



# MANTUA TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL COMMISSION SPECIAL BULLETIN

Volume 2, Issue 2

Special Memorial Day Issue

## **Memorial Day - May 29, 2023**

### **Remember and Honor**



The Township of Mantua Veterans Plaza

# James Elmer Hulings Remembering a Fallen Hero

By Jeff Gellenthin

James Elmer Hulings was born May 25, 1923, to James Nixon Hulings and Rae Kirkbride in Barnsboro, New Jersey. Sister Elizabeth Ann was three years old at the time. He attended Barnsboro Grammar School and later Pitman High School. He worked at the Wood Bus Company, where his father worked. He also worked for the Davis Milk Company as a truck driver, Coca Cola, and Cities Services Oil Company prior to being drafted into the service.



Elizabeth, sister of James Hulings

The following is based on research and excerpts from a scrap book created by James Hulings wife, Eleanor.

James was inducted in the Army Air Corps April 22, 1943, leaving Paulsboro the same day. He was sent directly to Fort Dix. He later went to many other camps including Florida, Texas, Nebraska, Nevada and Kilmer, New Jersey, then overseas to England.

While in Amarillo, Texas, his father visited him for a week during September 1943. While there, he visited Jim's barracks and met his friends, Ted Staley, Tom Franks, and others. During October 1943, Eleanor Dorothy Johnson visited Jim in Amarillo. While there, they were married on October 30, 1943. Eleanor stayed there until January 1944.

Jim arrived at Las Vegas, Nevada, his new station on January 20, 1944. While there, Jim learned the gunner courses and received one of the highest ratings. He won his wings and became Corporal



James Hulings in his Davis Milk Company Uniform

James E. Hulings. Before leaving Las Vegas, Jim and friends climbed a mountain, going up some 1,000 feet. He left Las Vegas on April 4, 1944, and arrived at Lincoln, Nebraska April 7, 1944.

On July 21, 1944, a son, James Roland, was born. The following day, James Elmer came home for 11 hours. He was able to see and hold his one-day old son. He was now a very proud father. The following day, he headed back to Kilmer, New Jersey. A few days later, James was headed to England.

While stationed in England, James's name appeared in the papers several times. Through this, the family learned that he had won the Air Medal and 3 Oak Clusters. During this time, James flew on a B-17 Flying Fortress as a turret-gunner, engineer.



Between September 17, 1944, and January 16, 1945, James had 27 missions to his credit. It was during his 28th mission that things went terribly wrong. At 06:20 hours on Saturday the 20th of January 1945, an American Flying Fortress crashed in the parish of Gipping, England. During take-off, the B-17G "Gallopin' Ghost" crashed. As reported by Charles Heist, the ship had reached an altitude of approximately 400 to 500 feet when #1 and #2 engines caught fire. Immediately, the crew jettisoned its twelve 500-pound demolition bombs. James (as he was engineer) was right behind Lieutenant Daniel Mote (pilot), as the plane went into a spin. James and Lieutenant Carlton Yarbrough (navigator) bailed out the nose door. It was very dark, and they could not

see the ground. So, they didn't know how high they were. It is understood that there was no prop wash, and their chutes did not open. At this point, the plane was approximately 250 feet above the ground. James and Carlton were killed immediately.



Lieutenant Carlton Leon Yarbrough

Robert Schaney (tail gunner), and Ken Lockwood (waist gunner) bailed out the waist door and the prop wash from #3 and #4 engines opened their chutes. They survived with only sprained ankles.

Lieutenant Mote, Lieutenant Fossum (the bombardier), Lieutenant Pruitt (the co-pilot), William Ilkka (radio operator), and Charles Keist (gunner) crashed with the ship. They all survived with only minor injuries.



members of his family and residence of the area, including the likes of J. Mason Tomlin. He was an all-American boy that got called off to war. With this writing we honor and remember James Elmer Hulings. He had his world ahead of him, with a wife and young son waiting for his return home. The pain and suffering that his family and friends endured cannot be comprehended. May his memory remain in our hearts as we thank James for his heroism and ultimate sacrifice.

In the end, the Flying Fortress came to rest atop the Mid-Suffolk Light Railway tracks. The ship was completely smashed after plowing through a farm field and fences.

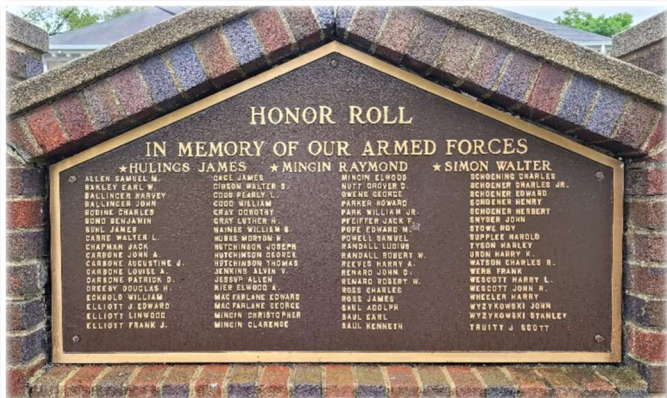
James Elmer Hulings and Carlton Yarbrough were buried side by side in the Cambridge Cemetery in the United Kingdom.

James was brought home in 1948 and is at rest in the Woodbury Memorial Park in West Deptford, New Jersey.



On July 7, 1946, in front of the Barnsboro Grammar School, a World War II Veteran's Memorial Monument was erected and dedicated (rededicated on July 7, 2001). It was originally funded by the churches, school, and fire department of Barnsboro.

As those from Barnsboro can imagine, James most likely played in the hollow behind the Barnsboro School, rode his horse through the surrounding woods, tiptoed through the Driver Cemetery, played in the Sewell Creek, swam in Tyler's Mill Pond, and enjoyed hearing stories of old being told by the elder



**Did you know?**

A B-17 named "Werewolf" made it home from a bombing mission over Brest, France on a single engine.

**FINAL RITES SET FOR SGT. HULINGS**

Pitman, NJ, July 22, 1948 -Services for T/Sgt. James E. Hulings, 21, of Barnsboro, will be held Saturday at 2.30 p. m. in a funeral home at 30 West Holly Avenue. The Rev. John B. Blair, pastor of St. Paul's Methodist Church, Paulsboro, will officiate. Burial will be in Woodbury Memorial Park.

Military rites will be conducted by Elwood Kimble post 49, American Legion, and Pitman Memorial post 6469, VFW. A firing squad will be provided by the veterans' groups.

Sergeant Hulings died Jan. 20, 1945, in England. He was a gunner on a B-17. He entered the service April 22, 1943 and had received the Air Medal with two oak leaf clusters, and the Purple Heart. He attended the Pitman High school.

Surviving are his widow, Eleanor D. and a son, James, both now living at Somers Point; his parents, Mr. and Mrs. James N. Hulings, of 43 Progress Avenue, Woodbury; and a sister, Mrs. Betty H. Dougan, Barnsboro.

**Did you Know?**

Current MTHC vice chairman Herb Hood's great uncle, Edward H. Hood, completed 35 missions as a top turret gunner on a B-17 during WW II.

**Joseph Hilderbrand, Navigator, B-17 Named "Peter Wabbit"**

**By Herb Hood and Jeff Gellenthin**



Mission after mission, they climbed into their aircraft and flew off into the sky knowing full well what they were going to face. They knew that if attacked in the air while flying to or from their assigned bombing target, there was no fox hole to crawl into for protection, no building to run into, no tree to stand behind to shield them from enemy fire,

no evasive maneuvers to take as they had to maintain their course to arrive at their targets. They had nowhere to run to, nowhere to hide.

If a crew member made 25 missions, their tour of duty was over. Unfortunately, the average lifespan of a bomber crew member was 17 missions.

Some of these crew members returned to their base with not so much as a single scratch. Others came home to base horribly wounded. Their aircraft was unpressurized meaning at altitude it was bitterly cold. Yet, they manned their stations in heated flight suits, hoping to make it back alive. It was so cold that the blood of a wounded airman didn't just coagulate on a wound, it froze over a wound. Still others never had a chance and were killed in combat.

These men had to depend on each other for their lives and for the survival of their aircraft. Sometimes their aircraft brought them home but was so badly damaged that ground crews could only shake their heads in disbelief and wonder how any such aircraft, with engines out, with huge gaping holes in its fuselage and wings, with its plexiglass nose shot away allowing hurricane force winds to roar down the inside of the aircraft, could still fly with that much damage. They watched as station ambulances chased them down the runway to take their wounded to a base hospital hoping that they would be in time to save a crewman's life.

Others waited in the control towers of the airbase. Through binoculars, they scanned the skies, hoping that a missing aircraft was just late in getting home. Most of the time, their wait resulted in sadness as the missing plane never showed up. Sometimes, they were joyfully rewarded as a missing plane did make it home. Take the case of an aircraft called "Little Willie". The plane was sent on a bombing mission to Berlin. Over Berlin the aircraft suffered flak damage which knocked out the super charger on one engine and caused the propeller on a second engine to become a runaway. With two engines damaged Little Willie fell out of formation. Then German fighters closed in for the kill. In the tail, gunner Robert M. Haydon, Jr. drove them off. When the

aircraft finally leveled off it was on the outskirts of Berlin and only 50 feet above the ground. Little Willie was officially listed as "missing in action" by the rest of its bomb group.

With two engines out and heavy damage to the aircraft's tail, the pilot of Little Willie, nevertheless, elected to stay with his damaged aircraft in the hope that it could get them home alive. Across Germany and then Holland, Little Willie managed to stay in the air on just two engines, but the plane's altitude never exceeded 150 feet.

Meanwhile, back at Little Willie's home base, the crews of the returning aircraft were done being debriefed and were looking forward to an evening meal. Some would later go to the officers' or enlisted men's clubs for drinks.

When Little Willie was over the English Channel, the plane's altitude was down to ten feet. Somehow the pilot managed to get a third engine started and Little Willie climbed to 5,000 feet and made it home to Knettishall Airdrome. Little Willie had spent nine and a half hours in the air in its quest to get home with far more than half of that in making its run from Germany to the English Channel on just two engines, but she made it. Little Willie had come home and so had his crew, all of them alive.



Painting of Little Willie, on two engines, clearing the Dutch coast and starting across the English Channel on her way home from Berlin, Germany.

Most of these airmen, like Joseph, were barely adults by age. Many of them had never even cast a vote back home.

Joseph Hilderbrand was born on February 15, 1919, in Mantua Heights. He is the son of Jerome J.

Hilderbrand and his wife Anna Martha Wurtz. By 1930, Joseph and his parents were living at 235 Elm Avenue in Mantua.

Joseph had six brothers and sisters, according to Census Records. They were Jerome (b. 1904), Lillian (b. 1905), William (b. 1910), Albert (b. 1911), Anna (b. 1916) and Marie (b. 1918).

Most, if not all of these children, most likely attended the Union Street School in Mantua, New Jersey. When J. Mason Tomlin Elementary School opened in Mantua, they may have been sent there.

Records show that Joseph did have two years of high school. Most likely he attended Pitman High School for those two years. If so, he would have been bussed there.

As to his activities as a child growing up in Mantua, there isn't any way to positively know for sure what he liked to do. Other children of this time period swam in the Mantua Creek at the end of Norris Street. They went ice skating on a pond near the bridge across Mantua Creek where it crosses Route 45. They played tag in school. They got ice cream from a store at the corner of Norris and Main Street. They got candy from a store called Katie Kane's at the intersection of Union and Main Street. They went "trick or treating". They enjoyed Memorial Day, then called Flag Day, parades.

When Joseph enlisted, he was working as a machinist at a paper mill. Joseph enlisted in the Army Air Corp during World War II. His military records show him as weighing 147 pounds with blonde hair and grey eyes and standing 5 feet 11 ½ inches tall. Joseph rose to the rank of 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant. He became a navigator flying on a Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress bomber.

His plane, a B-17F with the serial number of 42-29830, was named "Peter Wabbit". It was part of the 379<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group, 524<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron of the Eight Airforce stationed in Kimbolton, England. His crew mates were 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant Erwalt D. Wagoner,

pilot, 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant William C. Barnard, co-pilot, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Kenneth F. Gibbs, bombardier, T/Sgt Henry I. Cushman, top-turret gunner, T/Sgt Benjamin Radensky, radio operator/gunner, S/Sgt Francis J. Donahue, ball turret gunner, S/Sgt Marvin T. Charlson, waist gunner, S/Sgt Eldred J. Andruss, waist gunner and S/Sgt Dean J. Yates, tail gunner.

The following picture is the crew of "Peter Wabbit" assembled by their aircraft. It was taken on July 24, 1943.



By August 17, 1943, Joseph Hilderbrand had already flown a dozen combat missions. He had been awarded an Air Medal with an Oak Leaf Cluster and a Purple Heart Medal.

On August 17, 1943, Joseph, aboard "Peter Wabbit", was sent on a mission to bomb the ball bearing plant at Schweinfurt, Germany. Peter Wabbit was one of 240 American bombers sent on this mission. Another 146 American bombers were sent to bomb nearby Regensburg. Peter Wabbit was shot down by enemy aircraft over Dorrebach, about six miles west of Bingen, Germany. The aircraft crashed and there were no survivors. Peter Wabbit was shot down by Lt. Heinrich Rudolph of JG 11/I. Stab at Daxweiler. His aircraft was an FW-190A. Engine number three of Peter Wabbit was hit in a head-on pass. The engine exploded and tore off the right wing causing the plane to go out of control. The B-17 crashed into the woods of the Kohlenberg District near the township of Dorrebach, 13 KM west

of Bingen. The police at Bad Kreuznach, in a letter dated 8/19/1943, stated that five bodies were found inside the wreck and two others nearby.

The FW 190 was armed with 2, 13mm machine guns and 4, 20 mm cannons.



FW-190

Peter Wabbit was armed with thirteen 50 caliber machine guns. On a head-on pass, depending on the angle (high or low with respect to the B-17's level of flight), the B-17 could bring at least four of her guns to bear on the FW-190A. Probably other B-17's in the formation were tracking this aircraft also and some of their gunners may have been firing at the FW-190 too.



Joseph Hilderbrand is buried in Plot J, Row 25, Grave 24 in the Lorraine American Cemetery in Saint-Avold, France. He is gone but will never be forgotten.

## ANDREW HARRIS LAWSON

By Herb Hood and Jeff Gellenthin

Andrew Harris Lawson was born on June 28, 1910, in Norwood, Delaware, Pennsylvania. His father was Charles Costill Lawson (1879-1967). His mother was Helena Ann Ritter (1882-1939).

The Federal Census of 1930 shows that Andrew was living with his parents on Glassboro Road in Mantua Township, Gloucester, New Jersey. His family had moved into the township in 1924.

Andrew attended Pitman High School and graduated in June of 1928. In 1929 Andrew enlisted in the US Army for 6 months and was honorably discharged. After this military service Andrew began pre-med training at Hahnemann Hospital in Philadelphia. At the age of 31, with world military tensions rising, Andrew re-enlisted in the US Army on March 24, 1941. In the summer of 1941, Andrew completed training in the signal corps school at Fort Monmouth in New Jersey.

Andrew Lawson eventually wound-up fighting in the Philippines during the early part of World War II. At this time in the war, United States forces were in no position to send military troops, ships or planes to help out with the defense of the Philippines. In fact, the US military commander, General Douglas MacArthur was ordered to leave the Philippines and proceed to Australia.

When Bataan fell to the Japanese, Andrew was one of as many as 80,000 prisoners that were forced-marched to a Japanese POW camp. The forced-march of 65 to 69 miles, under the command of General Masaharu Homma, saw about 25,000 prisoners die during that march. Andrew survived the march.





Bataan Death March, picture source: New York Daily News

Prisoners who walked part of the way to the POW camp and fell and could not get up were simply killed where they fell as depicted in the following painting.

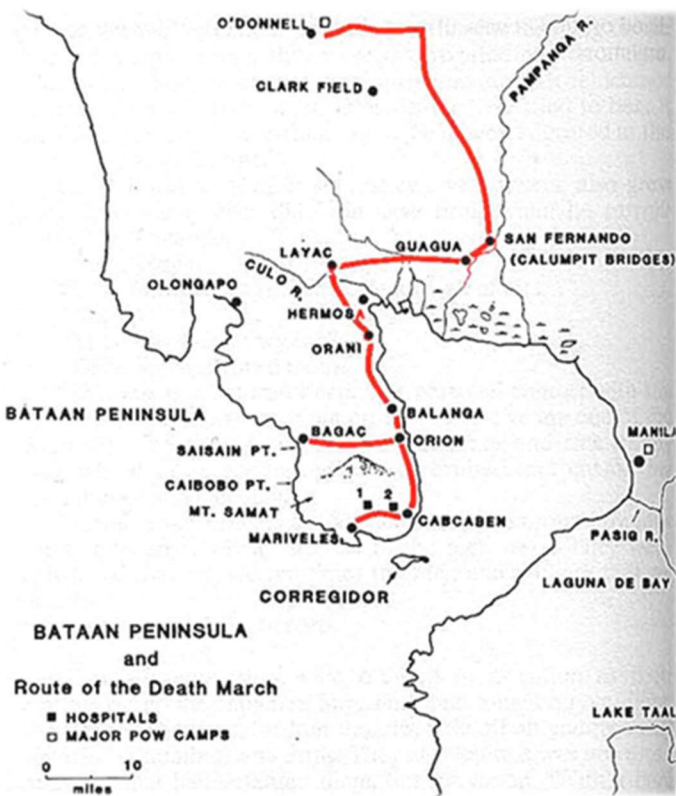


The POW Camp, Camp O'Donnell, was located on Luzon Island. The first prisoners began to arrive on April 11, 1942. The last ones came on June 2, 1942. The camp closed on January 20, 1943. Most American prisoners were removed from the camp and sent to other POW camps in June of 1942.

The living conditions in these camps were horrendous to say the least as the Japanese grossly underestimated the number of combatants that surrendered to them. At best they thought there would only be about 10,000 instead of the 70 to 80 thousand soldiers that surrendered.

In the camps, the prisoners lived in bamboo huts. They slept on bamboo floors with no coverings. There was no plumbing in the camps and drinkable water was scarce. Their 1500 calorie diet consisted mainly of rice and a vegetable style soup. As such it was deficient in protein and vitamins. Diseases such as malaria and dysentery ran unchecked in the camps as there were few medical supplies. The Japanese refused outside help from the Philippines Red Cross. About 40 people a day died in the camps.

The American public was not informed of the Bataan Death March until January 27, 1944. It wasn't intentionally kept from the American public but simply not discovered until General MacArthur returned with American and Allied forces to retake the Philippines. Shortly thereafter Life Magazine did a feature story on the event.



The eventual destination of the prisoners, both Filipino and American was Camp O'Donnell.

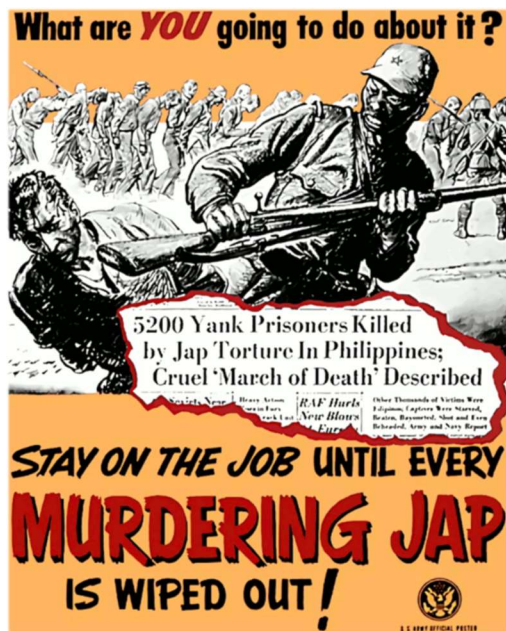
Some of the allied prisoners were transported to the POW camp by train. They were packed into box cars like sardines in a can. They could not sit down. When they had to urinate, they did it on themselves and those standing next to them. If a prisoner died, the weight of his corpse was held upright by the living which were packed around him.

General George Marshall issued a statement on the death march. He said,

“These brutal reprisals upon helpless victims evidence the shallow advance from savagery which the Japanese people have made. ... We serve notice upon the Japanese military and political leaders as well as the Japanese people that the future of the Japanese race itself, depends entirely and irrevocably upon their capacity to progress beyond their aboriginal barbaric instincts.”

After the war with Japan was over, General Masaharu Homma was tried for war crimes and convicted. In September of 1945 he was executed by firing squad.

When Bataan fell to the Japanese, Andrew’s parents must have lived in stark terror of not knowing if their son, Andrew, was alive or not. One can only imagine how much worse it got for them when the news of the Bataan Death March came to be publicly known in the United States.



As a result of this cruel and barbaric incident, propaganda posters began to appear as shown.

On October 11, 1944, Andrew was one of over 1700 prisoners that were placed aboard a Japanese freighter called the Arisan Maru at Manilla for transport to a Japanese POW camp in Manchuria.

The prisoners were kept in the freighter’s hold much like slaves were kept in the holds of sailing slave ships in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Arisan Maru was known as a “hell ship”. Hell Ships, as they were called, were ships used by the Japanese to transport POWs and their crews often starved and tortured the POWs on their way to the prison camps, apparently, for fun and amusement. Conditions aboard hell ships were about as barbaric and brutal for prisoners as can be imagined. The Japanese had as many as 204 hell ships.

The concept of a hell ship goes back to at least Revolutionary War times. British forces employed several ships to house American prisoners. Like their Japanese cousins, the British hell ships were just as brutal for prisoners.

On October 21, 1944, the Arisan Maru departed Manilla. The ship joined a Japanese convoy consisting of 13 merchant ships, three destroyers which acted as escorts and one fleet supply ship. On October 23, 1944, the destroyers in the convoy began to pick up signals from American submarines and the convoy was ordered to disperse and make their way at their best possible speed to Takao which is the modern-day Kaohsiung, Taiwan.



Arisan Maru

The Arisan Maru, whose top speed was only 7 knots, was attacked by the American submarine, USS Snook. The Snook fired five torpedoes at the Arisan Maru and sank the vessel. The prisoners, 1,773 of them, managed to get out of the ship’s hold and went into the water. However, the prisoners had no life jackets or life rafts. The Japanese did not rescue any of them and only nine survived the

sinking. Andrew Lawson was not one of them. Most likely he drowned or was taken by sharks.

Five of the prisoners made it to the Chinese mainland. They were later re-united with American forces and returned to the United States. The other four were recaptured by Japanese forces, their fate unknown.



The USS Snook, SS-279, was a Gato Class diesel-electric submarine built by the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, Maine. The submarine was commissioned on October 24, 1942.

The USS Snook was making its ninth patrol when it was last heard from on April 8, 1945. The Japanese submarine I-56 is thought to have sunk the Snook off of the Okinawa Island chain, east of Taiwan.

During the war in the Pacific, American Navy submarines sank 17 hell ships. The crews of these submarines had no idea that allied prisoners were on board these ships. Through the periscopes on the submarines, the ships appeared to just be cargo ships and the submarine crews were duty-bound to sink them. One can only imagine the regret and guilt they felt when they learned that they had sunk a ship with prisoners on board.

Andrew's family was not notified by the US Navy of his death until 1945. This capped off several years that the family lived in agonizing fear of not knowing if Andrew was alive or dead. Today, a headstone is in the Bethel Cemetery in Hurffville, New Jersey. The headstone commemorates and acknowledges the death of Andrew but, obviously, there is no body in the grave.



In addition to the marker in the Bethel Cemetery, another marker also bears Andrew's name. It is located near the site of Camp O'Donnell. On the monument are the names of those who died either in POW camps or on a hell ship.



The sentiment on the marker says, "Take unto Thyself O Lord, the Souls of the Valiant".

LAWSON ANDREW H	PFC	SIG AIR WARNING CO	PENNSYLVANIA
LAWSON AUGUSTA J	1 LT	382 INF 96 DIV	TEXAS
LAWSON BISHOP	SGT	59 CA REGT	TENNESSEE
LAWSON DAVE B	PVT	200 CA REGT	NEW MEXICO
LAWSON JOHN B	1 LT	400 BOMB SQ 90 BOMB GP (H)	OREGON
LAWSON JOHN H	PVT	93 BOMB SQ 19 BOMB GP (H)	VIRGINIA
LAWSON JOHN P	TEC 5	194 TANK BN	CALIFORNIA
LAWSON WILLIAM J	SGT	72 BOMB SQ 5 BOMB GP (H)	FLORIDA
LAWYER DALE R	2 LT	400 BOMB SQ 90 BOMB GP (H)	ILLINOIS
LAY MARLIN M	PVT	33 OM TRK REGT	OREGON
LAYOG BASILIO C	1 LT	26 CAV REGT (PS)	PHILIPPINES
LAYOLA CALIXTO A	PVT	12 OM REGT (PS)	PHILIPPINES
LAYSON MARIANO	PVT	45 INF REGT (PS)	PHILIPPINES
LAYTHA EDGAR M	TEC 3	HO CO USFIBT	NEW YORK
LAYUGAN CESAR	PFC	57 INF REGT (PS)	PHILIPPINES
LAYUGAN CONSOLICIO	PVT	45 INF REGT (PS)	PHILIPPINES
LAYUGAN MARIANO	PVT	45 INF REGT (PS)	PHILIPPINES
LAZARO LEONARDO	PFC	14 ENGR REGT (PS)	PHILIPPINES
LAZARO PRIMITIVO	SGT	24 FA REGT (PS)	PHILIPPINES

Andrew Lawson is gone, but he, too, will never be forgotten.



Andrew Harris Lawson

On June 18, 1945, a letter was sent to the Lawson family concerning the death of Andrew Harris Lawson. The letter was signed by Major General J. A. Ulio, Adjutant General of the Army.

The letter read, *“The International Red Cross has transmitted to this government an official list obtained from the Japanese Government, after long delay, of American prisoners of war who were lost while being transported northward from the Philippine Islands on a Japanese ship which was sunk on 24 October 1944. It is with deep regret that I inform you that your son was among those lost when that sinking occurred and, in the absence of any probability of survival, must be considered to have lost his life. He will be carried on the records of the War Department as killed in action 24 October 1944. The evidence of his death was received on 16 June 1945, the date upon which his pay will terminate and his accounts will be closed.*

*The information available to the War Department is that the vessel sailed from Manilla, Philippine Islands, on October 11, 1944 with 1775 prisoners of war aboard. On 24 October 1944 the vessel was sunk by submarine action in the South China Sea over 200 miles from the Chinese coast which was the nearest land. Five of the prisoners escaped in a small boat and reached the coast. Four others have been reported as picked up by the Japanese, by whom all others aboard are reported lost. Absence of detailed information as to what happened to the other individual prisoners and the known circumstances of the incident lead to a conclusion that a; other prisoners listed by the Japanese as aboard the vessel perished/*

*It is with deep regret that I must notify you of this unhappy culmination of the long period of anxiety and suffering you have experienced. You have my heartfelt sympathy.”*

Another document reached the Lawson family. It read, *“In grateful memory of Private First Class Andrew H. Lawson who died in the service of his country in the Southwest Pacific Area, October 24, 1944. He stands in the unbroken line of patriots who have dared to die that freedom might live and grow and increase its blessings. Freedom lives and through it, he lives-in a way that humbles the undertakings of most men.”* The document was signed, Franklin D. Roosevelt, President of the United States.

Andrew Lawson was awarded the Purple Heart Medal on July 11, 1945. The Purple Heart Medal was created by General George Washington on August 7, 1782.

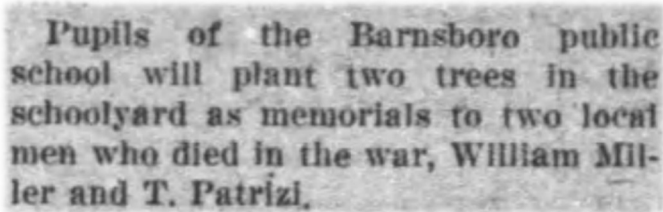
Other medals that were awarded to Andrew Lawson include the Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal, the Foreign Service Medal and an Honor Medal.

Andrew Harris Lawson was truly a credit to the brave men who served America in its wars and military conflicts for freedom.

# William B. Miller, Jr.

By Herb Hood and Jeff Gellenthin

The story of William B. Miller comes from a newspaper article.



Pupils of the Barnsboro public school will plant two trees in the schoolyard as memorials to two local men who died in the war, William Miller and T. Patrizi.

The Monmouth Inquirer, Thursday, April 10, 1919

William B. Miller, Jr. was born in Barnsboro, Gloucester, New Jersey on February 12, 1896. He had a sister named Minnie. Both William and Minnie attended the Barnsboro Academy on Main Street in Barnsboro, the predecessor of the Barnsboro School, built in 1913.



Class picture taken outside of the Barnsboro Academy. William B. Miller, Jr. is in the back row, fourth from the left.



Class picture taken outside of the Barnsboro Academy. Minnie Miller is in the back row, first person on the left.

William B. Miller, Jr. grew up in Barnsboro and was near not only his immediate family but also near his grandparents. William B. Miller, Jr's maternal grandfather was Thomas A. Locke. He was a veteran of the Civil War and is buried in the Mt. Zion Methodist Church Cemetery.

William, Jr's sister Minnie Bertha Miller was born on January 29, 1894, in Glassboro and died on December 1, 1942, in Barnsboro. William Jr. had a second sister named Mabel Miller who was born on August 7, 1897 in Gloucester County and died on April 18, 1900 in Glassboro. Sadly, William Jr. probably grew up with little or no memory of this sister. William would have been about four years old when she died.

World War I broke out on July 28, 1914. It ended on November 11, 1918. The United States did not enter the war at this time. President Woodrow Wilson was against getting involved in foreign wars. With Germany's escalating and continuing attacks on ships carrying Americans and with the discovery of the Zimmerman Telegram, Wilson was forced to ask Congress to declare war on Germany on April 2, 1917. Congress did just that.

With the United States now entering the war, draft registration began. William B. Miller, Jr. most likely proudly registered for the draft as did almost every American who did register. The following is William B. Miller, Jr's WW I draft registration. At the time of his registration, William was a machine shop laborer in Woodbury.

## Did you know?

Regionally speaking, the USS Olympia, currently berthed at Penn's Landing, brought back the remains of the Unknown Soldier from France after WW I. To do so, she fought her way through the remains of the 1921 Tampa Bay Hurricane. At the ship's arrival at the mouth of the Potomac River, Olympia was escorted to the Washington Navy Yard by the battleship USS North Dakota and the destroyer USS Bermadou.

Form 1 **1018** REGISTRATION CARD No. **4**

1 Name in full *William Benjamin Miller Jr* Age in yrs. **21**

2 Home address *Glassboro Pike, Barnsboro, New Jersey*

3 Date of birth *February 12 1896*

4 Are you (1) a natural-born citizen, (2) a naturalized citizen, (3) an alien, (4) or have you declared your intention (specify which)? *Natural born*

5 Where were you born? *Barnsboro, New Jersey, USA*

6 If not a citizen, of what country are you a citizen or subject?

7 What is your present trade, occupation, or office? *machine shop laborer*

8 By whom employed? *Hodge & Still Co*

Where employed? *Woodbury, N.J.*

9 Have you a father, mother, wife, child under 12, or a sister or brother under 12, solely dependent on you for support (specify which)? *No*

10 Married or single (which)? *single* Race (specify which)? *Caucasian*

11 What military service have you had? Rank \_\_\_\_\_; branch \_\_\_\_\_; years \_\_\_\_\_; Nation or State \_\_\_\_\_

12 Do you claim exemption from draft (specify grounds)?

I affirm that I have verified above answers and that they are true.

*William B. Miller Jr.*  
(signature of registrant)

**29-3-18-A**

REGISTRAR'S REPORT

1 Tall, medium, or short (specify which)? *medium* Slender, medium, or stout (which)? *medium*

2 Color of eyes? *gray* Color of hair? *light brown* Bald? *No*

3 Has person lost arm, leg, hand, foot, or both eyes, or is he otherwise disabled (specify)? *No*

I certify that my answers are true, that the person registered has read his own answers, that I have witnessed his signature, and that all of his answers of which I have knowledge are true, except as follows:

*Alfred W. Owen*  
(signature of registrar)

Precinct *1st District Hunter Exp*

City or County *Gloucester*

State *New Jersey* *January 5, 1917*  
(Date of registration)



William Jr. served in the U.S. Army during WW I. While serving, he participated in some of the largest and deadliest battle campaigns of that war such as the Meuse-Argonne. The Meuse-Argonne campaign took place from September 26, 1918 until November 11, 1918. During the battle 26,277 U.S. soldiers were killed and 95,786 U.S. soldiers were wounded.

William B. Miller, Jr. died in France on March 6, 1919, from pneumonia, most likely the result of the Spanish Flu epidemic which proved just as deadly as enemy bullets.

**William B. Miller, Jr. (Barnsboro)**  
 Residence: Barnsboro, Gloucester County, NJ  
 Place of Birth: Barnsboro, NJ  
 Cause of Death: Disease  
 No photo available; 1 descriptive card  
 Card ID# 2592

*Miller, William B. Jr.* 2,414-522 \*White \*Colored

Residence: *Glassboro Pike Barnsboro Gloucester New Jersey*

Subject: *B.A. N. G. R. C.* \*Inducted at *Woodbury, NJ* on *Apr 1 1918*

Place of birth: *Barnsboro NJ* Age or date of birth: *22 2/12 yrs.*

Organizations served in, with dates of assignments and transfers:  
*7 Co 2 Bn 153 Dep. Brig to May 8/18; Btry F 307 Pk to death*

Grades, with date of appointment: *Pvt*

Engagements: *St Mihiel; Meuse; Argonne; Toul; Grand Pre*

Served overseas from *May 27/18* to *death* from *to* to *to*

~~Was~~ Died of *Broncho Pneumonia* *Mar 6, 1918*

Other wounds or injuries received in action:

Persons notified of death: *William B. Miller, Sr. Father*  
*Glassboro Barnsboro N. J.*

Remarks:

\*Strike on words not applicable. \*Date of document from and control in the 17 8

William B. Miller is buried in the Mount Zion Cemetery in Barnsboro, New Jersey.



The decades of 1900-1920 were two decades of tragedy for William Benjamin Miller, Sr. He grieved from the death of his daughter, Mabel, in 1900, his wife, Mary, in 1902 and then his son, William, Jr. in 1919. Perhaps his daughter's marriage (Minnie) and family kept him going. Minnie Miller married Benjamin Harrison Postell.

Minnie and Benjamin had a daughter named Bertha Mae Postell. She was born on December 10, 1916 in Barnsboro and died on December 29, 2008 in Barnsboro. Bertha Mae Postell was William B. Miller, Sr's granddaughter. He got to spend the last thirteen years of his life around his granddaughter.

The memory of William B. Miller Jr. now rests with the living, the residents of Barnsboro and the residents of Mantua Township itself. Private William B. Miller, Jr. must not ever be forgotten.

With the approach of Memorial Day, the members of the Mantua Township Historical Commission would like to express our thanks for the service of all veterans in America for their service during the military conflicts our nation has faced. We recognize and greatly appreciate the sacrifice made by those who did not return to their loved ones back at home. The memory of these men and women must never fade or be forgotten. It is for the living to see to it that this never happens.

The Mantua Township Historical Commission also would like to express our thanks for the service of veterans who served in the Civil War, the War of 1812 and the Revolutionary War who rest in the Union Graveyard, The Jesse Chew Cemetery, and the Driver Cemetery. Two of those veterans, Jesse G. Eastlack and Joseph H. Johnson made the ultimate sacrifice by giving their lives in combat.

On March 2, 1866, an editorial appeared in the newspaper, the *Constitution*. It called for the creation of a monument for those from Gloucester County who gave their lives during the Civil War. Parts of that editorial read: *"Now is the time, if ever, to erect the monument, before time sobers away our ardor and our love. It is the new-made grave that is strewn with fragrant flowers and receives the most faithful homage. Now is the time to record the honored names and rescue them from forgetfulness.*

*Now is the time, while fathers, mothers, relatives, and friends are living and in quiet retirement of the family circle are watching with full hearts the vacant seat that tells of those, who, from a stern sense of duty, left these sacred ties, full of daring and hopefulness, to battle bravely for the right, and, if necessary, die in its defense."*

That monument was built and stands in front of the County Court House in Woodbury. Inscribed on that monument are the names of Lt. Joseph H. Johnson and private Jesse G. Eastlack.



May the memory, deeds, and sacrifice of these two Mantua Township veterans never be forgotten.



Mantua Township Historic Commission

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Mantua, New Jersey 08051

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**Our mission is to preserve and share the rich  
history of Mantua Township**

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mmission](http://www.facebook.com/MantuaTownshipHistoricalCommission)

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#### **Contributors, Authors and Editors of this Bulletin**

Jeff Gellenthin

Herb Hood

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The Mantua Township Historical Commission is always accepting donations of pictures, documents and stories concerning the Township's history.