To the Editor:

Robert "Bob" Beckwith of Watertown was buried Friday, July 27, with full military honors. Several persons and relatives attended the service and burial.

Bob, a friend and someone who not only served his country in time of World War II, but came back to his home and served as a mail carrier and contributor to his community, fellow man and countless others, was a highly decorated soldier of Wilson County. Among the numerous decorations he earned in the United States Army was: Silver Star, Bronze Star and three Purple Hearts for the three times he was wounded by enemy fire. One of these, a sniper bullet, he carried with him in his body to his grave.

Linda Beth Evins gave a beautiful eulogy relating to an interview she did with Bob a few years ago. She detailed by memory the places in the South Pacific in which he heroically served and also his subsequent service to his community. One could witness, on the faces of those in attendance, the admiration for Bob and his great loss to the community and nation.

I also had the great privilege of asking Bob to be, and he accepted, the honor of being the parade Grand Marshal for Veterans Day in Lebanon a few hears ago. I, too, sat in complete admiration of this soldier. I kept thinking at that time, and still do, some of the words in **A. Lawrence Vaincourt's**
magnificent poem, "A Soldier Died Today." (The poem is also known as "Just A Common Soldier.") It is quoted in part below:

"He was just a common Soldier

And his ranks are growing thin.

But his presence should remind us

We may need his like again.

For when countries are in conflict

Then we find the Soldiers part

Is to clean up all the troubles

That the politicians start.

If we cannot do him honor

while he's here to hear the praise

then at least let's give him homage

at the ending of his days.

Perhaps a simple headline in the paper that might say

Our country is in mourning for a soldier died today."

Lt. Col. Jim Henderson,
Retired, U.S. Air Force,
Lebanon