

# Gair Allie, "Year-Long Cup of Coffee"

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It was the final game of a long 1954 season for the Pittsburgh Pirates and their rookie shortstop Gair Allie. The Corsairs enter their Sunday afternoon game with the Brooklyn Dodgers a full 43 games behind the National League champion New York Giants.

Mired in a 2-for-25 slump with only one extra base hit in his previous nine games, Allie begins the season finale against Dodgers' rookie sensation Karl Spooner with a .201 batting average.

Allie is hitless in four at bats against Spooner when he flies out to left fielder Sandy Amoros in the eighth inning in what turns out to be his final at bat as a major leaguer. The F7 drops his batting average for the season and his career to .199 (.19856 to be exact). A hit in any one of his four at bats that afternoon would have enabled Allie to finish above the .200 mark.

The Statesville, North Carolina, native opens the season in a slump and pretty much stays there the entire summer. Allie finishes April with only eight hits in 49 at bats for a .163 average.

On May 4, Allie is hitting only .161, and has committed five errors at shortstop when he is benched in favor of 28-year-old WWII veteran Dick Cole. Allie returns to the starting line two weeks later and promptly goes 5-for-12 lifting his average to an even .200.

Following a 21-game streak where he hits .284 with 25 hits in 88 at bats, Allie's batting average climbs to .229 on July 3. It will mark the highest average of his career.



Gair Allie  
1953 Pittsburgh Pirates

Pittsburgh Pirates at Brooklyn Dodgers  
September 26, 1954  
Ebbetts Field, Brooklyn, N.Y.

PITTSBURGH						BROOKLYN							
	a	b	r	h	o	a		a	b	r	h	o	a
Roberts.2b	2	0	0	0	0	0	Gilliam.2b	4	0	1	4	1	
Allie.3b	4	0	0	1	1		Hoak.3b	4	0	0	0	2	
Skin'er.1b	4	0	1	5	0		Snider.cf	3	0	0	3	0	
Thom's.lf	4	0	0	3	0		Hodges.lb	2	1	1	3	0	
Gordon.rf	3	0	0	3	0		Amoros.lf	3	0	0	3	0	
Cole.ss	4	0	1	3	1		Moryn.rf	3	0	0	1	0	
Hall.lf	3	0	0	7	0		Zimmer.ss	3	0	1	0	0	
Koback.c	3	0	0	7	0		Walker.c	3	0	1	12	2	
Thies.p	3	0	0	0	2		Spooner.p	3	0	0	1	0	

Totals 31 0 4 24 4      Totals 28 1 4 27 5  
SCORE BY INNINGS

Pittsburgh ..... 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0—0  
Brooklyn ..... 0 0 0 0 0 0 1 0 x—1  
Errors: Hoak, Zimmer. Run batted in: Hodges. Home run: Hodges. Double play: Walker and Gilliam. Left on bases: Pittsburgh 7. Brooklyn 4. Bases on balls: Thies 1. Spooner 3. Struck out: Thies 5. Spooner 12. Run and earned run: Thies 1-1. Winner: Spooner (2-0). Loser: Thies (3-9). Umpires: Engeln, Stewart, Pinelli, Boggess. Time—1:57. Attendance—9,344.

But success is fleeting for the North Carolinian as he closes out the season hitting only .171 over his last 64 games. In addition to his batting woes, Pirate manager Fred Haney decides that Allie does not have the tools to be a major league shortstop and starting on August 22, Allie is moved to third base and makes 18 starts at the hot corner.

In addition to his sub .200 batting average, Allie finishes the season with the worst fielding percentage (.952) at shortstop of anyone in the National League who played at least 70 games at the position.

Among his 83 hits are eight doubles, six triples and three home runs. He ties with Brooklyn's Gil Hodges and Chicago's Dee Fondy for third among National League hitters with 84 strikeouts.

Born Gair Roosevelt Allie on October 29, 1931, in Statesville, North Carolina, the son of Kermit and Marjorie Brittain Allie. Allie earns 14 letters in baseball, basketball and football at Statesville High School.

## Gair Allie [2 of 5]:

In June of 1950, Allie tells the *Greensboro News & Record* that he will probably not sign a pro contract, but if he does he will further his academic studies at the University of North Carolina during the off-season.

The two-time all-state shortstop ultimately elects to attend Wake Forest College where in 1951 he plays on a Demon Deacon freshman team that finishes 11-3 and wins the mythical Big Four championship among Wake Forest, Duke, North Carolina and N.C. State.

While in high school, Allie is scouted by both the Yankees and Pirates, but signs with Pittsburgh on September 21, 1951, for a \$20,000 bonus. His signing with Pittsburgh may have been due to a relationship he'd developed with Pirates' General Manager Branch Rickey.

Earlier that summer Allie had been a late roster addition to the semipro Stellarton (Nova Scotia) Albions, sent there by the Pirates who were hoping to hide him from other teams by having him play in Nova Scotia for the summer. Joining Allie north of the border were three other Wake Forest players - Art Hoch, Joe Fulghum, and Johnny Alford - Duke Blue Devil catcher Leroy Sires and North Carolina Tar Heel pitcher Joe Pazdan. The Albions had also signed highly-regarded pitcher Billy Joe Davidson of Greensboro, North Carolina prior to his signing with the Cleveland Indians for a reported \$120,000 bonus.



Allie is all smiles after signing with the Pittsburgh Pirates on September 18, 1951.

## Gair Allie Year by Year:

Year	Team	League	Lev	G	AB	HT	2B	3B	HR	RBI	AVG
1947	Statesville Greyhounds	South Piedmont	HS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1948	Statesville Greyhounds	South Piedmont	HS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1948	Phoenix Beauknitters	Tri-County	SPro	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1949	Statesville Greyhounds	South Piedmont	HS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1949	Phoenix Beauknitters	Tri-County	SPro	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1950	Statesville Greyhounds	South Piedmont	HS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1950	East Monbo	Tri-County	SPro	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1950	Stellarton Albions	Halifax	SPro	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	=
1951	Wake Forest College Freshman	Southern	NCAA	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1951	Stellarton Albions	Halifax	SPro	-	-	-	-	-	19	-	.351
1952	New Orleans Pelicans	Southern	AA	155	487	105	18	3	9	50	.216
1953	New Orleans Pelicans	Southern	AA	32	91	22	2	0	1	12	.242
1954	Pittsburgh Pirates	NATIONAL	MLB	121	418	83	8	6	3	30	.199
1955	New Orleans Pelicans	Southern	AA	149	488	134	25	1	15	77	.275
1956	Hollywood Stars	Pacific Coast	Opn	69	219	64	11	1	4	21	.292
1957	U.S Army	Military		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1958	Columbus Jets	International	AAA	107	322	80	11	1	7	36	.248
1958	Carta Vieja	Panamanian	Winter	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1959	Memphis Chickasaws	Southern	AA	139	441	113	20	4	13	50	.256
1960	Chattanooga Lookouts	Southern	AA	134	450	120	18	1	3	53	.267
1961	<b>2 Teams</b>	<b>2 Leagues</b>	<b>A-AAA</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>.192</b>
	Syracuse Chiefs	International	AAA	15	49	8	0	0	0	2	.163
	Portsmouth-Norfolk Tides	South Atlantic	A	27	118	24	2	2	0	3	.203
	<b>Major League Totals</b>		<b>1 Year</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>418</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>.199</b>
	<b>Minor League Totals</b>		<b>8 Years</b>	<b>827</b>	<b>2665</b>	<b>670</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>.251</b>

**ML Debut: April 13, 1954 at Forbes Field, Pittsburgh:** started at shortstop (batting 7th) and went 0-for-2 with two strikeouts, a walk and a run scored against Robin Roberts in a 4-2 win over the Philadelphia Phillies.

**ML Finale: September 26, 1954, at Ebbets Field, Brooklyn:** started at third base (batting 2nd) and went 0-for-4 with two strikeouts against Karl Spooner in a 1-0 loss to the Brooklyn Dodgers.

The Pirates sign Allie after he tears up the Halifax League hitting .351 with a league-high 19 home runs. Assigned to New Orleans of the Southern (AA) Association for 1952, Allie he hits only .216, but with 18 doubles and nine home runs.

The following spring, Allie is the only infielder from the 1952 New Orleans Pelicans to be invited to the Pirates' training camp which is held in Havana, Cuba. With Dick Groat, Pittsburgh's incumbent shortstop, and Eddie O'Brien both serving in the military, Allie battles Dick Cole for the starting spot opposite of rookie second baseman Curt Roberts, the Pirates' first African-American player.

On March 30 1953, Allie's quest for a major league roster spot in derailed when he fractures his right ankle sliding into home during an intra-squad game. Expected to miss the entire season, he returns in time to play in 32 games with New Orleans, hitting .242 with one home runs and 12 RBIs for the Pelicans.

January 17, 1946  
Halyburton Dynasty

## HALYBURTON'S ROOM WINS BASKETBALL TILT

Yesterday at noon in the local Junior Hi School gym. Coach Halyburton's room defeated Miss Irma Holmes' room 24 to 10. High scorer for the winners was Gair Allie and high scorer for the losing team was Allan Morrison.

## Gair Allie [3 of 5]:



Five days before the team's 1954 season opener, Pittsburgh manager Fred Haney tells the media that two rookies - Curt Roberts (L) and Gair Allie (R), will open the season as the team's starting second baseman and shortstop, respectively.

A return to health, a solid spring training and a team youth movement enables Allie to open the 1954 season as Pittsburgh's starting shortstop, beating out veteran Dick Cole. The second-youngest player on the team, the 22-year-old Allie hits .199 with three home runs with 30 RBIs as the Pirates lose over 100 games for a third-straight year finishing in last-place 44 games behind the New York Giants.

Back to contend for playing time with Groat (back after a two-year hiatus) during the Pirates' 1955 spring training camp, Allie is unexpectedly sent back to New Orleans on March 21, three weeks before the team's season opener. Allie will hit .275 with 25 doubles and a career-high 15 home runs for the Pelicans.

In 1956, Allie is hitting .292 in 69 games with the Pacific Coast League's Hollywood Stars when on June 22 he receives his Army induction notice and told to report to Fort Ord for basic training. Discharged from the military in March 1958, Allie is assigned to the Columbus Jets where he hits only .248 in 107 games.

1959 and 1960 has Allie playing for the Memphis Chickasaws and then for the Chattanooga Lookouts. His final season (1961) in organized baseball is split between Syracuse and Portsmouth.

Following his baseball career, Allie enters the beer business in San Antonio, Texas, first as a sales manager for Falstaff for 15 years and then for Lone Star for 10. Allie passes away on October 4, 2016 in San Antonio at the age of 84

## Groat Spills the Beans

During an interview with *Charlotte Observer* sports writer Herman Helms in April of 1955, Pirates' shortstop Dick Groat reveals that Gair Allie has been sent to New Orleans and Dick Smith has been switched to third.

"All I know is that three of us started out at the job, and I seem to be the only one left now."

When the *Statesville Landmark* contacts Allie's mother Margie to get a little more information she says that he has not heard from her son since the previous week.

## ALLIE CHRONOLOGY

### ◀ April 9, 1947 - High School Debut

Allie makes his Statesville (N.C.) High School debut with two hits in four at bats and turns in the "most sensational catch of the game" with a bare-handed grab of a short fly ball into left field as the Greyhounds rally with three runs in the bottom of the ninth for a 6-4 win over Cherryville.

May 2, 1951

Allie hits two home runs and drives in three runs to lead the Wake Forest freshman team past the North Carolina frosh nine 11-4.

May 10, 1951

North Carolina is again the victim of Allie's long ball antics as he poles a three-run home run in the eighth inning as the Wake Forest freshmen prevail 7-2.

September 18, 1951

Nineteen-year-old Allie signs a contract with the Pittsburgh Pirates for an estimated \$20,000 bonus and is assigned to the New Orleans Pelicans of the Southern Association ... Allie announces that he is transferring from Wake Forest to the University of North Carolina where he will continue attending classes in the winter.

Cherryville	AB	R	H	PO	A
W. McGinnis, cf	4	0	1	1	0
Robinson, 2b	1	1	0	3	1
Y. McGinnis, 1b	5	1	2	8	0
Wright, 3b	5	1	0	2	0
Quinn, ss	4	1	1	0	4
Hayes, rf	3	0	1	1	0
Blackwood, c	3	0	1	7	1
Brown, cf	1	0	0	1	0
Dellinger, cf	1	0	0	3	0
Randell, p	4	0	1	0	2
Rudisill, p	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>26*</b>	<b>8</b>

Statesville	AB	R	H	PO	A
Allie, ss	4	2	1	1	1
Gray, 2b	4	1	1	2	3
Harris, cf	4	2	1	1	0
Pierce, c	4	0	2	8	1
McCrary, 3b	3	0	2	2	2
B. Miller, rf	5	0	1	2	0
H. Miller, 1b	3	1	1	7	0
Nash, lf	4	0	1	2	1
Smith, p	4	0	2	2	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>8</b>

\*Two out in Ninth when winning run scored.

R HE  
 Cherryville - 004 000 000-4 7 2  
 Statesville - 100 110 003-6 12 2  
 Summary: Errors-Blackwood 2;  
 Nash, H. Miller. RBI-Pierce 2,  
 B. Miller, Quinn, 2-BH-Quinn,  
 Blackwood. Stolen bases-Brown.  
 BOB off-Smith 6; off Randell, 4.  
 SO by-Smith 5; Randell 7. Hits off  
 Randell 10 in 9<sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub>; off Rudisill 2 in  
 2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub>. LOB-C 8, S 8. WP-Smith. LP  
 Randell. Umpires - Sanges and  
 Leaf; Time of game 2:15.



Gair Allie  
1952 New Orleans Pelicans

**Gair Allie [4 of 5]:**

**April 12, 1952 - Pro Debut ►**

The New Orleans Pelicans defeat the Birmingham Barons 3-1 the Southern Association season opener for both teams ... Allie is 1-for-3 with a sixth inning triple off of Barons' right hander Al Bennett that drives home catcher Jack Paepke.

June 12, 1952

Allie hits his first home run in professional baseball when he connects off of Chattanooga's Al Sima in the seventh inning driving home all of New Orleans' runs in a 3-2 come-from-behind victory.

February 13, 1953

Allie is the only infielder from the 1952 New Orleans Pelicans to be invited to the Pittsburgh Pirates training camp near Havana, Cuba ... Allie tells the *Statesville Daily Record* that he thinks that he can out play Duke graduate and incumbent shortstop Dick Groat and earn the team's starting shortstop position ... Groat is coming off a season where he hit .284 in 95 games for the 42-112 Buc.

March 30, 1953

With Groat being called into the military, Allie is suddenly in the running for the starting shortstop position with Dick Cole when he injures his ankle sliding into home during an intra-squad game ... at first it is believed to be a severe sprain, however it is later determined that he has suffered a complete fracture of his right ankle.

September 21, 1953

Pittsburgh manager Fred Haney says that the nearly-completed season is "one of the worst experiences of my life." ... looking forward to 1954, Haney foresees a possible starting infield of Danny O'Connell at shortstop, Allie at third, Dick Cole at second and either Preston Ward, Al Grunewald or Dale Coogan at first ... Haney's Pirates will finish the season an abysmal 42-112 and 54 1/2 games behind first-place Brooklyn.

October 12, 1954

Playing for Mazatlan in the Mexican Coast League, Allie commits four errors in the seventh inning enabling Navojoa to tally five unearned runs in a 8-0 win

August 25, 1955

Allie continues his hot streak driving in a career-high six runs with a home run, a single and a sacrifice fly in a 10-4 win over the defending champion Atlanta Crackers.

September 2, 1955

Five Pelicans are among 15 minor league players recalled by the Pirates - Allie, pitcher Bob Purkey, first baseman Bob Skinner and outfielders Felipe Montemayor and Ray Swarts ... all 15 are told to report to the team's spring training in 1956.

January 14, 1956

The Pirates announce the signing of Allie and minor league shortstop Dick Barone, who has "the looks and build of Phil Rizzuto" ... Barone will

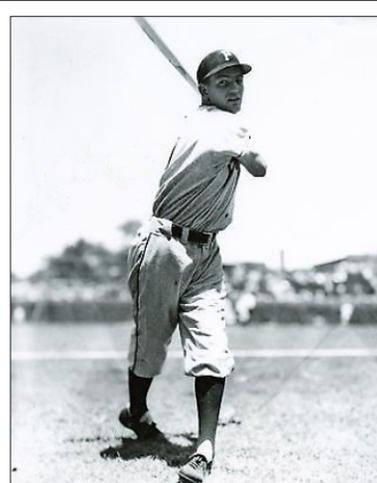
April 12, 1952  
New Orleans Pelicans vs. Birmingham Barons  
Heineman Park, New Orleans, Louisiana

Birmingham	AB	R	H	New Orleans	AB	R	H
Boyce 3b	3	0	0	Smith lf	3	1	0
Lynch 2b	2	1	0	Murtaugh 2b	2	0	1
Rackley rf	3	0	1	Thomas rf	3	0	0
O'Brien cf	3	0	0	Long lb	2	0	0
Sch'barth lb	2	0	0	Wentzel cf	3	0	1
Stendel lf	2	0	0	Rice 3b	3	0	0
Mathis c	1	0	0	Paepke c	2	2	1
Nicely ss	2	0	0	Allie ss	3	0	1
Bennett p	1	0	0	Morton p	3	0	0

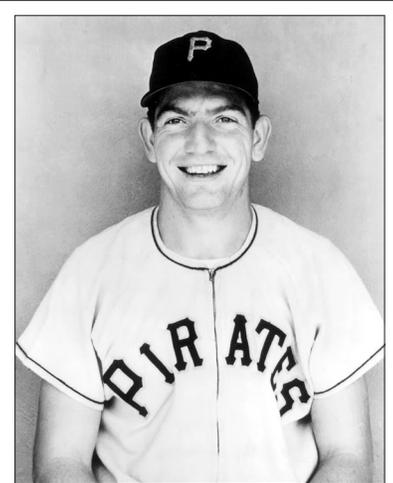
Totals 19 1 1 Totals 24 3 4

Birmingham	100	000	—1
New Orleans	000	021	—3

Summary: E—Boyce, Nicely 2. RBI—O'Brien, Martin, Murtaugh, Allie. 2B—Rackley, Paepke. 3B—Allie. SB—Smith. Left—Birmingham 4, New Orleans 7. BB—Morton 3, Bennett 3. SO—Bennett 6, Morton 2. HBP—Morton (Mathis). WP—Bennett. PB—Mathis.



Gair Allie  
1954 Pittsburgh Pirates



Gair Allie  
1954 Pittsburgh Pirates

## Gair Allie [5 of 5]:

eventually make it to the majors with Pittsburgh in 1960, going hitless in six at bats over an eight-day stretch in September.

### Twink Inducted

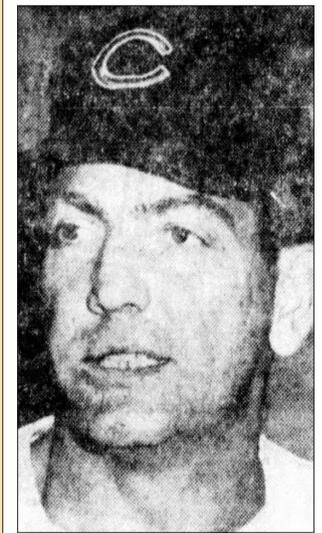
**HOLLYWOOD, June 23—(AP)—**Third baseman Gair Allie, a sparkplug of the Hollywood Stars recent 12-game winning streak, yesterday was inducted into the Army and headed for Ft. Ord.

March 22, 1956

Allie, along with future Hall of Famer Bill Mazeroski and outfielder Roman Mejias are farmed out to Hollywood.

June 22, 1956

Hitting .292 in 69 games with the Hollywood Stars, Allie is inducted into the Army and told to report to Fort Ord for basic training.



Gair Allie  
1960 Chattanooga Lookouts

April 1, 1958

Returning from the military, Allie, along with pitchers Laurin Pepper and Joe Trimble are sent to the Pirates' minor league training camp for reassignment ... Allie is eventually assigned to the Columbus Jets of the International (AAA) League.

September 1, 1958

Allie is one of 15 minor league players recalled by the Pirates ... first baseman R.C. Stevens and pitchers Bennie Daniels and Don Williams are told to report to major league club while the other 12 are instructed to report to the team's spring training in 1959.

October 13, 1958

The Pirates part ways with Allie when they trade his contract to the Columbus Jets for infielder Jim Pendleton and southpaw Jim Rowe.

April 8, 1959

The Memphis Chickasaws purchase Allie's contract.

August 9, 1959

Ray Crone tosses a five-hitter and Allie hits a pair of home runs in Memphis' 4-1 win over the New Orleans Pelicans.

August 23, 1960

Playing for the Chattanooga Lookouts, Allie is suspended indefinitely without pay and fined \$50 by Southern League president Hal Totten after the veteran infielder had gotten into a "vicious" argument with umpire Gene Haack in an 11-inning 5-4 loss to Nashville a day earlier.

May 22, 1961

The Syracuse Chiefs make room on their roster by transferring catcher Sam Mauney to Nashville, outfielder Ernie Oravetz to Spokane and placing Gair Allie on the inactive list ... the Chiefs reside in last place and are nine games behind first-place Columbus with a 6-15 mark.

May 25, 1961

Signing with the Portsmouth Tides of the South Atlantic (A) League, Allie is 0-for-3 in a 4-2 loss to the Asheville Tourists ... ironically, the Tourists are a Pittsburgh Pirates' farm team and that night's lineup includes future Hall of Famer Willie Stargell in centerfield, and Gene Alley at second base ... Alley will later become the Pirates starting shortstop for nine seasons.

July 1961

Allie is hitting .203 with 24 hits in 118 at bats when he and the Tides part ways.

October 4, 2016

Allie passes away in San Antonio at the age of 84.



Gair Allie  
1961 Syracuse Chiefs