

# MARTINSVILLE BULLETIN

## Service a long tradition

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By HOLLY KOZELSKY - Bulletin Staff Writer

The Richardson family of Martinsville will celebrate Veterans Day by honoring four generations of veterans. The Richardson military service spans both World Wars, the Vietnam war and local service through the Reserves, and the family's patriotism continues today.

Charlie Richardson was an Army private in France during World War I. The Henry County native was born in 1896, retired from Lester Lumber Co. and died in 1979. John Talmadge Richardson Sr. served in the Army in France and Belgium in World War II. He was a military police officer in 1945 and then worked at DuPont until his retirement.

He and his wife Mary had two children, Carolyn Davis of Charlotte, N.C., and John Talmadge Richardson Jr. Richardson Sr. died in 2000.

John Talmadge Richardson Jr., born in 1948, was a sergeant in the Air Force. He was stationed at Clarke's Air Force Base and flew on C-130s in combat in Vietnam. He now lives in the Figsboro area and works for Shaifer Distribution Co. in Greensboro. He has three children: Michael Richardson of Wilmington, N.C.; Nicole Richardson of Richmond; and Stephen Richardson of South Boston.

Stephen Richardson, 26, Charlie Richardson's great-grandson, was a Marine corporal in the Reserves for six years. He is a state trooper and is not married.

"We'll have to leave it up to Steve to have a fifth generation," joked Arnold Prillaman, nephew of Charlie Richardson and cousin of John Talmadge Richardson Sr. He is a co-founder of Prillaman and Pace.

"I just can't think of another family that can boast four generations of continuous military service," he added.

Prillaman and Mary Richardson, widow of John Richardson Sr., have been married for two years.

"I'm very proud of my Richardson heritage, so I'm glad for my wife to retain her name," Prillaman said.

The couple said they are honored to have four generations of veterans in the family.

"I wonder if anybody else would come forth and say, Ôwell, I have (four generations of veterans) too," Prillaman said.

"It would be nice," Richardson added.

Arnold Prillaman also is a veteran. He was in the Eighth Air Force during World War II. A gunner on a B-17, he flew 30 missions over Germany out of England.

He took his grandson to Normandy last year to visit the D-Day Memorial for the 60th anniversary of the end of the war.

While he was at the monument, he recognized the names of two local men who had died during the Normandy invasion, Ben Kearfott and Noel Washburn.

He photographed their names from the memorial to share back home in Martinsville. Prillaman said that he understands there was another local man whose name was on the memorial, but he didn't know his name.