



Sgt. Henry Clemmons in uniform

Photo contributed

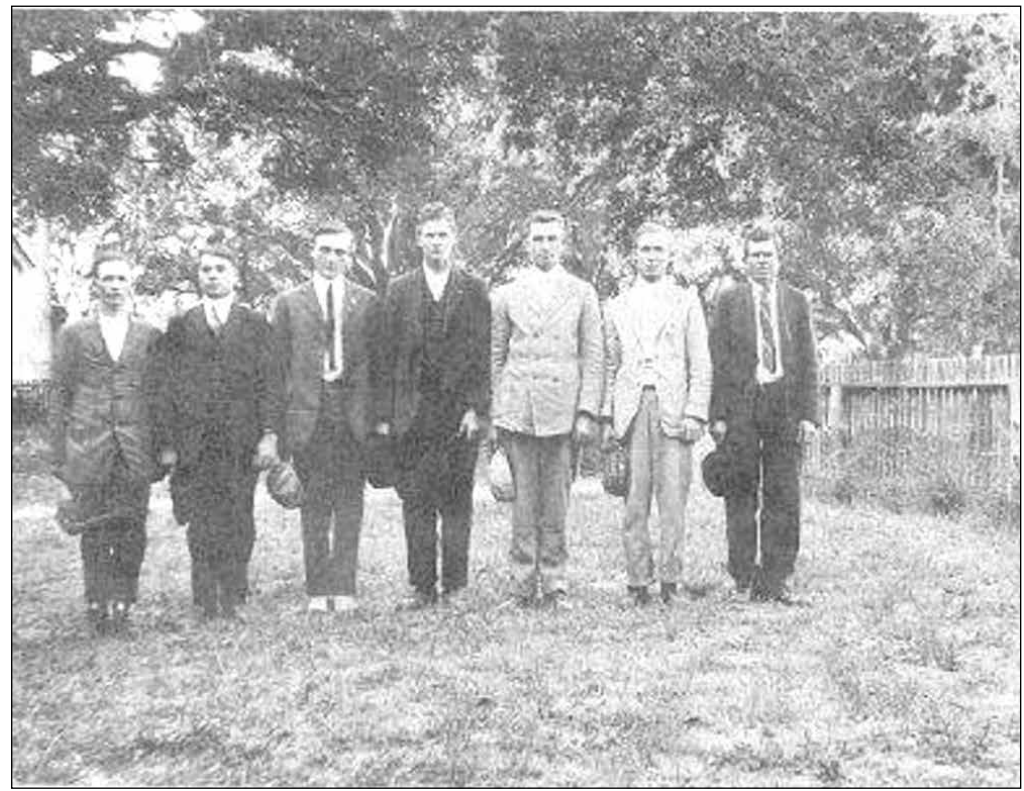


Photo contributed by Gwen Causey

Henry Lindon Clemmons, center, is shown with the six other men — Luther J. Inman, Owen R. Mintz, Willie H. Hewett, Robert W. Holden, Mack Leonard and Issac Fred Edge — from Brunswick County ordered to report for duty Oct. 15, 1917.

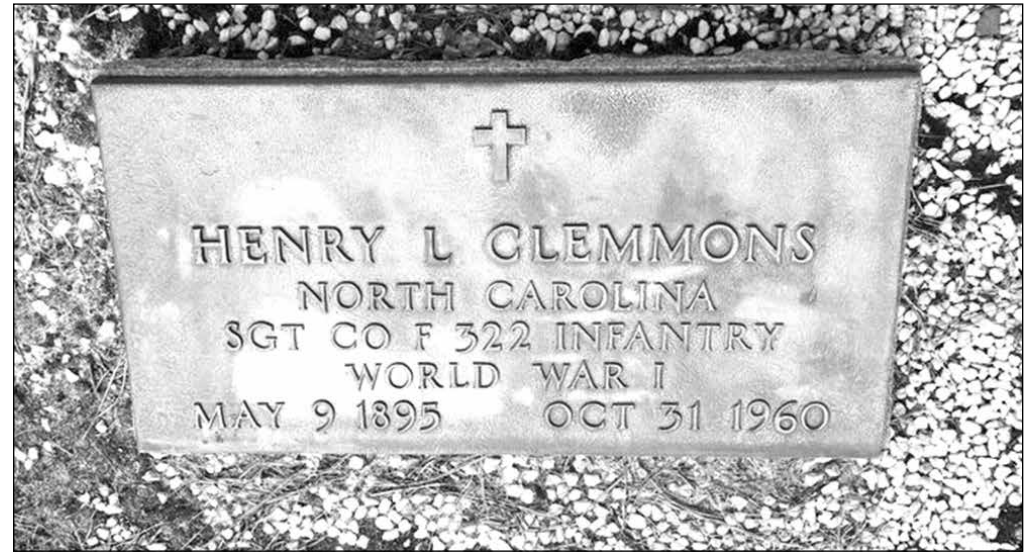


Photo contributed

Sgt. Henry Clemmons' military flat marker

## The World War I profile of Sgt. Henry Lindon Clemmons

BY NORMA ECKARD  
SPECIAL TO THE BEACON

Henry Lindon Clemmons was born and raised in Supply. His family tree is in Family Search.

Henry's World War I draft registration shows he was married with a daughter (born a month earlier in May 1917), living in Supply and farming for himself. He was described as tall and slender with blue eyes and red hair. His registration was signed by G. Floyd Kirby, a local businessman and friend.

Henry was ordered to report for duty Oct. 15, 1917, along with six other Brunswick County men: Luther J. Inman, Owen R. Mintz, Willie H. Hewett, Robert W. Holden, Mack Leonard and Issac Fred Edge.

All seven Brunswick County men were sent to Camp Jackson, S.C., and officially accepted Oct. 26 and then assigned to Company F, 322nd Infantry, 81st "Wildcat" Division. Robert Holden and Owen Mintz would be reassigned before leaving for Europe, while Isaac Edge was honorably discharged with a disability in December 1917.

Before leaving for France, Clemmons was promoted to corporal (July 4, 1918).

The 81st Division had just gone "over the top" during the Meuse-Argonne offensive. Clemmons had been promoted to sergeant about a month earlier (Oct. 5, 1918). First Sgt. Thomas Shinn's diary (entries interspersed throughout below) describes how those orders were received.

*At 4 a.m. on Saturday, Nov. 9, 1918, the captains were called and given orders. Sergeants were told to get the Companies up, have breakfast and packs rolled and ready to move to the front at 7:30 a.m.*

Sgt. Clemmons was responsible for carrying out the orders for Company F, 322nd, on Nov. 9, 1918.

*The 322 Infantry will go over the top at 8 a.m. 321 Infantry will follow them and relieve them at the first opportunity.*

The whole plan of action was based on the assumption that the enemy was withdrawing and would not greatly oppose the 81st Division's advance. It was not the case in this particular sector, however. With heavy packs, the men moved through the cold mud and rain, the packs becoming heavier with the rain.

81st Division, 322nd Infantry: These are the 14 Brunswick County soldiers:

Clemmons, Pvts. Isaac F. Edge and Ransom Ennis (Supply), Bugler Willie H. Hewett, Cpl. Luther J. Inman, Pvts. James W. Leonard, Mack Leonard and Simon A. Lewis, Sgt. David H. Long, Pvt. 1st Class Fred McDonald, Pvts. James Rolland Mintz, Luther P. Reynolds and Quince A. Simmons and Bugler William R. Smith.

The 60th Artillery Brigade of the 35th Division were shooting over their heads, causing the men to jump as they "shot such big guns right in our face."

*We didn't think of the many of our number that were going up never to return. We laughed and joked just as tho' we were on an ordinary hike. — 1st Sgt Shinn.*

The 322nd Infantry was on the left, the 324th Infantry on the right. The 321st and 323rd were in support on Metz-Verdun Road. Sgt. Clemmons' 2nd Battalion (Companies E-H) took the position right of the 1st Battalion (Companies A-D) on the morning of Nov. 9.

At 4:30 p.m., Company F formed a line south of Moranville. The town was captured about 5 p.m. Companies E and F then established an outpost nearby.

With no food or water, the 321st Infantry, 1st Sgt. Shinn's unit, lay in the woods all day and night without a fire or cover. It was raining and cold enough to freeze water in the canteen. Many of the men's feet froze until they couldn't walk on them.

*All the boys had lost that jolly yelling feeling that we had the morning before. — 1st Sgt. Shinn*

That morning, Nov. 10, the 322nd Infantry continued the attack at 6:30 a.m. They took the town of Grimaucourt at 9:30 a.m. and continued pushing east and west. They met strong resistance at 11 a.m. and withdrew. By 5:30 p.m., the 321st Infantry was ordered to relieve the 322nd, Clemmons' unit. "The roar of the battle still raged on." Shinn watched as ambulances were hurriedly bringing wounded men of the 322nd.

*We passed Captain Stone [unknown Company] staggering back shell shocked. "Thank God somebody has come to help us."*

*Every few minutes an ambulance would pass full of men with legs and arms shot off or a wagon loaded with 8 or 10 dead men in it.*

*They told us the 3rd Battalion of the 322nd [Companies I, K, L, and M] was somewhere out there but nobody knew where. They were lost and*

*beaten and we were up against a tough proposition.*

*As we passed on, stragglers from the 322nd came back, some wounded and some beaten in morale.*

Shinn led his company beside his captain, double time, through barbed wire, as shells burst all around, killing and wounding their men.

*We came to a few men of B&L Companies of the 322nd Infantry and carrying parties could be seen crawling along the edge of the wood trying to get up there to carry the dead and wounded back.*

*We got our men in a wide front and gave them orders to dig in which we didn't have to beg them to do for it was death to stay on top of the ground.*

*We dug in about two feet in a very few minutes with our helmets and trench knives.*

*I was digging into a man's body. I threw the bones out one by one but didn't go deep enough to get them all out so I lay in the hole on them all night.*

The Armistice was signed Nov. 11, 1918. However, because the 81st Division did not receive confirmation of the signing, another attack was planned the night of Nov. 10 and executed Nov. 11.

In those three days fighting, there were 178 killed, nearly 800 wounded, 57 captured, and 6 missing. Of those, the 322nd infantry: killed, five officers and 52 men; wounded, eight officers and 209 men; missing, 10 men. (Source: "Lest We Forget" The Record of North Carolina's Own)

Sgt. Clemmons returned June 17, 1919, on Mastonia (Source: ancestry.com). He was honorably discharged June 25, 1919, and returned home to his family. He and his wife raised a total of four children. Their three sons also served in the military, with two of them being career military.

Henry Lindon Clemmons passed away Oct. 31, 1960, at 65. At his death, he was honored with an article and editorial in The State Port Pilot in Southport:

*Henry Lindon Clemmons It is not possible to make editorial reference to each good man and woman in Brunswick County upon the occasion of their death, but we feel that the passing this week of Henry Lindon Clemmons merits special consideration.*

*Not that Mr. Lindon was one who would either want or expect special consideration, for his was an humble man; but the life he has led and the places of leadership he has filled in the religious, business,*

*and political life of his county has thrown him into contact with literally thousands of his fellow citizens throughout his life, and he has earned friendship and respect of every one of them.*

*The deceased was a man of unusually high principles of personal conduct, and he was uncompromising in their observance. He did not set himself apart from his fellowman, but he felt that he knew what was right for himself and his family, and these standards of right and wrong were observed.*

*Brunswick County needs more men like Lindon Clemmons, and it can ill afford his loss.*

An article was also published: *Prominent Man Dies at Home*

*Henry Lindon Clemmons Dies at Home Near Supply Following Brief Period of Illness*

*Henry Lindon Clemmons, 65, died at his Supply home, Monday. Final rites will be held at Prospect Baptist Church at 8 p.m. Thursday by the Revs. C.D. Blanton, Harry Lackey and R.W. Rollins, with burial in the church cemetery.*

*The deceased was one of the most widely respected citizens of Brunswick County. For many years he was engaged in the timber business and had contacts in every community. In addition, he was a leading Baptist layman and recently has headed a drive for funds for Campbell College. He was an active member of the Republican Party and four years ago was his party's nominee for Judge of Recorder's court.*

*Survivors include his wife, Mrs. Stella Clemmons, three sons, Edwin Clemmons of Supply; Clifton Clemmons with the USAF, Anchorage, Alaska and Clyde Clemmons, USAF, Plattsburg, NY; a daughter, Mrs. John W. Lancaster, Supply; a sister, Mrs. Lizzie Sellers, Supply and 10 grandchildren.*

*Active pallbearers will be H.W. Clemmons, Wright C. Clemmons, Leon McKeithan, Edger E. Sellers, Jr., Lindsay Clemmons, Jr., and Phillip A. Fulcher. Honorary pallbearers will be Dr. M.H. Rourk, Vander Clemmons, Robert and Aldreth Phelps, Clyde Holdvan, E.J. Prevatte, Floyd Kirby, Dr. L.H. Campbell, R.H. Sorenson, George McCotter and J.J. Hawes.*

*Sources: Johnson, Clarence Walton (1919), The history of the 321st infantry, with a brief historical sketch of the 80th division, being a vivid and authentic account of the*

view of the 1918 World War I Rifle Range Target Pit Storage Room.

We would like the public to review the names of the following Brunswick County men who died during World War I to make certain they have not forgotten anyone who may have perished or missed someone while researching names that should be on this list.

Killed in action: Pvts. 1st Class Walter S. Brock and Erastus I. Nelson, Pvts. Harvey T. Chadwick, Jimmie Griffin and Harry L. Pigott, Cpl. Herbert B. Ward

Died of wounds: Pvts. William C. Hewett and Benjamin B. Smith

Died of disease: Pvts. William F. Brooks, Carl J. Danford, Manning Hall, Claudie H. McCall, Elijah Milliken, Kendrick W. Outlaw, Cecil S. Pierce, Samuel C. Swain, Guy E. Watson, David Williams and Fred Wilson, Pvt. 1st Class John W. Carlisle, David L. Doshier (cook), Seaman James C. Edwards, Sgt. Robert G. Farmer

*Norma Eckard of Caswell Beach is president of Friends of Fort Caswell Rifle Range Inc.*

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