

The New Tatler

NEWSLETTER for alumni of Woodlawn High School, Birmingham, Alabama
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NOTICE. Please read this [important advisory](#) before reading this TATLER issue.

1 May 2012

The New Tatler Continues

under Editor

George Nelson WHS '55 .



Memorial Day is May 28th.

We are paying tribute to our war dead and veterans in this special MEMORIAL issue.

And we close on the back page with a rousing Moscow spectacle, celebrating 20 years of peace after the Cold War's termination.

ENJOY !

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Pulitzer Surprise

David P. Donahoo Jr.

WHS '39

1921—1945

Flight Officer B-29 Crew P26,
39th Bomb Group, Army Air Corps

Tribute to a Woodlawn Hero of *The Greatest Generation*

David Perry Donahoo Jr. was born in Birmingham, Alabama 24 June 1921 and grew up in the Woodlawn community, the son of David Donahoo and Theresa Perry. David graduated from Woodlawn in 1939.

After World War II began, David volunteered for the Army Air Corps in December 1942 and underwent training in Florida and Kansas. During that time he married his Woodlawn High sweetheart Johnnie McDonald (WHS '39), who accompanied him until he was shipped out to the Central Pacific combat theater.

During the war in the Pacific he flew missions in support of Army operations across New Guinea and the Philippines as well as heavy bombing raids against fortified Central Pacific islands in preparation for their amphibious assaults.

David Donahoo had been trained as a navigator at Radar School, Boca Raton, Florida, then promoted to Flight Officer and assigned to the 39th Bomb Group then flying the new, long range B-29 Super Fortress bombers in the Pacific. After Marine forces seized the Marianna Islands in August 1944, David's B-29 squadron transplanted to the newly captured Guam airfield to begin flying the dangerous, long range, deep strike missions against homeland Japan.

On 28 April 1945, Flight Officer Donahoo was flying as Navigator on B-29 bomber P26 returning from a bombing run over Kushira, Japan. David's close friend, 1stLt Rowland Ball, from Victoria, Texas, was flying alongside in bomber P3 "City of Montgomery" in the same flight formation and later described the following tragic events he personally and painfully witnessed.

After leaving the Kushira target area the returning B-29s were confronted by a lone Japanese fighter that came head-on into the squadron



.....Continued on page 2

David P. Donahoo, Jr. - continued from page 1

in a Kamikaze attack. The fighter appeared to be hit by the squadron's guns, but it rolled over and flew into Donahoo's bomber P26, shearing off six feet of the bomber's right wing. Donahoo's pilot had enough control to ditch the bomber in the ocean rather than have the crew bail out. The B-29 ditched successfully but broke in half yet stayed afloat, and Rowland Ball's bomber flew in low to pitch out emergency gear to the downed crew. All twelve crew members were observed in life rafts. Rowland Ball called for search and rescue (SAR), but no submarines were within 50 miles. Because it was 8 hours flying time back to Guam, and fuel levels were low, the remaining bomber crews were compelled to leave the downed P26 crew and head back to Guam. They sadly tipped their wings as they flew away.

No other rescue attempt could be made due to bad weather. Donahoo and all his crew mates were designated Missing in Action (MIA), but it was very likely Japanese pursuit fighters quickly found them and killed them in their life rafts.

Rowland Ball had taken aerial photos of the surviving crewmen in lifeboats and on the wing of their ditched B-29. He gave those photos to Donahoo's mother and wife after the war. It was not until February 1946 that they were officially notified that Flight Officer David P. Donahoo had been designated killed in action, buried at sea.

A beautiful bronze war memorial plaque hung many years in the front hall of Woodlawn High School listing one hundred and eleven WHS alumni who lost their lives in WW2. The name *David Donahoo* is number 31 on that plaque.

(See the [December 2011 Tatler](#) issue). This is the story behind that name

lest we forget.
Rudyard Kipling



Crew members of B-29 Bomber P26 at Guam, 1945.

This photo was mailed to David's mother Teresa Donahoo with his inscription at lower right reading, "To the Best Mother in the world, David".

This entire crew was lost a few days later.

At far right, first row kneeling, is Flight Officer David Perry Donahoo, 23 years old.

David P. Donahoo, Jr. - continued from page 2

Epilogue

David's widow, Johnnie McDonald Donahoo (WHS '39), remarried in 1948 to Leonard Irwin of South Carolina. She died of cancer Sep 1, 2005 on Amelia Island, Florida.

1stLt Rowland E. Ball also lost a Texas hometown high school friend in that same B-29 downing. But Rowland survived many more air combat missions and eventually came home to well-deserved honors from a grateful America. He is among today's few surviving members of that famous 39th Bomb Group and still attends reunions. We are indebted to him for providing significant parts of this story of Flight Officer David Donahoo's WWII service and his loss on that tragic day 67 years ago this month.

~ by Roland Monette '57 and 1stLt Rowland Ball, Army Air Corps, WWII

Watch this actual [B-29 Ditching & Rescue](#) filmed in WW2 combat (unedited).
Fly with Donahoo's [B-29s from Guam](#) in this actual 1945 bomber group film.

Rowland Ball
2007 Reunion



Next read this related story

Eugenia Lou Murchison Harris (WHS '39), Mother of Emmylou Harris

Eugenia Lou Murchison, called *Lou*, was born in the Woodlawn community of Birmingham in 1922, daughter of Dewey E. and Emma Lou Murchison, formerly from Coosa County, Alabama. Lou was a beautiful redhead who graduated Woodlawn High School in 1939 and worked as a secretary for the Southern Health and Life Insurance Company in Birmingham.

In the Summer of 1942 she met a dashing young Marine officer pilot, Walter Rutland "Bucky" Harris, at the beach in Pensacola. In January 1943, they eloped to marry in Birmingham, against the wishes and advice of her parents, who declined to attend their civil ceremony, saying he was "a soldier and a stranger and a Northerner to boot!" He was from New Jersey. But their marriage became a life-long love story of epic proportions, producing two wonderful children.



Lou Murchison Harris (Right) with Emmylou at Country Music Awards. Photo by Time-Life

Lou went with her young 1st Lieutenant husband to California where Bucky shipped out on an aircraft carrier to fly the legendary Corsair fighters in the bloodiest Navy-Marine Corps campaigns of the Pacific war. Their first child, Walter R. Harris Jr., was born shortly after Bucky's departure. After the war, Lou and Bucky moved to a home in Birmingham on 54th Street in Woodlawn. Their daughter Emmylou Harris was born in April, 1947 at East End Memorial Hospital in East Lake. Emmylou was half-way through 1st grade at Woodlawn Elementary School when the family moved to Cherry Point Marine Air Base, North Carolina, where Bucky continued his Marine Corps career.



Walter Harris Sr. and Emmylou shortly before he died in 1993.

During the Korean War, Major Bucky Harris was shot down and declared missing. He was a POW and tortured for 10 months before war's end in 1953. His experiences under torture were so extreme and his resistance so steadfast that the present Marine Corps code of POW conduct describes Major Walter R. Harris' behavior as the courageous and exemplary standard. After returning to the States, he piloted the Marine helicopters that ferried the President to-from the White House. He died in 1993, age 73, so loved and missed by Lou, Emmylou and Walter Harris Jr.

Eugenia Lou Murchison "Mammalou" Harris lives today with Emmylou in Nashville. Emmylou is proud of her mother for her gentility, her striking beauty, and the grace with which Lou Harris still comports herself at age 89.

Eugenia Lou Murchison was a WHS classmate and Woodlawn neighbor of David Donahoo (WHS '39) featured in the foregoing story.



~ compiled from various sources including Emmylou Harris interviews by Gail Griffith of Birmingham News, US Marine Corps archives and others who knew the Harris family.

[Click here and enjoy this Emmylou Harris classic](#)

NOTE: To return from this Emmylou site back to the TATLER, hit your browser's BACK ◀ button . Do not close Emmylou's window or the Tatler will also disappear. We're working to fix this glitch.

Henry Eugene "Red" Erwin, Sr. - Medal of Honor Recipient

Another Birmingham hero worthy of special remembrance on Memorial Day

Red Erwin was born May 8, 1921 in Adamsville, Alabama. During WW2 he was an Army Air Corps Staff Sergeant and a recipient of the U.S. military's highest decoration - the Medal of Honor - for his actions in 1945 that saved a B-29 Superfortress and crew in the Asia-Pacific theater.

During a bombing mission over Koriyama, Japan, a phosphorus bomb prematurely exploded in the aircraft and seriously wounded him. As smoke filled the plane, he picked up and carried the burning device through the aircraft to the cockpit where he tossed it out a window. Although he suffered severe burns that obliterated his nose, burned his body terribly, blinded him and disfigured him for life, he successfully saved his plane and 12 crew members by disposing of the smoke-generating bomb. He spent the rest of his life in Birmingham where he worked in the Veterans Administration Hospital.

In 1951 his story was included in the movie "Wild Blue Yonder"; S/Sgt Erwin was portrayed by Hollywood stuntman actor Dave Sharpe. Red Erwin died on January 16, 2002, age 80, and is buried in Elmwood Cemetery, Birmingham.

Read more details of [his life and Medal of Honor citation](#).



Know these WHS sweethearts ?

Click their picture and listen to her beautiful love song to him - 50 years later.

Can you relate ?

The Naked Art Gallery, Birmingham



The Tatler is highlighting this unique Birmingham enterprise because of its novelty and merchandizing originality. Established 1998, Naked Art is not a typical gallery. Its colorful walls and fun approach to art has caught the attention of national media and travel guides. Naked Art has been awarded "Best of The Road" by the Rand McNally Atlas.

Naked Art is accessible to everybody, it focuses on functional art - i.e. art that serves more than an aesthetic purpose - but also shows wall pieces by untraditional artists. "Naked Art" means that they want you to appreciate all the artists' work with the "naked eye", without "hi-brow" hidden meanings. They want everyone to feel good about being there and just enjoying the gallery's vibrancy.



3831 Clairmont Ave,
Birmingham 35222 205-595-3553
See [Naked Art Gallery](#) website .

ARE YOU SMART AS A 12th GRADER ?

Miss Hix gave "challenging" history tests. Try this.

- In 430 BC, Greek historian Herodotus described seven man-made Wonders of the Ancient World. Which one of the below was one of his wonders ? (one correct answer)

A. Great Wall of China	C. Babylonian Sewage System
B. Roman Coliseum	D. Lighthouse at Alexandria
- According to legend, who founded the city of Rome ?

A. Zeus & Aphrodite	C. Anthony & Cleopatra
B. Romulus & Remus	D. Rick & Bubba
- The Egyptians took how long to build the Great Pyramid ?

A. 20 years	C. 2,000 years
B. 200 years	D. Unknown. Aliens did it.
- Helen of Troy was of what nationality ?

A. Trojan	C. Persian
B. Greek	D. Amazonian
- The expression "As Dead as a Doornail" came from ...

A. William Shakespeare	C. Bob Hope
B. The Bible	D. Winston Churchill
- Our WW2 enemy was the alliance of which nations ?

A. Germany, Japan, China	C. Germany, Italy, Japan
B. Germany, France, Japan	D. Germany, Russia, Japan
- The great wave of Irish immigration to America 1846-51 was precipitated by what ?

A. Free ship's passage on the Titanic (3rd class)	C. 40 acres and a mule for all male immigrants.
B. Catholic oppression of Irish Protestants	D. Starvation due to the Irish potato blight

Answers on back page

OBITUARIES

FOWLER, MIRIAM ROGERS '57, age 72, died April 3, 2012 after a valiant fight against cancer. She was an accomplished scholar, distinguished professional, dedicated educator, historian, artist, loving mother and close friend of so many people. She received bachelors and masters degrees from UAB. She died two days following publication of our April *Tatler* issue which featured her wonderful life story. [Read that April Tatler article](#) and [Her Obituary](#).



DAVIS, JOSEPH "JOE" LLOYD '51, age 79, husband of WHS alumna Charlotte Cory '55, died April 2, 2012. He was an Eagle Scout, served in the US Navy in the Korean War, graduated from Samford University in 1958 and was a financial industry professional. [His obituary](#).



KONTZEN, PATSY KIMSEY '67, of Cullman, AL, died April 1, 2012. [Her obituary](#).

HAMMACK, CAROL ATTAWAY '57, of Springville, AL, died April 5, 2012. [Her obituary](#).

LOTT, ROBERT LEE "COACH BOBBY" III '44, age 85, died April 8, 2012; former WW2 Marine; retired after 29 years service as Brigadier General, Alabama National Guard; graduated Howard College (Samford) 1949; held Doctor of Education from Univ. of Alabama. Achieved many honors and awards during his 43 years service in education and coaching. [His Obituary](#)



BICE, LEWIS C. Jr. '51, age 77, of Leeds, AL, died on April 11, 2012. Attended Gibson School and WHS. He was a Marine Corps veteran and sports cinematographer for Auburn's and UAB's football programs. Served with Alabama Sports Hall of Fame 36 years. Survived by wife Dianne Keith Bice, two sons, one daughter. [His Obituary](#)

BLANE, JOHN PROPST III '48, age 82, son of WHS Coach John Blane Jr. and Floy Stewart Blane and husband of Poli Blane, died April 13, 2012. After graduating WHS he attended Birmingham Southern and Univ. of Tennessee where he excelled as a scholar and SEC track champion. After Fulbright Scholar studies at Univ. of Vienna, Austria, he served in the Foreign Service as ambassador to two African nations and as Professor of English at Univ. of Tirana, Albania. He received the US Presidential Meritorious Service Award in 1989. [His Obituary](#).

POTPOURRI & FACTOIDS

- What is Alabama's Official State NUT ?
Pecan
- Huntsville is the second largest high-technology complex in the world, behind Silicon Valley, California. Huntsville has eight colleges and universities.
- Why does it take over a million sperm to fertilize one egg?
Ans. They won't stop to ask directions.
- Alabama had the first electric streetcar in the world. It ran down Dexter Avenue, Montgomery in 1880s.
- Women ask: Why is it so difficult to find men who are sensitive, caring and good looking ?
Ans. They all already have boyfriends.
- Men claim: Scientists have discovered a food that diminishes a woman's sex drive by 90% .
Wedding Cake !
- Vulcan is the largest iron figure ever cast and was Birmingham's entry in the 1904 World's Fair where it won 1st Place.
- Why are married women heavier than single women ?
Because single women come home, see what's in the fridge and go to bed. Married women come home, see what's in the bed and go to the fridge.
- Alabama is the only state not requiring bartenders to be licensed. They are considered qualified if they can fog a mirror breathing on it.



Another WHS Sweethearts' Story

Judy (WHS '62) sent us this personal story about her wonderful married life with her WHS sweetheart Bill (WHS '54).

One Spring day Judy went with Bill to his doctor's appointment at UAB. After his checkup, the doctor called Judy into his office alone and said to her, "Bill is suffering from a very severe stress disorder. If you don't follow my instructions carefully, Bill will surely die. So every morning, fix Bill a great breakfast. Be pleasant all the time. Make nutritious lunches and wonderful candle-lit dinners - from scratch. Don't ask him to do any chores. Don't discuss your problems with him. Never nag him. Most importantly, make love to Bill every day, even if you kinda have to force it on him - creatively. If you can do this for the next 8 to 10 months, I think Bill may regain his health completely."

On the way driving home, Bill asked Judy what the doctor said to her. She replied, with tears in her eyes, "Ohhh honey...., he said you gonna croak before Christmas."

Burial was in Forrest Hills.

See Judy on [Dating Site For Seniors](#)





REUNIONS and Other Happenings in 2012

Also see information on these and other
events at

www.WoodlawnHigh.org

What	When	Where
<p>▶ CLASS OF '72 - 40th REUNION Email WHS72Reunion@yahoo.com to get a registration form, or call Lynn Stalnaker Cleveland at 201-910-3044</p> <p>Check www.WoodlawnHigh.org for more details.</p>	Saturday, 21 July 2012	MARRIOTT Grandview Parkway on US 280
<p>▶ CLASS OF '62 - 50th REUNION</p> <p>Contact Harold Morgan at HMorgan5225@gmail.com Or Jean Rogers Payne at JeanPayne841@aol.com</p> <p>See www.WoodlawnHigh.org for Reunion details and Registration Form.</p>	Friday & Saturday, 24 - 25 August 2012	Hilton Birmingham Perimeter Park (off US 280)
<p>▶ GRAND REUNION 2012 See details and registration form on website www.WoodlawnHigh.org .</p> <p>\$ 100 per person and \$ 70 for Golf Registration Questions? Call Paula McLendon at 205-668-0304 Everyone welcomed.</p>	Thursday, 30 Aug 2012 to Sunday, 2 Sep 2012	Boardwalk Beach Resort Hotel 9400 S. Thomas Drive Panama City, Florida 32408 850-230-4681
<p>▶ CLASS OF '57 - 55th REUNION PICNIC Maybe pot luck. Dunno nothing right now except lots of folks want to get together . Stay tuned for more info when we get organized. For now, send queries or comments to Webmaster@WoodlawnHigh.org (Roland)</p> <p>Check www.WoodlawnHigh.org for updated details.</p>	Saturday, sometime Summer or Fall 2012	maybe at Oak Mountain State Park, maybe not

WHS Meet-up Groups and Dance Clubs

Meet-up Group	Meet when ?	Meet where ?	Comment
▶ Moody Lunch Group	Weekly, every Wednesday, 11:00 am	Bobbie's Lounge in Moody, AL	Everyone welcome. Lots of attendees from classes '50 to '80. Just show up.
▶ Pell City Monthly Lunch Group	Second Thursday of every month plus holiday parties and other gatherings.	Different locations each month. Please get on email list for monthly notifications.	Contact Mary Sue Stevens Landman '58 at MLandman0703@charter.net or Jackie Vandergrift at Jackie200@aol.com . Everyone welcome.
▶ Brookwood Mall Monthly Luncheon Group	First Tuesday of every month at 12:00 noon	Brookwood Mall, Food Court	Been meeting 8 years. Also have annual Christmas parties, special outings, and short trips. Everyone welcome.
▶ W.O.W. !! Women of Woodlawn Lunch Group	Third Wednesday of every month at 11:30 am	Different surprise places. You will be contacted by phone.	Been meeting 11 years. We are adventuresome and go to the latest and most interesting places for lunch. To get on call list contact Ernestine Shannon at 205-936-6909 or EShannon@yahoo.com . Everyone welcome.
▶ Village Tavern Group	Third Thursday of every month, 6:00pm until about 9 pm-ish	The Village Tavern - on lower level of the Summit Mall (next to Flemmings Steakhouse)	Everyone welcome. Lots of '50s, '60s, '70s folks always there. Contact Pattie Neil at Pattie-Neil@hotmail.com for more info.
▶ Trussville Cracker Barrel Breakfast Group	First Monday of every month at 8:30 am	Cracker Barrel, Trussville. At Trussville Exit off I-59	Everyone welcome.
▶ BEACH SHAGGERS OF BIRMINGHAM Dance Club	Every Tuesday night at 7:00 pm	VFW Club, 18th St. and 11th Ave North, Birmingham	Everyone welcome. Free dance lessons at 6:30 pm. Come learn how to SHAG. Contact Jackie Vandegrift at 205-884-7581
▶ MAGIC CITY BOPPERS Dance Club	1st, 2d, 4th & 5th Wednesdays and 3rd Friday of every month at 7:00 PM	VFW Club, 18th St. and 11th Ave North, Birmingham	Everyone welcome. Free dance lessons at 6:30 pm. Contact Larry Vance 205-969-0732

CONTENT CONTRIBUTIONS TO FUTURE TATLER ISSUES ARE SOLICITED FROM EVERYONE

Send us proposed articles, images, songs, videos, poems, jokes, quizzes, obituaries, factoids, whatever.

Email to: **George Nelson** at LonEagle@knology.net and

Roland Monette at Webmaster@WoodlawnHigh.org

IMPORTANT: All TATLER issues are posted to and downloadable from www.WoodlawnHigh.org.

TO ALL WHS ALUMNI WHO SERVED, PHYSICALLY AND SPIRITUALLY, TO HELP END THE COLD WAR (1948-92)

On this 20th anniversary of the Cold War's conclusion, please take a moment to joyfully celebrate what that peace has produced for these beautiful Russian people - upon whom we spent 44 years senselessly posturing to rain down B-52 strikes and countless nuclear missiles.

[Click here or on Moscow's Red Square](#) and enjoy watching something wonderful happening other than a Russian military parade. The song they're singing is the great American classic

“*Putting On The Ritz*”
by America's famous
Russian-born composer
Irvin Berlin.

Russians are our friends.
Take this moment to enjoy it.



ODE TO A BOYFRIEND

Boys are great, but immature,
The price you pay is high;
He may seem sweet and gorgeous
But remember, he's a guy.

Don't fall in love with just a boy;
That takes a lot of nerve.
You see, dear one, you need a man
To get what you deserve.

So when you think you're deep in love,
Be careful if you can;
Young or old, what e'er you be,
Make sure that he's a MAN.



~ A lady contributor
anonymous by request

BIRMINGHAM COMING EVENTS.

Each Tattler issue endeavors to highlight one or more significant cultural events coming in the near time frame.

► Birmingham International Street Fair

Saturday, May 12th 2012 3rd Ave. North Between 19th and 21st Streets

Presented by the Birmingham Multicultural Association

The *Birmingham International Street Fair* is a family friendly event that celebrates world cultures through food, music and art. The event will also include an educational component that shares how to get involved in global issues that impact Alabama. Six musical acts, dozens of food vendors and artists will be on hand to help you travel the world for a day without ever leaving downtown!

[Click here](#) for ticket and other info for this event.



Click Birmingham365.org to see other coming arts, sports, entertainment and cultural events in Birmingham.

Answers: “Are You Smart as a 12th Grader?” (page 4)

1. Ans. D. Lighthouse at Alexandria. Others did not exist until after Herodotus died.
2. Ans. B. Romulus & Remus, orphans raised by a she-wolf.
3. Ans. A. 20 years, with no labor from Israelite slaves.
4. Ans. B. Greek. Helen was the young, gorgeous wife of elderly and ugly King Menelaus of Sparta before she was seduced away by Trojan Prince Paris ... or vice-versa.
5. Ans. B. ".....and if I do not leave you all as dead as a doornail, I pray God I may never eat grass more."
~ Shakespeare. *King Henry VI, Part 2.*
6. Ans. C. Germany, Italy, Japan, the “Axis Powers”.
7. Ans. D. Potato famine. 1.5 million Irish starved,, and 8 million immigrated to USA, Canada, England and Australia.

Hope your memory was good to you.

If you got 6 or more right, you were Miss Hix's “very special pet”, like I was. For 4 or more correct, you're pretty smart - really ! For 3 or less correct, you didn't like history, else Miss Hix didn't like you ! You get another chance next issue - with an English quiz.