

Cargo Flight

Flying was a hazardous profession during World War II. Flying cargo planes was perhaps the most dangerous type of military flying in the combat theaters. Cargo planes were slow and unarmed. Because their cargoes had to get through to keep units supplied with food, fuel, ammunition, and other supplies (not to mention mail), cargo haulers had to fly in all weather. Since the cargo aircraft were not equipped with oxygen systems for passengers, they often had to fly at or below 12,000 feet. Over the vast stretches of the Pacific Ocean where the 13th Troop Carrier Squadron flew, that often meant charging right into rough weather. Second Lieutenant Garnet Quillian Brown from Flushing, New York served as a copilot for one of the squadron's C-47 Skytrain aircraft.



Brown came to Clemson in 1941 as a mechanical engineering major. He remained on campus only for his freshman year before the United States was pulled into World War II. Brown volunteered for the Army Air Force and was accepted for flight training. He was channeled into multiengine training and assigned to fly the C-47, the Army's workhorse cargo hauler.

The C-47 was a modified version of the civilian DC-3. In addition to its crew of four, it could carry twenty-seven passengers or eighteen stretcher cases. With its two Pratt & Whitney 1200 horsepower engines, the C-47 typically cruised at about one hundred fifty miles per hour.



By the summer of 1944, Brown was assigned to the 13th Troop Carrier Squadron, "the Thirsty Thirteenth," flying missions in support of General Douglas MacArthur's operations in the southwest Pacific. The squadron played a direct role in moving men and supplies to and within New Guinea. It also supported operations to capture and establish airfields on Morotai Island in the Dutch East Indies.

Morotai would become a key base for aviation operations supporting MacArthur's return to the Philippines.

On Wednesday, November 1, 1944, Brown was in the right seat of a C-47 piloted by First Lieutenant Emerson King as it departed Sansapor on New Guinea's northeast coast bound for

Morotai about three hundred thirty miles to the west. As part of a three-plane formation, Brown's C-47 flew over the Halmahera Sea and landed on Morotai. After unloading their cargoes and eating lunch, the pilots of the three aircraft decided to proceed individually to their next island destination, Noemfoor. King, Brown, and their two crew members took off about 1800 hours. They were never seen again. A careful two-day search yielded no evidence of the aircraft.

Brown and his colleagues were declared dead on July 7, 1946. Brown is memorialized at the Manila American Cemetery in the Philippines.