

# WWI Snapshot: Alonzo Lee Murrell, 1894-1955

BY NORMA ECKARD  
AND AMY ECKARD  
GUEST COLUMNISTS

Alonzo Lee Murrell was born on June 20, 1894, in Brunswick County, N.C.

While living in Navassa, he was called to duty and inducted into the U.S. Army in Southport on April 2, 1918. PFC Murrell served in the Medical Department, serving overseas from Oct. 13, 1918, until June 10, 1919. He was honorably discharged on June 27, 1919.

Murrell married Emma E. Allen in Wilmington on April 11, 1921. A son, Jack Allen, was born in Wilmington. In 1925 they relocated to the Cumberland, Md., area, where a daughter was born.

His son, Jack Allen Murrell, served in World War II and was reported missing for six months, from Sept. 18, 1944, until March 16, 1945. Records indicate he was a POW. The following article describes his experience.

## Lt. Jack Murrell reported to be safe in England

Lt. Jack Allen Murrell, pilot of a C-47 transport plane, is free and back in England, according to a cablegram he sent his wife, Mary Weakley Murrell of 42 Potomac St. in Ridgeley, yesterday. He was reported missing in Groesbeek, Holland on Sept. 18, the day his baby daughter was one month old.

Serving overseas since Feb. 14, 1944, Lt. Murrell for seven months flew a regular run from England to France carrying paratroopers. At the time he was reported missing he was towing gliders over Holland.

The last word Mrs. Murrell had from her husband was Oct. 3; recently she received a small note,

Murrell, Alonzo L.		1,867,826	* White * Colored.
(Surname)	(Christian name)	(Army serial number)	
Residence: Navassa Brunswick		NORTH CAROLINA	
(Street and house number)		(Town or city)	(County) (State)
E. Enlisted * R. A. * N. C. * E. R. C. * Inducted at Southport N. C. on Apr 2, 1918			
Place of birth: Bloomington N. C.		Age or date of birth: 23 9/12 yrs	
Organizations served in, with dates of assignments and transfers: 156 Dep Brig to Apr 22/18; MD to disch			
Grades, with date of appointment: Pvt. 1st May 2/19			
Engagements:			
Wounds or other injuries received in action: None.			
Served overseas from Oct. 13/18 to June 10/19 from to			
Honorably discharged on demobilization June 27, 1919			
In view of occupation he was, on date of discharge, reported 0 per cent disabled.			
Remarks:			
Form No. 794-1, A. G. O. * Strike out words not applicable. † Dates of departure from and arrival in the U. S. Nov. 22, 1919. 3-7362			

Alonzo Murrell's NC Service Card

she said, from an English paratrooper, stating that he hoped her husband would reach his base some day soon. On March 15, she received a letter from an English pilot who wrote he had been with Lt. Murrell eight weeks having left him on Feb. 10, when the English pilot made his way back to England. In concluding, he wrote, Lt. Murrell should be following any moment now. Mrs. Murrell said she had reason to believe her husband and the English pilot were assisted by the underground in their escape of the Nazis and their return to England.

The son of Mr. and Mrs. A.L. Murrell, Ridgeley, Lt. Murrell entered the service April 25, 1941, and was commissioned and received his wings at Columbus, Miss., leaving

from Fort Benning, Ga., in Feb. 1944 for England. He was awarded the Air Medal for his part in the D-Day invasion.

(Source: Cumberland News (Cumberland, MD), 17 March 1945, p14.)

Alonzo Lee Murrell passed away suddenly at work on March 18, 1955, at age 60. He was laid to rest in Oakdale Cemetery in Wilmington. The following obituary was published:

Alonzo L. Murrell, 60, of Ridgeley, pipefitter for the Western Railway Company at Maryland Junction, died suddenly yesterday afternoon while at work. A native of Wilmington, N.C., he was a son of the late John and Julia Murrell and had resided in Ridgeley for the past 30 years.

A veteran of World War I, Mr. Murrell was a member

of the First Presbyterian Church here. Surviving are his wife, Mrs. Emma Murrell; a daughter, Miss Faye Murrell, Wilmington, a son, Jack A. Murrell, city; and a granddaughter, Mary Elizabeth Murrell, city; two sisters and two brothers, Leland, N.C.

The body is at the Knight Funeral Home where a service will be conducted today at 7:30 p.m. with Rev. W. Randolph Keefe Jr., pastor of Grace Baptist Church, officiating. Tomorrow the body will be taken to Wilmington for burial in the Oakdale Cemetery. The family requests that flowers be omitted.

(Source: Cumberland News, Cumberland, MD, 19 March 1955, p 6.)

If you would like to help us honor Alonzo Lee Mur-

rell or another Brunswick County WWI veteran, email the Friends of Ft. Caswell Rifle Range at [ftcaswellriflerange@gmail.com](mailto:ftcaswellriflerange@gmail.com) or go to [caswellriflerange.com](http://caswellriflerange.com).

Donations continue to be sent supporting the historical preservation of the 1918 World War I Fort Caswell Rifle Range Memorial and the book featuring all the men and women that served in the Great War from Brunswick County. Send donations to Friends of Fort Caswell Rifle Range, 5 Foxfire Trace, Caswell Beach, NC 28465.

On Saturday, April 4, 2020, at 11 a.m., another roll call will be held beside the 1918 rifle range in Caswell Beach. The public is welcome. Bring a folding chair. Park in condo parking lots.



BACK IN ENGLAND — Mrs. Mary Weakley Murrell, of Ridgeley, received a cablegram yesterday from her husband, Lt. Jack Allen Murrell, advising her that he "is free and back in England". He had been missing in Holland since Sept. 18. (See story.)

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Son of Alonzo reported safe in England

Photos contributed