

Thomas Wirt 'Tommy' 'Dipper' Walton

Thomas Wirt "Tommy" "Dipper" Walton, 79, of Vidor died Tuesday, April 3, 2007 at Harbor Hospice House in Beaumont following a long battle with asbestosis and emphysema.

A native of China, he was born November 9, 1927. During his adolescent years, Tommy played the bugle for American Legion Post #33 Sons of the Legion Drum and Bugle Corps, which, at that time was the largest Corps in Texas, as well as the nation. The Corps participated in all parades and activities county-wide, in the 30's and 40's.

In 1939, at twelve years of age, he placed second in Texas in Baton Twirling, to his sister's first place, as she went on to the national championship.

Before and during the WWII war years, 1938-1945, he joined his brother Jack in playing "Taps" and "Echo" for returning veteran's memorial services.

Graduating from Beaumont High School in 1945, Tommy attended Lamar Tech, and entered the Army 4th Signal Battalion Co. B.

He and brother Jack played trumpet and backup, participating in numerous patriotic affairs... U.S. Bond drives, blood drives programs and pageants, also baton back-up for their sister Fran's fire baton and flag routines, throughout Texas and the Veteran's hospital in Alexandria, Louisiana.

In 1950 he re-entered military service, enlisting in the Marine Corps and saw duty as a tank commander in the 1st Marine Division Tank Corps. Tommy was awarded numerous medals, as well as three small and large Bronze Star for heroism in Korea.

After discharge in 1954, he retained membership in Westminster Presbyterian Church in Beaumont, local #54 Sheetmetal Workers Union, International Association and a 50 year membership in Pipefitters Local #195.

Tommy is survived by his wife, Maxine Walton of Vidor; son, Don Lee Walton of Seabrook; grandson, Thomas John "T.J." Walton of Seabrook; step sons, J.W. Stanley and his wife Ann, Terry Stanley and his wife Kristi, Mike Stanley and his wife Christine all of Vidor; three step grandsons; three step granddaughters; one great step grandsons; sisters, Fran Wyche, and Mary Ann Kittell and her husband Ken all of Colmesniel; brothers, Jack Walton of Vidor; numerous nieces and nephews and great nieces and nephews. He was also preceded in death by his parents, Herman and Ila Walton, formerly of Beaumont.

The family would like to especially thank Harbor Hospice House and the Staff, they have been our angels on earth.

Funeral service will be 10 a.m. Friday, April 6, 2007 at Broussard's, 1605 North Major Drive, Beaumont with burial to follow at Walton Family Cemetery in Vidor. A gathering of family and friends will be 4 until 8 p.m. Thursday, April 5, 2007 at the mortuary.

Memorial contributions may be made to Southeast Texas Veterans Group, STVSG, Attn: Treasurer, 4788 Wela Drive, Orange, Texas 77632.