Statesboro, Georgia 30458
A Grateful Nation Remembers...

Bulloch County's
World War II
Roll of Honor

MARVIN GOSS
729 HILLWOOD DRIVE
STATESBORO GA 30458