



WCGHA

Newsletter

NOVEMBER
2025

201 LOCUST ST., MCMINNVILLE, TN 37100



President

Mary Oaks



Vice President

Bettye Pack



Secretary

Barbara Bates



Treasurer

Ann Brown



Past President

Mary Don Bixby

***Come Join Us
on November 15
at 2 p.m.***

For the next WCGHA Meeting

***“McMinnville Court
Square by Jimmy
Haley”***

We will meet in the Early Voting Room
located at the back of the Warren
County Administration building,
201 Locust Street

Mary Oaks, WCGHA President

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Dear Fellow Members!

We hope you enjoyed Dr. Mielnik's presentation on Warren County's own, Staff Sargent Joe Lynn Delong. We were honored to have his nephew, Edwin Lewis, as a visitor.

Cool weather is here and the holiday season is approaching fast! Jimmy Haley will round out our programs this year at the November meeting with a presentation on Court Square.

We will be closed on Friday, November 28th for Thanksgiving. There will not be a Members Meeting in December, but be sure to make plans to join us on December 6th for our Christmas Social. Reservations are required.

Hope to see you on the 15th!

Mary

Calendar of Upcoming Events

Nov 5th—**WCGHA Board of Directors**

Nov 10th— **Warren First Podcast at 9:15 a.m.**

Nov 15th—**McMinnville Court Square by
Jimmy Haley**



President Mary Oaks presented our speaker for October, Dr. Tara Mielnik, a copy of McMinnville at a Milestone and the WCGHA History Preservation Certificate.



WCGHA CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

December 6, 2025 at 11:30 a.m

Warren County Admin Building
201 Locust Street
Magnolia Room

Catered by

Helens on the Green

Menu

Grilled Chicken Bruschetta

or

Hamburger Steak

(with sauteed mushrooms and onions)

Salad

Mashed potatoes

Green Beans

Roll

Banana Pudding

Sweet/unsweet tea, lemonade, and water

PROGRAM

11:30 Welcome – WCGHA President, Mary Oaks

Lunch – Buffet

12:15 Entertainment

Warren County Christmas Trivia, Mary Don Bixby

Recorded Music provided by Mary Oaks

Name: _____
Choose one: _____ chicken bruschetta _____ hamburger steak

Name: _____
Choose one: _____ chicken bruschetta _____ hamburger steak

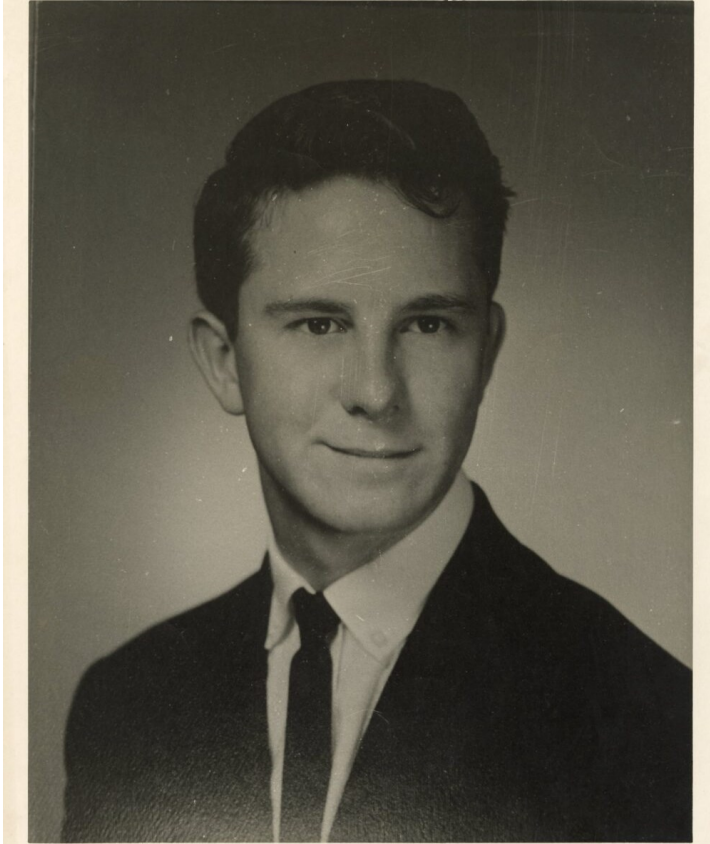
\$20.00 per person - payable by cash or check.
Make checks payable to: Helens on the Green

Reservations and payment are due by November 21, 2025.

Payment can be made at our monthly meetings or at the Association Office.
Open Monday and Friday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Staff Sargent Joe Lynn Delong

1947-1967



Joe Lynn Delong was born June 18, 1947 in Warren County, the fifth child of Grady Ross and Golda Lee "Goldie" Smith Delong. He grew up and attended school at Irving College graduating in 1966.



Joe's Irving College elementary school picture, c. 1958. Photo courtesy of Edwin Lewis



After graduating, Joe worked briefly at Powermatic and purchased a new 1966 Chevrolet, his "pride and joy."

Photo courtesy of Edwin Lewis.

On September 27, 1966, Joe began his military service, answering the call to serve his country.

After completing basic training at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, Joe returned home briefly to celebrate Christmas with his family before leaving for Vietnam in the spring of 1967. Joe was a small young man, only 5' 6" and 130 pounds. However, according to his friends at home and in Vietnam, he was tough.

Photo courtesy Edwin Lewis.



Delong wrote of his brief Vietnam experience in a letter home on April 29:

"... being in 2 big battles or firefights since I've been over here. We just keep humping these hills to we run into contact with the NVA. I guess the weather is nice back in the states right now. It sure is hot over here except when it rains & you get all wet seem like you freeze at night. Have to sleep in the mud and everything. Days seems to be passing off a little bit faster now, it won't be many more days until it will be two months in country,

While on patrol on May 18, 1967, Delong and members of Company B, under the leadership of Platoon Sergeant Bruce Grandstaff, attempted to track a few North Vietnamese along the well-used trail when they were ambushed by a large number of NVA. As the machine gunner, Delong was at the front of the platoon and began firing. The American soldiers were cut off and under heavy fire, and the situation was desperate. The soldiers attempted to assume a defensive position and dug in, hoping to hold out until reinforcement could arrive. By late afternoon, the American position was overrun and many American soldiers were killed.

The next morning, when members of Company A discovered their position, they found 23 killed in action (KIA), seven wounded (most had played dead to stay alive), **and one young man missing in action (MIA): Joe Lynn Delong.** Two of the survivors were tied up as if they were also going to be taken prisoner, but were left behind by the NVA. The injured were evacuated to Pleiku and on to a military hospital.

Members of Company A searched for Delong and sat for interviews regarding his last position. After searching the area, and with information later provided by a captured NVA, it was determined that Joe Delong had been taken captive by the NVA and was being held as a prisoner of war (POW) somewhere along the Cambodia/Vietnam border. The camp was known as B-3 POW Camp and its location moved at least four times during the war. Delong was imprisoned at the camp's third location, along with seven or eight other American POWs, throughout the summer and fall of 1967.

Sadly, it would be years before Joe Delong's family learned the truth about what had happened. As American Prisoners of War returned to the United States in 1973, former POW's imprisoned with Delong at Camp B-3 told his story. Once captured, Delong joined another American, helicopter pilot David Sooter, who had been a POW since February. They were joined two months later by five additional American soldiers, all from the 4th Infantry Division, who had been captured in a situation similar to Delong's.

For weeks, these few American soldiers remained under guard by the NVA at a remote camp somewhere along the Cambodian border. One of the POWs from the camp, Richard Perricone, recalled life in that camp in a 1998 news article: "We were told not to talk, so we communicated by songs. I'd sing, 'Hello my name is Richard, I'm from New York,' and the guards didn't realize we were exchanging information." To pass the time, POWs created a chessboard from wood and other materials in camp, and playing cards from Communist propaganda materials.

That fall, the POWs contemplated what Perricone called "the great escape." On November 6, 1967, two POWs pretended to have a disagreement over a chess match. They called in a guard to mediate, and Perricone hit him with a rock. Allegedly, Joe Delong disarmed the guard and perhaps even shot him. Delong, Perricone, Sooter, and others attempted to escape the camp. Within hours, all of the POWs had been recaptured, but Joe Delong evaded immediate recapture. Two days later, members of the NVA came into the camp and displayed Joe's battle fatigues with bullet holes and blood, and told the rest of the POWs that was all that was left of their friend.

Joe Delong's name was included on a list of those who had died in captivity, but gave no indication about the location of his remains.

- Unit: 4th Infantry Division, 8th Infantry Regiment, 1st Battalion, Company B
- Date of Birth: June 18, 1947
- Entered the Military: September 27, 1966
- Date of Death: November 6, 1967
- Hometown: McMinnville, Tennessee
- Place of Death: Ia Drang Valley, Vietnam
- Award(s): Silver Star, Prisoner of War Medal, Purple Heart (2), National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal
- Cemetery: Smyrna Cemetery, McMinnville, Tennessee. Courts of the Missing, Court B, Honolulu Memorial National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, Honolulu, Hawaii



Joe DeLong's cenotaph marker in Smyrna Cemetery in Warren County, Tennessee, March 2025.

Courtesy of Tara Mitchell Mielnik.

day, July 24, 2016

Bridge dedications

Continued from page 1A

Frazier is a 2004 graduate of Warren County High School. He joined the U.S. Marine Corps in July 2004 and after two years was deployed to Iraq. On Oct. 23, 2006, he suffered serious injuries when an IED exploded underneath the Humvee in which he was riding, killing two of his fellow Marines.

Edwin Lewis, the nephew of DeLong, offered appreciation from his family and spoke fondly of DeLong.

"I remember Joe," said Lewis. "I remember him in his uniform and his military haircut. I thought he was a grownup, but he was just a kid. He was 18 years old. We played hide-and-seek. I still have memories of him."

DeLong graduated from Irving College High School in 1966 and was drafted later that year to serve in the United States Army. After being deployed to Vietnam in March of 1967, he was wounded in combat and taken captive as a prisoner of war two months later in May of 1967. He was held in POW camp in Cambodia, from which he attempted escape in November 1967, and was reportedly killed. His remains have never been recovered.

The bridges are on the new four-lane Nashville Highway to Woodbury.

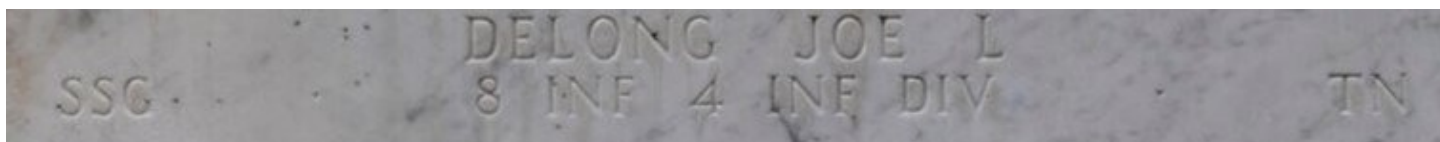


Lisa Hobbs photo

The sacrifice of Warren County native Joe DeLong was honored with a bridge dedication on Thursday. He was drafted in 1966, sent to Vietnam in March 1967, and was captured by the enemy two months later. He was killed in an escape attempt in November 1967. His remains have never been recovered. Pictured, from left, are Edwin Lewis, the nephew of DeLong, Vickie Rowland, the niece of DeLong, and Dolores Lewis, the sister of DeLong.

A bridge on US-70S near the Warren County Memorial Airport was dedicated in memory of Joe DeLong.

Southern Standard, July 24, 2016.



Joe DeLong's name is engraved on the Honolulu Memorial at the National Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu, HI.

The information in this article is taken from the National History Day website for Silent Heroes located at : <https://nhdsilentheroes.org/profiles/joe-lynn-delong/>

The article was contributed by Dr. Tara Mitchell Mielnik, Cumberland University.

The WCGHA is grateful to Dr. Mielnik and to Edwin Lewis, Joe DeLong's nephew, for their dedication to honoring the memory of one of Warren County's heroes.

The Bookshelf

by Mary Don Bixby

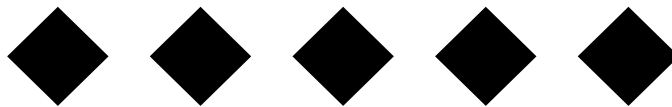
As all of you know, our country will celebrate its 250th birthday in 2026. The WCGHA has decided to make the American Revolution, especially Warren County participants, a focus next year.

A great way to brush up on Revolutionary War history is to visit the WCGHA office to peruse “Patriots to Pioneers – the First Tennessee Volunteers.” This book was published by the Tennessee Society Daughters of the American Revolution and was donated to us by the local chapter of the DAR.

It is a beautiful volume, filled with stunning color plates, maps, battle details and one page each dedicated to the Tennessee volunteers who fought. There is also a comprehensive index, plus a bonus section on additional Tennessee patriots.

The cover painting, “Patriots Farewell” by David Wright is particularly poignant, as it illustrates a man saying good-bye to his family as his fellow volunteers look on.

“Patriots to Pioneers” is just one of hundreds of treasures in the Resource Library at the WCGHA office. Come see and read!



THIS DAY IN NOVEMBER....

November 1, 1936: The Rome-Berlin Axis was proclaimed by Italian Dictator Benito Mussolini.

November 2, 1734: American frontiersman Daniel Boone was born in Berks County, near Reading, PA.

November 6, 1860: Abraham Lincoln was elected as the 16th U.S. President and the first Republican.

November 8, 1895: X-rays (electromagnetic rays) were discovered by Wilhelm Roentgen at the University of Wuerzburg in Germany.

November 15, 1777: The Articles of Confederation were adopted by the Continental Congress.

November 17, 1800: The U.S. Congress met for the first time at the new capital at Washington D.C. President John Adams then became the first occupant of the Executive Mansion, later renamed the White House.

November 18, 1883: A Connecticut school teacher, Charles F. Dowd, proposed a uniform time zone plan for the U.S. consisting of four zones.

November 22, 1963: At 12:30 p.m., President John F. Kennedy was shot as his motorcade was traveling in downtown Dallas, TX. At 1:00 p.m., he was pronounced dead at Parkland Memorial Hospital.

PIONEER FAMILY

Certificates Presented @ October 18, 2025 WCGHA meeting:

Certificates 184 thru 195 (11 certificates) recognizing 7 Warren County Pioneers

Ancestors Recognized

Lucas Holt as descendant:

184-Jacob Martin-maternal 5 th great grandfather

190 -Reddick Driver- maternal 5 th great grandfather

191- William Freeman-paternal 6 th great grandfather

Ancestor Recognized

185-Lusk Colville, certificate for Ida Bell Robb

192-Lusk Colville, certificate for Jeff Robb

Certificates received by Mike Pennington, researcher

Gifts for his maternal aunt and 1 st cousin

Ancestor Recognized

186- Christian Shell to Elizabeth Jacine Mariotti (her Paternal 5 th great-grandfather)

187-Christian Shell to Rebecca LeAnn Hallum (her Paternal 5 th great grandfather)

Recognize their mother, Julie Slaughter, as the researcher

Ancestor Recognized

188 - Aaron Tate, Sr. to Sebrena Wade, her paternal 5 th great grandfather)

189- Aaron Tate, Sr. to Trena Wade, her paternal 5 th great grandfather)

Recognize their mother, Evelyn Wade, as the researcher

Ancestor Recognized

193-195 William "Rock" Martin

193 – Harriett Ann Martin, her paternal 3 rd great grandfather. Harriett descends from Rock Martin's son, George Washington Martin.

Certificates # 194 is for Harriett's son, Travis Martin Barker, lives in Texas and not

in photo. #195 for Todd Michael Barker and #196 for Jimmy Gordon Barker II. Of course, William "Rock Martin" is the maternal 4 th great grandfather for Harriett's sons.



Lucas Holt

PIONEER FAMILY CERTIFICATES



Michael Pennington



Evelyn Wade



Julie, Elizabeth and Rebecca



Harriett, Todd and Jimmy

Office News

Two Hundred Thirty Six Hours! We are so thankful for our dedicated volunteers who so generously give their time to the Association. This month we had Charlotte Hamby, Freda Clifton, Lucas Holt, Marie Blair, Bettye Pack and, of course, our office regulars—Evelyn Wade, Bonita Mangrum, Mary Don Bixby, Mary Oaks and Ann Brown! Come join us!

Research

Livy Simpson (Crim, Clark, Martin, Fuston)

Rick Elliott (Elliott, Priest)

Jordan Broadway (King, Fults, Myers, Slaughter, Savage, Tate)

Nadine Stemberge (Kirby, Stemberge, Harris, Hammer)

Treva Sparkman

Jimmy King (Mangrum)

Marla Blauschild (427 N. Spring St.)

Contributions—Resource Library

The Mayflower Quarterly, Vol. 73, No. 2—Evelyn Wade

British Destroyers 1939-1945—Evelyn Wade

Cherokee Roots—Vol. 1, Eastern Cherokee Rolls—Evelyn Wade, Bettye Pack

Cherokee Roots—Vol. 2, Western Cherokee Rolls—Evelyn Wade, Bettye Pack

Contributions—Archives

Bible Record of Harvey M. and Mollie Green—Sandra Russell

Contributions—Photo Archives

Fairview School Photos (unidentified) - Anonymous

Eastside, Morrison and miscellaneous photos—Bobby Bond

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Mary and Steve Koelbl



Come Visit Us

**Our hours are
Monday & Friday
9 a.m.-3 p.m.
931-474-4227**

Email:
wcgaha.tn@gmail.com

On the Web:
www.tngenweb.org/wcgatn

On Facebook:

**Warren County Genealogical
& Historical Association**

and

**WCGHA's Old Warren County, TN
Family History/Photos**

**Our office is located at
201 Locust Street
McMinnville, Tennessee
in the lower level of the
County Administration Building**

Committees

Membership:

Ann Brown



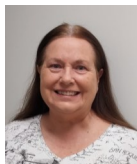
Historian:

Chris Keathley



Programs:

Bettye Pack



Web page/FB Admin:



Ann Brown

Research:

Bonita Mangrum

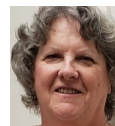


Mary Oaks



Newsletter Editor:

Susan Driver



susandriver801@gmail.com

931-314-6959

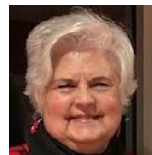
Bulletin:

Ann Brown



Publicity:

Freda Clifton



Office:

Evelyn Wade



Mary Oaks

