

Among the 18 first cousins or in-laws from the Dawson, Bateman, Foreman and Way families that served their

country in World War II are, top row from left, Thomas Dawson, Vic Von Drasek, Walter Dawson, W.B. McKey, Oscar

Bateman and Albert Bateman; bottom row, Gordon Shuckrow and James Bateman.

## Many Dawsons, Batemans served

Eighteen first cousins and in-laws from the Dawson, Bateman, Foreman and Way families of Amite County served overseas during World War II.

Out of the seven sons of Luther Cleveland Dawson and Allie Bateman Dawson, five served in the military, including four during World War II. Another died in a 1946 car accident at age 16 and the other son is a clergyman. Three of the couple's sons-in-law served in World War II.

The Dawsons included:

- Thomas James Dawson, the oldest son, served almost 34 years with the Air Force. His last rank was a major after serving as a navigator on B-24 Bombers in Italy and the entire European Theater. His medals included a Purple Heart, Victory Medal and two Bronze Stars.

During his tour, he was shot down over Romania on May 5, 1944 while on a mission heading for oil fields in Ploesti. He landed in a hay field, where he was captured by farmers who demanded his K-rations and struck him on the shoulder when he refused to give away the food. He remained a POW until that September when arrangements were made by Princess Catherine Caradja, who was sympathetic toward Americans.

The princess had a plane painted camouflage style, and it left with the paint still wet. Thomas was on the last plane out just as several German planes were coming onto the air strip.

- Roddis Harold Dawson enlisted in the Army in October 1942 and was discharged in March 1943 due to hypertension. He worked at old Camp Van Dorn in Centerville and Camp Shelby before moving to Keesler Air Force Base, where he worked as a civilian until his retirement.

- Victor Vincin Von Drasek was married to the family's oldest daughter, Maxine Dawson, and served in the Army as a military policeman. Maxine was teaching school and living in Gillsburg when a plane from Harding Field crashed in a tung oil orchard near their home. Drasek was sent to guard the plane and a courtship blossomed between the two.

Shortly afterwards, he was sent to Saog, Philippines for a year and then to Japan after the war ended.

- Robert Lee Byrd was married to Florence Dawson. He enlisted in the Navy the day after the Pearl Harbor bombing. He served as a boatswain's mate, first class, and operated an amphibious boat ferrying 30 Marines or soldiers from their ships to land in the South Pacific, New Zealand, Singapore, Philippines, Okinawa, Marshall Islands, Hawaiian Islands, Guam, Alaska and Hong Kong.

After the war, he moved to Crosby and ran a hotel-restaurant. He and his wife now live in Hattiesburg.

- Walter Lamottis Dawson of Liberty was drafted into the Army in October 1943 and served in Company B, 361st Infantry, 91st Division, 1st Platoon. He fought in Italy at Rome Arno, the northern Appennines and the Po Valley until the war was over as a

rifleman, radio operator and military policeman.

He received a Bronze Medal as a rifleman and the EAMETO Medal, Good Conduct Medal and Victory Medal. In the fall of 1944, he was returning to the front lines in Italy when he passed another company and saw his first cousin, Hilton Foreman, returning from the battlefield.

He now lives in Gloster.

- Loyd Elmo Dawson of Walls

enlisted into the Army at age 19. That October, he was sent to Viechiach, Germany for a year, keeping order in the town. He lived 30 miles from the Czechoslovakia border and 30 miles from the nearest base.

Several years after returning, he married Reta Belle Freeman of Amite County and continued working in Memphis until his retirement.

- William Brumfield "W.B." McKey was married to Tressie Mary Dawson and joined the Army as a corporal. He was with the 33rd Fighter Control Squadron from Oct. 24, 1942, until his honorable discharge on Nov. 6, 1945.

His battles included the Bismarck Archipelago, New Guinea, the south Philippines and Luzon. His decorations included the APTO Medal, Philippine Liberation Ribbon with a Bronze Star, Good Conduct Medal and Victory Medal.

Though all these sons and sons-in-law returned home safely, another son, Willie, died as a teenager on a highway outside of Liberty.

The following four men were the sons and sons-in-law of Joel Frank Bateman and Hattie Leggett Bateman of Amite County:

- Oscar Watson Bateman joined the Air Force in July 1942 and was killed in action at Karl Alps, Austria. He was married to Carmen Sterling, formerly of Amite County.

He was an aerial gunner of a B-24 Liberator crew, and was reported missing in action as of Aug. 23, 1944 when his B-24 failed to return from a high-altitude bombing mission over Turnitz, Austria.

He was awarded the Air Medal and one Oak Leaf Cluster and is buried in the National Cemetery in St. Louis. He and his wife had three young children at the time he was killed.

- Bennie Lee Wilkinson was married to Annie Grace Bateman. He



enlisted in the Marine Corps in August 1942. He served in the South Pacific until 1945.

When discharged in August 1945, he was a sergeant (T.W.), rifle marksman, expert bayonet and motor vehicle operator.

He participated in the initial landing and occupation of Guam, the Marianas Islands, and also at Iwo Jima and the Volcano Islands.

He worked for Exxon in Baton Rouge and retired to Gloster. He died five days after his 50th year

wedding anniversary.

- Albert Jackson Bateman joined the Army in the summer of 1942 and was discharged in 1945. After basic training, he was sent to Italy as a Company Clerk of Hq. Co., 809th Engineer Battalion.

While in Italy, he obtained a three-day pass to go see his brother, Oscar. At the time, Oscar told him that he only had two more missions to fly and then he would be going home. But Oscar was killed on his next mission.

Albert became an insurance agent in Natchez. He and his wife, Mary Davis Partridge had one child and three grandchildren.

- Gordon Tinola Shuckrow was married to Eloise Bateman and served with AAA 793rd, Battalion C, in Georgia, North Carolina, Virginia, Seattle, Washington and Pearl Harbor. The couple lives in Liberty and has three children.

Other family members who served:

- Willie Dallas Bateman was the son of Will Bateman and Annie York Bateman of Amite County. He joined the Army in November 1943 and was discharged in January 1946. He served in Company B, 727th Amphibian Tractor Battalion as an amphibian tractor driver.

He served in South Philippines, New Guinea and Luzon. He received several citations and medals: Philippine Defense Medal, Bronze Service Star, Philippine Liberation Ribbon, Good Conduct Medal, Bronze Arrowhead and Victory Medal.

After returning home, he went into the logging business.

- James Kendall Hughey Bateman and Gladys Tims Bateman. He enlisted in the Army in October 1939.

He was originally a parachute rigger, but eventually became a master sergeant with the 27th Bombardment Group, 17th Bombardment Squadron. He was discharged in June 1946, then re-enlisted, going into the Air Force. He retired in October 1959.

During World War II, he served in the Philippines Islands, the south Philippines and Luzon. He received the American Defense SV Medal with one Bronze Star, ATO Medal, APTO Medal, Philippine Defense Medal with one Bronze Star, Good Conduct Medal, Distinguished Unit Badge with two OLD's and a Victory Medal.

Bateman, a prisoner of war from April 9, 1942 until September 9, 1945, was part of the infamous Bataan Death March. The Japanese forced many of their prisoners to walk across Bataan with little food or water, but Filipinos would throw pieces of sugar cane in the road that Bateman and other prisoners would pick up and eat.

At the end of the march, they were put on ships and sent to Japan. After three and a half years as a prisoner, he weighed only 90 pounds. The POWs were evacuated by ship from Yokohama to the 29th Replace-

ment Depot at Cavite in the Philippines.

Bateman moved back to Mississippi after the war working in a box factory in Jackson and for Georgia-Pacific in Crosby. During the 1980s, he and his wife, Neta Belle Larimore of Amite County, went with a group of former POWs to tour the area of the death march.

Bateman's health was poor after the war due to diseases such as Beriberi, scurvy, pellagra, jaundice, amebic dysentery and malaria that he suffered in prison. He died of cancer June 15, 1994.

- Monette Roddis "Buddy" Foreman and Cullie Ardell Foreman were the sons of Roddis Foreman and Ella Bateman Foreman of Amite County.

Buddy enlisted in the Army Air Force in October 1939 and worked in the parachute shop in England. He was honorably discharged in January 1946 and was an independent retail merchant in the Coles community until his death.

Cullie enlisted in the Army Air Force in May 1941 as a supply

clerk. He received the American Defense Service Medal, A2 medal, APTO medal, Good Conduct medal and Victory Medal. He was discharged in January 1946 and moved to Crosby as a logger.

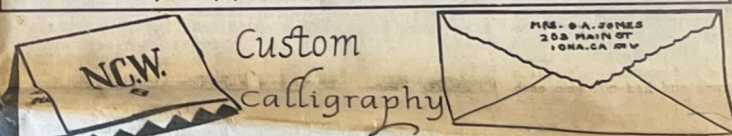
Maudis Ethel Bateman Way and Wingrove Anderson Way had two sons and a son-in-law that served in World War II:

- Carl Anderson Way served in the Army and was married to Lavada Annie Giles. They had one child.

- Britt Edwin Way entered the Army in 1942 and served in England and Germany with a trucking company delivering food and fuel to troops and hauling infantrymen back and forth. He was discharged around Christmas 1945 and lives in Southington, Conn.

- Howard Wilson "Bill" Dear was married to Lyndell Lee Way and joined the Army in World War II. The couple had three children and lived in Florence until their deaths.

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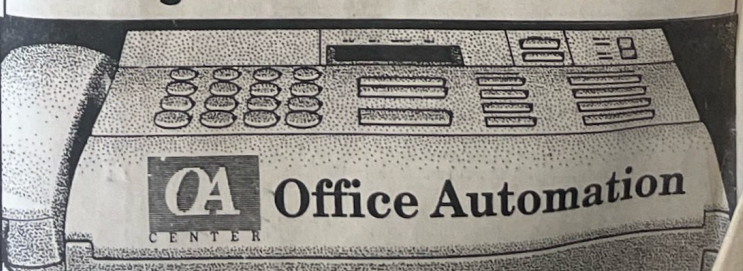
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