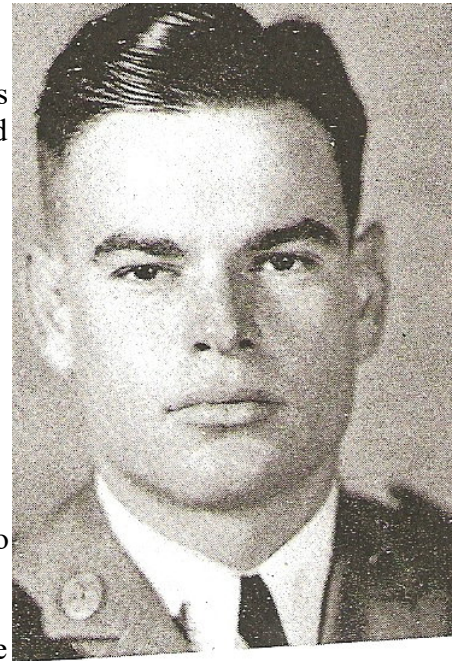


## One Family's Sacrifices

There are interesting contradictions in the story of Sailor Oswald Beard. Although he was a senior private in Clemson's Cadet Regiment, Beard was outstanding at drill, being selected for the Sophomore, Junior and Senior Platoons composed of the best drilled cadets in each of these classes. As a member of the Senior Platoon, Beard would have participated in fancy drill competitions and exhibitions at football games in Savannah where the Tigers topped Mercer 6-0 and at Clemson's two home games, wins over Presbyterian and Furman in the first and last games of the season. And, despite his first name that might suggest a nautical inclination, when war broke out Beard joined the Army.



Beard, "Dan" as he was commonly known on campus, came to Clemson in 1931 after graduating from Langley-Bath High School. He was one of the eight children, six boys and two girls, of Mr. and Mrs. Sailor Beard of Langley. Dan joined the Palmetto Literary Society and the YMCA. He was also selected for membership in Phi Psi, the national honorary textile fraternity. Despite not reaching a high rank within the college's cadet hierarchy, Beard nonetheless completed ROTC training at Fort McClellan, Alabama in the summer of 1934. This training would accrue to his benefit after World War II broke out and he joined the Army as a reserve officer in 1942.

Beard was assigned to the 79<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division which had formed at Camp Pickett, Virginia in June 1942. In April 1944, the division shipped to Great Britain, arriving at Liverpool on the 17<sup>th</sup>. On D-Day plus six, the division began landing at Utah Beach in Normandy. The 79<sup>th</sup> entered combat on June 19, with an attack on high ground west and northwest of Valognes and high ground south of Cherbourg. The division took Fort du Roule after a heavy engagement and entered Cherbourg, June 25. It held a defensive line at the Ollonde River until July 2 and then returned to the offensive, taking La Haye du Puits in house-to-house fighting, July 8. On July 26, the 79<sup>th</sup> attacked across the Ay River, took Lessay, and crossed the Sarthe River entering Le Mans on August 8. In the face of occasional heavy German counterattacks, the division reached the Therain River by the end of August. Moving swiftly to the Franco-Belgian frontier near St. Amand, the division shifted into eastern France. In mid-September, the 79<sup>th</sup> cut across the Moselle and Meurthe Rivers, and cleared the Forêt de Parroy in a severe engagement. By October 23, the division had captured high ground east of Emberménil. After more than four months of steady combat, the division was relieved the next day.

After rest and training at Lunéville, the 79<sup>th</sup> returned to combat with an attack from the Mignevine-Montigny area. It was during this engagement that First Lieutenant "Dan" Beard was killed. He was awarded the Silver Star for gallantry in action.

Sailor Oswald Beard was the second of the Beard brothers to die in combat. Houston Beard, an electrician's mate in the Navy, had been killed in action off the coast of Salerno, Sicily in September 1943. Of the four surviving Beard brothers, two served in the Navy Reserves.

Sailor Oswald Beard was survived by his wife, the former Melva Hastings. Their son was born after news of his father's death reached the family.