

If what we did yesterday is good, then we can enjoy and utilize the memory of it, but if what was done is wrong, then have no vain regret... banish its memory by doing today what should have been done better yesterday.

The Birmingham Eccentric

Participated in Operation Airlift, Training Maneuver

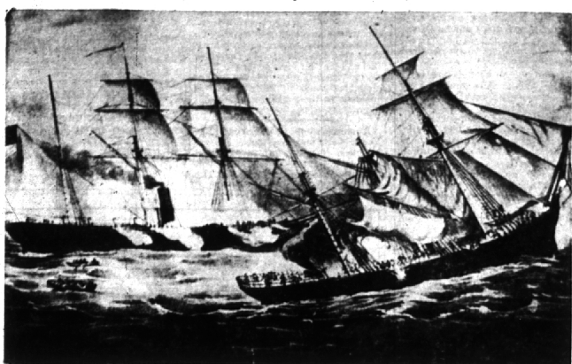
AUGSBURG, GERMANY—PFC Richard W. Culver, son of Mr. and Mrs. Cecil Culver, 24811 Farmbrook road, recently took part in Operation Airlift, a 5th Infantry Division training exercise, in southern Germany. Culver, a driver with the 2nd Battalion's Headquarters company of the division's 11th Regiment, entered the Army in April 1954 and received basic training at Camp Chaffee, Ark. He was a former student at Highland Park Junior High School, Birmingham.

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Birmingham Background

Local History in Story and Picture As Compiled and Written by RUTH ANNE SILBAR



BATTLE BETWEEN KEARSAGE AND ALABAMA LASTED ONE HOUR Picture from "The Pictorial History of American Ships"

Uncle Ben All Set and Ready To Settle Alabama Claims

"I'll tell you, boys," said Uncle Ben as he took a fresh chew and spat vindictively at the box of ashes used for a cuspidor in the postoffice, "this here country has got her blood up and she thinks there ain't no country on earth like her and I'll derned if I don't think she's about right.

"Now here's these Alabama claims and I'll tell you just how they ought to be settled!"

"Erebera and stretcher until everybody was out except one light and that was glimmering when Uncle Ben would reluctantly send his way home."

Few historians have recorded the sentiments of the people of this part of the country in 1866 or thereabouts when the Civil War was over.

The thought that Great Britain had materially assisted the southern Confederacy toward gaining their independence was rankling in the hearts of those who had stood by Uncle Sam. Then came this question of the Alabama Claims.

THE ALABAMA was a privateer built in British ports fitted out and manned by the British for the Confederacy. She was in the habit of sailing falsely under British colors till she came close to a Union vessel, when she suddenly would hoist her true colors and call for surrender.

After the close of the Civil War, Uncle Sam thought there were a few little scores he would like to settle up while he had his fighting harness on. He flatly told Mr. Johnny Bull that he must settle up for the losses caused to our merchant vessels and our foreign trade by the Alabama or there would be just another scrap as there was in 1776, and Johnny knew what he meant.

BUT THERE was a diversity of opinion. The people of the North

who had sympathized with the South were, of course, against it. "There has been enough war," they said, "let it go."

They were equally insistent that a very large indemnity should be paid and it was. \$18,500,000 in gold.

Students of Civil War history remember the sinking of the Alabama off the coast of France after a battle with the Union man-of-war, the Kearsage.

They have read the ultimate and wise disposition of the Alabama claims made by an international tribunal which met in Geneva, Switzerland, but at the time of which we write, it was hot stuff, around the stove in the postoffice.

GEORGE LEE was postmaster in Birmingham during this period and the post office was in his general store on Saginaw street (Woodward) where Birmingham Grill is now.

Opinions held by Andrew Wallace, Benjamin Daniels, Dr. Ebenezer Bayliss, Robert Mitchell and Jimmy Button, townspeople of that day, were varied and verbose.

In the partitioned night first quoted, there were a few who lingered about even after the lights were out.

They decided that it was a shame that possessing the bright and erudite opinions which characterized the massive brain of Uncle Ben that he was not considered eligible for the board of arbitration to settle the claims in question.

In fact, it was decided that it would be the proper thing to have him settle the whole business all by his lonesome.

ACCORDINGLY in due course of mail, there came a letter signed by Zachariah Chandler, the U. S. senator from this district at that

\$100,000 Grant Aids Study in Plant Nutrition

Fundamental research on some of the most-challenging problems of plant growth—the relationships between plant roots and the soil—will be undertaken by the University of Michigan with a grant of \$100,000 from Ford Motor Co.

The research grant, which will cover a three-year period, was announced jointly last week by Henry Ford II, president of Ford Motor Company and U-M President Harlan Hatcher in connection with the formal opening of Ford's new Farm Machinery Research and Engineering Center at Birmingham.

Despite all of the great advances made in the technology of crop growth, there is still very little known about many of the basic mechanisms involved in plant growth.

ONE OF the most important of these is the means by which the roots absorb essential nutrient minerals from the soil and how these minerals are used in meeting the requirements of plant growth. "minerals" arrives in a partially selective process since different kinds of plants have different abilities to absorb minerals and different requirements for plant growth.

"Knowledge of the mechanisms of nutrient uptake and the ability of different plants to absorb essential minerals could ultimately result in higher crop yields," President Hatcher stated.

"It would permit the development of new varieties of crop plants better adapted to the conditions in different soils, it would permit the more efficient use of fertilizers, but even more, it might lead to many as yet unknown ways of improving the quality and quantities of the foods of man and animals."

Hospital Corpsman Aboard Kearsage

Richard W. Irwin, hospital corpsman second class, USN, arrived at the North Island Naval Air Station in San Diego, Calif. in May aboard the attack aircraft carrier USS Kearsage, after an eight-month tour with the 7th Fleet in the Western Pacific.

The Kearsage, with Air Group 11 aboard, steamed 40,000 miles, took part in the Tachen Islands evacuation, and made visits to the foreign ports of Yokosuka, Japan; Manila, P.I., Hong Kong and Singapore.

Irwin is the nephew of Mr. and Mrs. George A. Burnham, 19404 Glenwood boulevard.

Completes Course in Food Management

Second Lt. Paul C. Grant Jr., whose parents live at 1793 Winthrop lane, recently was graduated from the consolidated and open mess management course at the Quartermaster school, Fort Lee, Va.

In the seven-week course, Grant was trained for duties as officer in charge of a field ration consolidated mess and an officers' open mess. Sanitation methods, menu preparation, food control and pur-

chase and cafeteria and buffet type services were subjects included in the course.

Lt. Grant, a 1954 graduate of the Michigan State college, entered the Army last October.

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Training in Flying

Navy Ensign Herbert J. Strauser reported in May to the Naval Auxiliary Air Station, Saultrey Field in Pensacola, Fla., for training in formation flying. Instruction in night, combat and cross-country flying is also part of the curriculum. He is the son of Mrs. Beatrice G. Strauser, 1785 Webster.

Private Graduates From Armored School

Pvt. Edgar V. Ellis, son of Mr. and Mrs. L. B. Ellis, 816 Oakland, recently was graduated from the track vehicle maintenance course at The Armored School, Fort Knox, Ky.

The course trains enlisted personnel to repair track vehicles issued to armor units. The men also are taught administrative functions of unit maintenance shops.

Pvt. Ellis entered the Army last October and received training at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. A member of Phi Alpha Lambda fraternity, he is a former student at Highland Park Junior college.

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