

A Brother Remembers

Joe Anderson remembered the day; it was May 11, 1942 and he was preparing to depart his home for the United States Navy. His brother Ben and Ben's wife Elizabeth:

came over to see me before I left Edgefield for Annapolis. I remember that Ben and I had a long talk in my room that afternoon. We discussed plans for our future after the war. We were in perfect accord on everything. However, I have had a feeling ever since that day that we would never met again.

Benjamin Waldrep Anderson of Edgefield was an agricultural economics major and member of the Clemson College Class of 1941. As soon as its members graduated, most were off to military service. No other class would see so many of its young men fall in action in the war that was soon to engulf the world.

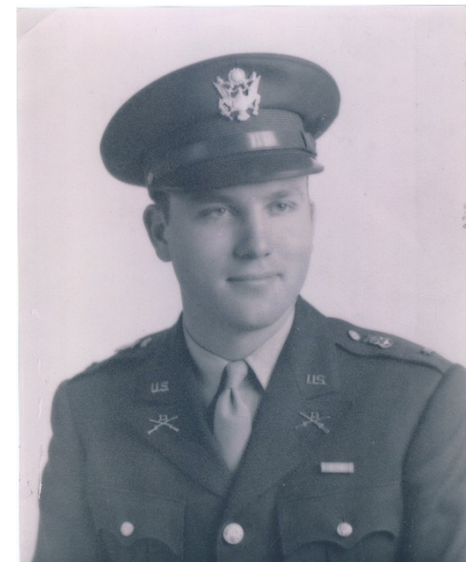
Ben Anderson was one of six children who grew up in Edgefield, South Carolina. His older brother, Joe, also attended Clemson and served in the Navy during World War II, being discharged after the War was over with the rank of Lieutenant, Senior Grade.

Ben soon found himself at Fort Jackson, where the 13th Infantry Regiment had been reorganized as part of the 8th Infantry Division. Anderson shipped overseas in November 1943 as part of the build-up of forces in preparation for the coming invasion of France.

On July 4, 1944, the 8th Infantry Division landed at Utah Beach. Three days later, the 13th Infantry Regiment faced the Germans in combat for the first time. Anderson quickly demonstrated his mettle. In an attack on July 13, Anderson was cited for "courage far beyond the call of duty by his continuous, untiring activities on the front lines of his company and with complete disregard for his own personal safety..." In leading his company in an assault on German positions, "Anderson stayed with his men, exposing himself so as to give them all a few words of encouragement and at the same time gathering information as to the whereabouts of the enemy gun positions..." For this gallant action, Anderson was awarded the Silver Star.

A few weeks later, on August 27, while still commanding K Company near Brest, Anderson and his men were again engaged with a determined enemy—and again Anderson displayed outstanding leadership and bravery. This encounter, which cost Anderson his life, resulted in the award of the Distinguished Service Cross.

In October, Lieutenant (j. g.) Joe Anderson, then serving in the Pacific Theater aboard the escort carrier USS Hollandia, wrote of his brother:



He had a brilliant mind and on numerous occasions I have told him and written him he was much smarter than I am. I wish I could have been fighting side by side with Ben when he was killed. I wish we could have been fighting together... I included Ben in all of my plans for the future after the war. I had planned for us to work together as a team.

Benjamin Waldrep Anderson was awarded the Purple Heart in addition to the Distinguished Service Cross and Silver Star. He was survived by his wife, the former Elizabeth Wheeler of Saluda; his brother Joe, and his four sisters.

He is buried in the Brittany American Cemetery, St. James (Manche), France.

Ben was recruited by Frank Howard to play football at Clemson, but a shoulder injury his senior year prevented him from playing in college. Twenty-five years later, his nephew and namesake, Ben Anderson, II, walked on to the football team and started all four years. After working at Clemson for 28 years, Ben II died in 2015 and is buried on Cemetery Hill, just a few yards away from the Scroll of Honor, which includes a stone bearing the name of his uncle.

