

# We Have a Feast of Blessings



## MESSAGE FROM CEO/GENERAL MANAGER DEBBIE ROBINSON

Later this month, people will sit down at dinner tables with family and friends for the annual Thanksgiving Day feast, followed by the traditional post-dinner nap and NFL games.

But Thanksgiving isn't just about full bellies and football. It's also a time we set aside for reflecting, counting our blessings and enjoying the company of our loved ones.

As CEO and general manager of Wood County Electric Cooperative, I am thankful for members like you who support the mission of this cooperative to provide reliable electricity at a reasonable rate, but also to be a strong presence in sustaining the communities we serve. Your participation in co-op meetings, elections and activities makes WCEC a vital organization, one that can be counted on to support charitable endeavors, scholarships and economic development efforts.

I am thankful for our directors, civic-minded members who give of their time and talents to represent your interests as we set policies and plan for our future electricity supply. With each passing year, as financial and regulatory challenges mount, your board members must stay abreast of the factors that influence the efficient and cost-effective delivery of electricity to your home.

I am thankful for WCEC employees, who demonstrate dedication and professionalism in performing their duties. WCEC is an environment where service comes first, and our employees exemplify this beautifully.

And last—but more important—I am thankful for all of the military service members who ensure the freedoms that we all so willingly enjoy on Thanksgiving, and every day of the year.

May you and your loved ones have a happy, healthy and blessed holiday.



Hand-washing dishes is an energy-efficient choice if you don't leave the water running.

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY

# Dishwasher or Hand-Washing?

Gathering family members to help you carefully wash and dry your dishes by hand is a great way to keep everyone together in the kitchen after a big holiday dinner. It's also a big waste of hot water.

Cleaning dishes in the dishwasher typically uses 37 percent less water than washing them by hand. The reason: Most of us run the hot water constantly while washing plate after glass after casserole dish.

A tip: If you have a divided sink, plug the drains and fill one side with warm, soapy water and the other with clear rinse water, and then turn the faucet off. You'll use half as much water cleaning your dishes with this method as you would if you ran the dishwasher.

If you do load the dishwasher, wait until it's full to turn it on. If you have to rinse dried-on food from dishes beforehand, use cold water only.

Always opt for the "energy-saving" cycle when you run your dishwasher. And deactivate the "heated drying" cycle in favor of letting the dishes air-dry. You'll save up to 10 percent on dishwashing costs if you do.



# Choosing the right Electric Knife

**Slicing through a turkey without tearing it to shreds or fighting to remove wings and legs isn't the easiest Thanksgiving dinner chore.**

A solution: An electric knife makes easy work of cutting uniform slices even from the turkey's hardest-to-reach places.

Here are some things to consider before buying an electric knife.

▶ Don't skimp on quality. You get what you pay for. A top-of-the-line electric knife costs around \$50. It is likely to last longer, stay sharper and be safer.

▶ You can choose a corded or a cordless electric knife. The cordless version will need charging between uses and is useful only as long as it holds its charge. Opt for one with a fairly long battery life. The corded version's cord can get in the way while you're cutting the bird, and you can use it only near a power outlet.

▶ Think about what you will use the knife to do. A single, long blade works well for slicing meat, but if you intend to use it year-round to slice bread and cut vegetables, you'll need a second, shorter blade.

▶ Take the knife on a "test drive" at the store. Pick it up and notice if the grip and weight feel comfortable. Notice if the knife has an "on" switch that you have to press as you carve; that can make the task awkward. Remove the blade to determine if it's easy enough to do. Listen to how loud it is and decide on the level of noise you can tolerate.

▶ Buy one that you can put in the dishwasher.



# LED-Strung Christmas Trees Going Fast!

**If you'd like to buy an artificial Christmas tree strung with long-lasting LED bulbs, buy it now. If you wait until after Thanksgiving, you might not be able to find a nice one.**

LED-strung trees sell out quickly—even though they cost more than artificial evergreens with traditional lights—because the bulbs stay bright so long. They're expected to burn without trouble for 200,000 hours, so they ought to last for a multitude of Christmases.

LED means light-emitting diode. The light is built into the light fixture, so there's no bulb to change. By the time the lights stop glowing, you would need to replace the whole fixture—and tree—anyway.

Other benefits: LEDs are cool to the touch, so they're easier to handle and don't present a fire hazard when they come into contact with your tree's limbs. They use up to 90 percent less energy than traditional holiday lights. Their casings are shatterproof.

Take some of the hassle out of the holidays by switching to LEDs. Even if you don't want a

fake tree, you can replace your tree and outdoor lights with removable strings of LEDs.

But do it soon, or you might wind up waiting until next year to make the switch.



**LED Christmas lights resemble traditional ones but have many advantages.**



## Wood County Electric Cooperative

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Debbie Robinson

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- Tuesday**, Family Dollar, *Mount Vernon*
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- Thursday**, Brookshire's, *Winnsboro*
- Friday**, Economy Drug, *Grand Saline*



## Contact Us

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## Rarin' To



**Wurlington W. Hughes says his daddy, Walter King Hughes, walked all the way from Piney Flats, Tennessee, to Plainview when he was just 13.**

A quick Internet search shows that to be a distance of 1,282 miles. And, WW, as he is called, said his daddy also told him he did it without a road map or a compass, but instead used the sun as a guide. Walter King was aiming to get to Plainview to join his sister and her family, and once there, he decided to settle down. He became a jack-of-all-trades, and WW also says that even though his dad only had a third-grade education, he was extremely well-read. Also, WW said he could cipher figures “faster than any modern-day calculator.” Walter and his wife, Dolly, had four children, WW being the baby, born October 7, 1918.

WW turned out like his daddy in many ways, including his ability to excel without a long, formal education.

“I got kicked out of school for fighting in seventh grade,” WW says matter-of-factly. He said the principal told him, “WW, lots of people get by real well without an education, and I think you are going to be one of them.”

So in 1936, WW went to work at a service station and became a pretty accomplished mechanic before he joined the Texas National Guard in 1940. After basic training in Dallas, he served in the 112th Cavalry, which was a mounted division that was called in to federal duty. There he seemed to flourish and said, “Horses have always liked me, and I like horses.” After leaving Dallas, WW spent quite some time in El Paso, where, he said, “We drilled and rode our horses night and day.”

Following this training, his unit spent time at Fort Clark, where WW’s platoon sergeant promoted him to a file-closer sergeant. His platoon rode mounted patrols along the Mexico-Texas border. One of their duties was to guard the Pecos River High Bridge, which was a railway across the Pecos River gorge. WW said it was a little bit frightening at the time because the Army decisionmakers had sent only seven men to guard this important site from potential sabotage. Eventually, WW and his fellow soldiers were relieved by an entire troop.

After that, his unit spent time near the Army supply depot town of Brackettville. They were there when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. WW said that

most of their duty at that time consisted of detaining and redirecting immigrant families who were crossing the border in search of work.

The next stop for WW was Angel Island, California, which was a processing station. From here, WW’s entire regiment of about 3,000 men was readied for war service. The men were loaded onto a troop transport ship and sent to the small southwest Pacific Ocean island of New Caledonia, about 750 miles east of Australia. It was here that they awaited their horses, which never showed up. It was rumored that a Japanese submarine might have torpedoed the ship carrying the horses. In the meantime, they were given some Australian and French horses, he said, but eventually it was determined that horses and the jungle just weren’t a practical fit. Thus, WW says they got the order to pack their now-useless saddles and other tack into large crates, never to be seen again. From that point on they were unmounted cavalry. So, they set off on a foot march to Nouméa, which is the capital city of New Caledonia on a peninsula that included a deep-water port.

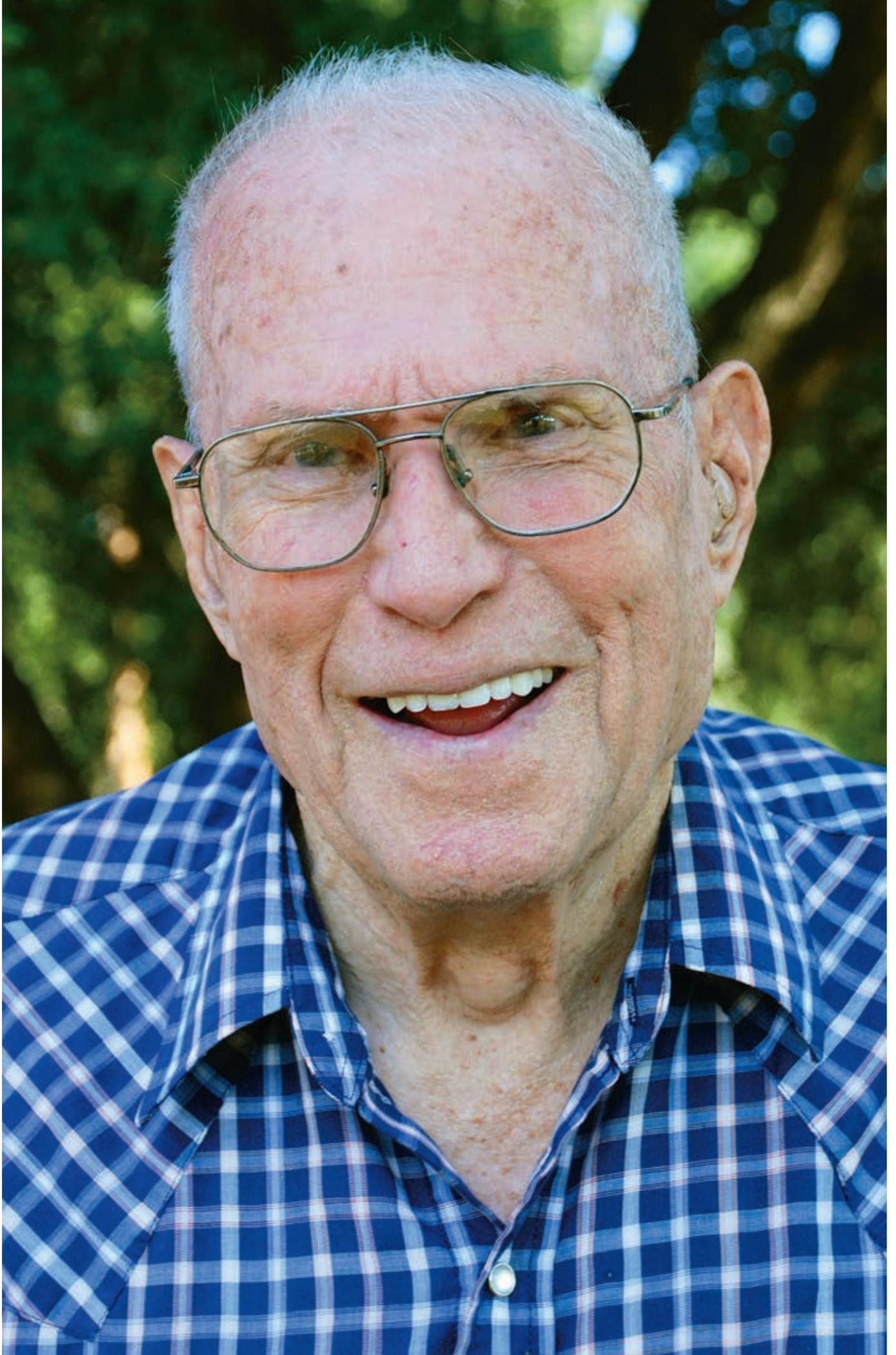
Once at the port, the 112th Cavalry, along with another Marine and Army battalion, loaded aboard landing ship transports and were summarily deposited on the shores of Woodlark Island. This was one of the first amphibious actions undertaken in the Southwest Pacific. Captured with no fighting, Woodlark became a future airfield to support other operations across the theater.

Afterward, WW’s troop, known as A Troop, joined amphibious operations on New Britain against some pretty strong defensive fighting.

“We did not have it near as bad as other outfits,” WW said. He said that there were 50-foot cliffs along the shores with just a little strip of land, and there was some shooting and a few bomb attacks. It was here that he had his lifeboat shot out from under him, and he lost many friends. But, he said, the Marines had it the toughest. It was also on New Britain that WW suffered a shrapnel wound to one of his hands. He said today, when anybody asks him about it, including his grandkids, he tells them, “You are darn right, I was afraid.”

Because of the shrapnel, WW was sent off to the hospital for a few days to be patched up. Once A Troop completed its action on New Britain, the troops then spent some time in New Guinea before moving on the Philippines.

When talking about all of the fighting, WW minimizes much of his role in these battles, speaking of others as heroes. He also reverently talks of the many who sacrificed their lives. And, he says of his time in theater, “I fired 11 rounds the whole time I was in the Pacific.” But historians tell of the fierceness of the Philippines conflicts, especially for the 112th Cavalry, which served more than a year in combat there. To his count, WW may have only fired 11 shots, but that pales in comparison to the enemy ordnance that must have been coming his way until the end of the war. After those last shots were fired, WW was sent back to the States to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, to serve the rest of his enlistment training recruits. Interestingly, A Troop went to Japan as part of the occupying force, and it had a little easier time there, serving as part of Gen. Douglas MacArthur’s honor guard.





When WW did land back on U.S. soil, he said there was “no playing the fiddle or nothing.” He said he was met by two folks from the local Masonic lodge who welcomed him home. He was not complaining, mind you, but just building up to say, “I am so proud that folks are now recognizing the men that are keeping our country free.”

Eventually, once home and out of Army service, WW was offered a job working for the government, first in war assets, where he was in charge of sorting materials for auction. Then, he went to work for the Public Building Service, where he was introduced by a co-worker to his first wife and the eventual mother of his three children, Patty, Barbara and Gary.

Tired of working for the government, WW eventually ended up opening up a Mobil gas station. He was very successful, until he says, he was run off by the president of Mobil because he was getting some bad publicity. As WW tells it, “Well, I’d crossed horns with the Corps of Engineers.”

It seems they’d “grounded” an amphibious boat of WW’s and were calling it unsafe. WW wound up in several news pieces stating his opinion, which was contrary to the Corps of Engineers’ beliefs. But, even with the loss of his station, he says today, “That fight I had with the Corps of Engineers, I enjoyed every single minute of it.”

Never the worse for wear from it, WW took over a Phillips 66 station for a friend, and eventually Mobil asked him to come back and run one of its stations. Once they had promised him free rent for three years, utilities paid for three years, and a few other pot-sweeteners, he agreed. Eventually, he was even featured in a few national magazines (in approved Mobil media interviews), and in one of them, WW said that a Mobil executive said, “WW does everything contrary to the way we like it. But, he is very successful.”

Negotiation skills and business acumen seem to have come naturally for WW. Even as a kid, he had negotiation skills. He said he made one his first and best trades when he was about 11 or 12. First, he traded a BB gun for a donkey. He saw an advertisement by a man who wanted to pay \$5 for a pet donkey for his grandchildren. WW rode his donkey all the way from Grand Prairie out to Hensley Air Field. He said the man must have been loaded to give \$5 for a donkey when men were working in those times for just 10 cents an hour. But, WW presented the donkey, and the man bought it. And, the buyer also paid for WW’s streetcar ticket home when he learned that he was planning to walk the five miles home.

Listening to WW, you can imagine that he has got a million stories like these. He is a very spry 94 with a quick wit and steel-



**WW during his time  
with the 112th Cavalry**



trap memory. He can spout dates and recall events as if they happened yesterday. It's a marvel to hear of his successes, and even some of his gleefully told failures. But most of all, it's an honor to stand in the presence of someone who has served his country with distinction, earning a Purple Heart along the way.

In addition, he's led Scout troops, been an election precinct chairman and judge, and dabbled in politics, once running for state legislature, losing by only 25 votes. He also volunteered for more than 30 years for the YMCA. Crowning those accomplishments, he just received his 70-year notice of membership from the Masonic Lodge, and he will also be getting his 50-year

notice as a Shriner. He is still active in both.

WW was married to his first wife, Lillian, for 60 years. And, after her death and at the suggestion of his children, in 2008 he married Lorraine, a longtime family friend. Together, they are members of Wood County Electric Cooperative and live in Quitman.

The cavalry motto, "Rarin' To Go," still fits WW to a T. He says that when he turns 100, he'll make sure everybody knows it, because he's going to circle the courthouse square with a sign telling everybody so. He will very probably do it. And there are also, very probably, a lot of people who can't wait to see it.