

## The Most Capable

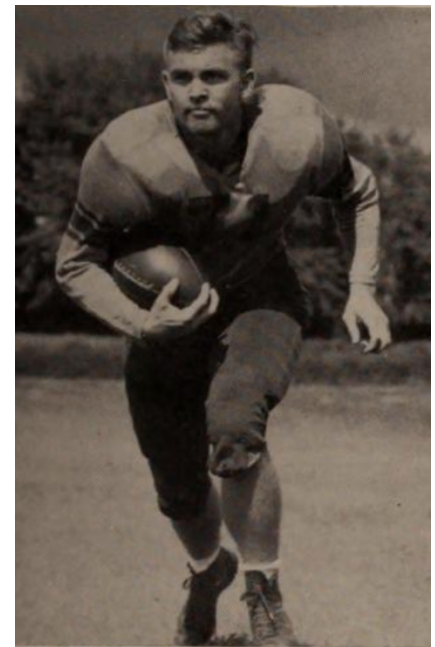
Before he was a soldier, John Harrison Franklin, Jr. of Morristown, Tennessee was an athlete. Franklin, a member of Clemson's Class of 1944 was a two-sport standout, playing football and running track. An animal husbandry major, Harry Franklin was a 168-pound back on third-year head coach Frank Howard's football team in 1942. The first football season of the war saw the Tigers compile a 3-6-1 record, but the wins included a victory over rival Furman and a Big Thursday thumping of South Carolina.

Franklin ran the 880-yard dash as a member of coach Rock Norman's track team. He set the record of 1 minute, 58.2 seconds at the State Intercollegiate Meet in 1942.



Assigned to Company F, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment, Franklin was appointed a cadet sergeant as a junior. As he and his classmates looked forward to their senior year, the war intervened. At the conclusion of 1943's spring semester, most cadets were ordered to military service.

By early 1944, Franklin was a second lieutenant assigned to the 232<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment, part of the famous Rainbow Division, the 42<sup>nd</sup> Infantry. Franklin's regiment had been activated in July of 1943 and trained at Camp Gruber, Oklahoma. When the Army cancelled its Specialized Training Program at Kansas University, the whole class was transferred to the 42<sup>nd</sup>. Some of its members were assigned to the 232<sup>nd</sup>'s Company G in which Franklin served as a rifle platoon leader.



After several months of strenuous training, the 232<sup>nd</sup> headed for France, traveling first to Camp Kilmer, New Jersey and then boarding Liberty ships. The regiment arrived at Marseille on December 8, 1944. The three regiments of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division were organized into a task force and sent north to defend the area west of the Rhine River around Strasbourg. On Christmas Eve, the task force moved into the line, relieving the 36<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. The 232<sup>nd</sup>'s assigned area covered 22 miles along the Rhine, creating a thin defensive front. On those last days of that momentous year, activity along the front was light and weather was nearly as big a concern as the enemy. Temperatures dropped into the low 20s in one of the most bitter winters in fifty years.

On December 30, Second Lieutenant Franklin was killed when his jeep crashed. Franklin, recalled Ray Essig, a private in Franklin's company, "was the most liked and probably the most capable officer in Company G." His loss would be felt in the early days of the new year when the Germans counterattacked into the 232<sup>nd</sup>'s area.

John Harrison Franklin, Jr. was survived by his parents. After the war, his body was returned to Morristown and buried in the Jamagin Cemetery.



JOHN H FRANKLIN JR  
TENNESSEE  
2 LIEUT 232 INF 42 INF DIV  
WORLD WAR II  
NOV 28 1920 DEC 30 1944