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his family needed him to work instead.

There wasn't much work to be had in the mountains, though. Aside from growing their own food, most folks had the choice of either picking beans in the hot fields all day long or cutting timber.

So the young Nix picked beans and helped his family harvest cane for syrup, and they would barter their goods in nearby towns, like Murphy or Clarksville.

When he was older, about 14, Nix got the chance to work in the Civilian Conservation Corps out of Suches. He spent six months constructing roads and working on campsites, and he helped to build a fish pond over near Turner's Corner.

As that work came to an end, he and his brother Burt took on cutting acid wood along the old Bald Mountain Highway, pulling a crosscut saw and making \$0.25 an hour. At eight hours a day, this came out to \$10 a week for the three months it took to clear the area.

The timber business was about to get a sight kinder to the Nix brothers, however, because when they finished working on the highway, a man hired the pair for their crosscutting skills at \$4.35 an hour, a fortune by comparison.

Nix continued to cut wood and do various other odd jobs in the mountains until 1944, the year he turned 18.

That year, the U.S. government drafted Nix to fight the Germans during World War II. So, off he went to war, but

not before he could marry his childhood sweetheart, Nova Lee Tanner.

From Union County he traveled to Fort McPherson in East Point, and from there to Camp Shelby, Mississippi, where he and his fellow conscripts waited for space to open up elsewhere for training.

They finally ended up at Camp Blanding, Florida, where the young men underwent 16 weeks of basic training before shipping out as young soldiers to Baltimore, Maryland, and then to Massachusetts, where Nix joined 7,000 other soldiers on a five-day cruise across the Atlantic Ocean aboard a ship headed for Liverpool, England.

Their next destination was France, where they worked their way toward Germany. At one point, Nix and his company, the 78th Infantry Division, needed to cross the Rhine River to get to the frontlines.

"We were building a bridge, but the Germans would blow it as fast as the engineers could build it, nearly," said Nix. "We crossed on big old rubber rafts drawn by ropes, but of course, some of them got blown. You'd see soldiers just wash on down — that Rhine River was rough."

After making it across into German territory, Nix remembers taking part in the Battle of Hurtgen Forest, which is the longest single battle in U.S. Army history.

Conditions were dire — rest was nearly impossible to

come by, and for the first 16 days and 16 nights after he entered that forest, Nix didn't get a single chance to even take off his shoes.

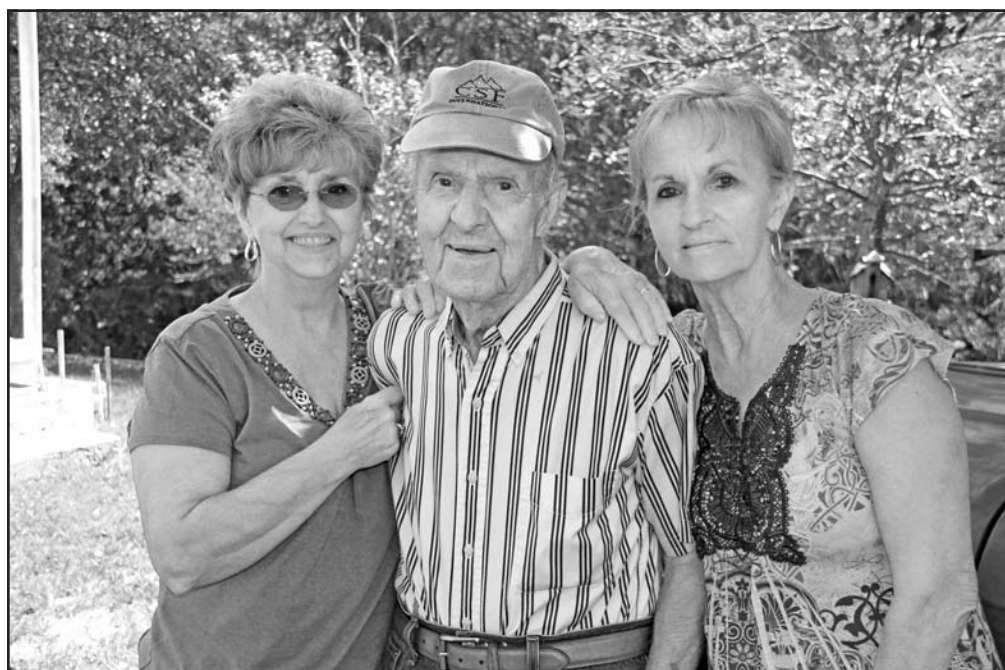
Those were dark days for Nix and his fellow soldiers. He recalls how an accompanying division was completely wiped out, and he remembers the men who had to go in to collect the bodies of the American dead, and how they stacked the fallen several feet high in places.

But there were brighter days ahead, as the Americans and Allies pushed forward and won the European front not long after that long battle.

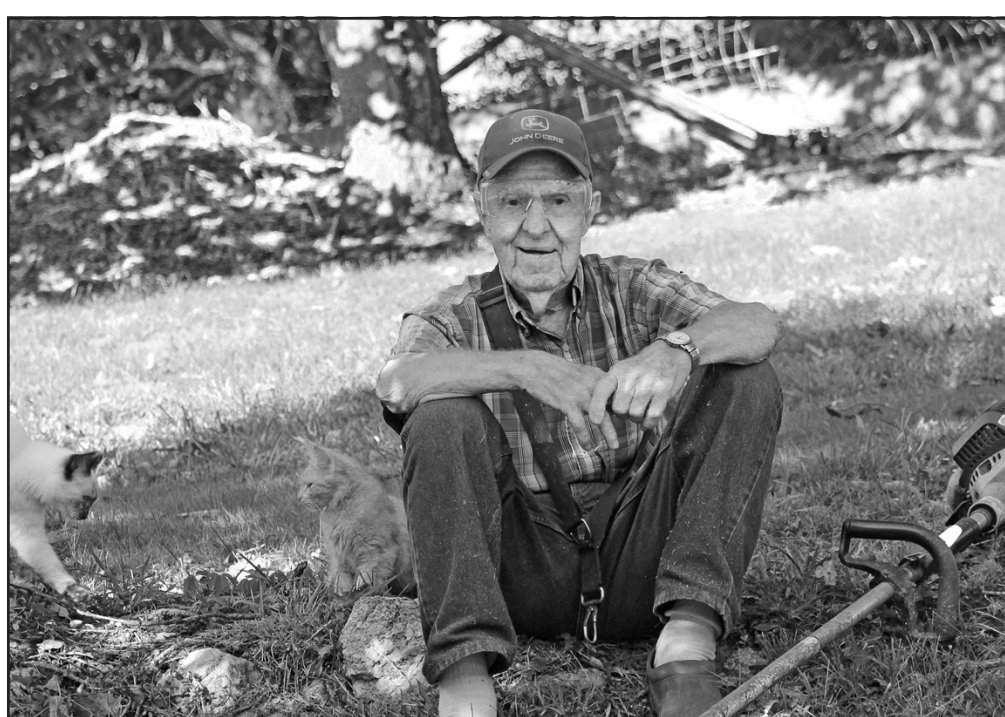
Nix doesn't say much about certain parts of the war or the concentration camps he witnessed, though he did say that, when the Jewish prisoners saw the Americans arriving with freedom as their banner, they were overcome with joy and began hugging and kissing one another.

After the war ended, Nix and his fellow soldiers remained in Germany and traveled from town to town on guard duty. He said he gained a good bit of weight eating all the trout and potatoes he could handle, and has several lighthearted stories about the immediate post-war Germany.

"We were in camp pulling guard duty when (Gen. George) Patton came by," said Nix of one post-war occasion. "I was the only one that was outside, and I seen him come riding in a Jeep through there. He went back to headquarters, and he said, 'By God, I didn't see nobody but one old Nix.



Nix with two of his children, Hattie Jackson and Linda Duckworth



Gene Nix enjoys the company of his cats as he sits in the shade, taking a break during a warm morning of weed eating

He's the only one out. The rest of them are asleep, I reckon."

But Nix got to missing home and his wife, Nova Lee, and as guard duty days wore on in Germany, Nix's longing for home intensified.

"If only we'd move a little ways, we'd be in France and see happier days," wrote Nix in a poem he composed in 1945 while in Germany. "But as things stand to this late date, all we can do is sit and wait. I sleep 'til I can sleep no more; I read 'til it is just a chore. I talk and walk 'til there's no enjoyment, just waiting here for redeployment."

Finally, Nix got to go home, though he did reenlist to serve for an extra year stateside. When he was finally discharged

from the Army in 1946, he returned to Union County to a farm he and Nova Lee had purchased with savings, and that year, their first son Larry was born.

The couple would go on to have five more children: Linda Duckworth, Hattie Jackson, Perry Nix, Terry Nix and Tammy Rhoten.

In 1954, Nix and his family moved from Choestoe to the property on which they still live in Union County, and it was there that he and Nova Lee made a happy home raising their children to be healthy and independent.

Leading up to his retirement in 1988, Nix put in more than four decades of hard work. He cut timber immediately following the war

and for years afterward, and then worked for Union County, both at the transfer station and the road department.

Nix is one of six children himself, with siblings Cora Jane Brown, Burton Columbus Nix, Lydia Elizabeth Saxon, Viola Jaworski, and Elvia Iowa Brookshire, though only Viola is still living, at 94.

He also has five grandchildren — Michelle Duckworth Dover, Sabrina Nix Lunceford, Christopher Larry Nix, Dennis "Dee" Joseph Gilbert and Holly Gilbert — and two great-grandchildren, Casey Dover and Logan Nix.

Those who know Gene Nix appreciate dearly his neighborly disposition, fun-loving sense of humor and infectious work ethic.

Local realtors hold Pumpkin Decorating contest



Entries included (L-R) a Cyclops, a "Smart" pumpkin, Frozen (2nd prize winner), Queenie (1st prize winner), Mr. Turkey, Spider's Web, Princess, Red M&M and Owl.

Mountain Realty Owner Janet Allen provided each agent and staff with a pumpkin to decorate. There were no limitations, just everyone was asked to participate, which all the gang did and had a great time with it. The judging was done by 2 lovely very young ladies, Marlowe and Ella, and they did an awesome job. The winner was "Queenie" entry by Jan Simony, and 2nd place went to "Frozen" entry by Brenda Jackson. This was a fierce competition, as Janet offered \$50 as 1st prize and \$25 as 2nd prize. Congratulations to



2nd place winner, Frozen, by Brenda Jackson. Our winners!

You're welcome to stop in to take a look at these entries,



1st place winner, Queenie, by Jan Simony.

Our Mountain Realty office is across the street from Hardee's in Hiawassee. NT(Oct12,F3)SH

Rollins Planetarium "Fright Light II" Laser Concert

Young Harris College's O. Wayne Rollins Planetarium will present "Fright Light II Laser Concert" at 7 and 8 p.m. on the Friday evenings: Oct. 21 and Oct. 28. Planetarium admission per show is \$5 for adults, \$3 for students and free with YHC ID. Tickets are available for advance purchase online at yhc.edu/planetarium or at the door 30 minutes prior to each show.

This spooktacular family friendly Halloween show is set to amazing laser lights from SkyLase, the only full-dome, full-color, solid-state laser projection system, and enhanced by a stunning star projector. Combined with classic monster music favorites like "Thriller," "Monster Mash" and "The Devil Went Down to Georgia," and new selections including a Horror



Movie Medley, this show is sure to be a hallowing good time.

Laser concerts contain loud music, flashing lights, spinning stars and other effects that some may find disruptive. This show is not recommended for those who may have conditions that could be aggravated by this experience.

O. Wayne Rollins Planetarium features a state-of-the-art GOTO Chronos Space Simulator star projector with a full-dome digital projection system, the Sky-Skan Defini-

ti, in a 40-foot dome theater with 5.1 surround sound. With comfortable seating for 104, Rollins Planetarium offers public shows and educational opportunities for school groups throughout the year. Rollins Planetarium is located in the Maxwell Center on the YHC campus.

For more information about the planetarium, call (706) 379-5195 or visit yhc.edu/planetarium.

Mountain Shelter Board meeting

The Humane Society's Mountain Shelter Board of Directors will meet in the Community Room at United Community Bank in Blairsville at 5:30 p.m. on October 19.